

# Using company events to strengthen employee engagement

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Meetings, workshops, conferences and events allow the human connection to be experienced and, by connecting in person, create an effective way to disseminate messages, build camaraderie and unify your internal audience.



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When executed properly, corporate conferences, sales meetings and internal training sessions build strength within teams and organisations. In a world, that has adopted email as the primary source of communication, face-to-face interaction can powerfully align influencers, stakeholders and teams with a common goal. Whether educating about a new product, celebrating corporate success or motivating teams for the future – internal events create brand advocates, build trust and cultivate culture.

Creating brand ambassadors is more than just a great event. It is about understanding what culture you are trying to cultivate and using these experiences as a medium to drive that internally. In a transparent world of online (and offline) viewers, there are more windows looking into a company's culture than ever before, and it will only increase. Employees at every level are publicly communicating their experiences within companies on social media platforms daily. By creating a strategic internal advocacy program unique to your brand and cultural values, an organisation can leverage its team to amplify the brand story authentically. This not only harnesses the spirit of the team, it puts the enthusiasm to work, both for your brand as employees spread its message.

## Seven tips to elevate internal conferences or events

Establish an identity and build excitement - the first and most important step is creating a clear and authentic identity that elevates your event's purpose and message. Develop a name and theme for your event, extending the creative treatment to fully branded emails, registration sites and mobile applications to the team. To excite teams and increase enthusiasm leading up to the event, create an event countdown and leverage user-generated content such as contests and trivia.

Treat your attendees as guests - give your teams the five-star treatment they give your customers year in, year out.

Creating culture means not taking life too seriously - have some fun – even though the message may be serious, explore ways to incorporate entertaining and engaging elements to inspire a playful environment. Find simple ways to keep your teams smiling through small activations.

Give experiences worth sharing - incorporate elements beyond the traditional general session that teams will want to write home about (or at least share on social media). Interactive demos and breakout sessions, such as Tai Chi and Yoga classes or themed parties allow your attendees to network, relax and have fun. They also provide photo-worthy opportunities for social sharing, so do not forget a unique event hashtag.

Give guests a platform to participate - incorporating digital elements allows guests to interact beyond the physical space. Attendees can create and share experiences and ultimately drive your message further after the conference ends. Consider live streaming the content and then make it available for post-event download. Offer the opportunity for them to give virtual 'high-fives' through an accolade wall that is aggregated and projected for everyone to see.

Create a call to action or a platform for engagement - determine your goals and objectives from the onset of the programme and integrate those into calls to action. If your goal is to inspire your guests, or discover purpose, turn it around and ask attendees what inspires them, what gives them purpose? Create brainstorm sessions where they can actively participate. This not only drives your message further, but also lets your guests know that their opinions matter.

Capitalise on the face time – it is not every day that employees get to interact with C-suite and senior level staff. Provide a space for teams to interact with these individuals one-on-one. It will help maintain your company's mission and values and give your internal brand ambassadors a reason to carry the message forward.

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