

In-person events are making a comeback!

Learn how event experts
use brand merchandise
to make event publicity,
registration, and
attendee experiences
more successful.



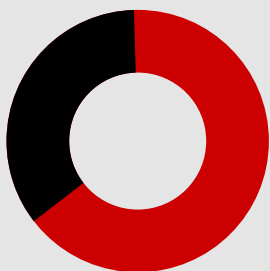
Get ready for the return of in-person events next quarter.

Businesses are getting ready to resume physical meetings and events. According to a March 2021 survey by PCMA Convene, 64% of Event Experts plan in-person events this year, with 83% scheduled for the third or fourth quarters.

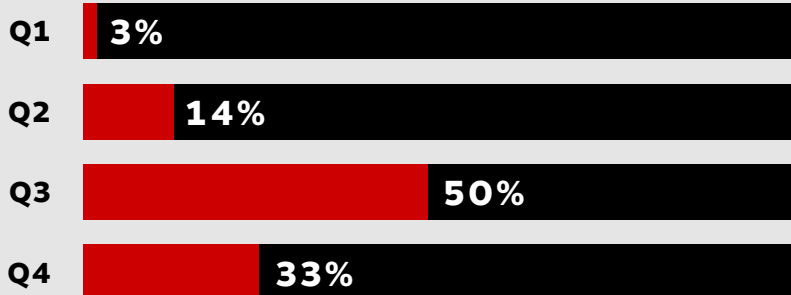
PCMA Convene*

Are you planning an in-person event in 2021?

64% Yes
36% No



What is the anticipated date of your in-person event planned for 2021?



Brand merchandise plays a bigger role in modern event ROI.

Whether your event is physical, virtual or hybrid, one thing never changes. The only way to create the most ROI possible is to give attendees the most engaging experiences possible!

As physical events were forced into virtual venues last year, meeting experts counted on merchandise more than ever. They used it to enhance awareness, registration, and engagement.

You can use the same merchandise tactics to improve event engagement and ROI this year!

Create authentic buzz with organic social.

Be more intentional & strategic about social media publicity.

Turn attendees into publicists.

Cultivate authentic, organic event impressions.

Increase registration demand & urgency.

Enhance registration response & revenues.

Make merchandise a more powerful messenger.

Deliver your idea, not just the product.

Win attention, not just attendance.

Engage attendees with carefully curated products delivered more meaningfully.

Optimize physical space and virtual time.

Make experiences richer, content more compact & key takeaways more emergent.

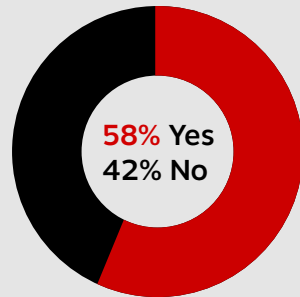
Collect, plan, deploy.

Collect attendee information, plan personal experiences & deploy personalized products.

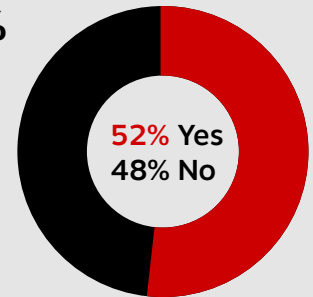
Create authentic buzz with organic social.

Social media plays a bigger role in event success than you might think. Let's explore why that is, and how merchandise can help!

Social influences purchasing decision, even if it's not where the product/service is discovered



It is where 52% of all brand discovery takes place



Social media directly affects event performance. It is where 52% of all brand discovery takes place and it influences 58% of all purchasing decisions. Accordingly, the amount and type of social buzz your event receives directly affects how it is perceived and how well it performs in terms of awareness and attendance.

As shown throughout, merchandise can magnify social post visibility and volume. It inspires organic or “earned” posts from remote and physical attendees. Earned posts are more authentic and influential than paid posts, especially for younger audiences.

Merchandise and merchandise-inspired social posts can also:

- Improve event publicity
- Enhance registration demand and urgency
- Increase messaging impact
- Optimize event attendance and engagement

Turn attendees into publicists.

User-generated and posted content is by far the most valuable because it is perceived with more authenticity. Photography & video occasions drive post creation and subsequent view counts. Therefore, plan unique experiences and distribute colorful, brand and discussion-relevant products to inspire user-created posts.

For physical events; prominent signage, colorful and over-sized displays, high-value giveaways, contests and interactive-experiences create post occasions.

For virtual events, gamification, dimensional direct mail, clever kits, higher-value or brand-name promotional products and rewards for interaction are suggestions that increase posts.



Using Social Media & Gamification to increase engagement

Montessori Model UN created a series of simple daily challenges in which attendees could easily participate for a chance to win prizes. One such challenge was simply to post a photo of your computer setup.



* Twitter Posts; Various Contributors

Increase registration demand & urgency.

Merchandise should play a larger role in event registration, particularly for virtual events. Promising and depicting event-immersive merchandise experiences will enhance results. It can increase registration urgency, differentiation and value.

Increase Urgency

A limited-quantity product or kit can be offered to those that register early.

Sprout Social offered such a kit to the first 500 registrants.

In addition to creating an incentive to commit early, this tactic also created organic social media impressions when recipients posted photos and comments.



Increase Differentiation & Value

Do you have different event packages and options? By adding merchandise to one or several options, you can influence perceived value. Increase sales of top options by packaging them with premium product experiences.

Register online today!

All Access registration provides you with access to all conference activities AND you will receive a Conference in a Box in the mail a few days before the conference begins. A limited number of conference boxes are available and we always sell out! The cost of All Access registration is \$50.

Digital Only access provides registrants with access to all conference activities, but does not include a Conference in a Box. The cost of Digital Only access registration is \$25. The registration deadline for Digital Only access is Friday, January 31, 2020.

Make merchandise a more powerful messenger.

At virtual events, merchandise delivers more tactile and emotional impact.

The more virtual the event, the more responsibility merchandise carries. It provides almost all the physical experience and tangible impressions. Your product experiences will be felt more personally and emotionally as part of virtual events—particularly amidst today’s digital saturation.

Investing more in personalized product curation and richer messaging is a value-play. Wrap your product in the most important messages so they’re heard more personally and meaningfully. Use inserts and packaging to tell attendees how products align with content. Make them illustrate your content’s story.



- Key learnings from case histories
- Persuasive discussion moments
- Primary content themes
- Benefits dramatization

GLAG—Global Learning in Agriculture—sent a merchandise kit to “full conference participants.”

- It served as an incentive for a registrant to choose a \$50 pass over a \$25 pass
- One of the components was chocolate for an online testing experience
- It generated social media posts and publicity when conference registrants started receiving the kits



* Twitter Posts; Various Contributors

Win attention, not just attendance.

Attendees have endured a steady diet of digital and virtual experiences, all viewed from the same boring home office.

They're sitting next to phones and tablets, which chirp steady distractions the second your content starts to lag. So, keep it interesting. Change it up. Direct more attention to the conference experience.

Interaction is mindshare.

Interactive content is the most engaging because conference attendees learn more from one another; and from experts besides yours. Here are a few things you might try to add engagement and break virtual clutter.

Q&A

Pause to collect audience questions, or request feedback. Spot reward correct answers or intriguing comments with merchandise. Give respondents a code they can redeem online for a reward of their choice via our complementary custom microsites.

Customer & expert panels

Let attendees ask the clients and experts, not just you. The unscripted spontaneity of such sessions can be a highlight.

Switch it up

Change presenters with enough frequency to make it fresh, but not so often that it gets confusing. Practice good transitions.

Electronic certificates of completion

Reward attendees for completing a set amount of conference sessions.



Customer & expert presenters

Have respected experts or prized clients deliver content sections. This adds credibility and implied endorsement. Attendees also benefit from unexpected perspective that adds interest.

Real-time quizzes & polling


Ask attendees to vote to galvanize participation. Ask which case history you should present later. Tabulate results in real-time. Everyone is interested in how their opinion ranks.

Gamification

Quizzes, trivia, contests, spot awards, buzzword bingo and online or physical scavenger hunts are a great way to challenge attendees and keep them on the lookout for gamified elements of your content.

MAKE YOUR VIRTUAL EVENT MORE INTERESTING THAN WHAT'S INSIDE THE REFRIGERATOR

*Heather McNair | Chief Community Officer
Higher Logic*



Thursday, May 28 | 1 p.m. EST

kasiandesign · Follow

BINGO

Hi, who just joined?	Can you email that to everyone?	Is ____ on the call?	Um, ____ you're still sharing	Hey, guys, I have to jump to another call
(Sound of someone typing, possibly with hammer)	(Loud, painful echo/feedback)	(Child or animal noises)	Hi, can you hear me?	No, it's still loading
Next slide, please	Can everyone go on mute?		I'm sorry, I was on mute	(For overtalkers) Sorry go ahead
I have a hard stop at...	I'm sorry, you cut out there	Can we take this offline?	Can everyone see my screen	Sorry, I didn't catch that. Can you repeat?
Sorry, I was having connection issues	Sorry I'm late (insert lame excuse)	I think there's a lag	I'll have to get back to you	Sorry, I didn't catch that. Can you repeat?

Optimize physical spaces & virtual times.

Traditional Events are shared in the same space.

Virtual Events are shared in the same time.

Product Goal

- Enhance the experience!

- Enhance the experience!

Attendee Experience

- Noisier, less isolated experience
- More reactive
- Venue carries more of experience
- Different intervals

- More concise, less noisy experience
- Merchandise stands out even more.
- More data-intense reaction
- Ideas & content carry experience
- Simultaneously shared

Content

Merchandise can be used in a wider variety of ways but is less of the overall physical & tactile experience. It can be used to increase traffic, reward attendance to emphasize key content, etc.

Merchandise is almost all the overall physical & tactile experience. Invest in more strategic and directional use. Emphasize key points & ideas, use as incentives for registration & to broker more participation / engagement, etc.

Messaging

- Coordinate merchandise to enrich experience & support ideas
- Presenter or exhibitor can time delivery with merchandise
- Can be delivered personally
- You can read & react to response

- Well-curated merchandise brings richer, more personal & emotional impact to your message
- Coordinate merchandise to emphasize key ideas & points
- Surround product with print or packaging that carries messaging

Freight Cost

- Less a concern due to bulk shipping

- More a concern due to individual shipping

Transport

- Plan for ease of attendee taking it home

- Individually shipped to home, so plan product & packaging to be a rich messaging experience

Brand Names

- Not as important in communicating value because product is physically present

- Brand-name products presented as incentives are better at communicating value

Content

- Can be longer & more complex due to face-to-face interaction

- Needs to be shorter, less complex due to less control over experience



When sourcing physical event merchandise, don't forget your recipients have to get them home!

Gifts given to presenters before or after their contributions can motivate incremental effort, gratitude & collaboration.



Stickers are trendy, they mail easy, and distinctive designs can earn real estate on laptop covers, phone cases and other day-to-day peripherals.

"Chance to win merchandise" contests can be effective towards reaching some tradeshow metrics.



Collect, Plan, Deploy.

SPPOne makes it easier to enhance physical & virtual event experiences with merchandise.

Whether your event is physical, virtual or hybrid, SPPOne can help you enrich the experience with merchandise. This secure, cost-free online platform makes it easy to:

- Collect information such as attendee sizing & shipping addresses
- Offer merchandise choices
- Enable attendees to select product choices and sizes
- Generate reporting on redemptions

SPPONE
Driving business transformation.



Thank You

For more of our brand expertise, visit

StaplesPromo.com

or contact your Staples Representative