AEROSPACE & DEFENSE

EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

Aerospace and Defense Event Planning Guide: Top Strategies for Running Successful Corporate Events

In today's competitive aerospace and defense industry, hosting successful corporate events can play a crucial role in building relationships, showcasing your brand, and driving business growth. With the right approach, you can create memorable experiences that leave a lasting impression on attendees, sponsors, and partners. In this guide, we will share three essential tips and practical how-to's to help you run impactful corporate events within the aerospace and defense industry.

Tip #1: Start with the end in mind – Define your audience and set clear goals

A successful event starts with clearly understanding your target audience and the desired outcomes. By focusing on the end goals, you can create an event that adds value, fosters meaningful connections, and brings people together in a non-promotional way.

Identify the key stakeholders you want to attract

Before you start planning your event, take the time to identify the specific groups of people you want to attract. These may include potential customers, industry professionals, investors, teaming partners, or media representatives. By understanding your target audience, you can tailor your event content and format to meet their needs and interests.

Define the event's objectives

It's essential to set clear objectives for your event. This may include increasing brand awareness, generating leads, showcasing new products or services, fostering connections with high-profile speakers or investors, or educating attendees on industry trends to build thought leadership. By establishing well-defined goals, you can increase your odds of achieving objectives and create metrics to measure success.

Develop a detailed event strategy

Once you've identified your target audience and defined your event's objectives, create a detailed event strategy that outlines the event format, theme, and key messaging. This should include specific tactics for attracting attendees, such as targeted marketing campaigns, partnerships with industry professionals, or unique event features that appeal to your target audience. If your event includes programming, you will also want to look at which types of content will be most appealing to the audience, sponsors, and high-profile speakers.

A word of warning on the programming content. It is very common for speakers, partners, or sponsors to make content recommendations that do not align with the goals and audience of

the event. It is critical to set a north star and work with partners to develop ideas that align, as opposed to making concessions which may lead to audience confusion and difficulty in the event marketing stage.

Tip #2: Create an event brand with a long-lasting impact

Corporate events present an excellent opportunity to build and reinforce your brand without having to say a word. A well-branded event can leave a lasting impression on attendees, sponsors, and partners and help establish your organization while creating a long-tail effect.

Design event materials that align with your brand identity and messaging

OPTIV Cyber House

Consistent branding is crucial for creating a cohesive and memorable event experience. Design event materials, such as invitations, banners, signage, and promotional items that align with your brand identity and messaging. For big conferences, where brands can easily get lost in the crowd, like SXSW, AUSA, or RSA, it may make sense, depending on organizational goals, to work brand elements into the exterior of the venue or throughout the venue's interior. Please note that this may require permits from the city, so allow yourself extra time if this is desired. This will reinforce your brand during the event and create lasting impressions that attendees will associate with your organization.

Create engaging and informative panel discussions, workshops, or keynote presentations
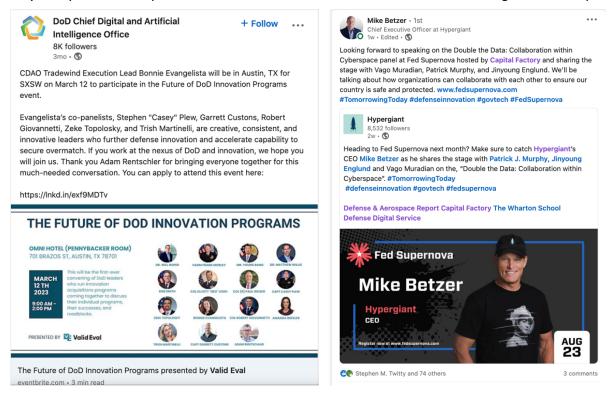

The Future of DoD Innovation Programs

If one of your organizational goals is to build thought leadership, events featuring engaging speakers may be worth considering. When choosing topics, make sure to consider the audience and the speakers you are looking to attract. Look at big topics that are important to your customers or other key players. If you have target customers or other VIPs that would be valuable speakers, go to their LinkedIn and look at the type of content they are sharing. Talk to your executive and sales team and find out where customers are allocating funding and what topics are most critical to them. Armed with this information, you can search articles identifying prominent leaders who might be good as speakers and punch ideas for content. Just be sure your panel titles don't feel the same as what everyone else is saying so your audience doesn't feel like they have already heard what you have to say.

Collect Data

When building out your event sign-up process, ensure you capture the data you want without being overly taxing, for example, having a drop-down that provides a category for attendees (government, executive, entrepreneur, investor, media, etc.). Depending on your CRM system, consider creating a custom sign-up form that automatically integrates with your database but enables you to keep form responses separate. Then make sure your organization tags the data so it can be used for future marketing and business development efforts. Use the captured data to target your follow-up communications, ensuring they are relevant and engaging for each attendee.
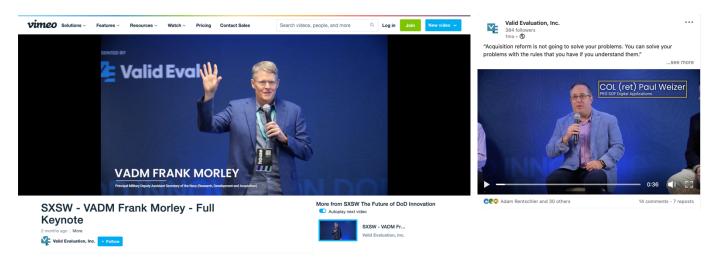
Use your speakers and partners' networks to drive attendance and build thought leadership

Once you have your event branding strategy in place, start developing content and graphics which can be shared among your speakers and partners to drive sign-ups. The easier you make it for people to share and the earlier you do so, the more you can use the networks of others to promote your event, build your database and increase the overall impact of your event.

Capture the event through high-quality photography and videography

High-quality photography and videography are essential for extending the impact of your event beyond its conclusion. By capturing memorable moments, engaging speakers, and interactive experiences, you can showcase your event's success and reinforce your brand's message. Share these images and videos on your organization's website, blog, social media channels, and post-event communications to maintain engagement with attendees and reach a broader audience. For additional virality, you can create a Dropbox folder you share with all of the speakers and their communications and marketing staff—providing them with valuable marketing assets for them while expanding your overall reach.

This is an effective way to build your brand and thought leadership. It additionally allows attendees to relive their event experience and enables a much broader audience reach who may not have attended the event.

Encourage networking and interaction among attendees

Space & Defense Innovation VIP Reception

Fostering relationships among attendees is essential to creating a memorable event experience. Encourage networking and interaction through structured activities, such as roundtable discussions, interactive workshops, audience participation, social networking events, or strategic placement of guests at dinners. This not only creates opportunities for attendees to connect but also helps build brand loyalty and strengthen relationships with your organization.

Tip #3: Leverage the power of post-event follow-up

An event's success is not only measured by its immediate impact but also by the ongoing relationships and opportunities it generates. By collecting the right data, capturing memorable imagery, and having a well-planned follow-up strategy, you can maximize the long-term benefits of your event.

Develop a targeted email campaign to maintain engagement with attendees

Maintaining engagement with attendees after your event is critical for building lasting relationships and ensuring the ongoing success of your event strategy. Develop a targeted email campaign that provides relevant content, resources, and information on upcoming events. Tailor these communications to each attendee's interests and needs based on the data collected during the registration process and event.

By following these tips and incorporating practical how-tos, you can create a memorable and impactful event that drives business growth and solidifies your position in the aerospace and defense industry. With careful planning, strategic branding, and effective follow-up, your corporate events can become a powerful tool for enhancing your organization's reputation and success. Remember to always focus on your target audience, create lasting brand impressions, and leverage the power of post-event follow-up to maximize the long-term benefits of your corporate events.

If you're looking for support in any of these areas, Distinctive Edge Partners has a full-service aerospace and defense corporate events division that can help you achieve your overall business goals and objectives. To learn more, please contact marcella@distinctiveedge.partners.