



5 KEYS

TO SUCCESSFUL EVENT BRANDING

Tips, tools and strategies for making an impact and creating a buzz.

IMAGINE THIS

The event floor is buzzing with happy attendees, your social channels are lighting up with tagged selfies, and sponsors are already making bookings for next year.

A strong event is the result of a great team, but what makes a successful event brand?

Your event's brand is its personality, its DNA, and the way it is perceived as a whole by your audience. Building your brand from the ground up ensures that your event has a strong foundation, stays true to its mission and delivers on its promises. And, perhaps most importantly, it helps attract new attendees, sponsors and fans who will talk about your live event well after bump-out.

This e-book aims to give you the tools to build a strong brand for your event by following 5 key steps:

- 1 Define your mission
- 2 Create your story
- 3 Build your creative
- 4 Get noticed
- 5 Make an impact

At the end of this e-book we've included a one-page [Event Blueprint](#) to help crystallise your vision. If you're ready to make a big impact with your next event then read on!

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KEY 1 DEFINE YOUR MISSION

Define the key goals of your upcoming event

Step one to any branding process is to define your 'why'. This gives you a strong foundation from which everything else can build.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ Why are you staging this event?
- ▶ Why are you inviting attendees to your event?
- ▶ What are the key things you want an attendee to walk away with?

The right event goals should align with your overall marketing as well as your company mission statement. Once you have your 'why' you will be able to define your 'who' - who else shares this mission and how are you going to catch and hold their attention?



"People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. And what you do simply proves what you believe"

Simon Sinek, Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action

WHY?

To provoke action

To bring about change

To share learning and best practice

To inspire

To generate ideas and new thinking

To celebrate achievements

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Attendees

People attend events for a number of reasons but the top ones are:

- ▶ Networking with like-minded people and industry peers
- ▶ Learning and find solutions to problems
- ▶ Sharing ideas
- ▶ Being inspired
- ▶ Getting out of the office and having experiences

Ask yourself who your key attendees are and what are their goals, values and interests. What problems are they facing right now in their day-to-day work environment? What will inspire and engage them?

Sponsors

For sponsors to want to be involved, your event will need to align with their values and business vision. They want to know their potential customers will be attending and that their brand will get as much positive exposure as possible.

Your event is a chance for them to:

- ▶ Build brand awareness
- ▶ Increase sales numbers
- ▶ Improve their own brand image

Ask yourself who your key sponsors are, what is on their radar right now, and how your event goals will align with their values. Ideally, your target market will match that of the potential sponsor. This way, they know they are reaching the right audience by contributing to your event. If you are attracting the right attendees, sponsors will follow.

KEY 2 CREATE YOUR STORY

Experience and emotion form a foundation for memory...

...and the main link between experience and memory is narrative.

Leveraging the insights from Key 1 you can now start building the narrative/theme for your event based around your brand values (the reason for holding your event), the core values of your target market, and their challenges or pain points.

If there are other conferences/events in your space, consider how you can differentiate. You might choose to make yours more interactive, or offer more opportunities for small group networking. If you have a strong differentiator, you could build your entire theme around it.

Tell your target market why they should be a part of this event:

- ▶ What will they gain?
- ▶ What do they stand to miss out on if they don't attend?
- ▶ Why is your event unique?

Once you have a theme you can weave your narrative through the whole event experience including on-site activations, food and beverage suppliers, entertainment, panel discussions, sets and graphics.

"So powerful is our impulse to detect story patterns that we see them even when they're not there."

Frank Rose, *The Art of Immersion: Why Do We Tell Stories?*, Wired Magazine

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KEY 3 BUILD THE CREATIVE

Your visual identity is the face of your event and what will draw in attendees and sponsors alike.

It should encapsulate your theme and engage your audience. Your visual identity isn't just a logo – it includes fonts, colours, graphic styles and imagery, all carefully woven together to create a standout brand persona.

When working with your designer, make sure to communicate as much information as possible during the briefing process around your goals, themes, target market and narrative. Your brief should include;

- ▶ **Event Name** – This may seem obvious but you should be settled on your event name and theme before you engage your designer. A change in theme could mean starting the design process from scratch.
- ▶ **History/Background** – Is this the inaugural event, or has it been running annually for 10+ years? What has been done in the past? Are there key stakeholders that need to be represented in the branding?
- ▶ **Event Goals** – Your why, what and benefits from Key 1.
- ▶ **Target Market** – Include key demographics, the more defined your target market, the easier they are to target!
- ▶ **Positioning Statement** – The key statement that sums it all up!

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Keep it consistent

Once your identity is complete, it is important to stay as consistent as possible so that your brand message isn't diluted. This can be achieved by using the same fonts, image style and colour palette throughout while adding interest with different elements that sit within the same family. Make sure your entire event team is able to access your identity elements and brand guide so that the same language can be used across all printed and digital collateral. When creating event collateral always keep your target market in mind - aim for all collateral to be engaging and shareable.

Implementation

When it comes time to roll-out your identity, consider the event's core values. For example, eco/sustainable events should reduce printed collateral and waste wherever possible and might focus instead on digital and interactive (apps etc.) collateral. Graphics will need to take this into account with the use of contrast and font sizes on-site.

“Brands are built through the consistent delivery of the brand promise through all stakeholder touch points.”

William Arruda, Why Consistency Is The Key To Successful Branding, Forbes

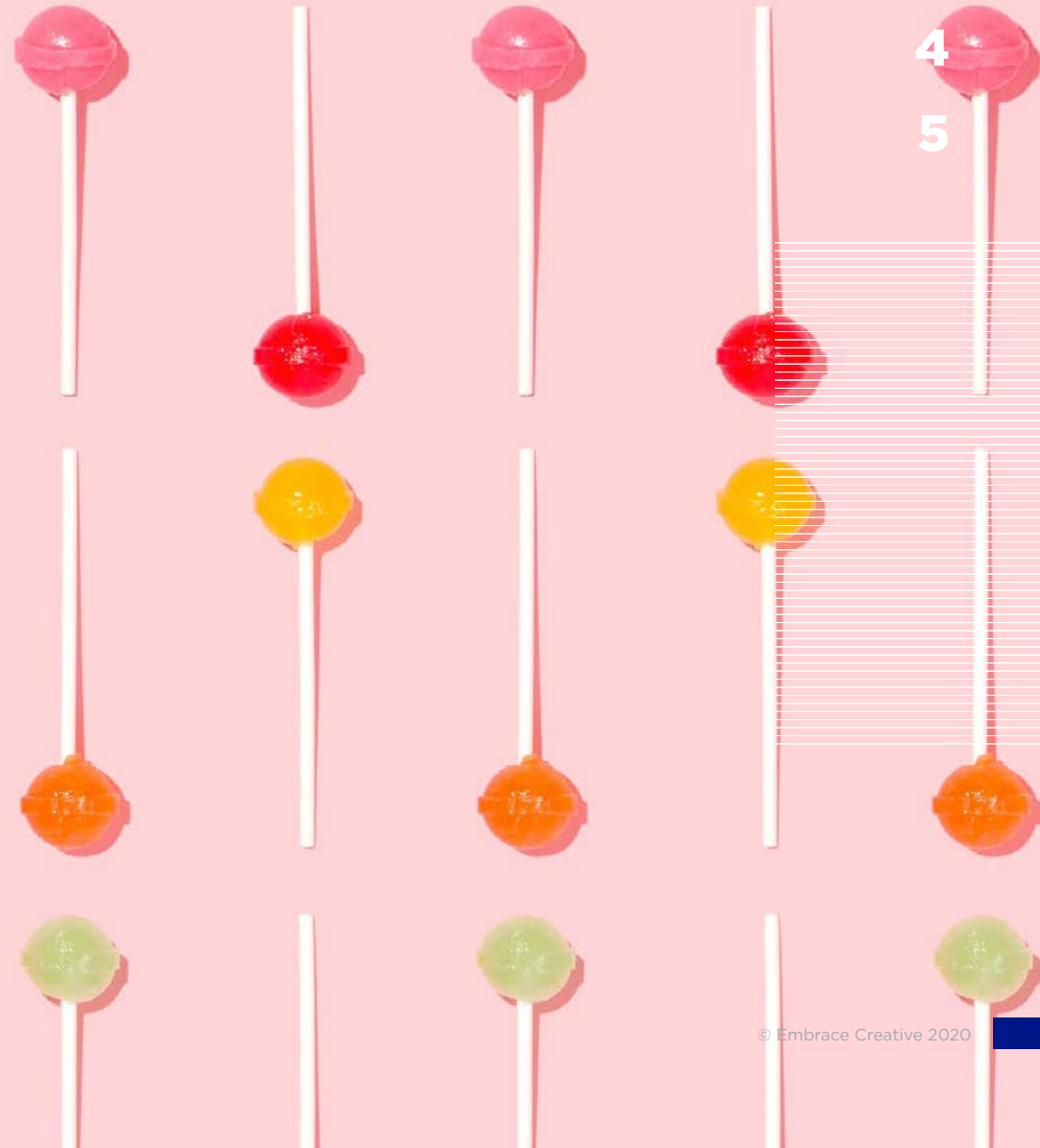
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KEY 4 GET NOTICED

Now that you have your event narrative and identity in play, you need to get it to the masses!

Marketing Channels

Identify where your target market spends their time. Where do they go for industry insight? Their channels could include:

- ▶ Social Media such as LinkedIn, Facebook groups, Instagram or twitter
- ▶ Industry news sites or blogs
- ▶ Print or digital publications such as magazines, newspapers or newsletters
- ▶ Podcasts

Cherry-pick the best channels for your event marketing campaign. Make sure to have a clear call to action on all marketing material. And, once you have the attention of your target market, you need to make it as easy as possible for them to take the next step.

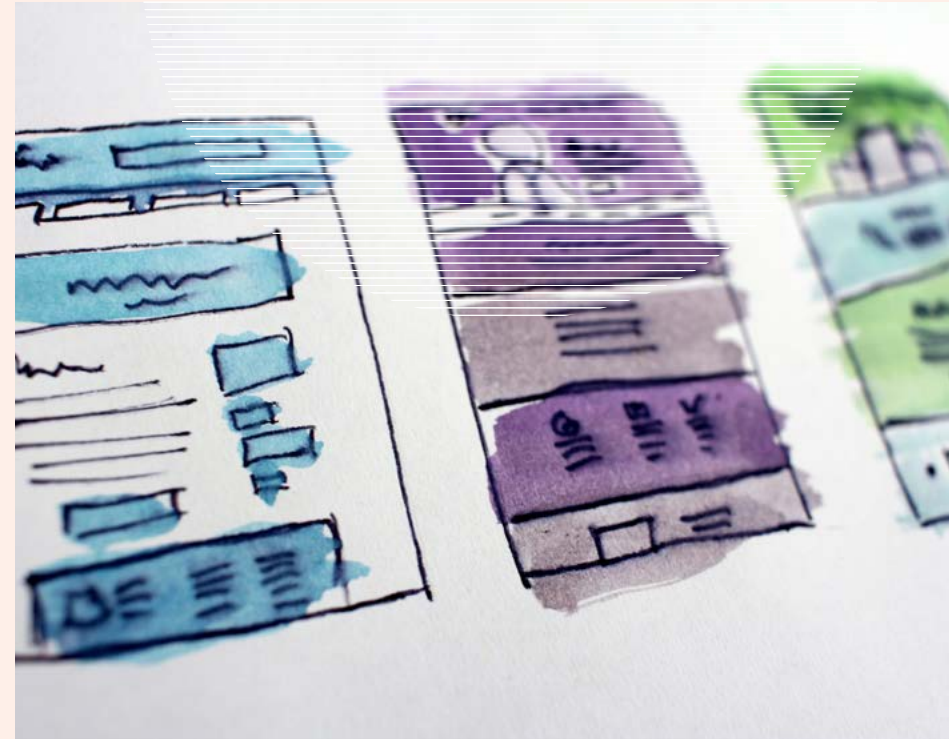


Website

Your event site is the digital home of your brand. All your online, audio and print marketing should lead to your web presence. It is a place where you can tell the whole story of your event, its reason for being, its mission and its history. Your website creates a digital platform that can live on past the live experience. And, of course, make sure to optimise your SEO so that people can find you!

As well as your brand's DNA, your event website should include these elements:

- ▶ **Event Banner** - The graphic that announces your event name and purpose, and engages your audience.
- ▶ **Event Logo**
- ▶ **Event Highlights** - Data and figures about the event.
- ▶ **Participant Profile** - Who should attend?
- ▶ **Agenda** - What, where and when
- ▶ **List of Speakers**
- ▶ **Partners and Sponsors**
- ▶ **Contact Details**
- ▶ **FAQ's**
- ▶ **Exhibitor section**
- ▶ **Direct Ticket Box** - An integrated ticket booth where visitors can directly pay for the event on the website itself.
- ▶ **Footer** - This should include social media links, newsletter sign-up form and additional navigation.



An event microsite is a great tool that allows you to create a domain name that links directly with your event and is easy to remember. For print, you can include your short and memorable URL, while digital campaigns should feature direct click throughs. Make the ticketing process fast and easy by including a way to purchase through your site either with a third party link or, better still, a built in widget so people don't have to leave your website to make a purchase.

Social Media

Make sure to update your social channels with sleek headers that align with your branded campaign, and update any existing pages to include your upcoming event.

Use Hashtags!

Hashtags allow attendees to stay connected before, during and after the event. Choose something that is catchy and that people will be happy to use.

Encourage Pre-event Networking

Help attendees get to know each other before the event to boost excitement. You can do this by starting conversations and asking questions that encourage feedback.

Share

Sharing social media posts by prospective attendees, or content from attendees of previous years' events, is a great way to promote the event and generate organic interest. Give attendees a sneak peek by sharing speaker guest blog posts, or interviews with event sponsors and vendors. Remember that video and image-driven content is more engaging so include speaker photos and animated memes and GIFs.

Make sure to space out sales posts with general industry news or lifestyle content and always try and keep content conversational.

Influence

Work with key influencers in your industry where possible to talk up your event and help encourage prospective attendees to register.

Ask attendees and speakers to post their support of the event on their own social media channels using branded content supplied by you.

Email

40% of marketers believe email is the single-most effective channel for promoting an event. Email has fast become one of the most powerful marketing tools today – your attendees might not have much time to spend on social media, but they will ALWAYS check their email.

A few tips to make sure your email campaign is successful:

- ▶ Make sure it is mobile friendly – always test your emails on a mobile device before sending.
- ▶ Make sure your calls to action are clear and bold.
- ▶ Use interactive content such as GIFs and video to generate clicks.

Content

Creating content that demonstrates the significance of the topic of your upcoming event can be a great promotion. Things like blog articles, infographics, videos and podcasts are engaging and shareable. You can also utilise content created by event speakers and notable guests.

By creating strategic and consistent marketing on a regular basis you can continue to build your event's brand and profile. In turn, this keeps you relevant, positions you as a market leader and encourages attendance.

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KEY 5 MAKE AN IMPACT

Creating a memorable experience encourages people to talk about your event to those who didn't have the opportunity to attend. It also determines if people will attend in the future.

Understanding the reasons attendees are coming and making sure they're covered will personalise the experience, creating a one-on-one connection with your brand.

Give people something unexpected that will stay with them and keep them talking about it well after the event.

You can increase the impact of your theme by weaving the narrative through all aspects of your event on the ground. Focusing on the five senses means your attendees will get an immersive and stimulating experience.

Sight

Nothing captures attention more effectively than beautiful visuals. Sight makes the event memorable by enabling the audience to recollect specific moments.

- ▶ **Stage Design** – Create an unforgettable event experience by designing a stage that moves beyond the presentation, speaker or performance and becomes a feature in itself.

- ▶ **Motion Graphic Content** – Illustrate the core concepts of your brand message and tell a story in a captivating way through motion graphics and animation.
- ▶ **Lighting** – Increase ambience, use as directional signage or projections, highlight architectural pieces or event styling.
- ▶ **Immersive Styling** – Designing a cohesive look across all event elements to make sure that every piece aligns with the event theme. This becomes the creative 'thread' tying everything together.



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Hearing

Create the perfect mood for your attendees by creating soundscapes that generate the emotions you want them to feel at a particular time in your event. You can use soundscapes to;

- ▶ Rev up the crowd
- ▶ Create a tone for the event
- ▶ Set the mood for meetings
- ▶ Speed up brainstorming sessions
- ▶ Introduce activities and speakers
- ▶ Illustrate key points and multimedia presentations

Smell

Smells have a stronger link to memory and emotion than any of the other senses. Ideas for incorporating scent into your event include:

- ▶ Scenting conference sessions to evoke positive emotions - for example, lavender and vanilla help to create a calm relaxing atmosphere
- ▶ Scent printed materials such as menus and invitations
- ▶ Enhance your theme by incorporating linked smells

Taste

Everyone remembers an amazing meal. Incorporate taste into your theme by:

- ▶ Matching your menu to your event narrative
- ▶ Ensure that dietary preferences are taken care of

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Touch

Touching something creates connection. This sense is particularly important for kinesthetic learners who learn best when they can move around and engage with their environment. You can incorporate touch into your event using:

- ▶ Polling
- ▶ Interactive presentations and screens such as social media walls
- ▶ Event apps
- ▶ Tactile styling elements
- ▶ Interactive technologies
- ▶ Touch screens
- ▶ Physical Activities

Think kinesthetically about your theme and how you can interpret it into an interactive experience such as a game, interactive on-site art piece or app.

THE TAKE-HOME

Building a successful event brand takes work but if it's done properly you will reap the rewards long after the event is done.

The most successful brands stay true to their mission and deliver on their promises.

By taking the time to define the real reasons for holding your event and the benefits you want to offer to your audience, you can create an experience with meaning and impact that resonates. Using this mission to create a theme and narrative and then carefully weaving this through all of your creative before, during and after your event, keeps your message strong and memorable, encouraging engagement and building fanatics.

Because your event isn't truly working until it's a success for your attendees, your sponsors and your brand.

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ABOUT EMBRACE CREATIVE

We think what you have to say is important.

Expressing your ideas in an impactful and engaging way gets you noticed. We take a deep dive to understand you and your goals, then craft the messaging that gets you where you want to go.

WE VALUE

Considered creativity

Cookie cutter approaches are great for cookies.
Your business is not a cookie.

Collaboration

We believe in partnerships and trust. We'll be the Chewbacca to your Han Solo.

Exceeding expectations

We'll walk 500 miles, then 500 more.

Integrity and respect

Our R-E-S-P-E-C-T starts at home and extends to our partners, clients and all those we encounter.

Openness and transparency

We won't BS you. So there's no unpleasant surprises – just delight.

Approachability and accessibility

We're not precious or stuck up. Talk to us any time about (almost) anything.



Emma Bracey,
Owner and Creative Director,
Embrace Creative

Having had a hand in organising, running, designing, and of course attending countless conferences and events, we are all too familiar with the logistical nightmares they can entail.

Speakers and sponsors that drop in or out of programs at the last minute, seating arrangements that leave delegates staring at pillars, presentation formats that are not compatible with the AV setup or files that corrupt on the day.

So, from the planning stages through to all the fun and stress of the live event, you need a creative team you can trust.

We know events and can help bring your brand message to life.

Get in touch to book a free free Event Strategy session
emma@embrace-creative.com or 0488 362 805.

EVENT BLUEPRINT



Mission

Event Goals

Why are we holding this event:

What do we want to share:

What benefits will we offer:

Why Statement

Our event exists to

So that

Positioning Statement

For _____, who _____, because _____ provides _____.

Target Market

Sponsor Avatar

Industry

Av. Age

Av. Gender

Goals

Values

Challenges

Pain Points

Attendee Avatar

Job Title

Av. Age

Av. Gender

Goals

Values

Challenges

Pain Points

Story

Event Theme

Event Name

History/Background

Core marketing message

Touch Points

Core marketing channels

Possible partnerships (media partners and influencers)

Domain name

Hashtag

Experience

Sight

Sound

Smell

Taste

Touch