



February 2004, abridged

Capture The Competitive Edge

Business Theater Marketing

Deidra Everdij
Business Theatre Dir.
M.E. Productions

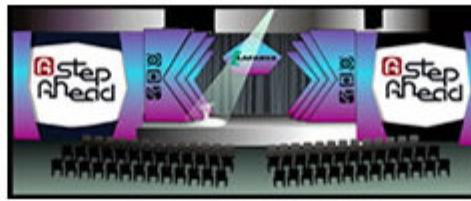
Event marketing allows companies to turn any event—from a corporate holiday party to a press reception and everything in between—into a purposeful and successful usage of the format and, more importantly, the funds behind it. Here you'll discover why this genre packs such a punch, and then learn some insider tips on doing the same for your company or your client; thus, giving you both the competitive edge.

The History

Branding through events is not a new idea. It's simply a technique whose time has come. With a cinch on budgets and a society lustful for reality, event marketing just makes sense. "Branding through events has gone through cycles in history," says Debra Deidre Everdij, director of business theater, M.E. Productions, a full-service production and destination management company in Pembroke Park, Fla. "Perhaps the earliest 20th century example is when a cigarette company had a troop of women march in an early Macy's (Thanksgiving) Day Parade, while they smoked."



"This technique gathered steam in the '80s and '90s," continues Everdij. "as



The Why

So why is this genre so successful? Don't traditional marketing channels—TV, radio, the Internet—also serve to differentiate the brand? Yes, to a certain degree they do; however, the event format lends itself to a more natural, and often effective, positioning of a brand.



"What we are seeing today is that companies really do realize that by doing events, they are able to position themselves to a very select group of trendsetters, influence makers, people who are able to spread the gospel about a brand or product," comments Frank Goldstin, CEO of the Experiential Agency (XA), which has offices in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles.

Controlling who receives your branding messages is a key factor in event marketing's effectiveness and a primary difference between this medium and more traditional marketing channels, that tend to disseminate information to a much wider, general audience.

Event marketing also produces results that can be more immediately quantifiable. Consider this: Pharmaceutical Company A throws a 10-year anniversary celebration for employees and clients. It's a luau—a beautiful, lush celebration showing off the company's prosperity. Pharmaceutical Company B likewise hosts a 10-year anniversary celebration; except this company immerses its guests in a true reflection of the brand, which is marketed as deep concern for improving the future. The overall theme is high-tech—a sort of space age elegance.

Lee Stabler, creative director, M.E. Productions, agrees and adds that event marketing has been hugely successful thanks to both its depth and control: "(In branding through events), the depth of the presentation is no longer limited by the medium; now the presenters can use everything at their disposal to reinforce the message from the first invitation to an all-out theme party. In this controlled environment, the presenter can ensure that the message is heard, felt, seen and retained."

The How

So how do you create such a sensory

February 2004

Special Del

Using entertainn
effectively comm
corporate messa



Interactivity & Custo
Two of the most effectiv
audience's attention are
entertainment and cust
production to incorporat
are particular to and me
attendees.

"Obviously, your audie
aware of these tie-ins fo
effectiveness," notes Le
director, corporate thea
M.E.Productions, "but o
sort of tie, you won't ha
as hard to ensure there
connection to your deliv
Another production :
incorporate common wo
elements that are specil
own corporate culture.

"When it comes to r
interaction is king," not
entertainment that invo
the performance has an
chance of success in me
than one that is a passi

Use Your Imagination

Another method is to si
throat and jar a compla
back to life, which is wh
did when it helped a cat
stage a mock company
middle of its annual bus
Although the message v
humor, the intent was c
says, the company's str
great effect. (Please see

Innovative ideas suc
takeover come from not
conventional wisdom to
possibilities of presental

"In some instances i