

# the ultimate guide to B2B event marketing

SAGEFROG MARKETING GROUP





# your comprehensive event marketing guide

Attending events and trade shows for your business is essential to any B2B marketing strategy, and preparation is key. If you know what to expect and how you plan to promote your products, services, and brand, you'll maximize your investments in these events.

To get started, you need to understand the event marketing basics, including why it's important, what types of events you can attend, what to prioritize during an event, and more. The impact of event attendance on your business can be crucial, and opportunities to make valuable connections should never be overlooked.

**Read on to familiarize yourself with event marketing and get our tips for making your endeavor a success every step of the way: before, during, and after the event.**



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## EVENT MARKETING BASICS

# what is event marketing?

Event marketing is the promotion of a brand—or its products and services—at an organized event, typically in a format like a trade show or conference that brings together people from a specific industry. While these events used to primarily take place in-person, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, many virtual options emerged as well.

Using event marketing to your advantage as an exhibitor means taking your products and services on the road to meet new potential customers. Nothing beats the quality face time you get when leads come to your booth at an event to discuss your services and their needs in real time. Whatever event you're attending, **your goal as an exhibitor is to build better relationships with prospective customers and leads and entice them to do business with you.**

### WHY IS EVENT MARKETING IMPORTANT?

Event marketing can be challenging to plan and demands time and money from your company, but there's seldom a better opportunity to find leads and connect with such qualified contacts in your industry. If you prepare well, legitimate leads will come directly to you at your event booth or connect online to discuss your products, services, and potential partnerships.

Not only does event marketing offer the opportunity to get contact information for new leads, but it enables you to start building solid relationships with potential customers on the spot. You get a unique opportunity to network with a group of people in your industry, saving you the effort of tracking down key accounts and qualified leads externally. When done right, the time and energy you put into event marketing as an exhibitor is worth it.

# types of events to know

For anyone new to event marketing, the different types of events that you can attend may seem overwhelming and confusing. Let's break it down so you know which to focus on for your company.

## TRADE SHOW

Exhibition events where companies from an overarching industry gather to promote their products and services to an audience of interested people.

## CONFERENCES

Conventions that bring together members of the same profession for lectures, networking, presentations, and more—typically on an overarching topic relevant to their industry.

## WEBINARS

Online seminars where a lecturer presents a topic that draws out an industry-specific audience on the internet rather than a physical venue.

**Planning on attending a trade show? Use our handy checklist for exhibitors to make sure you're ready to go.**



# event marketing benefits

The benefits of exhibiting at an event are numerous and significant. You can identify potential business opportunities and leads, network with fellow industry peers, and generate awareness for your brand—all in one convenient location.

## FINDING NEW BUSINESS

When you think about the ideal leads and potential new customers you want for your business, **they must all have one big thing in common: they will benefit from your products and services.** What better place to find these customers than at an event specifically tailored to your line of work? You don't have to put in the legwork to find them out in the world because they literally come to you—at your booth. And you can connect with them on the spot, turning strangers into leads and then leads into customers!

## NETWORKING WITH INDUSTRY PEERS

It's easy to assume that attending an event as part of your B2B marketing strategy is all about filling your pipeline and acquiring new customers, but the benefits of event marketing go beyond that. Events afford you the opportunity to network with peers from your industry and make connections. Just like the unique circumstances that put so many potential new leads within arm's reach for you, you'll be able to speak face-to-face with peers from aligned businesses—providing valuable insight into your market and competitors, as well as opportunities for potential partnerships and lead references.

## GENERATING BRAND AWARENESS

In marketing, we know brand awareness is essential to lead generation. Keep this in mind when you're setting up your event booth. Ensure your booth, pop-up banners, tablecloth, media, and hand-out materials are cohesive and tell a memorable story. Make sure you collect information from the people stopping by your booth—be sure to dedicate a space for business cards or provide a giveaway in exchange for contact information.

**Ask yourself: Are my company's name and the services we offer crystal clear to someone walking by on the trade show floor? Does my booth stand out enough to draw attendees in? Is the setup welcoming and conducive to conversations?**



# pre-event tips

Success as an exhibitor at an event is all about how you prepare beforehand. You need to make sure you have the right people attending on your behalf, the right tools at your disposal, the right information to convey about your company, products, and services. This is why Sagefrog always works with our clients before an event to prepare everything they need before setting foot in the conference center.

## ✔ BUILD AWARENESS FOR YOUR BOOTH ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Your event marketing success starts long before you pack your bags. Make sure your followers know you'll be attending the upcoming event by promoting your presence and booth number on social media, giving them a chance to connect with you the day of.

## ✔ USE PAID SOCIAL TO PROMOTE YOUR ATTENDANCE

Beyond your regular social media posts, consider investing in paid social posts to reach an even wider audience who may want to connect with you at the event. It helps ensure your regular followers stay informed and helps get your brand name in front of new leads.

## ✔ SEND PROMOTIONAL UPDATES TO YOUR AUDIENCE

Not everyone who wants to sync up with you uses social media, so while social posts are a useful tool, don't forget to use email blasts and website pop-ups as well. That way, you can be sure you have reached your whole audience and let them know where you'll be.

## ✔ DEVELOP YOUR MARKETING COLLATERAL

The big, beautiful posters and signs and other marketing materials you'll need at the event won't make themselves—if you don't have those created already, make sure you have plenty of time to write, design, double-check, print, and receive those critical tools.

## ✔ PREPARE FOR QUESTIONS PEOPLE MIGHT ASK

Anyone who makes the effort to connect at an event will have questions about your products and services, so be prepared! Refresh your knowledge about product details and common concerns, and have a way to find answers to anything you don't know offhand.



# day-of-event tips

Today's the day—it's time to put that event marketing knowledge to good use. Confirm that you have everything you need, then follow these tips for how to make the most of your time and resources at the event.

## ✓ **MAKE YOUR EXHIBIT APPROACHABLE**

If you ensure your booth seems friendly and fun, you'll get more potential leads and peers to approach and start a conversation with you. The easier it is for people to walk up to you, the better for you, your business, and your brand.

## ✓ **MAKE IT EASY FOR VISITORS TO UNDERSTAND YOUR COMPANY**

Consider your booth an extension of your marketing materials—who your company is and what you do should be clear at first glance, and it should intrigue attendees enough to come over and investigate your offerings.



# day-of-event tips (continued)

## ✓ BE ENGAGING WITH VISITORS

When you have a “customer” at your booth, don’t ignore them. Chat and pay attention to what they want and need. You don’t have to be pushy, but they expect you to engage with them if they approach you, so be prepared with a few questions up your sleeve.

## ✓ COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION

Don’t let a lead get away without getting their name, phone number, and email address—you’ll want to be able to contact them after the event. From digital contact capturing technology to business card contests or giveaways and beyond, you have options—**learn more in our checklist.**

## ✓ HAVE YOUR EXHIBIT STAFFED THE WHOLE TIME

Have at least one person from your company at your booth the entire time. You’ll lose out on potential business if a lead finds your booth empty and doesn’t wait around for someone to return.

## ✓ GIVE AWAY BRANDED PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

Everyone loves free stuff, so load up on the pens and stress balls featuring your company’s logo and present them proudly for interested visitors at your booth. These small investments can go a long way when attendees get home, see the item, and remember your company!





# post-event tips

Whew, it's almost time to relax after your hard work at the event! But before you kick your feet up, follow our post-event tips to optimize the connections you just made and capitalize on your efforts.

## ✓ SEND PERSONALIZED EMAILS TO THOSE WHO STOP BY YOUR BOOTH

Reciprocate the effort for anyone who stopped by your booth and left their contact information by reaching out after the event. You can thank them for stopping by, ask how they enjoyed the event, and see if they have any questions for you about your services.

## ✓ HAVE YOUR CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT TEAMS PERSONALLY FOLLOW UP AFTER YOUR EMAIL

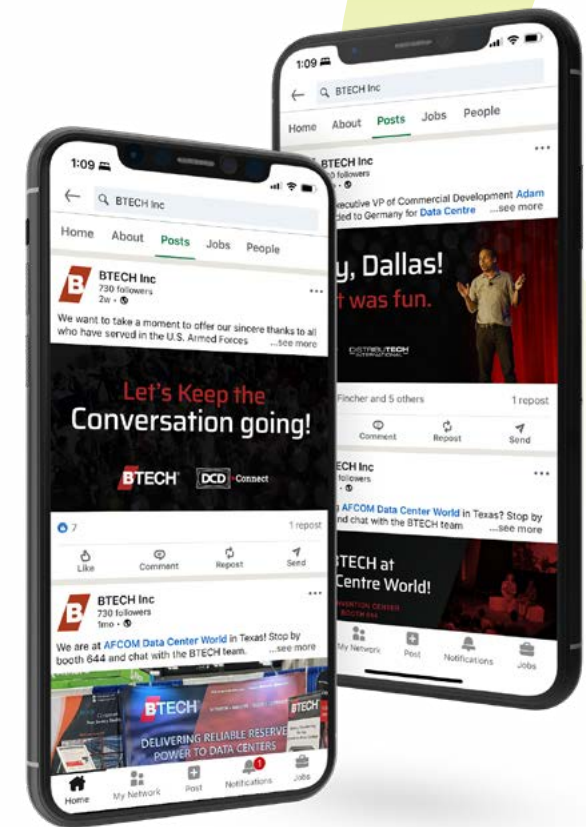
You know how swamped your inbox can get, so don't stop at your personalized email—have someone from your team follow up with another attempt to engage with every visitor from your booth.

## ✓ SHARE CONTENT FROM THE EVENT

Show how much fun you had at the event by sharing photos and details about your experience. Did you have something extra to wow visitors with, like a game simulator or prize wheel? Don't hesitate to make followers think twice about missing your next event or exhibition.

## ✓ KEEP YOUR AUDIENCE IN THE LOOP FOR THE NEXT EVENT

End your follow-up messages with a compelling call-to-action as well as information about your next event, if available. If not, be sure to reach out to them again when you do know and start convincing them to visit your next booth.





# perfect your event marketing strategy

When it comes to attending an event on behalf of your business and working to win new customers, preparation is everything. That's where Sagefrog comes in—we help with every aspect of event marketing strategies, from pre-event organization to post-event analysis, so you can reap all the benefits of your hard work.

**Ready to tailor your event attendance efforts to your specific business needs?**

**Contact us today** to level up your event marketing game.

# about sagefrog marketing group

Sagefrog is a top-ranked B2B marketing agency and award-winning Best Place to Work®, with specialties in healthcare, technology, industrial, and business services. We accelerate client success through branding and integrated marketing delivered through proven programs, business acumen, and fast quality. Our services include branding and strategy, websites and digital, content and inbound, and traditional marketing.

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