



DEDICATED EVENT MARKETING DEPARTMENTS are being born and staffed, and although many are years away from implementing true “event strategy,” they start to embrace a measurement mentality amid chief marketers demanding to know what they’re getting out of face-to-face programs. For some, measurement is premature and unobtainable. For others, ROI numbers are substantial and a preview of better metrics to come. “Unfortunately, measuring results from event marketing is still very much a guessing game,” says HP event manager Bob Major.

Event programs begin to evolve from “one-shots” into true “campaigns” that span 25 or even 50 markets and in some cases, six or even 12 months. Initial objectives of campaigns are to “touch” a target audience and create an “indelible brand impression.” It’s the softer side of experiential, and marketers don’t know that in a few short years they’ll care more about sales and “likes” than they do about “share of heart.” But hey, everything starts somewhere, and this industry is starting to heat up.

It’s still a no-tech era, so experiential marketing campaigns lean on brand ambassadors, exhibits, signage and location to draw people in. Sure, it’s clunky, but it’s working. And as the year goes on, events get a little smarter. Events near retail stores start setting up inside the stores to push sales. Exhibits at trade shows invite top prospects to more targeted, intimate (and relevant) VIP functions off the trade show floor. Corporate events focus more on content distribution than the evening reception starring Kool and the Gang. (To be clear, we dig Kool. The Gang? Meh.)





“We’re not looking for the best price. We’re looking for the best value.”

KEN HEINZ,
GLOBAL EVENT MARKETING
PROCUREMENT MANAGER, HP

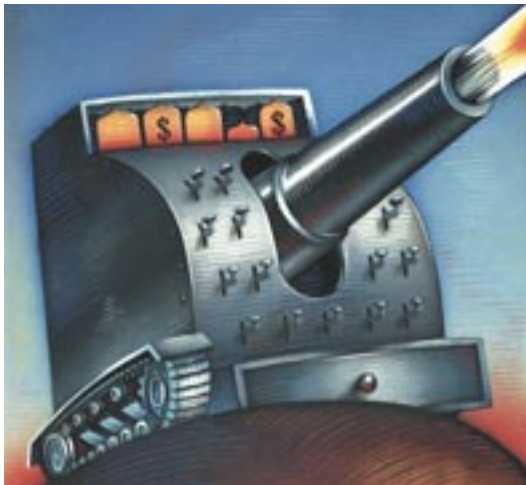


TREND: PLUGGING IN

New technology slowly starts to show off the potential. Wireless attendee tracking systems are showing up at b-to-b events, allowing marketers to track traffic, generate leads, push to websites and in some cases allow attendees to communicate with other attendees (early crowdsourcing).

TREND: PAY THE PRICE

Retail components are finding their way into more event campaigns as an increasing number of companies decide that while they’re strutting their stuff, they might as well sell some stuff. Those that embrace the concept immediately slap themselves for not selling sooner. The era of the transactional experience is upon us, my friends. Sniff.



TREND: AHHH PROCUREMENT

With the event marketing industry spend still climbing, RFPs and cost mechanics begin to fall into the hands of procurement—ushering in what would forever be a love-hate (or in some cases, a hate-hate) relationship. Procurement managers say they are trying to create value for the company. Event marketers say procurement managers are trying to suck the very life out of them. But we digress.

“We are constantly reminding ourselves that we are not in the business of sponsoring things. We are in the business of convincing people to use our services. Events are a conduit to that.”

KEVIN DEMSKY, MANAGING DIRECTOR-SPONSORSHIPS, FEDEX



TREND: POP-UP PREMIERE

Delta Air Lines’ Song division opens a “pop-up” store in New York’s SoHo district... and changes the industry forever. The Song in the City store has six different areas to experience and features everything from cooking demos to entertainment presentations to comfy couches for hangin’ and a travel planning area.

“We cannot communicate with consumers the way we need to with an ad. We need to be more relevant and use event marketing.”

**BUD DENKER, VP-BRAND AND
MARKET DEVELOPMENT, KODAK**

“Marketing is not a case of money. It’s a case of having a good idea.”

PETER BOYD, VP-PROMOTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS, VIRGIN MOBILE



➔ With NFL, NBA, MLB and NASCAR properties filling up fast, brands start to go in the opposite direction by investing in sponsorship of small properties.

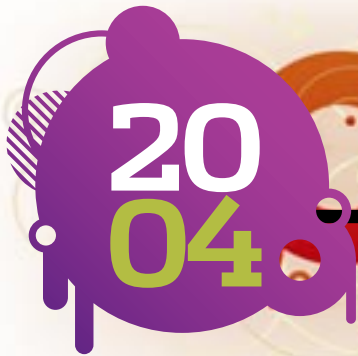
➔ Mobile marketing vehicles pull double duty as brands pull their mobile vehicles into trade shows.



➔ In an age of explosive growth and an era of experiential marketing expansion, marketers begin to ask themselves one question after a campaign ends: What the hell do we do with all this leftover crap? Event surplus websites and barter auctions explode.

➔ Trade show marketers start the full-court press on show organizers to offer them non-traditional options beyond a piece of cement on the convention center floor.

➔ New DOT rules have a drastic impact on the event industry, as the mobile driver can no longer also be a part of the field staff.



➔ **Volkswagen** launches the \$90,000 (I mean, *really?*) Phaeton sedan with an event program that places the cars outside W Hotels in Chicago and New York City. Hotel guests could take a spin in the cars or get a ride to anywhere they wanted to go.



➔ Technology lands in the mobile marketing sector as **Budweiser** gives EM a sneaky peeky at the True Music Roadhouse, a double-deck, multimedia double-expandable monstrosity. Oh, it's sick.

➔ Marketers embrace the "small win strategy," in which they use a series of smaller events that in total achieve a larger objective. "It's a better bet than putting all of our eggs in one basket," says Miller Brewing manager-entertainment marketing Peter Laatz.



➔ **Unilever's** Slim-Fast turns New Year's resolutions into reality with a one-day event inside 3,500 **Walmart** stores. The 12-week weight-loss continuity program has consumers shedding pounds and retail shelves emptying.

➔ Event microsites come of age. General Motors uses a dedicated corvette50th.com website as the lone driver of live attendance to its events.



➔ HP's You+HP tour is so big, the freakin' thing won't fit in a truck. The super-immersion is born, and in this case, it's 8,000 square feet.





➔ As mall events fall into the mainstream, so do their costs. And as the costs go up for mall space related to event marketing, marketers walk away and strike deals with strip centers and outlets.

➔ Baseball fans collectively raise an eyebrow over **Sony's** summer promotion for "Spider-Man" that puts the movie logos on MLB ballpark bases. "I can't understand what they are thinking," says **IBM** head of worldwide sponsorships Rick Singer.

➔ EM goes on the mother of all ride and drives as we invade the 10th anniversary Camp Jeep.



➔ Brands set up partnerships with colleges that give them semester-long access for creating events on-campus.

➔ B-to-b event marketers begin to set up private trade show halls and sell sponsorships at their own events in an effort to connect partners and subsidize costs.

➔ Companies start recruiting the ultimate brand ambassadors to work their events: their own employees.



➔ The worst hurricane season in years shuts down event programs all across the Southeast, forcing marketers to reroute, recreate and relaunch.



➔ Eighty-two percent of marketers say they are investing in event marketing, up from 25 percent in 2000. Oh, it's happening.



➔ **Coke** wraps up the first-ever global Olympic Torch Relay, an initiative that would prove so successful that the beverage giant would make it a permanent staple.



➔ **eBay** launches Camp eBay, a summer event initiative that translates an online promotion into a live experience. The Camp rewards current users and educates newbies. The faux camp experience travels the country and would go down as one of the first true digital+live programs.



➔ EM sales stud Jeff Fortmann gets a speeding ticket in Ohio. After finding out he'd have to pay only \$75, he floors his rented Malibu and gets caught three miles later. By the same cop. It's just so sad.

➔ **Levi's** debuts at NASCAR tracks with its Fit Pit, a mock pit stop in which consumers check out the jeans, learn about the brand and get a personalized laminated track pass that pushes them (gasp!) online for photo retrieval.



➔ EM founder Kerry Smith tests his new fancy GPS watch by going geocaching. He gets stuck about a quarter-mile inside a drainpipe chasing a cache. He emerges three hours later from the pipe with the cache in hand—and in a shocking twist, his hair remains perfect.

➔ Cable networks begin to drive traffic to their programming using—*get this*—event marketing. HAHAAHAHAHA HAHAAHAHAHAHA!!!! Oh man, you're killing us here.



➔ **Self** magazine opens the Self Center, a three-floor immersion in New York City offering consumers activities and events through the fall.