

How to build first class content

Earlier this year I got the chance to speak with John Mooney, the Chairman of the Board of MC Communications and also of 3 Deep Media, LLC, a events company, which also does some event consulting . In addition all of the above, he received the inaugural 2008 Robert L. Krakoff Industry Leadership Award during the last SISO CEO Summit.

John is a guy who has achieved a lot of success in an extensive career, and I was intrigued about his secrets, especially in the area of conference content. Clearly the hardest thing to do in the business is to attract a quality audience to your events over and over again. When discussing this with John, he said getting the quality and quantity is easy if you have “first class content” and you build a plan focused on the long view.

Sounds easy enough but like anything, it takes strategy, persistence and a strong commitment to providing the right resources(including money). Given these things, how does one start?

1) Do market research for a needs assessment

You’ve got an idea, but is the market interested? John’s team at MC did very extensive market studies in the healthcare market, which helped them hone their market concept so that the risk ‘of being wrong’ was much lower than simply launching an event without extensive data. John is surprised by the low level of market research which is done by companies looking to launch new events, so he strongly recommends this investment.

2) Partner with top class organizations

In the case of MC’s Pri-Med shows, they teamed up with Harvard Medical School to make sure they delivered top level content to a very discerning audience-doctors looking to continue their education-these are professionals who do not have time for anything other than valuable conference content at very high standards.

In bringing Harvard Medical School into the fold, together with MC’s abilities to market and execute a high level event, a marketplace was created which allowed MC to quickly expand both in North America and overseas.

3) Have the audience deliver the content

At Pri-Med it’s the doctors who deliver the content, the peers of the audience. This is important since it gives the program instant credibility and makes the event easier to market when you already have buy in from industry colleagues.

4) Measure how well you are doing

In all cases, just putting up the product isn’t enough to deliver a top event, you need to measure the results. How? Well besides extensive attendee surveying, the sponsors also are asked for their evaluations. John feels that in general top buyers aren’t

attending big shows and this puts the onus on event producers to deliver customized content to attendees to keep them served, happy and coming back to future events.

5) Create the marketplace

If you assemble all the right stakeholders for a new show-buyers, speakers, sponsors, partners- you can take a marketplace by stealth, as John has done with MC. PriMed is the definitive source of medical doctor education, but the event is here to stay. John has used this model with other disparate market segments with the same level of success.

As mentioned above you need the vision, cash, persistence and execution capabilities to make this work. Sounds hard? Well it certainly beats the nail biting that we all get in waiting for the registrations to come in.....long live king content!

Warwick Davies is the Principal of The Event Mechanic! a consulting company which helps event organizers realize greater revenues and profits by fixing 'broken' events and launch new ones both in United States and internationally . His clients include event organizers in the information technology, healthcare, biotechnology construction and design engineering and executive event markets. Previously, Warwick was responsible for internationally recognizable event brands such as Macworld Conference and Expo, LinuxWorld Conference and Expo, and the Customer Relationship Management Conference and Exposition worldwide. For more information on The Event Mechanic! and past SISO The Event Doctor! columns please visit <http://www.theeventmechanic.com/resources.html>