

Big Event Impact with Limited Resources

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What You Will Get Today...

- Scalable ideas in two **key** areas of event strategy and execution
- Why knowing your “why” is most important
- How limited resources doesn't mean a limited mindset

Assumptions...because we only have so much time...

Resources = \$, **but** also people/energy and time

Your event has AMAZING, CAN'T GET IT ANYWHERE ELSE CONTENT.

You WANT **participants**, not attendees.

You WANT said participants to return to your event.

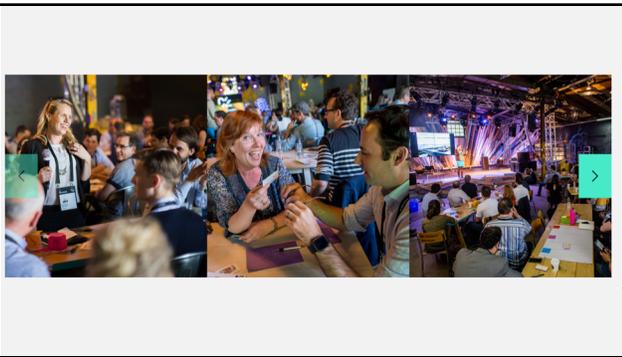
Focus On Two Key Areas

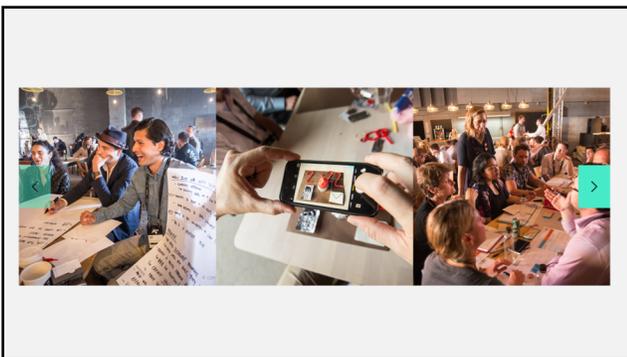
(1) Engagement

(2) Vibe

Why?

Because engagement and vibe resonate across most events large or small and keeps your participants happy and wanting more.





Engagement Regardless of Resources

What it is event engagement?

Active participation, and/or a beneficial "conversation" with the event/organization/brand.

What does "good" engagement look like? Can you measure it?

*Good engagement should be observable across a variety of platforms and experiences and, **yes you can measure it!** More on this later...*

Engagement Regardless of Resources

We're going to look at engagement with limited resources across these four areas:

- With content...
- With your association...
- With your event's sponsors and exhibitors...
- With other participants...



You need to get to your "Why"...

Before you do anything, you need to understand your purpose for doing it.

What do you hope to achieve and what will you do once you've achieved it?

What does success look like?

With Limited Resources...

Sometimes you will need to make tough decisions.

Without really understanding your "why", you'll have difficulty making the tough decisions with limited resources.

To design events with impact AND limited resources:

You'll need to be super-selective and design and execute in the most efficient way based on your objectives and desired outcomes.

Why the "Why" Is Important!

To design events with impact AND limited resources:

You'll need to be **super-selective and design and execute in the most efficient way** based on your objectives and desired outcomes.

Some Sample Engagement Objectives

Participant engagement with...	Objectives
Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback on specific topics 2. Peer-to-peer idea sharing 3. Leverage industry "brain-power"
Association	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback on state of the association/future of the industry 2. Interest in new products, services 3. Community-building
Sponsors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Face-to-face conversations with your participants (quality leads, information) 2. Teaching and speaking opportunities
Other participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make new contacts/expand network 2. Solve challenges

If You're Looking for Engagement within Content

Objectives	Ideas for Impact with Limited Resources
Feedback on specific topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whiteboards/boards with post-it notes in key areas/outside session rooms with specific questions enlist volunteers or students to capture information • Social media hashtag for certain hot topics within your event
Peer-to-Peer idea sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave white space in the schedule and set up designated meet up areas to discuss ideas, topics, challenges. • Create a social media contest for participants to share their best "ah-ha"
Leverage industry "brain-power"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crowdfund a key challenge via social media in your industry and allow participants to work on possible solutions in a designated meeting room. Recruit volunteers to share the work in a plenary session and post-event.

If You're Looking for Engagement with Association

Objectives	Ideas for Impact with Limited Resources
Feedback on state of the association/future of the industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reverse Town Hall where a volunteer group of members are the panel and the leadership asks them questions on needs, concerns • Recruit volunteers/students to conduct impromptu three question interviews throughout the event • Set up a voting whiteboard where participants add a colored sticker (red, green, yellow) on importance of a topic. Allows you to see trends at a glance.
Interest in new products, services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a "What Do You Need for Success?" board in a high-traffic location. Take photos of the responses. • Highlight and demonstrate new association offerings in an "exclusive" room or semi-private space and ask for specific feedback. Use snacks as incentive.
Community-building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal member/industry segment #meetups • Breakfast/lunch roundtables • "Ask Me About..." stickers for name badges

If You're Looking for Engagement with Sponsors and Exhibitors

Objectives	Ideas for Impact with Limited Resources
Face-to-face conversations with your participants (quality leads, information)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try out a Resource Speed Dating activity where vendors and participants meet face to face for a few minutes and move to the next person. • Allocate space for sponsors and key exhibitors to hold one hour focus groups. Sponsors invite and provide incentives. • Encourage key sponsors to create an activation such as a mini-spa, pop-up shop or other fun activity to draw participants in for networking.
Teaching and speaking opportunities (product demos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strive to position your sponsors and exhibitors as true thought leaders with valuable content to share throughout your communications. • Publish their exhibit booth speaking slot or demo timeslot in your program or mobile app. • Provide sponsors with a unique opportunity to share anything "exclusive" within a workshop, e.g., research

Engagement with Other Participants

Objectives	Ideas for Impact with Limited Resources
Make new contacts/expand network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed networking at front of program • Roundtables for unique and fun topics at certain times • "Ask Me About..." stickers for name badges
Solve challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I Have a Challenge/I Have a Solution" Board • "Ask the Expert"—Engage speakers/presenters to hold "office hours" use a sign up board and set aside space/round tables

Measuring Engagement—Three Quick Ways

- **For measuring brand awareness**—Google Analytics to measure website traffic
- **For measuring social media engagement:**
 - Create hashtags—easy to remember and put it everywhere
 - Use a platform to provide insights to hashtag usage such as Hootsuite or Brand24
- **For measuring on-site activities and activations,** make sure you ask about their participation in your post event survey



Creating the Perfect Vibe for Your Event

Understand that *vibe* is a feeling...

- Language
- Graphics
- Sounds
- Lighting

Never underestimate the impact of a pleasant surprise

Know your audience!

Creating Vibe with Limited Resources

We can focus "vibe" into the three objective categories:

- **Objective:** Energy
- **Objective:** Inspiration
- **Objective:** FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) or, *What Can I Only Get at THIS event?*

Vibe: Cultivating Energy and Attention – Not Noise

- Watch out for spacing—not too spread out
- Walk in music. Make it different and matches your event's story arc (Stay aware of ASCAP/BMI fees).
- Lighting for your spaces
 - Natural light is best but...
 - Light that changes color without being distracting keeps participants paying attention
- A series of small surprises in sessions, at registration and plenaries/general sessions—throughout your event, keep them guessing where the giveaways will be next. Great sponsorship.

Vibe: Cultivating Energy and Attention – Not Noise

- Upgrade your language on existing website, messaging and signage
 - Can be plain and ordinary OR inspiring and attention getting, you're paying for it either way
- Get local
 - Local entertainment and local artisans gives participants a sense of place and reduces costs

Vibe: Inspiring Emotion and Action

- Tell a story in your messaging, right from the start
 - Why is your industry special? What results from the work of your industry?
 - How are lives changed?
 - Help participants feel they are a part of something special
- Get local (again)
 - Ask your local convention bureau if they have a list of local charitable organizations and hold a simple donation drive or fundraiser
 - Tell the story!
 - Bonus points if the charity aligns with your industry!
- Leave inspiring quotes everywhere—printed at the bottom of existing signage, on post-its in the bathrooms

Vibe: I Can't Miss This!

- Recruit volunteers or students to livestream via social media using your event's hashtag
- Create **one** "Instagrammable" backdrop for participants to take photos with your event's brand. This is also a GREAT sponsorship activation.
- Help your participants tell the story immediately after—how did they feel when they left? Ask them to share their stories via phone video and social media. Hold a contest for the best one and give out a great prize. Another GREAT sponsorship activation.

Some Tips About "Scaling" Ideas

- With limited resources, you need to be able to see the "why" in any idea and learn to strip away the extraneous components that only add sparkle and flash. Ask yourself: **What is the core objective?**
- Ask your vendor how to accomplish the same objective for less money.
- Make small bets—hypothesize, test and try it out. Get feedback and redesign again.
- What can you re-use or share with events coming in before or after you?

Final Thoughts...

- Producing a high-impact event with limited resources requires *unique and valuable skill sets*
- Change your mindset and perspective
- Get clear about your "why" and visualize and document what success looks like as a result of your ideas and execution
- Make choices, test them out and get feedback to validate

Thank You!

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