



STAGING BIG CITY EVENTS

Crafting big city events is no easy feat, and there are any number of unforeseen mishaps that can crop up. And if they aren't man-made, Mother Nature usually steps in. **Civic Entertainment Group offers a checklist to help you plan your next metropolitan shindig.**

✓ **LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION:**

Get a list of the top 10 media markets and set up in a high-traffic location that the target audience and media outlets have easy access to. Locate a site close to public transportation and parking.

✓ **PERMITS:** City agencies issue permits, and you need to apply for one—the right one. Start way in advance because this can take time. If you're in a park, you need permission from the Parks Department. If you're on the street, you need permission from the Department of Transportation. Building a stage or platform requires Department of Building permits. "You can't just show up," warns Seth Webb, director of Civic Entertainment.

✓ **TIMING:** Make it easy on yourself and pick a day that's free of competition. Don't compete with the local baseball team, religious



holidays or big parades. Choose a time of day—preferably around lunch—to maximize the chances of getting the event picked up by the local media.

✓ **BRANDING:** Understand the impact that presence, staging, signage and staff create for the brand. Civic Entertainment set up an outdoor porch for **Southwest Airlines in New York's Bryant Park to get the word out that it was about to begin offering service out of LaGuardia Airport.** The porch was located

throughout the summer in the southwest corner of the park and offered food inspired by the airline's destinations, such as soft-shell crab sandwiches from Baltimore.

✓ **SECURITY:** Large events require security to safeguard talent, keep an eye on set-up and break-down (often in the wee hours) and monitor VIP-only areas.

✓ **CONTINGENCY PLAN:** Bad weather? Excessive crowds? Electrical failure? Talent no-show? Think through the scenarios and have a clear plan of who to call and how to handle the unexpected.
—PATRICIA ODELL

TIP: Get Attention with the Unexpected

THE NORTHEAST HAD MORE THAN ITS FAIR SHARE OF SNOW IN WINTER 2011. So naturally, Golfsmith dumped more on the streets of Manhattan in February.

Golfsmith and TaylorMade-Adidas Golf Co. held a "White Out" in-store and on-the-street promotion to get some attention for their two new drivers—the all-white R11 and Burner SuperFast 2.0.

An all-white range for professionals to try out the

drivers was built outside Golfsmith's Manhattan store on 54th Street, closing off two of the three lanes to traffic. And to make sure the "white out" effect was complete, extra manmade snow was brought in for the 45-foot-tall by 120-foot-long caged hitting bay.

"You've got to think about something that will make people stop and say, 'You're going to do what?'" Golfsmith CMO Matt Corey said. "They have to think you're a little bit crazy."

Top-ranked professional golfers Martin Kaymer and Sergio Garcia—wearing all white, of course—kicked off the event at 11 am by teeing off for a cause. For each target they hit, TaylorMade-Adidas and Golfsmith donated up to \$40,000 to Operation Game On!, an organization that uses golf as part of rehabilitation efforts for wounded warriors.

The public was then also invited to try the clubs at the range, visit the store to get autographs from the professionals and receive giveaways such as hats or one of 10 white drivers.

Golfsmith's marketing strategy typically focuses on direct mail and catalogs and online promotion of Golfsmith.com, as well in-store demonstrations, clinics

and private parties at its 75 stores.

"On occasion you have to have something that's not just about direct response. This event is to drive our brand," Corey said. "When you have the opportunity to do something unique and out of the box—not just another discount or free shipping offer—that's going to create awareness for your brand and your partner's brand, you've got to do it."

Word-of-mouth proved its worth at a major event Golfsmith staged in 2006 to bring attention to its tennis equipment and apparel. It built a tennis court in New York City, where a match was held between Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. Viral components were credited with bringing 700-800 people to the event.

Other attention getting events included:

- Eco-friendly cleaning brand Mrs. Meyer's brought its Clean Day products to San Francisco—and dumped them into the fountain in San Francisco's Ghirardelli Square.
- Snapple created a 20-ton ice pop in New York City at an attempt at a Guinness World Record. The weather played a role in this event too, temperatures rose and the pop began to melt. —PO





AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT A HOUSE PARTY

Home parties are growing in favor, providing marketers with a far-reaching network of qualified hosts who invite family, friends and neighbors to experience brands in a personal setting, often interacting with the products the way they would on a daily basis in their own homes.

House Party, an Irvington, NY, based experiential marketing agency, has staged parties for Microsoft, Royal Caribbean, Fisher-Price, Sargento, Domino's, Xbox, Ziploc, Ford, Werther's, Turner Broadcasting and others. Parties range in size from 1,000 to 100,000, each averaging 3.5 to four hours. The average cost is between \$200,000 and \$250,000, but can run into the millions depending on the number of parties.

To recruit hosts, House Party taps the brand's consumer database, and also uses its own database of several hundred thousand potential hosts.

Kitty Kolding, CEO of House Party, shares the five stages in planning such events.

1. Planning and Prepping (2-6 weeks)

This is the time to identify the party theme, entertainment and activities, such as contests or sweepstakes, product trial, demos or sampling. Items for party packs, delivered one week prior to the events, are identified and sourced. A discussion about whether a co-sponsor makes sense takes place. Success metrics and a time line for the

events are developed. The event micro-site is launched and communications are created to recruit hosts.

2. Recruiting the Host (2-3 weeks)

Over the next several weeks, the client provides six- to 18- demographic and psychographic characteristics required of the host and attendees. The hosts must be highly social, good at throwing parties and have a wide circle of friends and family who like to attend their parties. A promotional plan is developed to reach out to potential host, driving them to a landing page—live for two-to-three weeks—that describes the party and how to qualify as a host.

3. Getting Ready (3-4 weeks)

During this phase, the hosts are notified. They pick a party theme, customize their online party planning stages, invite friends, upload photos and stay looped in to the national party page. The party packs are shipped.

4. Party Time

All of the parties happen on the same day or over a weekend.

5. Post Event (2-3 weeks)

Once the parties end, the focus turns to continuing interactions and communications with attendees to motivate post event brand awareness and trial, such as coupon redemption, a visit to a Web site to take an action, such as a test drive. A post-event survey is fielded and a word-of-mouth path is documented. Highly engaged guests are converted to viral agents for the brand.—PO

TIP:

Light Your Audience's Fire with Music

THE ZIPPO MANUFACTURING CO. STAGED SIX MUSICAL EVENTS IN CHINA LAST YEAR—one per month—to convert buyers and build advocates among young adults. Zippo is just one brand upping its marketing in the “BRIC” countries. Global marketing spending is expected to jump in this year, with Brazil, Russia, India and China leading the way.

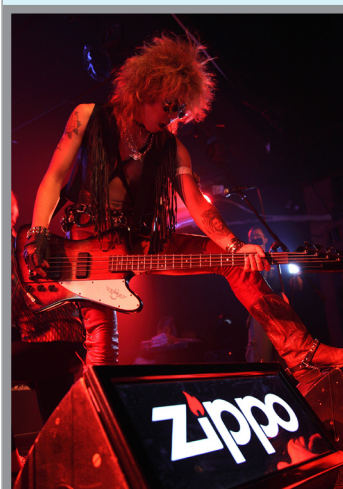
“Our target audience from the underground rock scene are a very cynical bunch so we worked hard to present Zippo in a way that connected with them,” Ben Taylor, president of Asia-Pacific for Jack Morton Worldwide said. “The brand was always presented in an honest and raw way. We didn't try to overshadow the music but neither did we hide in the corner.”

The objective was to not only drive Zippo's sales in the region by 20% over a one year period but to boost brand awareness overall and build a database of brand advocates for the lighter. “Zippo Hot List Night” was a six-month campaign that centered on one event per month featuring well-known rock acts and up-and-coming acts. Zippo's sponsorship of the events relayed its support of grass roots rock music in China. New Zippo purchasers received free tickets to attend the events.

Audience members won shirts from local t-shirt rand Plastered 8 on the night of the events, which were emceed by a well-known Chinese rock musician. Zippo ambassadors mingled with the

crowd wearing Zippo fragrance and apparel and lighting up peoples' cigarettes. The stage design included two LED Zippo-Meters which acted as “cheer-meters” to gauge average popularity of the performing band. Off-stage, bartenders made patrons the “Z-52” a cocktail served and consumed while on fire.

An average of more than 400 people attended each event. Casual interviews indicated that most of the audience



would come back for more Zippo rock concerts., and onsite data collection yielded a database of 123 on average per event.

“It wasn't just music events but underground music events,” Taylor said. “The people who are fans of this genre of music and follow these bands in Beijing are also “early adopters” of fashion trends. Having Zippo appeal to this demographic has a ripple effect throughout the wider community.”—PO