



## Top Ten Tips for Exceptional Events

1. **Leverage Your Lists.** Take advantage of every opportunity to expand your database of contacts with special offers, surveys, newsletters, sponsorship deals and cross-promotional opportunities with affiliate partners. A weak promotion using a quality, targeted list will outperform a great promotion sent to a bad list.
2. **Bring Home the Benefits.** In your event website and collateral marketing materials focus on the takeaway value of attending. Of course, you'll want to share key details of your event, but selling the benefits will go a long way in overcoming objections and doubts. Testimonials from satisfied past participants are one of the most powerful endorsement tools. Every prospect asks themselves the same questions—"What's in it for me?" and "Is this worth my time?"
3. **Don't Be a Hit & Run Promoter.** With busy schedules and overloaded inboxes, making multiple points of contact with your contacts is prudent. A good rule of thumb, however, is no more than weekly (for events with a 4-6 week promotional period), unless you have a major announcement or an important update. More frequent emails will result in higher opt-out rates and may lead to an unfavorable image of your organization.
4. **The Advantage of Analytics.** Never underestimate the value of detailed campaign reports, which provide data on hard and soft bounces, open, click-thru and forward rates and opt-outs. This type of intelligence will help you determine what subject lines lead to higher opens, what offers are most—and least—appealing, and who are the hottest prospects.
5. **And the Survey Says...** Why guess your prospects' interests when you can ask them? Online surveys are a quick and affordable way to gauge the interests and needs of your target prospects. For events, you can send pre-event surveys to determine what locations are ideal, what topics are of most interest and what problems your prospects are experiencing that you can help them overcome.
6. **Timing is Everything.** When promoting your event, keep in mind that the higher the price of admission, the longer lead-time you need to market it. Four to five weeks is appropriate for free or low-cost events; more costly affairs that involve travel may require three to four months or longer. Inadequate promotional time is a common denominator in low-turnout functions.

7. **Say No to No-Shows.** A registrant does *not* equal an attendee. While no-shows are often unavoidable, you can take steps to minimize them. Every registrant should receive a prompt confirmation upon registration, but don't forget to send a reminder a few days before the event. This is an ideal opportunity to reiterate the take-home value of the event and to provide important—and often reassuring—details regarding the schedule, parking information and directions to the venue.
8. **Do You Deliver?** If you've been sending email invitations to a large list through Microsoft Outlook, the chance that many of your emails were flagged as SPAM are likely. Professional email programs are affordable, provide invaluable intelligence, typically result in higher deliverability rates and can help you stay SPAM compliant.
9. **Save a Tree & Your Sanity.** If you're not using electronic registration, you're losing attendees. When it comes to registration and payment processing, digital reigns supreme. Not only is this method the favored choice for prospective participants, your organization will save a great deal of time and hassles with a streamlined, automated and paperless process.
10. **Fast Follow-up.** Capitalize on post-event enthusiasm with strategic outreach immediately following your function. Send your attendees/guests a thank you, a survey, an article or other informative materials. Invite them to become a member of your organization, a subscriber to your newsletter or a member of your online network. Participation in your function should be thought of as the *beginning* of an ongoing relationship, not an end point.

To learn how the Ennect suite of products can help you plan, promote and manage your next event, visit [www.ennect.com](http://www.ennect.com). In the meantime, if you have questions or comments, please email me at [dshiring@elliance.com](mailto:dshiring@elliance.com).