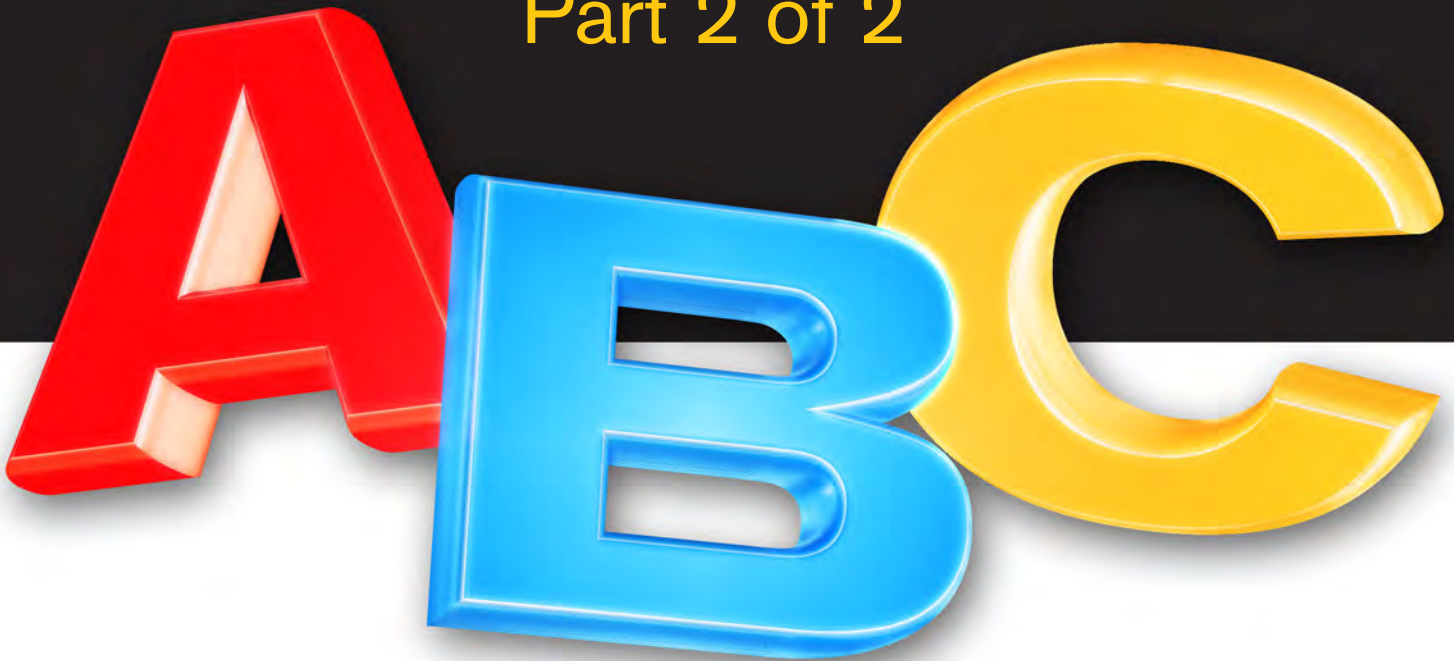


The ABC's of EVENT MARKETING 2016 Edition

Part 2 of 2



In the last issue of “i.e”, we introduced you to the A-Z’s of Event Marketing using one concept per letter to help event planners and marketers navigate some of the trends facing successful promotion of their 2016 events. 26 letters. 26 concepts. Due to the length, we had to break the alphabet in half, so we covered A-M, the first 13 letters in the last article

Covered in the last installment were basics and trends from Advertising, Branding and Collaboration to Keywords, Logos and Millennials.

This installment will focus on the second half of the alphabet, featuring ideas, concepts, platforms and more

beginning with the letters N-Z. So without any further ado, here’s the second half of the Marketing Alphabet:

Naming Rights

Sponsorships are the lifeblood of many of our events. For the sophisticated marketer, you’re already exploring new ways to go beyond the obvious to make partnerships more successful, thus increasing the opportunities when renewal season approaches.

No longer is it enough to put someone’s logo on a poster or just include casual mentions in the advertising lead up to the event. What

has become clear is that the relationship between sponsor and property offers a tremendous opportunity to go beyond just the basic packages and think about the business outcomes that are necessary for today’s sponsors and how you can best provide solutions to those challenges.

One way to achieve this goal is to package naming rights into different areas of your festival. While it is easy to affix the naming rights or presenting rights on to the entire festival or stages, what might take a little more ingenuity is to figure out how to connect the brand to different segments of

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your festival and make meaningful connections for sponsor and guest.

Organic

The "O" trend for 2016 is organic. You've heard the term used many different ways, but we'd like to take a look at two ways in particular as they relate to marketing and events.

The first definition is natural marketing growth or the growth that occurs without outside influence. Social media has taken to using the term and if you peel back the layers of analytics, you'll see "organic" staring back at you in your Facebook, YouTube and Google data.

Others use the term word-of-mouth, but whatever you call it, organic growth is what we strive to gain. It is what keeps our events and organizations thriving, it doesn't cost a penny but it can be the one influence that makes the difference between a mild and huge success.

The second definition of "organic" is the trend of healthier food and beverage options. The major package product brands have focused on this as a major area of growth for the next generation as millennials and their children exchange their super-sized fast food, for smart and healthy options.

The organic trend in food and beverages should help you in determining new vendors to welcome, sponsorships to cultivate and promotions to undertake.

Personalization is the choice for the letter "P." Customized experiences have now become more commonplace as technology allows marketers to do more, faster than ever before. And this trend is only at the beginning as 3D printers come online and better delivery mechanisms are created.

The term mass customization may be an oxymoron, but the time has come and you only have to witness the lines at the customized Coke displays at events across the country to see that this is the type of personalized experience event-goers and sponsors want to have and to rave about.

Personalization can also come from the premium access to your events. Early access to ticket purchases or the event grounds are ways to take a Disney-type

model and have it work for your event. But beyond special seating and VIP access, where else can your event look to customize your guest experience?

Quiet is the concept for the letter "Q". Sometimes it is OK to be quiet. It is OK to have a strategy of quiet to allow all of the other marketing to breathe and sink in to the audiences mind.

Social media has now made communication 24/7/365. It is now our job to make the times where our information or our stories stand out. By approaching your marketing plan with periods of "quiet" you will be able to make a larger impression when the message is important. Take those quiet times to regroup and rethink your strategies before the next period of aggressive communication.

Responsive is the choice for letter "R". Responsive is a wonderful word when it comes to guest relations, but we're thinking of it in a different manner entirely.

Responsive is the trend in website design we should all be looking at as the industry standard. Responsive technology allows your website to reformat the graphics and navigation from desktop to mobile, no matter the device. Whether someone is on their laptop, tablet or phone, your website will be totally functional meaning guests will be able to interact with your site, buy tickets, get directions or see schedules, without you worrying about the user experience.

Many of us do not have the budget to build a customized app for our guests, in the case of responsive design, your site becomes an app and with a few tips and tricks will function just as well as a high-priced app.

If you're redesigning a website in 2016, it must be responsive. Case closed.

Just like Superman, *Sponsorship* wears a large letter "S" due to its importance to the overall success of festivals and events around the world.

The trends in sponsorship are all heading in the right direction. As people hunker down in their homes with Netflix and social media has them spending more time laughing at

memes and watching what others are doing, events remain one of the few opportunities to gather for a community experience. Just as the arts and sports provide those same atmospheres for large gatherings, so do events, and we must make this case to our sponsors.

But there are also some other trends in sponsorship we must remain aware of: Data.

Just as in other forms of business, sponsorship is being driven by data as much as any other marketing decisions. Long-term relationships now undergo the same scrutiny as social media and website engagement and the trend will not be changing anytime soon.

By using technology on-site, the same type of methodology is now being used to prove sponsorship hypotheses of engagement and interaction rather than some of the more mushy anecdotal reports that were the metrics of past activations.

Many properties have seen sponsors curtail or leave partnerships because the data no longer supports the ongoing commitment of resources. While this raises the stakes for some organizations, it also provides opportunities for events to expand their relationships and dig deeper to provide measured outcomes from their sponsorship partners.

The main takeaway from the data trend in sponsorship is to make sure you are aware of the importance data now plays and build metrics into your next sponsorship proposal plans. While your event might not be responsible for the actual data collection, knowing that it exists and is important to your partners will allow you to work together to maximize the relationship across all levels.

Twitter is the concept for the letter "T." While much has been made about Twitter, it is still the little brother to Facebook in the social media revolution. Twitter works best as a platform for a personality – the larger the personality the better. Music stars, athletes and politicians use Twitter as their direct link to their fans and followers and in this capacity, it works incredibly well.

However, unless your event or festival has a unique personality (see our writings on Brand), Twitter might not be the best place to post on an ongoing basis, unless to post the very latest news or happenings during your event. Even at 200 million+ subscribers, it's still very small and for the majority of events, we do not have the resources to actively build the community around Twitter that will provide the measurable impact to our fans and followers.

Underserved is the concept for the letter "U". How many of us are doing the

However, the need for Executive Directors and others to drive ill-fated attempts at making content go viral has finally been put in its place. Viral messaging is capturing lightning in a bottle, and thankfully most marketers now know that it is something you cannot plan, so we have begun spending our time on more tangible pursuits.

work needed to reach the underserved in our community? Are we offering programming that reflects the diversity of our audiences? Are we creating relationships with the leaders in these communities to open the doors to more engagement and participation?

As each of our communities grows more diverse, there inevitably will be more opportunities for us to expand our programming and open our doors for new participation. When looking for new audiences, we may need to look beyond our own worldview to see thousands of new faces that long to be part of what we are offering.

Serving the underserved does not come easily. After all, how does one reach those who are not on our contact list, subscribe to our email, visit our website or follow our social media?

It takes an initiative within our organizations to go to the places where potential new audiences exist. They attend schools with their children, they worship in their churches and mosques, they shop in the convenience stores and supermarkets in their neighborhood and they are hosting their own community events and festivals.

We must actively seek out these individuals and their families to welcome them to our events and make the most out of this celebration of our diverse cultures and communities.

Viral is our marketing concept for the letter "V." After the positive hysteria of the "ice bucket challenge" of the Summer of 2014, it seems that buzz finally peaked.

Sure, there are still the heart-warming stories with millions of viewers that are usually celebrity infused. And of course, there are always those videos of people falling down or otherwise impaling themselves.

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messaging is capturing lightning in a bottle, and thankfully most marketers now know that it is something you cannot plan, so we have begun spending our time on more tangible pursuits.

Word of Mouth represents the letter "W" in marketing for 2016 as it has for generations before it. There is no more powerful and efficient marketing tool than "word-of-mouth." We've read about it for years and years, but how many of us have it as part of our playbook.

As previously mentioned in "organic," how better can festivals and events grow their audience, than from satisfied individuals and families spreading the word of the positive experience they had? But how do we fan these flames of powerful growth?

We've heard a lot about the "WOW" factor, but has it lost some of its luster? In the end, those moments or examples of "WOW" are what keep people coming back over and over and over again.

Social media has allowed us to amplify word-of-mouth to make it even more effective, but with the ever-changing rules, there are not many events able to commit the resources necessary to keep up with the best practices when they seem to change monthly, if not weekly.

Xtra Large is the term for the letter "X". While we cheated a little, the idea is still the same. Go big or go home. We need to be XTRA large in our signage, XTRA large in our promotion and XTRA large in our event's personality.

It takes so much to cut through the clutter, especially when a percentage of the population goes through their day noses buried in their smart phones. It takes a super human effort in many cases to bring attention to all that we do and to make it somewhat as important to our audience members as it is to us.

YouTube is the perfect concept for the letter "Y." Fact: Did you know that YouTube is the second leading search platform after Google?

As the millennial generation continues to embrace technology in ways we have never imagined, YouTube is at the forefront of this trend. We need to be able to utilize this platform in inexpensive and efficient ways in order to spread the message and know that the 30-60 second video is purely disposable, but also is rapidly becoming the new norm for communication.

One concept that is a hurdle is the production of quality video that will exemplify your brand but not cost a fortune to produce. We all carry video cameras in our pockets that are far in excess of what was used to make movies in the past. Your challenge is to be able to figure out a plan to create watchable content that tells your story, sells your event, without breaking the bank or embarrassing yourself.

Zen is the twenty-sixth and final concept for this article series. Zen in marketing is the same as Zen in life. When all phases of our marketing are working in perfect harmony, when our message matches our audience and they are learning about it on their preferred medium, we have achieved marketing Zen. It's a goal worth pursuing, but is a journey rather than a destination.

Now that we've provided a guided tour through the 26 concepts and trends that you are facing in the marketing and promotion of your event in 2016, we hope you've taken your first step on your journey towards achieving marketing Zen.

The most important takeaway from this two-part article is that there are just some things you will never be able to get to, and that's OK. There are some concepts and platforms that just will not provide return on your investment of time or money. That is OK too.

The basic rule is to never give up and know that you will always get out of your marketing what you put into it, either as a volunteer, member of a committee or a full-time employee. Marketing will get you where you need to go and hopefully these 26 concepts will help you get there faster and more effectively than ever before.

Best of luck on a record-setting year!

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