

Seven Secrets for Successfully Marketing Your Next Event



Feel the power of the dark side!

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Before we go any further we need to be clear that this is not about event design. So I need to test the assumption that you're absolutely clear on:

- Purpose – why the event is being held
- Outcomes – what it will deliver for attendees – the problem it will solve for them (WIIFM)
- Profile – who you're trying to attract and the niche they belong to (farmers is not a niche)

Tip 1. Structure your messages

Use the AIDA structure:

Attention – grab the target's attention with a benefit-based headline

Interest – build their interest by illuminating and magnifying the problem that the event solves

Desire – show how the event will solve this problem

Action – identify the steps they need to take to get your solution



Tip 2. Use 'back-casting' to plan your marketing

In the lead up to the event, identify the *final day* that you'll send out any marketing messages. (Note - by this stage you'll need to have passed the break-even mark for registrations.) Set up a calendar and work backwards to map out what is going out, when it's going and to whom.

Tip 3. Identify an offer to get to your break-even point

Remember, people buy on emotion and then justify their decision with logic. Think of an offer that will appeal either to an emotion of your target market. The emotion could be:

- Recognition – a premium seat or dinner with the guest speakers
- Pride – a chance to be on a panel or part of the event
- Fear – they may make a wrong decision with serious repercussions (reserve place to avoid)
- Love – use an offer that would benefit someone they love (e.g. day spa voucher for partners)
- Greed – appeal to our love of a bargain. Add bonuses that outweigh the price of the event



Tip 4. Build anticipation

With a clear lead-in time you'll be able to build people's anticipation about the event. Do this by:

- Using a 'mark the date' notification to your 'A-list' of hot prospects or members
- Making the event a closed, invite-only event (if so, needs a higher ticket price)
- Hinting at who the guest speakers may be
- Highlighting the calibre of previous, similar events
- Identifying the types of people likely to attend (who'll attendees will get to mix with)
- Using testimonials from previous events (easy to get via online post-event survey)

Tip 5. Establish reciprocity

A common mistake is that we simply send an email and ask people to sign up to our event. We need to get into a Christmas frame of mind and give without an expectation of receiving. As part of your marketing you should 'give' up to three snippets of valuable information that will assist the target in solving the problem that the event solves. Don't go overboard – show *what* needs to be fixed, rather than *how* it needs to be fixed.



This helps to establish a feeling of commitment to you from the prospect as you've provided them with something of value. The third snippet of information is where the event should be introduced. You've warmed your prospect up, they'll have more trust in you and be more likely to sign up (especially when you provide a good offer!)

Tip 6. Use the market/message/media triangle

The No. 1 number to avoid is '1'. Don't rely on one media to get your message out. Think of your market and where they typically go for their information. Options to use include:

- Post cards (personalised and automated)
- Video (film your presenters)
- Direct mail (3D)
- SMS
- Local newspaper and radio
- Industry websites and email (e.g. GRDC events)
- Local grower group newsletters, websites and emails

Tip 7. Provide an unexpected bonus

This helps attendees become ambassadors for future events. Think of something that'll be valued by attendees and maybe even talked about into the future. Build it into the ticket price if you need to and turn your event into an *experience*.



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