Revolutionizing

The Annual Conference
6 Steps/Hacks To Higher Revenues & Attendance
WELCOME
THANK YOU
LAW OF CLICK
LAW OF MOTION
TEXTING, TYPING SOCIAL SHARING
Welcome
Tweet unto others as you would have them tweet unto you.
Tweet something good before you tweet something bad.
SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND
Safe space to agree, disagree, ponder and question.
About Me

- Coal Miner’s Grandson
- Nonprofit Junkie
- Learning Explorer
- Education Evangelist
Favorite Food
1) Identify and assess six big conference disruptors.
2) Discover steps/hacks to higher revenue and attendance.
3) Discuss the effective function of content in conference education programming.
4) Explore the evolving role of a speaker in 21st century education
Your Turn

Which of these LOs important to you?
1. Identify and assess six big conference disruptors.

2. Discover steps/hacks to higher revenue and attendance

3. Discuss the effective function of content in conference education programming.

4. Explore the evolving role of a speaker in 21st century education.
WHY
DISRUPTORS COMING
Are We Going To

CAUSE IT OR FALL VICTIM TO IT
Define hacking. Why is conference hacking important?
HACKING

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CONFERENCE HACKING

- Anything that increases value & ROI
CONFERENCE HACKING

- Anything that increases value & ROI
- Creates attitude, behavior, skill change
WHY CONFERENCE?
YOUR TURN
WHY CONFERENCE?
EDUCATION & NETWORKING
Traditional Conferences dire need of CREATIVITY, INOVATION, REINVENTION
STUCK IN RUTS
An artist is someone who uses bravery, insight, creativity & boldness to challenge status-quo.

~ Seth Godin
Need A New Breed Of Conference Organizers

THAT ARE BRAVE & COURAGEOUS
What is the value

True Value

Hardware Stores

Of a conference when learning & networking everywhere?
If anyone is going to disrupt the industry, it is going to be us!

~ Smart Customers, Stupid Companies
WHAT IS PRIMARY PRODUCT

Conferences have offered?
YOUR TURN

What is the primary product that conferences have offered?
FOCUSED ON DEMANDS
of product, experts as speakers
LONG TERM FOCUS

Offering more speakers, more content
PUT CONTENT OVER CUSTOMERS
SPEAKERS OVER LEARNERS
COMMITTEE CONTROL

Over smart business growth strategies
It Happens
Never learned how to acquire new customers
More than new customers – the RIGHT customers

Depending upon easy sale & past marketing methods.
Shotgun Approach
All things to all people
Big box department store
discounted quantity for masses
Content defined by committees
Laser approach
Highly amplified
Coherent focused beam
What is the primary objective of most conferences?
Revenue - profits
Revenue - profits

Monetize over a long time period
Product Centricity
Product Centricity

More product you sell, cheaper it becomes to produce, sell more & make more money
Most Conferences Have Product Centricity Mentality

The more content offered for all stakeholders more likely people will register.
Product Centricity – Shampoo Model
Create a conference.
Market the conference.
Sell the conference.
Repeat.
Product Centricity

Tweak conference slightly
Attendees:

1. Demanding better experience.
Cracks in Product Centricity

Attendees:
1. Demanding better experience.
2. Expect better ROI.
Cracks in Product Centricity

Attendees:

1. Demanding better experience.
2. Expect better ROI.
3. Like free agents, loyalty is fickle.
Product Centricity Vulnerable

Way you’re planning conferences more vulnerable than in past.
In The Past - Stacked Deck

Expertise in industry.
In The Past - Stacked Deck

Expertise in industry.

Info delivery models that secured market share.
In The Past - Stacked Deck

Expertise in industry.

Info delivery models that secured market share.

Few competitors
Perfect Storm
1. Easy access to experts today.
Perfect Storm

1. Easy access to experts today.
2. Info widely available online.
Perfect Storm

1. Easy access to experts today.
2. Info widely available online.
3. Increased competitors.
Not all registrants created equally
WHERE DOES THE CUSTOMER FIT?
Conferences must become more customer-centric.
In world of customer centricity, there are good customers ... and there is everybody else.

Peter Fader
Customer Centricity

Focusing on the right customer for strategic advantage.
Customer Centricity

Not a philosophy
Customer Centricity

Not a philosophy

Not customer service
Customer Centricity

Not a philosophy

Not customer service

Not being nice to customers
Customer Centricity

Cannot be fostered via mission/guide
Customer Centricity

Cannot be fostered via mission/guide

Strategy: align topics with needs, solutions for most valuable customers
Customer Centricity

Aim: more profits for the long term
Is customer always right?
Is customer always right?

Right customer always right!
Two Types Of Conf Customers
Two Types Of Conf Customers

1. Good customers

2. Everyone else
Your Org Better Served If

1. Spent more time on attracting right, good customers for your conference.
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2. Right customers hold key for long term profitability.
Your Org Better Served If

1. Spent more time on attracting right, good customers for your conference.

2. Right customers hold key for long term profitability.

3. Right customers give strategic advantage over competition.
1. CONFERENCE HACK

- Identify your top 3-4 target markets
CONFERENCE HACK

• Identify your top 3-4 target markets
• Focusing on serving them first
CONFERENCE HACK

- Identify your top 3-4 target markets
- Focusing on serving them first
- They are key to profitability
Describe the traditional conference experience?
STALE, PREDICTABLE
TRADITIONAL CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

- Attendee is passive consumer
- Prescribed Encounters
What is the connection between the attendee, exhibitor or sponsor experience and their loyalty?
CEB & Effortless Experience
Matthew Dixon, Nick Toman & Rick DeLisi
2013 Research
Organizations Tend To OVERESTIMATE
LOYALTY

• Customer Satisfaction
• Exceeding Customer Expectations
• 60%-80% customers who defect satisfied
• 2013 CEB Research
WHAT IS LOYALTY

• REPURCHASE - continue to buy from you
WHAT IS LOYALTY

• REPURCHASE - continue to buy from you
• SHARE OF WALLET - buy more over time
WHAT IS LOYALTY

- REPURCHASE - continue to buy from you
- SHARE OF WALLET - buy more over time
- ADVOCACY - customers say good things
Conference Loyalty

- 50% Paid Attendance 2 of 3 years
Conference Loyalty

• 50% Paid Attendance 2 of 3 years
• 65% Exhibitor Stickiness
Conference Loyalty

- 50% Paid Attendance 2 of 3 years
- 65% Exhibitor Stickiness
- 75%-80% Sponsor Stickiness
Customer Acquisition

Sales & marketing processes used
Customer Acquisition

Sales & marketing processes used

Includes staff time & benefits
Customer Acquisition

Sales & marketing processes used

Includes staff time & benefits

Web, print, postage, pr, social media
New Customer Acquisition

Costs 6-7 X more than loyal customers
FOCUS ON ATTENDEE EXPERIENCE
Reinvented Conferences

WE ARE EXPERIENCE DESIGNERS
WE CREATE STORIES
WE CONNECT WITH EMOTIONS
WE ARE CONNECTORS
55% Of Expenses
To Attendee Experience
Attendee Experience Expenses

- AV
- Food & Beverage
- Speakers
- Entertainment
Invest Back Into Attendee
CONFERENCE HACK #2

• Collect registration data for past 3 years
• Identify conference loyalty (goal 50% + 2 out of 3 years attendance)
• Aim for 65%+ Exhibitor Stickiness
• 75%-85% Sponsor Loyalty
CONFERENCE HACK #2

• Try alumni campaign
• When past attendees register, thank them for past involvement
CONFFERENCE HACK #2

• 55% - 65% expense to attendee experience

• Plan and think about creating an attendee conference experience from the beginning of conference planning
YOUR TURN

What is content?
What is the role of content in reinvented conferences?
DATA-, INFO-, CONTENT-CENTRIC
MORE CONTENT, MORE WE CAN SELL
Our strong commitment to content

BLOCKS PATH TO BEING CUSTOMER-CENTRIC
CONTENT IS CORE OF CONFERENCE

• Becomes a barrier to presenters
CONTENT IS CORE OF CONFERENCE

• Becomes a barrier to presenters
• Cover all the content
TIME TO CHALLENGE THAT THINKING

That content is king at the conference.
OUR AFFECTION FOR CONTENT

- Reinforces surface learning
- Memorization
- Forgetting information
Too much content creates CONTENT BULIMIA
POLARIZED PRESENTATIONS
Content covered or active learning occurs
CONFERENCE HACK #3

• We need to become curators of content
CONFERENCE HACK #3

- We need to become curators of content
- Help attendees uncover what content means
CONFERENCE HACK #3

• We need to become curators of content
• Help attendees uncover what content means
• Content as tool to develop deeper understanding
CONFERENCE HACK #3

- We need to become curators of content
- Help attendees uncover what content means
- Content as tool to develop deeper understanding
- Opportunities to discuss how to apply content
CONFERENCE HACK #3

To increase conference revenue and attendance, must curate right content for top three target markets that solves their problems.
WHAT IS JOB OF SPEAKER?
YOUR TURN

What is the job of a speaker?
Speaker as dispenser of information and knowledge now obsolete!
WEB DISPENSES INFORMATION
Better than speakers!
SPEAKERS AS FACILITATORS
Of Learning!
Means less telling from stage
More discovery by participants
Transition from delivery of information to LEARNING DESIGN
LEARNING DESIGN IS

• What will participants do?
LEARNING DESIGN IS

• What will participants do?
• Creating activities and exercises
CONFERENCES HACK #4

- Speakers need to be facilitators of learning
- Focus on learning design not transfer of information
CONFERENCE HACK #4

To increase conference revenue and attendance, speakers must focus on providing learning experiences that readily apply on the job, increase work productivity and improve employee performance.
PROCESS OF EDUCATION
When people attend conference education, what are they searching for or expect to leave with?
- Information
- Wisdom
- Data
- Knowledge
- Understanding
Data

Information

Knowledge

Understanding

Wisdom
Wisdom
Understanding
Knowledge
Information
Data
DIKUW
TAKEAWAYS, UNDERSTANDING & WISDOM
CONFERENCE EDUCATION ABANDONS FACTORY MODEL

DESIGNING A LEARNING EXPERIENCE NOT A LECTURE
CONFERENCE HACK #5

- Paid registrants are looking for understanding
- & wise application of takeaways, not just information
CONFERENCE HACK #5

To increase conference revenue and attendance, education must help target attendees solve their most pressing needs with relevant takeaways and understanding.
CONFERENCE HACK #5

To increase conference revenue and attendance, education must involve brain-based learning that allows for “Think, Write, Share” methods of peerology.
TASK OF TECHNOLOGY
CHASE SHINY NEW TECH TOOLS
IMPLEMENT WITHOUT

Considering if they add value or distract
SMART DATA
SEGMENTATION & ATTRACTING ECONOMIC BUYERS
Identifying Right Customers

Requires data collection
Identifying Right Customers

Requires data collection

Collecting, tracking & monitoring
Identifying Right Customers

Requires data collection

Collecting, tracking & monitoring

Past purchasing habits
Identifying Right Customers

Requires data collection

Collecting, tracking & monitoring

Past purchasing habits

Investing in tech & staff to collect, sort
Use Technology To Flip The Conference Model
Use Technology To Flip The Conference Model

Provide pre and post conference webinars

their customers want.
Use Technology To Flip The Conference Model

Create short speaker videos

Encourage attendees to connect through “Idea Networking” instead of traditional networking
Use Technology To Flip The Conference Model

Live stream specific content free as an content marketing strategy. Remember to use a speaker that understands engaging face to face and remote audiences.
Use Technology To Flip The Conference Model

Schedule “replays” of recorded sessions and invite speakers back during replay.
DECISIONS BASED ON "WHAT'S IN BEST INTEREST OF ATTENDEE?"
CONFERENCE HACK #6

- Technology should be a tool to increase engagement
CONFERENCE HACK #6

- Technology should be a tool to increase engagement
- Add to attendee's experience
CONFERENCE HACK #6

To increase conference revenue and attendance, use technology to flip the traditional conference model and extend the conference experience before and after the event.
YOUR TURN

What is your biggest takeaway from this presentation?
1) Identify and assess six big conference disruptors.
2) Discuss the effective function of content in conference education programming.
3) Explore the evolving role of a speaker in 21st century education.