



The Heat is On! 40 HOT TIPS to Perk up your Education in a Down Economy

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Connecting Great Ideas and Great People

Association Education Should ...

- Engage participants (in the education and in the association)
- Maintain their interest and keep 'em coming back for more
- Be constantly in a state of learning (from research and data)
- Make money!



MUCH Easier Said Than Done ...

- How do you do that in a Recession?
- Challenges associations and members face:
 - Travel budgets being cut, so distant meetings are harder to attend
 - Less money for training
 - Staff sizes down, so more work in office, less time for education



Our Objective Today:

- Help you beat this economy ... without getting beat up
- Offer ways for you to strategically evaluate your education portfolio
- Assure lasting value to your member/customer
- Help you think in a new way, through a new lens
- Be prepared for when recession is over!



UNDERSTANDING YOUR CUSTOMERS



TIP #1

- Conduct a SPECIFIC education needs assessment at least once a year.
- Knowledge is power ... especially now
 - Right now, your members want to know what others think, what others are doing.
 - KEY: Ask questions that will provide meaningful, actionable responses and crosstab by demographics to make it meaningful!



TIP #2

Profile your education customer.

- Your existing customers/members are your most precious asset. Understand them well and treat them as such.
- Having demographic information in your membership database is not enough. You must know what certain *sectors want and need*.



TIP #3

Reassess your competition.

- DO NOT ASSUME it is always who it has been in the past.
- It is critical that you know who's competing for your education dollars.
- Ask and listen, take notes, alert all staff.



TIP #4

Employ the Perfect Trifecta.

Member demographics + Expressed need
Current offerings

- You will begin to clearly see gaps. Within those gaps like your biggest areas of opportunity.



TIP #5

Do you have "Jonesers?" Understand them!

- They are the "lost generation" between Baby Boomers and Gen Xers
- They came of age at a dramatically different time than boomers
- Products and marketing are not the same
- Nearly 1/2 of them make \$75,000 or above



TIP #5 (continued)

- Working long hours and having school-aged kids makes them starved for time
- Appeal to their need for simplicity and convenience
- (Bet = most of your active members fall into or near this newly identified target group!)



TIP #6

Keep your eyes on the forest ... not the trees!

- Never lose sight of your pipeline of members and consumers
- Always pay attention to the continuum of offerings being provided to them by your association



UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT



TIP #7

Stay current . Be focused. Look to outside resources to infuse new life and energy into your educational programs. Check out these sites regularly:

- www.ted.com
- www.trendhunter.com
- www.wfs.org
- www.trendwatching.com
- www.trendsresearch.com



EXAMPLES

- Apply world events to your industry. When something happens in the state, nationally or internationally, ask yourself: *What will this mean for my members?*
- In 2009, here 4 of Jeremy Gutsche's Top 20 Trends ... how can they relate to your industry?
DIY, Physical Customization, Virtual Tourism
Remaking History Better



Gutsche wrote "Exploiting Chaos"

- Did you know: Hewlett-Packard, Disney, Hyatt, MTV, CNN, Microsoft and GE all started during periods of economic recession?
- Periods of uncertainty fuel tremendous opportunity
- They change the rules of the game - must be on top of your game
- Preview book on trendhunter.com



TIP #8

Do not let a scary time frighten you into complacency or paralysis!

- If you cut *all* spending, you have stopped investing in your future.
- In "Leadership in the Era of Uncertainty" by Ram Charan, he says, "Being innovative when your competitors are merely staying afloat can make all the difference."
- Use "prudent" yet "disruptive" innovation.



TIP #9

Set aside some of your budget (say 15%) and consider it "The Experimentation Fund."

- This is not the time to put ingenuity on the back burner
- The experiment fund is just for that - if lost, you can live without



TIP #10

Let members know you care about their issues and have programs that respond to the economic pressures and offer ways to help.

- Do a program on health and well-being and put it into the context of your own association's topic areas.
- A recent survey by *Chicago Tribune* citing the AHA said:
 - 57% say economy has affected their ability to take care of health
 - 32% say they've skipped a preventive care
 - 10% say they've stopped (or diminished) use of medicines to lower cholesterol or manage asthma or other chronic conditions.



DELIVERING YOUR PRODUCT



TIP #11

Work with chapters, other local outlets to offer members local education

- Be proactive. Reach out to chapters, local groups before they eat your lunch!
- As a national entity, you may have the ability to serve as a wholesaler of educational products out to the locals



TIP #12

Offer Fingertip Learning

- ASAE does this ... it's content that can be downloaded at reasonable prices
- Bite-sized information to members in an easy to consume and digestible format
- Not as big a time or financial commitment



TIP #13

Try On-Location Programming.

- Take a popular live program and bring it to a large member organization and charge \$ for it.
- Allow the purchasing organization to sell retail spaces to the course (such as a state association or local group) giving both you and the group the opportunity to make a profit.



TIP #14

Develop and maintain a hip pocket of evergreen courses

- Count on evergreen topics to carry you through (at least a little).
- The main ideas here remain pertinent despite the economy. Courses that work well? Beginning-to-the-field courses.



GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR INSTRUCTORS



TIP #15

Look to less than traditional means for presenters and save \$\$\$ in the process
Be creative!



TIP #16

Re-negotiate instructor agreements

- Your association may be better off negotiating a base fee + incentive pay for instructors rather than straight honorarium
- Understand the leverage you have (or do not have) over your instructors first!



EDUCATIONAL DESIGN: TRY NEW APPROACHES IN CHALLENGING TIMES



Some associations have become victims of their own success. For years, the same products, services and delivery methods have worked and served to be cash cows.

In 2009, all bets are off ...



TIP #17

Develop education around your credential, if you have one.

- Do your members need to maintain continuing education credits ... (medical groups!)
- Offer online prep courses, rather than in-person study groups. Your fees would be far less and the process is easier.



TIP #18

Offer Podcasts

- Can either promote already in-place education program or stand-alone.
- Offer podcast series where members can access 15 to 30 minute sessions on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis.
- Production costs typically minimal. Record sessions, bundle and resell throughout the year.



TIP #19

Blog - specifically for education programs

- Get presenters to blog before, during and after sessions
- Invite interaction
- Can use for event descriptions, posting of graphics or video
- Ask prominent members to chime in



TIP #20

Get on Facebook - but be purposeful, know WHY you're doing it

- Create a plan before a page.
- This can be education-specific, but you can then use this page to promote your education, throw ideas on the page to gauge reaction, etc.



TIP #21

Get a Life ... Second Life, that is

- Linden Lab (creators of Second Life) statistics from July 2008: 63% of Second Life users fall into the Gen X and Gen Y age range
- Provides a unique opportunity to engage in "real" interaction with other participants



TIP #21 (continued)

- Participants communicate in a variety of forms: using chat window open to all; instant messaging is more private; and a voice chat using a microphone.
- Discussion is similar to traditional professional development, with a uniqueness of allowing all participants, including the instructor, to have the same ability to communicate and share ideas.
- Instructors have more flexibility with content presentation.



TIP #22

Add additional programs with caution

- The ASAE Economic Study showed that members may be cutting lower-cost travel first. May suggest members will still pay to go to Annual Meetings, but may skip single-day education instead.
- Be sure you have an ample market to support a program before planning it. No time for extreme niche programming.



TIP #23

Offer and promote “exclusive” Annual Meeting education programs

- Members can ONLY receive this information at Annual Meeting
- Special speaker
- Unique expert panel, and so on



TIP #24

On the flip side of exclusive content ... repurpose it!

- From Annual Meeting, create DVDs, CDs or a link on your Web site
- Attendees receive either with registration fee or at a discounted rate than non-attendees



TIP #25

Bundle programs and offer a price break Example:

- Offer a special package where members purchase, on behalf of organization, 10 seats for your seminars annually for the price of 8 or 8.5 seats. Anyone in the organization can use the seats, not just the attendee. Key: member must apply for this.



▪ EXAMPLE:

- \$500/person/seminar x 10 = \$5,000 retail for 10 seminar seats
- \$500/person/seminar x 8.5 seat charge = \$4250



HERE'S A GOOD STORY ...

- Premium Denim
- They learned to UNBUNDLE when necessary.



TIP #26

Unbundle your two and three day programs

- Cost cannot be justified
- Charge less for three-hour or even half-day courses if you are finding members cannot pay for the “jeans.”



TIP #27

- Offer a combination of products in an offering: 5 seminar seats for the year and 5 podcasts, for the wholesale price of 4 seminar seats and 4 podcasts.
- You have ability to put restrictions on sale dates, costs are covered.
- May lose small amount at the margin but have presold a number of seats.



MARKET YOUR PROGRAMS EFFECTIVELY TO ENSURE STRONG ATTENDANCE



ASAE study also showed that “Youth isn’t feeling served.”

- Are you marketing education specifically to them ... that is for them?
- Ask several younger members for feedback
- Remember: they are into social media!



TIP #28

Institute a “send your staff” initiative

- Particularly good for trade associations
- EG: Existing member can bring nonmember from the same company for 50% off nonmember price
- EG: Existing member can bring young executive from the same company for 50% off, etc.



TIP #29

Dedicate area on your web site for “Products to Help you Through the Economy”

- Gather all educational products that pertain and highlight them there
- Offer bulk buying discounts to sweeten the pot



TIP #29 (continued)

- Keep communicating through Web, social sites and emails with consistent message, “We know what you’re going through ...” and that’s why we’re offering this or that



PROGRAM DELIVERY



TIP #30

Allow enough time in educational programs for connection and networking

- Now more than ever, participants need extra time for this interactivity
- Consider using more interactive techniques and icebreakers than before



TIP #31

Use Needs and Leads Session

- Popular at the Harvard Business School, the “needs and leads” is an interactive session that allows members to come in with a “need” and get leads on how to address it through other members. NOT intended as a “sales” session!



TIP #32

Education MUST provide take-home value

- Members need to quantify value: have you helped them do their job better? How much? In what ways? CEOs demand it.
- A few ideas:
 - Ask audience, “What are three things you learned today that you can implement tomorrow?”
 - Have a Review Quiz



TIP #33

Make your education as PRACTICAL as possible

- Incorporate case studies and other items based in real world examples
- To learn how to write more case studies, check out:
 - www.klariti.com
 - www.btobonline.com
 - www.ecch.com



THE RECOVERY PERIOD



According to consumer market research firm Mintel ...

- Contraction in wealth is a given
- There will be a sustained societal shift in values brought about by this recession, the tightening of banking practices and more
- This means a number of economic variables will be affected



Mintel's data and research shows that because of the credit crunch and ongoing consumer skepticism:

- Fewer small business start-ups
- Less overall innovation in small business, and even large business
- SBA loans cut by 50% - going from \$20B to \$10B this year



This means ...

- In the midst of a lot of distrust in the external environment, the "trusted" association entity has an opportunity to provide the kind of innovation and leadership that for profit businesses might not be able to ...



TIP #34

- Prepare for the association education recovery period



TIP #35

Listen to members and market like you never have before!

- Financial services industry will be looking to provide additional funding on human capital.
- Training and development being high on the list! (according to Mintel), but it will not be "same old, same old"
- What can this mean for your association?



TIP #36

Consider the topic areas (and points of pain, in some cases) for late 2009 and 2010 noted by Mintel



TIP #36 (continued)



TIP #37

Find compelling content in the areas that are changing for your members and society. It is not business as usual!

- De-mobilization and de-suburbanization
- Creation rather than consumption
- Re-regulation



TIP #38

- Come to the session for this tip!



TIP #39

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TIP #40

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