



## **Program Marketing that Works: Generate Enthusiasm & Attendance**

You've developed a great program. But if people don't hear about it, they won't be there! There are many things you could highlight to encourage attendance at the meeting. But one of the most powerful marketing messages for any presentation is who will address what topic.

Your first chance to positively impact the marketing of an event is name you give to the program. A title, of course, is mentioned frequently—in brochures and publications, on websites and blogs, in conversation (we love word-of-mouth!). Even at the event it appears on signage. So a title that is memorable, enticing and appealing is important.

Work with your speaker on titles. First and foremost, it is imperative that a title properly reflect the program's focus and avoids creating false expectations for the audience. Many speakers have spent a considerable amount of time, energy, and even money, to develop great titles for their sessions. Consider using the speaker's title. Having said that, however, titles are rarely cast in stone. Consider your audience and the particulars of your event. If the audience will respond to certain words or the entire event has a well-defined theme, it may be wisdom to create your own unique titles for programs.

Titles can be smart, amusing, thought-provoking, even shocking. But they must absolutely be pithy and memorable. Consider, too, adding a subtitle to expand, explain or clarify the title.

Here are some simple but effective marketing ideas to promote speakers and their programs. These tips will generate interest, enthusiasm, and attendance.

- ◆ Consider focusing the title's message on what attendee will learn in the program: '10 Tools ...,' 'Three Simple Rules ...,' or 'Five Guaranteed Solutions ...'
- ◆ Develop a short but appealing description of the session; whenever possible consider using a bulleted or numbered list of what attendees will learn.
- ◆ Include a speaker photograph (formal head-and-shoulder portraits can be a bit boring, so action shots or other interesting casual photos should be considered).
- ◆ If you have permission and if the individuals (or the organizations they represent) carry weight with your audience, use testimonials from others who have heard the speaker address the topic.



- ◆ Consider using audio or video clips of the speaker to generate excitement—many speakers have been interviewed from time to time, or better yet, there are easy, inexpensive tools available which allow you to create your own audio clip which you can post to your website—perhaps a portion of a dialogue you have with the speakers or short interview with a key executive in your organization.
- ◆ Highlight the speaker's book; in fact, consider a place and occasion (with permission) to reproduce an excerpt from the publication.
- ◆ Put a link from your website to the speaker's website, or include her URL in your marketing materials.
- ◆ If your speaker is interested in learning more about your audience, discuss with him the idea of a pre-event survey—not only will this create interest in the minds of those who complete the survey, but it is an excellent way to start a buzz because people will enjoy learning the results of the survey when they attend the event.
- ◆ Planning occasions during your event when the speaker can interact with the audience; invite them to attend a welcome reception, plan a book signing after their presentation, include the speaker in a discussion activity—this will give people additional reasons to look forward to a particular speaker.
- ◆ Include one or more submissions from speakers for your organization's e-newsletter, magazine, or blog.