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## SOCIAL MEDIA TIP OF THE MONTH

In this new monthly series, EM brings you tips and tricks from pros and experts who've been eating social media marketing for breakfast. So eat up, and check us out on Twitter @eventmarketer and facebook.com/eventmarketer for more.



**THIS MONTH**, EM looks at trade show social media with the help of Jeff Hurt, director of education and engagement at Velvet Chainsaw Consulting. He has worked in the nonprofit and hospitality arenas for more than 20 years in education and events, and has planned meetings for audiences of 25 to 35,000. He blogs for VCC's Midcourse Corrections about meetings, education and social media: [velvetchainsaw.com](http://velvetchainsaw.com); Twitter: @JeffHurt

## FIVE TIPS FOR CREATING A SOCIAL MEDIA- FRIENDLY TRADE SHOW PROGRAM

- 1. Identify influencers in your industry who already use social media and ask for help.**  
These folks are your ticket to ride, and they're usually ready to get in the driver's seat. If they're already planning to attend the event, ask them to help you brainstorm ideas for making social media an integral part of your event. If they're not yet planning to come, invite them.
- 2. Make sure your event website is web 2.0-ready.**  
That means, you have your Twitter widget embedded in the site, with your event hashtag feed running. (Editor's Note: If you don't know what any of those terms mean, start with a Twitter tutorial.) Don't design your experience for a specific platform, but with the devices your attendees will be using top of mind—how big will their screens be, and will your site fit? Another key thing to remember is to have a site for unregistered folks, encouraging registrations, and another one for people who are already planning to come, full of rich, interactive content.
- 3. Don't scrimp on the high-tech touch points.**  
Make sure you have charging stations and strong WiFi. Not too much more to say about that, but if you mess it up, you'll be tired of hearing about it long before attendees tire of complaining about it. Have plenty of monitors around to display your social media feeds and disseminate event info via those channels. Don't forget SMS. Plenty of people prefer it and, yes, it counts as social media. Live streaming is new enough to still have some of that new tech smell on it, so it's worth considering for the benefit of people in your industry who didn't make the trip, but still want to feel like part of the show.
- 4. Create a social media-friendly physical environment.**  
Have a social media lounge, with comfy chairs, tables and mini-discussions about your industry, promoted through your social media channels. A tweetup can be an opportunity, too. Your event can become the host for the most forward thinking and tech-savvy attendees, all in one place at the same time, and that kind of audience can be golden.
- 5. Make your event's content spreadable.**  
Interactive technologies like digital QR codes that send information to mobile devices, "text me" promotions and tweet-to-win contests are fun for all and get your message out into the cybersphere in a way your website can't and won't. Take your event beyond the broadcast. Social media photo and video booths are great ways to get attendees to put your event out on their channels, too. **EM**

—Kenneth Briodagh