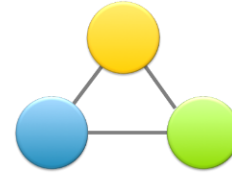


The Art of User Group Conferences

Educate, Connect, and Inspire!



When it comes to software and technological products nothing compares to the entanglement power of a user group conference. Bringing your customers together in a live environment to share their experience and learn how to get more out of their investment is an ideal recipe for creating long lasting connections and building brand loyalty.

A well run user group conference provides an environment that educates participants and inspires them to expanded use of the products. There is nothing quite like the word of another user to build credibility and demonstrate the possibilities. Achieving these results takes careful orchestration and attention to detail.

Structure is important! Leaving it loose and hoping for the best is unlikely to produce results worth mentioning. Begin your path to user group success with a carefully thought out program outline including topics, timing, travel considerations, interactivity, breaks and social events. Don't forget to identify who is responsible for each part of the meeting and build in check points to make sure that everyone on your team is fully prepared in advance of the big event. Attendees must walk away feeling like their time was well spent and meaningful. Stick to your agenda throughout the conference and your attendees will be duly impressed with your professionalism and expertise.

Communication as always is the ultimate key to providing an exceptional experience for everyone involved. Ample notice, thorough information, clear instructions and reminders on the front end will maximize participation and bring people to your event with confidence. Clarity and repetition throughout the event will keep everyone in their comfort zone and prevent participants from drifting off. When the event is complete the communication should continue! Post event communications are your opportunity to solidify the relationships, show your gratitude, and keep momentum.

The right location at the right price will impress your attendees and mesh with your budget expectations. If you don't have expertise in event facility and service provider negotiations, enlist the help of an expert. Understanding the leverage you have and

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finding creative ways to stretch your dollar will help to create an unforgettable event. The atmosphere you create can be one of the most memorable elements of the entire experience. It sets the stage for your event and is a detail that should not be taken lightly.

When the lights go out and attendees are on the way home, your team should still be hard at work. Immediately following the user group conference is the best time to gather together to discuss what went well and what can be improved upon next time. Incorporating a post-event survey into your program is an excellent way to be sure you get fresh, quality feedback from attendees and your own staff.

Putting these considerations into action will get you on the road to a successful user group conference. It is as much an art as it is a science. Just the right blend will educate and inspire your audience as you build deep connections and brand loyalty.

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Marketing Branch offers complete user group planning and coordination packages. Visit us online at www.marketing-branch.com to learn more.

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