

It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory.

By Arran Coole, CEO

Whether you're an organiser, venue, caterer, A/V provider, or from the multitude of other suppliers to the events industry, now seems to be a good time for exploration and experimentation in the way we all do business.

Employing new technologies can still spark the sharp intake of breath reaction that you used to get from the plumbers and builders of old. Although technology really is here to help, I strongly believe that technology should complement your business objectives rather than dictate them. What are we talking about now with new technologies anyway – just new ways to communicate.

So what about Web 2.0 and all the accompanying jargon and buzzwords that goes along with it? Useful to you? For teenagers only? Think again...

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is THE global business online network and includes an events section (<http://events.linkedin.com/>) where you can create an entry for yourself, a group for your event and add the event itself.

Be sure to link back to your profiles from your website - this way your exhibitors



and visitors can join the events group and, with any third party website, linking to your website is also good for SEO.

EventCrowd

This network is specific to the events business and includes UK and international contacts from all areas of the industry. We've found the photos on online networks useful for recognizing people face to face and for contacting someone you may have met but not taken a business card from.

Facebook / MySpace

In the UK Facebook is primarily a personal, non-business, function. However, if you run

EIA Standard, Winter 2008

a consumer show or even a B2B show which has a young, social audience it's well worth setting up a profile on these.

Blogging

Blogging requires work - you will have to write content on a regular basis. Our suggestion would be to write 5 blogs before you even post them. You will soon see that it can be time consuming and may be hard to sustain a dialogue. What you must do though, is seek out the bloggers in your industry. If they exist then nurture these individuals and even invite them to your show as members of the press.

YouTube/UStream/tubemogul

Adding video to your website or to YouTube needn't be difficult or expensive. Web quality video is becoming very cost effective - we use the newest 'cool tool' Flip video camera and within seconds can create web quality video.

Social bookmarking – Stumble-upon, reddit, Digg, delicious

Social bookmarking is an extension of current networking gizmos and allows website visitors to save and categorise websites and share them with others. So, if visitors to your event website come across an interesting page and want to save it or share it with other people, they simply click on one of the links to add it to their list.

Twitter

Twitter is becoming very popular, very fast. Twitter might seem a simple version of the

Facebook status but its beauty is in the 'follow' function which transforms this into an opt-in only form of marketing. You can either log in and view the Tweets or download a simple application like Twitteroo.

Some networking or connection sites will come and go, while some will evolve and dominate - get used to it and take advantage of them. The financial investment is extremely low for the methods mentioned here, so there is no downside of reaching out, working harder and trying new avenues.

Arran Coole, CEO, ASP