



# Unlocking new sources of revenue with digital marketing

**Before the dawn of time associations were essential to establish relationships and bring together like-minded individuals. Memberships were the foundation of professional societies and trade organizations. In today's interconnected world, associations need to bring new ideas to the table to ensure success, growth and long-term financial sustainability.**

**D**igital marketing is quintessential in this day and age. While many associations have already built their reputations and longstanding traditions, it is equally important to keep up with the trends and developments of the digital age in order to connect and bridge relationships with younger generations. As a result, association leaders are left combating pressing challenges; declining membership, remaining relevant and upholding their unique value proposi-

tion. Digital marketing not only increases the potential attendee pool exponentially but also utilizes e-commerce techniques to convert people into paying delegates. So, why are associations spending a significant amount of their allocated budget on a congress and less than 1% on digital marketing?

## **MARKETING AUTOMATION**

Marketing entails positioning, branding, website design, search engine optimization, e-commerce optimization, engagement on social media and digital advertising. Ensuring that the right channels are chosen is a vital step every association has to take. Not one marketing channel overrules the other. Each have their advantages and disadvantages. Thus, utilizing a marketing automation tool will allow associations to gain access to multiple marketing channels.

Marketing automation will enable associations to not only generate personalized experiences for attendees, but also it will enable the organization to create entirely new ways to communicate with current and potential members. Being able to track engagement from emails, campaigns as well as monitoring trends help associations to fully comprehend the target audience and to better direct marketing for further growth potential. The data also gives insight into the potential delegate's readiness to submit an abstract or register, which allows the delivery of personalized and timely marketing messages that accelerate the decision-making process.

#### VISUAL, VISUAL, VISUAL

With this constant in-flow of information, how does an association attract individuals to attend their congress? What is your unique value proposition and how can you display this on your website?

The answers are in the visuals! What many associations often forget is to understand the importance of visuals when it comes to displaying content on their websites. Studies show that 65% of individuals are visual learners. Visuals are processed 60,000 times faster than text and your content is 50 times more likely to be higher on the search engine if the website

includes a video. Approximately, 50% of website traffic is generated through search engines alone. Optimizing the website for search engines is of course a simple and cost-effective way to ensure high web traffic rankings. Investing to improve website design and optimizing the time and quantity that individuals access and stay on the page will increase your SEO.

#### WHY NOT PACKAGE MARKETING?

So, why not combine all of the above into the ultimate marketing package? Case studies have proven that on average congresses increase registrations by 15% from the previous years through a devised marketing mix, consisting of website optimization, e-commerce, sign up forms and many more. The results encouraged sponsors to invest more in the congress. Google Adwords remarketing and market automation increased the website traffic by 20% and digital forms illustrated an increase of 8% from the database. Remember, it is never good to put all your eggs in one basket! Make sure to use a variety of marketing channels to optimize output.

#### WHAT COMES AFTER IT ALL ENDS?

Remember, digital marketing is a tool that should be used all year round! Even

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MCI is a global leading provider of strategic engagement and activation solutions in association, congress, meetings, and events industries since 1987. Through face-to-face, hybrid and digital experiences, we help associations and companies to strategically engage and activate their target audiences, building the dedicated online and offline communities they need to strengthen their brands and boost their performance.

when it is all over, the significance of post congress marketing is sometimes more important than pre- and during to extend its lifecycle. It is something that the attendees can look forward to in the future. A well-executed digital marketing investment plan change your association in ways that you could never imagine. So, why not start now? Why, wait?

