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1 | Foundation in marketing for events

Personal recommendations are the most effective way to promote your work. People are more likely to support a project or use a product that has been recommended to them by someone they know. Recommendations tend to attract loyal clients who will continue to further recommend you.

Consider these questions to help you attract personal recommendations:

- Is the project the best it can be? Can you fix any gaps or flaws?
- Do you have a backup plan if anything unexpected happens? Think about what you will do if there is a last minute line-up change, bad weather, a larger than expected turn out, etc. This way you will be able to solve problems smoothly and quickly. Potential recommenders will be impressed if you can handle spontaneous challenges.
- Does your project look well organised? What can people see? Is your office and venue tidy or messy? This will influence potential recommender's perceptions of how organised you are.
- Is the price clear and fair? Be clear of any booking fees or concessions.
- Is every person involved with the project treated professionally and as fairly as possible? This includes employees, suppliers and friends, also those you don't get along with.
- Are you accountable? Can anyone contact you about anything, including finances and complaints? Are your contact details easy to find? Be open to questions and feedback.
- Is there a process for dealing with conflicts? How can you maintain professional relationships despite disagreements?
- Can you clearly describe the project? Try describing the project in 45 words. Will recommenders be able to describe it to their contacts? Communicate what you're offering clearly.
- Do you have a complete and current contact list of organisations and people who might want to attend or help promote the project? Create a spreadsheet of the contact person's name, organisation's name, address, email and phone number.

- Can people locate you and information about the project? How do people contact you? What directories would be useful? Is the project location easy to find?
- Can the project logistically handle an increase in attendance as a result of the promotion? Have some plans on how to deal with this, eg. Have car and driver available to get extra supplies if required, budget for these supplies, etc.

2 | Marketing strategies

Direct marketing: use your list of contacts to provide people with a special offer or a sample of what you do.

Parallel marketing: is aimed at promoting your project area to the general public.

Peer based marketing: understand your role as part of a group of peers in your field and make effective use of that.

Ideas: Send 10 postcards to friends or acquaintances who you think may benefit from the project. Arrange an event where people come with their address books and send 10 postcards to people they know. How else can you reach people outside of your immediate networks?

Remember it is essential to provide real value for the people you are marketing too.

3 | Marketing plan

Brainstorm ways you can fulfill each of the ideas listed above. This will be the basis of your marketing plan.

Your marketing plan can be as simple or elaborate as you wish.

The most important part of a marketing plan is to use it and carryout marketing activities on a regular basis. Make a timeline of when to use the different strategies to keep you on track. Continue to evaluate and improve your marketing plan as you go along.

Reference

Raspberry, S. & Phillips, M. (2008) *Marketing without Advertising* Nolos USA