

{TIPS FROM A PRO}

## Leveraging Brand Identity to Grow Meeting Attendance

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CONSIDER YOUR MOST RECENT SHOPPING EXPERIENCE. Whether you snagged a new pair of skinny jeans on clearance or picked up a jar of peanut butter from the grocery store, what role did the brand play in your purchasing decision?

For many, brands matter.

The best brands strive to align customer expectations with extraordinary experiences. When executed successfully, these brands appear to have certain qualities that make them special or unique. Ultimately, it's this balance between expectations and experiences that promotes brand identity and trust.

In a hyper-competitive market fraught with countless choices, trust produces sales. In much the same way, trust improves meeting attendance.

Select any signature program your organization plans annually. How would you describe this meeting's brand? That is, what distinguishes this meeting from all others?

Whether you can clearly and succinctly articulate this meeting's brand, chances are it could be improved. Following are five strategies for creating a stronger brand identity:

**1 Plan quality education sessions.** Marry the best and the brightest thought leaders in your industry with engaging instructional strategies, unique function spaces and creative room sets.

**2 Develop intentional networking opportunities.** Encourage meaningful connections among attendees during breaks, meals and receptions.

**3 Build an innovative brand.** A clever name, logo and tagline are just the beginning.

Think beyond graphics, shapes and colors to meeting value and brand promise.

**4 Write an effective marketing plan.** Identify your organization's available communication channels and draft a comprehensive marketing strategy that utilizes multiple media.

**5 Share your meeting's story.** Don't assume prospective attendees recognize your meeting's benefits. Gather testimonials to help demonstrate potential outcomes.

Above all, create an exceptional experience. It starts with a well-planned and well-executed meeting. It's then necessary to cultivate a brand that successfully represents your meeting's goals and objectives. Finally, it's important to communicate this brand and its value to your target audience.

The organization's education team and staff must rely on meeting attendees. If attendees' expectations are met, your brand identity improves. Not only will they make plans to attend future meetings, they'll also encourage their friends and colleagues to do the same.

Set aside time this month to assess your organization's brand identity, identify opportunities for improvement and develop a course of action. Additionally, be sure to engage meeting attendees throughout this process for optimal results. 🍷



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