EVENT
MARKETING
MATTERS!
Build an audience for
your **brand through**
Event Marketing
MOVE

Marketing is meant to do two things:

Attract attention, then build brand ambassadors.

- Good marketing - does this by engaging its audience
- Great marketing - creates memorable experiences

Primetime Facetime

In a marketing era of digital, well... just about everything, it may come as a surprise that real time, face-to-face contact still counts when motivating brand commitment. Take online dating, for example. Tens of millions of people search the web regularly in hopes of finding that special someone. It's an affordable, efficient, fast, and convenient way to date. Yet, it still lacks the ability to "seal the deal." At some point, all online couples communicate face-to-face in order to be certain they have found "the one." Non-verbal cues such as tone, inflection, and body language all play a vital role in perception and acceptance. Without engaging a majority of our senses, genuine bonds are not easily formed.

Living The Marketing Event Life

According to endless events, **95% of marketers agree** that live events provide attendees a valuable opportunity to make personal connections in an increasingly digital world.

Eventbrite's report conducted by the Harris Group on how to fuel the experiential economy from a millennial perspective, revealed that today's audience prefers experiences. So much so, that...

77% of millennials said the best memories of their lives happened at live events.

Right on the heels of the millennial generation is Gen Z, who, like their millennial predecessors, also crave engaging brand experiences. Not that they aren't embracing brand engagement from a digital perspective; they are, it's just that they favor brands who also utilize live events in their marketing.

Not to be overlooked, live event marketing appeals, of course, to Boomers and GEN Xers, too—especially if it's mixed with a little old school nostalgia. So cue up that top 60's, 70's and 80's playlist.

Which means, whatever your brand, you must deliver not only digitally engaging brand experiences, but also experiential live events in order to appeal to today's audience.

So, let's look at what's involved in pulling off a great event.

“Good marketing engages its audience.
Great marketing creates memorable experiences.”

The Most Popular Types of Live Event Marketing

When we discuss “live event marketing” or “experiential marketing,” we’re talking about any way a brand humanizes itself by meeting with an audience live and/or in real-time. Here are some of the most popular types:

Online live events/webinars

Online events erase the travel aspect, which make them far less expensive and time consuming. Even if an event occurs onsite during work hours, live webinars allow attendees to join as private observers who can choose to engage or not without revealing their identity to the whole audience. That makes them more private, and, therefore, more appealing to some.

Live online events also make it possible for brands to reach a global audience without a hosting cost of travel, food, beverages, valet, and venue—without losing impact.

Intimate Events

This includes seminars, workshops, thought leadership events, meals, and the like. An obvious benefit of these small gatherings is personal engagement. Instead of a tutorial or lecture style event, here your audience can’t hide in the crowd, which makes them more apt to actively participate with your brand. And that’s where magic happens.

Add to that common task goals and meal sharing, and bond development grows exponentially. So, for the extra cost of venue, meals, speakers, etc., you may gain a far more loyal following. More cost, more return.

Large Public Events

Think “conference” and “convention center.” In these venues, you’re a small fish in a big pond, but you also have the advantage of a large real-time audience. So, provided you found a way to attract attendees to your stop-in-your-tracks-amazing display booth (we can help make that happen for you), the opportunity to tell your brand story to an ocean of people becomes a reality.

There are many more kinds of live events, but the thing to remember for them all is that no matter which style you’re using, the biggest advantage is your brand’s ability to build trust with an audience in real time.

By showing them that your brand is human, has a personality, and is likable (well, hopefully), your audience is far more likely to want to get better acquainted with you.

“...the biggest advantage is your brand’s ability to **build trust** with an audience in real time.”

Preparing for Your Big Event
(even if it's a small luncheon)

Figuring Out the Macro

First, ascertain who your audience is. Identify their mindset and deliver the event style they would most enjoy.

Next, choose a topic or area of focus. Let all your other goals cascade from the main one and contribute to its purpose.

Then, create an event theme based on a creative idea addressing that area of focus.

Next up, you'll need to assign a team leader—one person on your team who knows the ropes and can keep the whole production moving in harmony.

Now you'll want to decide on your event goal or takeaway. Are you looking to generate new leads? Attract gifted employees? Or launch a new product?

From there you'll need to determine how to measure your goal's success. You can identify your key performance indicators as responses to follow-up surveys, social media activity, ticket sales, number of attendees, or request for follow-up meetings and so on.

Finally, select the event date, set a budget, lock in a venue and vendors (if needed), then commit to your speakers and talent, audio visual partner and media.

Shaping Your Event with Creative

It's our job as a marketing firm, working with you, to take a kernel creative idea for a live event, develop it, and integrate the idea across all deliverables to have the greatest impact—both at the event and afterward.

With a twenty-year history of supporting Johnson Controls (JCI) and their presence at the North American International Auto Show, we found each year to present a bold, new challenge. One of the most fun shows for us to work on was a show emphasizing "small car." We were excited because we played a significant part in not only shaping the theme of the event, but naming the showstopper small car demonstrator— "re3" which stands for "rethink, renew, respond."

Our responsibilities for this live event included the design and delivery of booth graphics, print collateral, kiosk displays, digital presentations and videos, as well as integrating this content into the website.

Throughout the process, we worked closely with the marketing and public relations, design and engineering teams in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific. A key effort that stimulated response from all these regions was an email campaign prior to the show that drove customer registrations and, eventually, booth traffic.

This integrated approach to the event generated significant exposure and impact for JCI in the industry. The re3 campaign helped establish JCI as the "one to watch" in the market for small car interiors. It was awarded runner-up for AutoWeek's "Best Concept," an honor never before achieved by a supplier. Media coverage generated over 6 million online, broadcast and newsprint hits and resulted in significant opportunity for customer engagement after the show. We succeeded with Johnson Controls in hitting our targets—increased engagement at the show and sales opportunities following.

Engagement! Engagement! Engagement!

If you take away nothing else from this article, grab this:

You must connect with and continue to engage with your audience through the whole brand event experience.

Dave Menzo of Menzo Media–a long-term partner of MOVE, echoes the belief that brands need to optimize engagement.

"Create as many options for social engagement as you can in order to capture the interest of your audience. Currently, the two most active demographics are Millennials and Gen Zers. Both spend the majority of their time ingesting information from YouTube and Instagram. Utilize those platforms. Then kick off your new campaign with a live event. Grab the audience's attention. Create a bond. It goes a long way in solidifying their loyalty."

Here are some specific engagement actions you can take before, during and after the event.

Pre-event Engagement:

Outbound emails:
Get the news out way before the event date

Sponsor Partnership:
Link to sponsors and present their logos on social to build brand cred

Incentives:
Make an irresistible offer to visit your booth or attend the event

Encourage Sharing:
Incentivize social sharing with offers, free merchandise, and sweepstakes

Website/Microsite:
A place where everything about the event is located, including incentives such as early registration perks and giveaways

Guerilla Marketing:
Get the word out with social media stickers, sidewalk/outdoor art, fliers, wearable swag, and teasers

User-Friendly Hashtag:
Something catchy you can add to every social post and piece of event information

Blog/Vlog:
Web or video enticement leading up to event

Social Media Platforms:
Consider X, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, or LinkedIn, based on your audience's social habits

Direct Mail:
Send something fun and encourage attendance with a live event giveaway

These are just a handful of examples. Again, you'll need to utilize whichever combo of engagement best attracts your audience. Don't let your brand's event be easily overlooked. Do this:

Be unpredictable. Be attractive. Be engaging. How? By bringing your best creativity.

Live Event Engagement:

Event Staff:
Greeters, food servers, bartenders, valet, coat check

Digital Demos:
Take advantage of brand promotion–especially new launches

Live Social Media Engagement:
X, Facebook, Instagram

Capitalize on Influencers:
Whichever name or photo or likeness that you have authority to use, use it!

Activities:
Drawings, scavenger hunts, trivia, auctions, games

Charging Station:
A great opportunity to showcase products to a captive audience

Eye-catching Display Booth:
For large events, make sure to have a well-designed, attractive brand booth that welcomes attendees

Guerilla marketing:
Geo Filters, product vending machines, brand art, props

Massage Station:
Enough said

Video:
Livestream, looped brand content, new product launch

Photo Booth:
Encourage sharing with hashtag and live event social

Music:
Live is best—make it match your target audience and attendees

Leverage the Surprises

One of our favorite live event outcomes happened because of a surprise influencer. We received a call from the External Communications Director for Johnson Controls Power Solutions. It was an event to support the Grand Opening of their new Lithium-Ion Plant in Holland, Michigan. It promised a 400-person guest list and one month to prep. Great. We're on it.

Then notice came that President Obama would be visiting the facility.

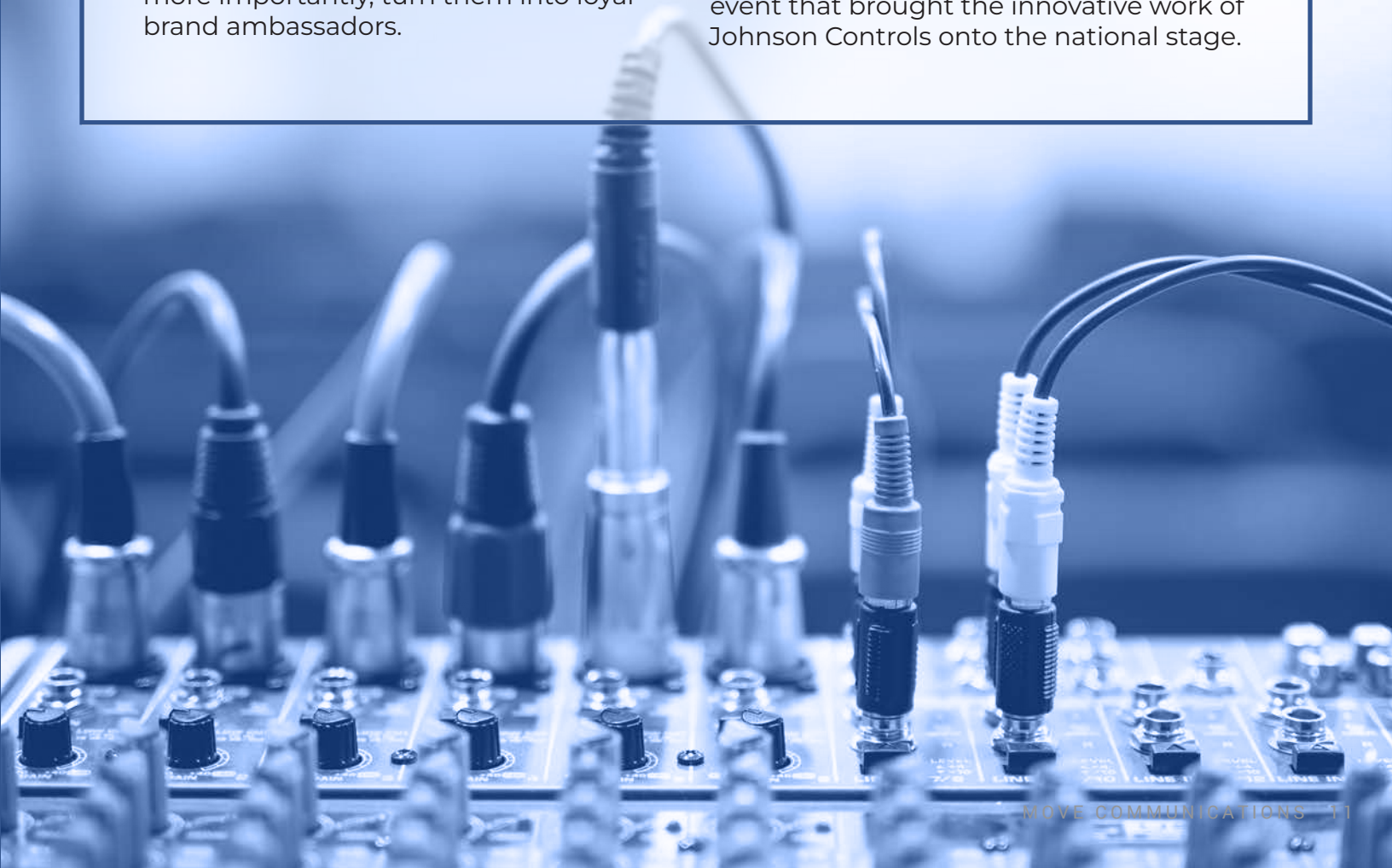
Yes, then President Barak Obama. So, with probably the most notable influencer anyone could ask for in the free world as the keynote, we set into motion with two other teams from Johnson Controls to pull it all off.

As with any event, you should strive to surpass your guests' expectations and, more importantly, turn them into loyal brand ambassadors.

To help ensure success for this event, we worked closely with the media so that their story highlighted this new breakthrough in sustainable energy that the Obama administration had helped to support. This story was reflected at the live event through a guided tour pathway through the plant that the President, as well as invited guests, could follow. The tour showcased posters throughout, explaining the technology as well as new jobs made available.

Security was tight and everything had to happen according to schedule with just the right amount of flexibility for the President to shake hands with the audience but then step up on stage for his address.

With some rearranging and collaboration, we were able to support the President's visit and create a world-class corporate event that brought the innovative work of Johnson Controls onto the national stage.



Bring Engagement to Life

The annual Archbishop's Gala is Sacred Heart Major Seminary's signature event in Detroit. It's the one time during the year when supporters from around the southeast Michigan area can get together to celebrate the accomplishments of the Seminary and be motivated for the future.

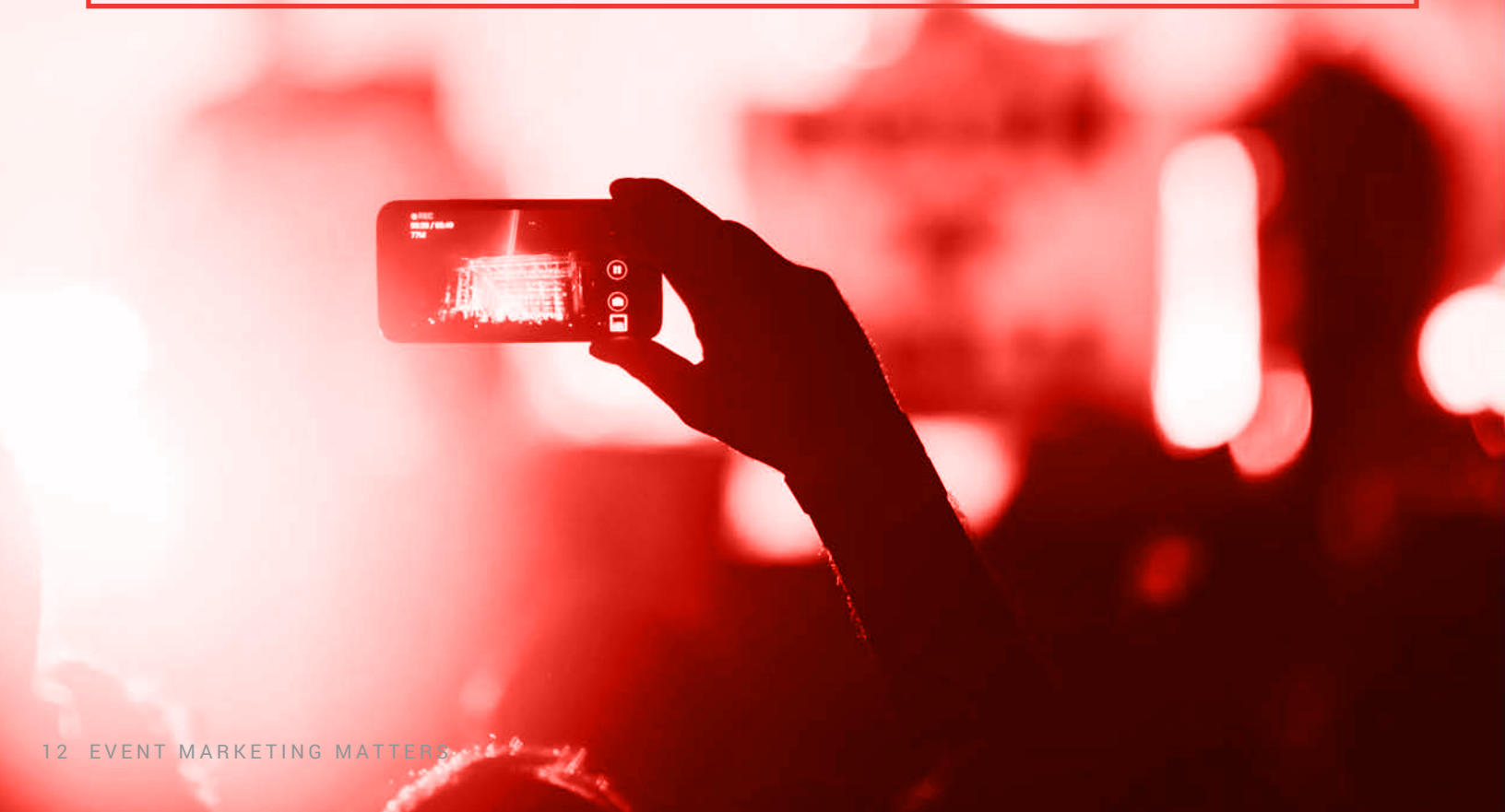
Hosted at COBO Hall (now the TCF Center) in Detroit, MOVE has creatively lifted the quality of the event over the past six years, while standardizing production processes to achieve cost and resource goals.

Dave Menzo, who served as the senior producer, shared how engagement was brought to life pre- and post-show during last year's event:

"The theme of the evening centered on the idea of "Divine Providence"—that there is a through-line in life of protection and love. At the pre-event cocktail hour, a set of kiosk presentations encouraged guests to text about the experience of divine providence, where God touched their lives. This kicked off engagement." He continued,

"During the live event dinner, these 'live providence sightings,' were displayed on a big screen, further fueling engagement. The whole experience really resonated with our audience. Those who engaged in texting opted in for further text message marketing from Sacred Heart. This allowed us to follow through with post-event texting, which created a path for ongoing engagement."

This type of engagement can be applied to any venue by asking people to share their story by texting "STORY" and displaying it live. Text responses can be automated, or you can enlist a person to review and return texts to facilitate the live event.



Post Event Engagement

Create New Contact List:
Utilizing all attendee contact information collected

Outbound Emails:
Send highlights of event and welcome new email subscribers

Blog/Vlog:
Web or video highlights of event

Offer incentives:
Provide special offers and discount codes to attendees

Post-Event Survey:
Request event feedback from audience

Sponsor Thanks:
Thank sponsors publicly

Social Media Platforms:
Post event highlights (photos/videos) to X, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and so on

Follow-Up Event:
Send special invite to attendees who engaged for a small webinar or luncheon

Your pre-event and live event engagement will determine your post-event engagement to some degree. Unintended opportunities for follow-up can present themselves, too. Take advantage of these!

Tying Up Loose Ends

Once an event has been completed successfully and the venue is cleared, sponsors have been thanked, and your brand is counting new followers, you still must attend to some final details.

Schedule a time to meet up with your event team to review results and gather metrics based on your goal measurement.

That data will help you determine the hits and misses of your event. From there, you can begin early preparations for your next live marketing event.

MOVE

EVEN MORE ON EVENT MARKETING

MOVE Communications offers a team of strategic and forward-thinking creatives with the proven marketing experience it takes to helps businesses move ahead. For more on the impact of live event marketing, check out these additional MOVE Communications blogs, or give us a call directly!

FULL-SERVICE LIVE EVENT MARKETING

SLAM DUNK YOUR NEXT LIVE EVENT ›

EVENT MARKETING

TOP 5 TRENDS ›

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Kimi Mattig-Louria is a go-to creative concept innovator, content strategist, and SEO-proficient copywriter for independent brands, advertising agencies, and search marketing firms.

Dave Menzo is a producer of music, digital media and live events. He works with brands to bring their event to life, using digital and experiential engagement tools. Being a live performer also, you may see him on a stage near you!

movecommunications.com