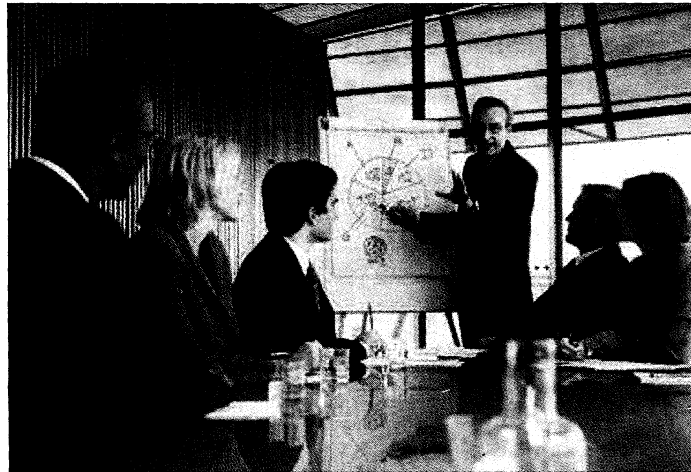


4r1 Face-to-Face Events Deliver Greatest Marketing Performance 130

Globaly, 91% of marketing executives perceive the importance of event marketing to be constant or increasing, a finding from the 2004 Global Event Trends Survey that bolsters a three-year trend of increased confidence in the face-to-face marketing discipline. The results of this global study of corporate marketing executives, conducted by global event marketing agency The George P. Johnson Company (GPJ) and The MPI Foundation forecasts a future for event marketing rich with potential, in terms of impact, utilization and investment.

For the past three years, the Global Event Trends Survey has monitored opinions and intentions of corporate executives regarding event marketing and how it relates to and impacts other components of their marketing plans. This year's study is based upon interviews with more than 600 decision-making marketing executives and personnel in U.S., European and Asia Pacific corporations with recorded sales exceeding \$250 million. Respondents included executives from a range of vertical industries including: automotive, technology, healthcare, financial services, consumer, manufacturing and associations. The MPI Foundation is the research and development arm of Dallas-based Meeting Professionals International (MPI), the world's largest association for the meetings profession with 19,000 members in 60 countries.

A key takeaway from this year's survey is the emergence of event marketing as the marketing discipline reported by 37% of respondents to deliver the greatest return on investment (ROI), as compared to other disciplines. According to the survey, direct marketing ranks a distant second with 19% of the responses, followed by sales promotion at 14%. Although event marketing tops the ROI list, marketers' use of specific event types differs along with their marketing objectives. Global results show that trade shows



Global marketing strategy

are perceived by one-third of surveyed corporations as the leading event type in terms of ROI. Following behind trade shows in perceived ROI are conferences (24%) and seminars (20%).

This survey also distinguishes itself from previous years with the elevation in the importance of using event marketing to increase product knowledge and to increase brand preference. As the communication markets become increasingly saturated, corporations are becoming more strategic in their outreach with customers. Respondents rated 'increased brand awareness' as the most important "success criteria" (4.2 on a scale of 5), with 'increased product knowledge' coming in at a close second (4.1).

Respondents' perceptions of ROI performance did not directly inform their marketing budget pri-

orizations, however. Despite findings that only 16% of companies consider "web or Internet advertising" tops in delivering ROI, 51% of respondents anticipate increasing budget allocations for these activities. On the other hand, event marketing, which was ranked first in ROI, is anticipated by fewer executives surveyed (41%) to benefit from increased budget allocations.

"The industry finds itself at a crossroads, as marketing mixes shift in favor of more measurable program activities," said David Rich, vice president, program strategy, GPJ. "As businesses are increasingly compelled to justify budgets with measurable results, I believe we will see an alignment of value and investment in favor of event marketing."

The survey also revealed differences in the

ways the U.S., Europe and Asia-Pacific qualify event success. While the U.S. and Europe cited 'increased product knowledge' as the criteria most important when determining event marketing success, Asian Pacific companies placed greater emphasis on 'brand awareness.'

David A. DuBois, CMP, CAE, executive vice president, the MPI Foundation and vice president, corporate services, MPI, said, "Whether it's increased product knowledge, greater brand awareness, a boost in sales or a reinvigorated work force, face-to-face events are instrumental in helping organizations advance their strategic goals. It is encouraging to see that executives in the US, Europe and Asia-Pacific are continuing to see the value of events in the marketing mix."

Across all geographies, event marketing averages 20% of total marketing communications budgets. That trend is most dramatically demonstrated in Asia Pacific, where 74% of the survey's participants cite the growing influence of event marketing, almost 20 points higher than the global average. In fact, more Asian Pacific corporations (49%) anticipate increased budget allocations to event marketing than for any other marketing activity.

The final report, an evaluation of the current use of and anticipated demand for event marketing among corporations globally, explores the discipline's changing role, levels of investments and perceived effectiveness compared to other marketing mix elements.

The full 2004 Global Event Trends Survey report is available upon request of either Jane Berger or Kelly Schulz (contact information above). A white paper contextualizing the survey's findings with respect to other industry and economic trends will be available soon at both www.gpjco.com and www.mpfoundation.org.

Information for this article was provided by the MPI Foundation. Learn more at www.mpfoundation.org.