



» Tech Marketing Best Practices from UBM Tech

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How To: Optimize Your Tech Event Sponsorships

Q&A with UBM Tech Event Experts

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Sponsoring industry events can go a long way in helping to achieve your marketing goals. Our experts take a look at some of the best practices to observe in order to ensure maximum ROI across your integrated industry event activities—from your pre-event strategy, to your onsite approach, to your post-event follow-up.

Every year, UBM Tech produces more than 15 large-scale industry events around the world—including Interop, Black Hat, GDC, and HDI—where technology professionals can gather to learn and exchange ideas. These events set the stage for our clients to promote their brands' products and services, build relationships with new customers, and pave the way to increased business opportunities. In keeping with our presence as a leading event producer, UBM Tech is constantly refining the best practices we, and our clients, implement to extract the maximum value from event marketing.

In this paper we share with you a conversation with three of our event experts; Ally Thorndike, Director of Marketing for Interop; Chris Lotspeich, Director of Marketing for Enterprise Connect and GTEC; and Holly Shellner, Director of Marketing for HDI. They provide their latest insights on how to engage your target audience as an event sponsor.



MODERATOR: HILARY JANSEN

Hilary Jansen is the assistant marketing manager for UBM Tech's event and online brands including InformationWeek, Interop, and Enterprise Connect. In her role, she produces and manages the content of CreateYourNextCustomer.com, an online resource for technology marketing best practices and insights. Hilary graduated from Johns Hopkins University with a BA in Writing Seminars.



HOLLY SHELLNER

As HDI's director of marketing, Holly Shellner is responsible for promoting events, education & certification, and content; as well as bringing new members to the HDI family. With more than 15 years of experience spanning global non-profit, financial, education and technical industries, she has a track record of breathing life into both new and aging brands while delivering integrated marketing strategies that drive sales.



CHRIS LOTSPEICH

Chris Lotspeich is the director of marketing for UBM Tech's Events Group, with a portfolio of market leading brands such as GTEC, Enterprise Connect, Tower & Small Cell Summit and No Jitter. With more than 15 years of experience in B2B technology marketing, Chris is responsible for driving each brand's marketing strategy and messaging, demand and lead generation, and works hand-in-hand with the brand's leadership.



ALLY THORNDIKE

Ally Thorndike is marketing director for Interop and InformationWeek Conference at UBM Tech. Prior to UBM, Ally has worked in a variety of marketing roles at technology and media companies including CNET, Snap.com, NBC Internet, and E-LOAN. She has a degree in journalism from the University of Colorado at Boulder.



Q: *Thanks for joining us today. Right off the bat, as a tech marketer, what's the first thing I should think about when it comes to event marketing?*

HS: The first thing to think about is your audience. Who are you talking to? What are their job functions? What businesses are they in? And what do they need and want to do their jobs better?

AT: You need to establish clear goals as to what you want to accomplish. "Value" is different for every exhibitor, which is why you need to establish quantifiable metrics for things like customer and partner engagement, demand generation, brand awareness, media relations, competitive insights, and the impact of social media.

CL: I think you have to look at it as its own campaign, which includes pre-event marketing, on-site activities, and post-event marketing. Pre-event is all about brand exposure, on-site gives you the opportunity to really educate prospects in a 5-10 minute

interaction, and post-event is all about acknowledging who you met and keeping the conversation going.

Q: *How do I evaluate the events that best fit my brand?*

CL: Look at the audience profile, as well as the exhibitor list. If you don't see your competitors at the show, then it may not be the right fit for your company.

AT: I'd agree that the attendee profile is really important. Is it a match for your target audience? I would also try to imagine what it's like to be an attendee and consider event location as a key part of my decision.

Q: *Once you've selected an event, what are your priorities?*

HS: You've got to know the timeline—what do you need to do, and when do you need to do it? Your marketing efforts should start six months leading up to the event and progressively ramp up with more content and communication with prospects.





75% of IT pros say that they are more likely to visit a vendor's booth if there is a subject matter expert. Promote your experts ahead of time to drive traffic!

CL: Yes, the top priority is getting as much exposure with the event and attendees as early as possible. Engaging in marketing campaigns and promotions will help get your name in front of people well before they arrive on-site. You have to let them know which experts and peers are going to be in your booth, what they'll be presenting, and what other kinds of interactions and information are available to them once they get on-site.

Q: *So you're saying it's most important to promote your presence before an event?*

AT: It's absolutely critical. A lot of companies spend time and money creating exhibits and presentations, but they fail to promote them ahead of time. And then they wonder why they're not generating the kind of booth traffic they'd like to see!

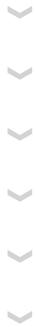
At the very least, be sure to tell your local customers and prospects that you'll be at the show. Have your sales teams reach out to make sure people know about the show and direct them to your events

calendar. [Cisco does a great job of this](#) on their corporate site, listing when and where they'll be an exhibitor.

HS: I agree. Also, check with the event if there are additional sponsorships that will help you get your message out. Many sponsors don't fully leverage the event's PR team to find out about pre-event PR activities that can maximize exposure.

Pre-Event Checklist

- Email prospects and customers about your presence at the show and which experts are coming
- Schedule on-site interviews with experts and executives
- Arrange speaking opportunities for experts on-site
- Align with sales and channel communication plan
- Schedule executive meetings with partners, customers and targeted sales channels
- Pre-schedule customer booth tours
- Build social media buzz and content
- Incorporate presence on your company website



Q: *At the event itself, how do you make sure your booth stands out and gets noticed?*

AT: Make sure that your exhibit is true to the heart of your brand! Live events let you go beyond just your brand colors and taglines. You should create an experience at your booth that helps visitors connect to what makes your company genuinely different—and better — than your competitors. Consider thought leadership opportunities beyond the booth — small breakout sessions can set the stage for a deeper relationship between your company and your customers and prospects.

79% of tech professionals would attend a smaller hosted breakout event at an industry event if it adds value.

CL: Offer incentives to drive people to the booth, but don't fill up your booth with too much "stuff" and clutter; you want to make it as inviting as possible.

HS: Good design goes a long way. Plus, have FUN! Give them a reason to come in, like an interactive activity or a theater presentation written specifically for the show. Put yourself in

their place—what would you like to see and experience?

Q: *What should I tell my booth representatives when it comes to initiating and engaging in conversations with prospects?*

CL: Common sense dictates that your reps should be smiling and at least saying hello to passers by. It's a turn off to visit a booth where the staff is lounging or scowling. A simple hello gets attendees to turn their head. It all starts with that.

AT: Look at your booth as the intersection of people, product, and promotion; manage all three elements well to attract and engage attendees. Typically, they like to explore a booth a bit on their own before engaging. Make sure you don't overpower them with a blatant sales pitch right out of the gate. And make sure your reps are informed, because tech pros want to know they're talking to someone with real product knowledge.

HS: I agree with Ally. You have to be able to read people; don't be afraid to start a conversation, but don't pounce for the sale right off. It helps to engage them about their pain points, to give them time to get comfortable before you get too deep into your pitch. There's an art to it, no doubt about it. You have to staff your booth with people who have those kinds of skills, who know how to interact with people.



Q: *What are some post-event activities I should observe to make sure my investment delivers value? And how do I quantify value?*

HS: The process starts at the booth. Make sure to use electronic badge scanners to collect and manage information about your booth visitors. However, simply collecting a pile of business cards isn't enough. You have to qualify your leads and tag them for action. Take careful notes and customize your post-show email. An attendee who spent 30 minutes talking to your team onsite is not going to appreciate a generic email "blast" afterwards. Better yet, ask the attendee what type of follow up information they want from you like research or case studies.

CL: Immediacy is important for all prospects though. For the 'moderate' leads, send a thank you email with more information

about your products and services. It's important to have your sales team reach out to all attendees within a week or so after the event. Much longer than that, and the attendee could have already forgotten about you.

AT: Beyond the thank you emails, you should promote a post-event survey, and track success metrics like social media engagement, customer meetings, and so forth. That will give you some quantifiable metrics and results.

CL: The whole point of event marketing is to engage your audience directly; don't lose sight of that engagement, and be sure to take the next steps in nurturing the relationship. The face-to-face time is how you gain the most value from an event, and that's how you turn prospects into customers.



Do you need pre-event, onsite, and post-event marketing ideas?

Here is a sample of marketing opportunities that can optimize your integrated marketing strategy.

Pre-Show	At-Show	Post-Show
BRANDING & LEAD GENERATION	LIVE EXHIBITION	CONTENT MARKETING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Web Advertising <input type="checkbox"/> eNewsletters <input type="checkbox"/> Webinars <input type="checkbox"/> Content Syndication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Show Daily eNewsletters <input type="checkbox"/> Web Advertising / Show Coverage <input type="checkbox"/> Research-Based Infographic: Poster size of the Trends survey infographic can be created and displayed in your booth. <input type="checkbox"/> Podcast: Interview key subject matter experts from your company and create a short podcast for you to share with clients. <input type="checkbox"/> Video: Interview key subject matter experts in your booth and produce a professional two-minute video to share with customers and prospects after the event. Options include Executive Q&As, Product Demos, and more. 	<p>Nurture relationships with an ongoing content marketing campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 4-Page Whitepaper <input type="checkbox"/> Research-Based Infographic <input type="checkbox"/> Podcast <input type="checkbox"/> 4-Page Business Case Builder: Immediately after the event, cut through the noise with a custom Business Case Builder that can help your prospects justify an investment in your product/solution. <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Page Executive Q&A: 2 weeks after the event send a Tech Brief about your solution and a Q-A with a company executive will be sent to prospects. Ideally, the Q-A would focus on customer success stories. <input type="checkbox"/> Webinars: 3 weeks after the event, invite prospects to a 30-60 minute webinar to follow up on event discussions/demos. This is an ideal time for attendees to connect with SMEs and ask questions.
CONTENT DEVELOPMENT		
<p>Pre-Event Surveys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Months Prior: Arm your sales team with the most up to date intelligence with a Pre-Event Pulse Survey (5-7 Questions): Find out who will be at the event; What are their expectations? What problems are they trying to solve? <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Months Prior: Launch a survey to study important challenges and opportunities in your solution space. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Create an infographic to highlight key results</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Trends-Based Quantitative Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>2-Page Executive Q&A</i> • <i>4-Page Whitepaper</i> 		RELATIONSHIP BUILDING / BRANDING
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Native Advertising: Share content on appropriate online communities.

For more information on how UBM Tech can help your organization to achieve quality integrated marketing solutions, please visit createyournextcustomer.com or email us at cync@ubm.com.