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Brief #7



MINUTE MARKETER

How to Use Event Marketing for Lead Generation

12 tactics for garnering a wealth
of leads from live events



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30-Minute Marketer: How to Use Event Marketing for Lead Generation

12 tactics for garnering a wealth of leads from live events

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30-Minute Marketer: How to Use Event Marketing for Lead Generation

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TACTICS YOU CAN LEARN OVER LUNCH

Welcome to *30-Minute Marketer* – a resource from MarketingSherpa featuring bite-sized tips for busy marketers.

In this report, we focus on how you can use event marketing to increase your lead generation results.

Live events can be both a blessing and a curse for marketers. On one hand, they offer the opportunity to make a valuable in-person connection with a potential customer. You can serve as a face of the company, and add a personal touch that makes the prospect more likely to engage.

On the other hand, live events require considerable resources on your part. You will need to devote considerable man-hours before, during and after the event. Then, there's the time and expenses involved in hosting or staffing events, not to mention travel time and costs.

To get the most for your investment—and to provide a worthwhile experience to attendees, who are also investing time and money into this event—you need a solid game plan.

In this report, we'll show you:

- How a clever admission fee approach can help boost attendance
- Tips for standing out among a crowd of sponsors
- Ways to use giveaways as a lead generation goldmine
- The importance of avoiding the hard sell

We know you're in a hurry, so we won't make you wait any longer. Enjoy these tips about event marketing!

Bobbi Dempsey
Editor, *30-Minute Marketer*

About *30-Minute Marketer*

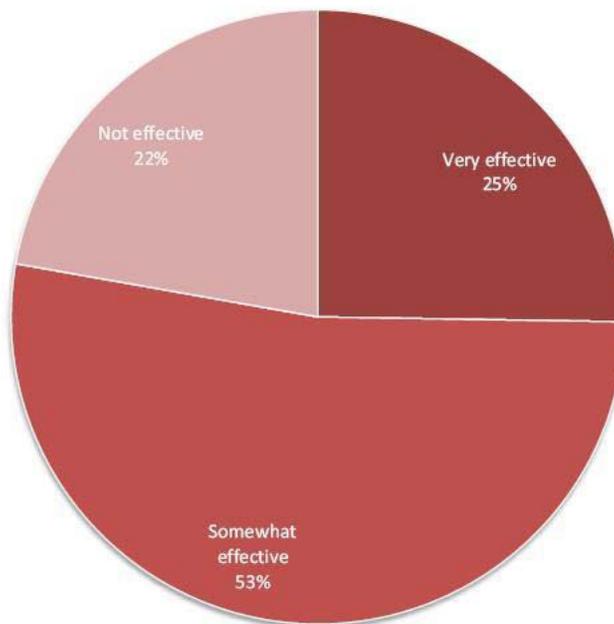
MarketingSherpa's *30-Minute Marketer* is designed with you, the busy marketer, in mind. We know you've got a lot to do and not a lot of time in which to do it. You need quick, simple tips that you can put into action right away.

For each *30-Minute Marketer*, we scour the vast MECLABS library of marketing research, from MarketingSherpa case studies and benchmark reports, to MarketingExperiments optimization tests, and edit the research down into an actionable piece for helping you improve your marketing performance right now...or, at least, by the time you're done with lunch.

Live events can be a great way to generate new leads. They allow you to put a "face" on your organization while getting some valuable in-person interaction with potential customers. If you present information in an entertaining or interesting way, answer questions on an individual basis or just do something creative that makes you stand out from the crowd, people are likely to remember you and want to connect with you later.

Despite the cost and work involved, most marketers see live events as a worthwhile investment. As the chart below from the [MarketingSherpa 2011 B2B Marketing Benchmark Report](#) shows, 78% of respondents felt trade shows were somewhat or very effective for their organizations. (Note: One caveat for consumer marketers, this research was conducted with B2B marketers.)

CHART: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRADE SHOW MARKETING
Q. Please indicate the effectiveness of trade show marketing for your organization



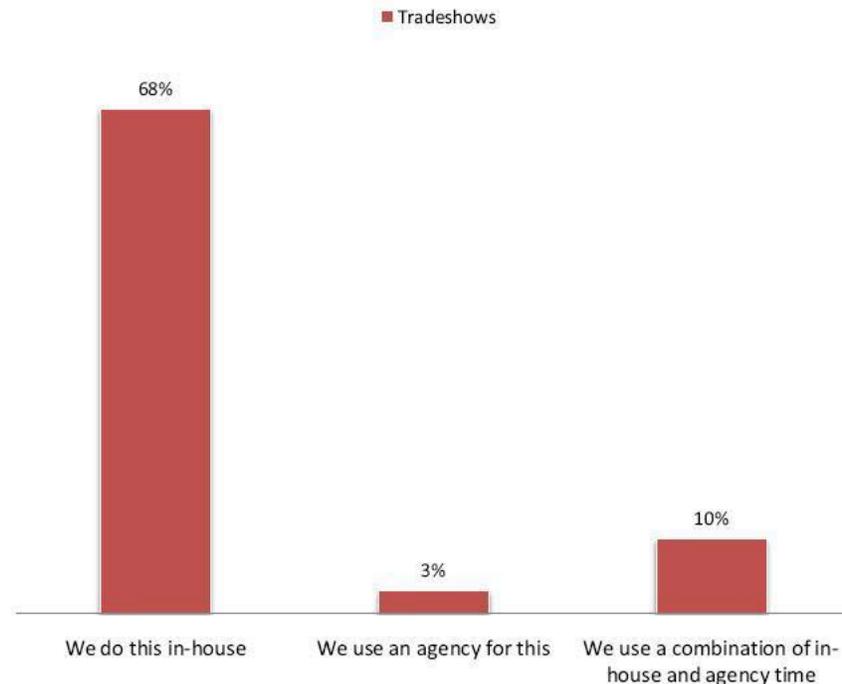
Source: MarketingSherpa B2B Marketing Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded Aug 2010, N=935

Pulling off a successful live event takes detailed planning, impressive promotion, and flawless execution (having a good amount of luck doesn't hurt, either). Basically, all the stars must be aligned. It's even more of a challenge if your brand is new or small, and you're working with a limited budget.

It's very likely that the work (or at least the bulk of it) involved in planning and running a live event will fall to your team. As the following chart shows, 68% handle this completely in-house, while another 10% split the work with an agency.

CHART: THE EXECUTION OF TRADE SHOW MARKETING

Q. Please select the statement that best represents your current trade show marketing practices.



Source: MarketingSherpa B2B Marketing Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded Aug 2010, N=935

As an increasing number of companies cut travel budgets, it's becoming more of a challenge to get people to attend events in person. You're asking them to give up their valuable time—remember, time *is* money. And, if you don't yet have a track record of successful and exciting events, people may need to be convinced that this is worth their time.

Conversely, your company is also investing time and money to produce this event, at a time when every dollar spent must often be weighed carefully.

So, you will likely need to be able to make a case for continuing to spend money on live events. Measure everything. Being able to demonstrate impressive lead generation metrics as a result of event marketing will go a long way to help your effort. If you don't have past metrics to rely on, using some of the case studies from this *30-Minute Marketer* may be able to help you make the business case.

TACTIC #1: COME UP WITH AN ANGLE THAT WILL TOUCH YOUR AUDIENCE

For an event promoting her coaching services, alongside the publishing services provided by her event partner, Nancy Juetten, owner of Main Street Media Savvy, a one-woman publicity consultancy for small businesses, decided to work in a charity angle. As explained in the MarketingSherpa article, "[Event Marketing: Entrepreneur drives year-round sales, increases email list](#)," Juetten asked for an admission fee in the form of a small donation, or an item that would be useful to a nonprofit organization for children affected by HIV and AIDS.

Tip: For her event, Juetten offered event sponsors marketing tables in the room, if they agreed to promote the event to their communities. This turned out to be a win-win situation.

TACTIC #2: EMPHASIZE BENEFITS AND SERVICES

Plan your content and presentations carefully, tailoring them to your audience's interests and needs. You want to provide helpful information or resources, so attendees leave the event feeling like they received something valuable in exchange for their time. Hopefully, they will have enjoyed themselves. This makes it more likely that they'll want to attend future events.

TACTIC #3: KEEP SALES PITCHES UNDERSTATED

Nobody wants to come to an event where they'll get bombarded with hard sells. After making her presentation—in which she explained why it's so important for entrepreneurs to be media savvy—Juetten wrapped up with a quick line encouraging audience members to contact her if they wanted to chat about the topic in further detail. You need to work in your pitch carefully, so as not to be annoying.

Tip: Come up with some creative promotional elements, signage, etc. that will display the call to action in an effective, yet nonaggressive, way.

TACTIC #4: SPOTLIGHT CLIENTS AND CUSTOMERS IN MARKETING MATERIALS

One way to stand out at an event is to let your customers do your talking for you. In the MarketingSherpa article, [“Trade Show Strategy Overhaul: 6 steps to 36% larger deal size,”](#) Angela Sanders, Director, U.S. Marketing Operations, Aon, explained how her team decided to take a new approach at a major trade show by talking about the customers, not the company.

The Aon team went all out, creating an entire concept called “Client World,” where attendees could watch an assortment of video testimonials from clients. But this was just the first step. The team reserved its own floor space, which it dubbed “Clientopia,” where current and prospective clients could relax and network. Aon also hosted a dinner for clients/prospects on the first night of the show, an event they called “Clientpalooza.”

TACTIC #5: SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES WHEN SPONSORING EVENTS

Even if you are just one of many sponsors or exhibitors at a large event, you can still be successful in gathering leads—if you use lots of creativity. The key is to stand out so you don't get lost in the crowd of other exhibitors. In the MarketingSherpa article, [“Event Marketing; HubSpot's Dreamforce effort generates more than 2,300 new leads and 362 product demos,”](#) the HubSpot team shared the secrets of their success as a sponsor of a large event.

Some key takeaways:

- **Be noticeable.** The HubSpot team was almost impossible to ignore, as they were all decked out in matching orange track suits.

- **Break out of the box (or the booth).** Instead of one simple booth, the HubSpot folks spread themselves out and established four "un-booth" stations with casual sitting areas. This also allowed them to have a presence in different locations of the event venue, not just in the main exhibitor area.
- **Be quirky.** You want to be unforgettable and leave a lasting impression. The HubSpot team came up with a theme that tied into – of all things – a unicorn mascot.
- **Offer giveaways.** People love fun swag, and giving them something to take with them makes it more likely that they'll remember you later and follow up. HubSpot gave out stuffed unicorns dressed in an orange cape (note the matching color scheme). Prior to the event, HubSpot had released a tongue-in-cheek press release noting the country's unicorn shortage, which also helped build curiosity. Each attendee also received a gift bag loaded with unicorn goodies adorned with the company logo and a URL and QR code that led to a special landing page.

EXAMPLE: THE HUBSPOT "UN-BOOTH" EXHIBITOR AREAS



TACTIC #6: EVALUATE WHICH EVENTS OFFER THE BIGGEST ROI

If budget concerns make it necessary to limit your number of events, consider which ones offer you the most benefit.

In this case, bigger wasn't better. In the MarketingSherpa article, "[Budget Cut Prompts Marketing Performance Review: 7 tactics to reduce CPL and boost leads 12%](#)," the team from Application Security had to greatly reduce

their expenses, which forced them to be very selective about where to focus their efforts. They realized the large trade shows didn't result in a lot of bang for their buck, so they instead focused mainly on smaller, local events.

Tactics like these enabled them to increase leads by 12% while greatly reducing their average cost-per-lead.

TACTIC #7: HAVE SUFFICIENT STAFF AVAILABLE FOR ONE-ON-ONE CONNECTIONS

Attendees are more likely to want to engage with your company if they feel like they've made an individual connection. The HubSpot team had a large team of staffers on hand at their event, so someone was always available to chat one-to-one with an attendee. As a result, prospective clients felt like they met a person, as opposed to a company. Again, the key is to avoid the hard sell. Staff should offer a service, such as sharing a few quick tips, providing basic yet helpful advice, or even doing a brief consultation.

TACTIC #8: USE SOCIAL MEDIA AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

As with any promotional campaign, you should incorporate social media into pre-event publicity efforts. But social media can also be an extremely valuable tool for real-time promotion. Ideally, you should have at least one staffer onsite at the event focused on spreading the word via social media (obviously, this should be someone with excellent social media skills).

They should provide running updates on the action at the event. They can live Tweet, using the event's official hashtag, or a hashtag you create specifically for the event. Perhaps they can even offer a special "insider" deal—perhaps a special Facebook "codeword" that attendees can use in order to obtain a special giveaway item at your booth.

TACTIC #9: OFFER GIVEAWAY ITEMS THAT WON'T GET TRASHED

You want to be memorable to attendees, and also want to make it easy for them to remember your information so they can connect with you after the event. Handing them a nondescript flyer—or worse, a pile of advertising materials—won't do the trick. Your materials will likely end up in the nearest trash can.

Other marketers also realize the importance of offering standout swag. In the MarketingSherpa article, "[How simple and inexpensive trade show souvenir got 30% ROI](#)," Chris Walker, Sr. Marketing Manager, BioWorld Today, said his team knew they needed to come up with something different. But they also need something they could afford on a tight budget.

The team developed the idea of creating distinctive hats as giveaways for an annual trade show. The hook—since the event was held in a different city each year, the hat for each event featured a custom design that represented the host city.

A pre-event press release reminded attendees to stop by the booth and pick up their hat—and also linked to a short trivia quiz about the host city. To build anticipation for the event and ensure attendees would visit the booth, the pre-event promotion included a landing page offering people the chance to register in advance to be on a "VIP list."

Tip: Your giveaway items should include your company name and website, of course. But, if possible, try to include a QR code that attendees can scan with their smartphones. This should lead to a special landing page geared toward event attendees.

EXAMPLE: BIOWORLD PRE-EVENT LANDING PAGE FOR VIP LIST REGISTRATION



Let's talk about the *real reason* you're going to **BIO 2006 in Chicago:**

to get the NEW 2006 BioWorld[®] Beanie – given away exclusively to attendees who stop by our Booth #2351.

For biotech fashion mavens who have the seven previous limited production BioWorld hats, this is your chance to add to your collection. And if you are new to BIO, now is your opportunity to get started.

The **2006 Chicago BioWorld Beanie** is perfect for keeping your head warm while you soak up all the news and developments at the conference, which you'll be reading about in *BioWorld Today*, of course – free and hot-off-the-press every morning at our **Booth #2351**.

Only 200 hats will be given away each day, so stop by early to get yours.

Click here to get on The BioWorld Beanie VIP List

TACTIC #10: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY HIGH-TECH TOOLS AT THE EVENT

At the event where the BioWorld team distributed their custom hats, attendees were given badges that featured a special digital code. The BioWorld team was able to scan the badge of each person who picked up a hat, allowing them to quickly capture lead information. After the event, they gathered more than 1,700 leads, triple the amount they'd seen at past events without the hat promotion.

TACTIC #11: USE LOCAL EVENTS TO NURTURE EXISTING LEADS

Yes, you want to generate new leads, but you also want to take care of the ones you already have. To make existing customers feel like they're getting the personal touch (while also making it convenient for them to attend), consider hosting small regional events in areas where your customers are concentrated.

In the MarketingSherpa article, "[Event Marketing: Regional customer forums improve field events attendance rate by 150%](#)," Meagen Eisenberg, Director of Worldwide Programs, Marketing Automation and Operations, ArcSight, discussed how her team used regional events to connect with existing customers. The goal was to give customers the opportunity to share their thoughts and feedback while also gaining valuable information they could use right away.

The events were promoted via a carefully selected email list. Recipients were direct to a dedicated microsite where they could register, review the event agenda, suggest possible topics and share an invitation with colleagues.

TACTIC #12: EXTEND THE EVENT'S SHELF LIFE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE

The event shouldn't stop paying off when the doors close. Offer some sort of benefit or bonus material afterwards that will keep people coming back to your site. This will also allow you to attract people who didn't even attend the event. Consider using video or audio recordings from the event (or relevant segments of it) to create an archived event available on your site, or possibly package it with some other material to create a multimedia set.

In the MarketingSherpa article, "[How to Turn a Trade Show Speech into a Podcast that Becomes a Lead Machine](#)," Michael Williams, who was then Marketing Director at Global Management Technologies Corp., told how he transformed a podcast into an ongoing source of quality leads. Using inexpensive recording equipment, he recorded a client testimonial at a trade show, did some slight editing, and created a 36-minute podcast. The podcast was then hosted as an MP3 file on the company's website. Visitors would need to complete a registration page before they could listen to the recording. The total number of listeners was more than nine times the amount who actually attended the event, and more than 16% of the listeners were considered high-quality leads.

Useful Links and Resources:

[How to Dominate a Trade Show Floor and Garner Loads of New Sales Leads with a Clever Promo](#)

[How to Use a Backstage Blog and Virtual Community Networking to Maximize Your Road Show's Impact](#)

[How to Build Buzz at a Massive Trade Show on a Limited Budget](#)

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