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How to Prepare a Special Event Proposal to Support a Sales Promotion

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Although the terms "special" and "event" may sound exciting separately, when placed together as "special event," there is only one expected outcome. Special events can turn into major disasters if you don't allow adequate time for preparation or understand what they entail. Combine that with a sales promotion, and it will be either a trip up promotion lane or a fast track through the exit door. Merging the two together takes skill and knowledge in both arenas. Make sure you understand the intended outcome first, and then prepare to make it happen!

Difficulty: Moderately Challenging

Instructions

Backing Into the proposal

1. Define the words "promotion," "sales" and "special event." This is an important step. Although it would seem obvious, knowing what each word means for a specific task and for the company or organization you work for is key. Oftentimes, words like "promotion," "publicity" and "marketing" are used interchangeably when they have totally different meanings depending on the purpose. For instance, publicity may come as a result of marketing your special event. Once you've defined each word and its specific task, state what the objectives are, followed by the goals. This will help to shape the outline of the proposal and keep within specific boundaries.

2. Ask yourself "why" questions from various vantage points: yours, colleagues, management, support staff, customers, competitors and media. This is where the rubber meets the road. Why should anyone care about the proposed event? By asking this question from different points of view, you will be able to draft a document with few unanswered questions.

3 Get input from key personnel: colleagues, management and support staff, for your first draft of the special event proposal. This allows you to fill in the gaps and show that you've done your homework. Remember, input from a variety of sources helps you to consider challenges you may not have discovered on your own.

4 Organize the input for your special event proposal according to terms and personnel.
Then start to organize everything into categories and lists. Remember, you are backing into the proposal at this point, so you need to work from the sales promotion to the special event and then to the proposal; the opening curtain.

Making It Happen

1 Assemble the first draft. Now that you have collected all the relevant data, input and support, it's time to put everything together to present to the sales team. Don't skimp on this part. First impressions are lasting impressions. Even if there are revisions to be made as a result of the presentation, having as much information in the proposal in an easy-to-read and understandable format will assure the sales team that you are on the right track and will set them at ease that what you have in mind is a good fit.

2 Meet the team. Now it's time for action! Call a meeting of the key decision makers within the organization for a presentation. Make it as interactive and inclusive as possible. Keep in mind the goal of the event and your key audience, which is the sales team. Have plenty of handouts, visual aids and samples of products, if possible, and stick to the script. Allow for questions and encourage input. Be upbeat and stay that way even when things seem to go south. Many times a great attitude will lend itself to a favorable outcome!

3 Write the final draft for submission using the constructive input you received in the meeting. The rewrite should incorporate those elements that were part of the meeting and put it in finalized form for management sign-off. Make sure the final presentation is free of errors and other nonessential items. You are now ready to execute the special event.

Tips & Warnings

- Make sure you allow enough time in the planning process to complete the task. It is a good idea to give yourself enough leeway on the front-end, usually three to six months planning time, in the event of any unforeseen challenges.

Resources

- "The Event Marketing Handbook"; Allison Saget; 2006
- "You Can Negotiate Anything"; Herb Cohen; 1980
- "1001 Ways to Energize Employees"; Bob Nelson; 1997