

Events in magazine media

And how to convert them into a revenue source



FIPP
Connecting
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Intro

Events can act as “a form of insulation against economic turbulence” when other variables seem to be in flux, says Jonathan Dorn, Chief Innovation Officer, Active Interest Media

Magazine publishing has been going through significant restructuring over the last decade. Within this changing landscape, and seeking a way out of past over-reliance on advertising, many media companies are now committed to finding alternative revenue sources and revisiting old ones. Subscriptions, paywalls, and affiliate marketing are three examples, but possibly the biggest opportunity is for brand extensions – in particular, events.

Events represent a clear opportunity for growing an audience, attracting new advertisers, and increasing engagement with existing readers and subscribers. Magazines have run events for decades as a way of getting closer

to readers, but now the emphasis has shifted – they are recognised as being a serious revenue stream as well.

As Jonathan Dorn, Active Interest Media (AIM)’s Chief Innovation Officer, explained to FIPP¹, events can act as “a form of insulation against economic turbulence” when other variables seem to be in flux. AIM now claims more than 50 per cent of its revenue from events.

This report meets the needs of magazine media companies: the small team who are looking for ways to grow their audience, or an employee at a larger publisher who feels excited by the

possibilities of events and has the resources to invest, but doesn’t quite know where to begin.

With so many opportunities to entice new readers and entrench relationships with existing ones, there’s every reason to start planning your first event. There will inevitably be challenges throughout the process, but as you’ll read in this report, that’s something that most of the media representatives we spoke to have already priced in – and managed to overcome.

Our aim is to show that an event can be small but very lucrative, strengthening your brand and attracting audiences. Whatever your role, we hope that you’ll find inspiration here for getting started in the world of live events. ■

¹ Innovation in Magazine Media World Report 2019-2020 p.46

01 It's time to consider events

A changing culture

The growing opportunity for publishers in events has largely been fuelled by the development of the “experience economy”. From festivals and LARPing (live action role play) to cinema trips and exotic travel, enthusiasm for memorable encounters is driving interest and spending across the globe. In an age where 78 per cent of millennials choose to spend money on a desirable experience rather than a material product¹, there is a real chance for media companies to appeal to them as these generations reach their earning potential.

¹ eventbrite.com

Victoria Archbold,
Managing
Director, Events
and Sponsorship,
Hearst Live



Today, “consumers’ expectations are so much higher,” says Victoria Archbold, Managing Director of Events and Spon-

sorship at Hearst Live. Hearst Live is Hearst UK’s 30-person events agency that in 2018 ran 100 events catering to an audience of 1.3 million people, doubling attendance levels compared with the previous year.

“The four Ps [price, product, promotion, place] are not as important as they once were” to consumers, adds Victoria.

“When it comes to experience we are seeing them shift to the five Ws – Where am I? Who am I with? What am I doing? Which channel shall I share it via? Why am I or they (the organiser) doing it?” These are all questions to bear in mind as you start planning.

More than a media brand

Publishers know that in 2019, it is essential for magazines to permeate every area of their readers' lives, from print to digital and, increasingly, in person. Since digital is the first way most younger readers will encounter magazines today, there's a significant opportunity to lead them towards attending live events too.

“Take one of the most engaged magazine brands and you would have historically have secured GBP£30 (US \$37) maximum from [each reader] in a year via a subscription,” says Victoria. “Now, with maximum brand trust and engagement, you have the opportunity to multiply this tenfold with event tickets, travel experiences, beauty boxes and content to commerce affiliate fees.”

From events with established heritage like the Ideal Home Show, the world's longest-running exhibition now in its



111th year, to fresh occasions like PPA Scotland's Edinburgh International Magazine Festival, the first event of its kind that kicked off in September 2019, there's much to be excited about in the events space.

The main tools are already there

The number one thing to keep in mind is that most media companies already possess the right tools to move into events – and turn a profit while they're at



Hearst Live events:
Elle Weekender,
Esquire Townhouse
and Country Living
Christmas Fair

it. A well-defined target audience? Check. Existing channels for promotion? Check. A loyal following? Check. Bags of relevant content and expertise? Double check!

“We leverage all our own brand channels, so the benefit of running events and being a media owner is that we’re already talking to the target audience and have built in reach to provide guaranteed ROI,” says Leigh Kinross, Managing Director at Associated Media Publishing (AMP) in South Africa. “Our brands lend themselves so well to consumer engagement. Celebrities and local influencers want to collaborate with us because our brands hold such global appeal.”

Event and brand experiences make up a key part of AMP’s business, with a 26 per cent revenue contribution last year. “We ran 16 events across our brands in 2018 and this year we’ve factored to run 26!” Leigh told FIPP recently.



Leigh Kinross,
Managing Director,
AMP

Augment APAC, the business division of Burda, a fashion magazine published in 17 different languages, was launched in Hong Kong in 2018 to provide a “one-stop shop” for custom brand solutions. Shortly after, dedicated teams were set up in Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and India, and there are now 30 storytellers, creatives, and other event specialists working to expand even further across the continent.

So how did they get started in events? Augment’s Director, Talia Jackson, told FIPP that with Burda’s strong, pan-Asian presence, it was a natural next step. “Demand for marketing solutions will continue to grow as brands increasingly need to become publishers in their own right,” she said. “Brands need to stand out with high impact consumer experiences and events, creating meaningful connections in memorable ways.” ■



Burda Asia’s MEA Smart Run





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02 What kinds of events are there?

ONE OF THE first things to decide is what type of event to put on. What you choose will ultimately depend on budget and resources, but you should always put your audience front and centre. Personas can help with this – who is it you're hoping to reach, and what style of event would appeal to them?

Here are some of the categories your event might fall into.

▶ **Festival style:** A multi-day festival gives attendees the chance to experience your brand first-hand. *Glamour's* UK Beauty Festival hosts an array of speakers, brands, beauty tutorials, goodie bags and free samples.



▶▶ **Informative:** Media brands have an advantage in their access to talent, and an event bringing together thought leaders offering their perspective on different subjects is an enticing one. *Esquire's* Townhouse, for instance, combines stimulating discussion with a relaxed vibe, featuring an array of well-known speakers from the worlds of politics and entertainment. And it's worth taking stock of your in-house talent, too – many readers will have favourite journalists, editors, or contributors associated with your brand that they would pay to hear from in person.

▶▶ **Listen and learn:** Canadian magazine *The Walrus* offers TED-talk style events, The Walrus Talks, for readers to discuss important subjects. There's also the option of a conference or discussion series like *Red's* Smart Women Week, which hosts 50 speakers and attracts 2,000 attendees.

▶▶ **Interactive:** *The Economist's* Open Future Festival, a 24-hour rolling event taking place in Hong Kong, London, and New York, is a good example of an event with built-in audience interaction, channelling the theme of urgent contemporary political issues. It also engages younger audiences through running essay contests, with winners being invited to the Festival to receive their prizes, and also has “ask the editor” sessions, programmed time for gathering audience takeaways, and performances from local poets.

▶▶ **Awards:** Bonnier USA's 30-person events team excels at running awards ceremonies, with great results. As John Wilpers and Juan Señor write in their most recent Innovation in World Media Report,¹ one advantage of a single annual event – like awards – is that you can use the whole year to create excite-

ment and build-up. Winners can be relied upon to promote their status, thus generating extra attention around the event and your brand.

▶▶ **Activity-based:** Some magazine brands lend themselves to more active events, based on their readers' interests. *Go! Magazine*, in South Africa, has found that readers trust them when it comes to travel advice – creating an opportunity for events.

“Initial subscriber offers morphed into an entire business of offering mountain bike slackpacking tours, intensive photography weekend workshops, outdoor cooking classes, camping weekends and even 4X4 tours,” Piet van Niekerk reported for FIPP in 2018.² “For readers to become part of the ‘Go!’ club is now somewhat of a status symbol.”

¹ Innovation in Magazine Media World-Report 2019–20

² fipp.com

What you choose will ultimately depend on budget and resources, but you should always put your audience front and centre.

Time: their most valuable asset

It's worth remembering that people are making a significant investment to attend your event. There's the cost of the ticket, or even if the event is free, their time. At Hearst Live events, for instance, as many as 76 per cent of attendees spend more than four hours there.

“This one to one interaction had led to a whopping 78 per cent average uplift in sponsor brand consideration,” says Victoria Archbold, adding: “It is significantly more intimate than any other media.”

It's all about the experience

Experience should be part of any publisher's wider business strategy, says Victoria Archbold. Hearst UK sees a lot of success not only because its events are high quality, but because it has fully integrated events into its business. “It's very easy to view anything live as ‘just another event’ but there are numerous types and models of events. You could do it all, but the real power comes in specialism,” adds Victoria. This is ought to be good news for niche publications, for whom specialisation is already part of their brand identity. ■

03 What can you gain from events?

THE MOST OBVIOUS benefit of running events is that they provide a way of connecting with readers face-to-face. Live events are nothing new, but “with the increase in content channels we consume over nine hours of media exposure a day,” says Victoria Archbold of Hearst Live. “For brands and consumers, a live experience can cut through the often-shallow nature of some of this to create deeper connections.”

National Geographic’s live events team, *National Geographic Live*, also aims to create deeply personal connections with attendees. “Customers who experience *Nat Geo Live* events are some of the



Good relationships lead to subscriptions. Marie Claire event in Argentina.

most loyal customers to our brand, and most likely to recommend our brand to others,” Natali Freeling, Director of Marketing, told FIPP. “The majority of our respondents report that attending our events increases their interest in



watching our channels, subscribing to our magazines, purchasing one of our books, booking travel with us, or shopping on our website.”

Gustavo Bruno is Circulation Director at

Editorial Perfil in Argentina, the country's biggest magazine publisher and one of Latin America's largest media groups. Explaining the importance of events to strengthening the brand-audience relationship, he told FIPP: "Being able to replicate the same event year after year for the same publication, and for the audience to keep growing, that's a very important KPI."

Subscriptions can be driven in person, along with other opportunities to engage with your brand. Good relationships lead to subscriptions, so brands that prioritise the subscription approach should make reader – and by extension, event attendee – relationships central to their strategy.

Jonathan Moore, SVP of Events at Bonnier in the US, agrees. "Events are paramount to serving communities," he told FIPP, "regardless of the size of the operation. The bottom line is that people want to en-



Gustavo Bruno,
Circulation Director
at Editorial Perfil,
Argentina

gage in person, and there are now significant opportunities to garner marketing dollars in experiential platforms."

Offer extra services

Brands can use events as opportunities to connect their online presence with 'real world' offerings, showcasing the practical impact of their themes and topics of expertise. They can offer extra services and quality experiences that people already associate with the brand, which builds trust and a sense of community.

One example is the *Little London Magazine* Baby Awards, now in its fifth year. The show's Little London Awards champion excellence in pregnancy, baby, and children's brands, thus cultivating relationships with respected brands and sponsors.

The *Country Living* Magazine Fair invites people to "step into the pages

of the magazine", connecting the dots between the brand and the real world. They also partner with other events with a similar focus, such as hosting their first Country Living Pop-up Café at the Big Festival 2019.

Create buzz and attract attention

Events – especially those with an intriguing USP – can become newsworthy in themselves, drawing attention from other media outlets and inspiring interest more broadly. Outside interest and engagement with your hashtags and themes can be validating, and help to drive sales.

Magazines undergoing changes can also use events to launch or promote a new project, consolidate their image, and celebrate progress within the media industry itself. PPA Scotland's top industry-focused event, Magfest, took the theme of "game changers" for 2019 and featured representatives from *The Big*

“Regardless of the size of the operation, the bottom line is that people want to engage in person, and there are currently significant opportunities to garner marketing dollars in experiential platforms.”

Jonathan Moore, SVP of Events, Bonnier, USA

Issue, *The Atlantic*, and *gal-dem* magazine, among others.

“We’re bringing together people from magazines that are changing the world,” Laura Kelly Dunlop, Edinburgh International Magazine Festival Director, told the *Media Voices Podcast*.¹ “It’s about how magazines can have influence, and change the conversation.”

Build relationships with sponsors

Events allow a unique, in-person opportunity to cultivate relationships with sponsors and advertisers, both online and offline.

Editorial Perfil breakfast cycle with Marie Claire readers in Argentina.



Sponsorship is the primary way in which most of the magazine brands FIPP spoke to monetise events. “Allowing brands to collaborate with us on our brand executions gives them the opportunity to engage with a positive, premium, targeted audience,” says Victoria Archbold. “Our events are built around our brand pillars and reflect back into consumers’ life purposes and passions.”

Launched in 2019, Editorial Perfil runs a successful “breakfast cycle” event with Marie Claire Argentina readers, supported by advertisers who use the event to promote new products and services. “It is a very good exchange between the readers of the publication and the target

¹ voices.media

audience of each of the advertisers,” says Gustavo Bruno.

Something else to consider is partnerships. For example, Vice Media partnered with Delta Airlines in three major US cities to create its Launchpad series – entrepreneurial events aimed at a younger demographic, with topics covering food, film, and music.

Create content

Brands can use their in-house expertise and access to talent to create distinctive, event-related content that can be repurposed so that it’s relevant to different audiences across multiple platforms and geographical regions. This is particularly relevant for brands that have a presence in different continents and work in different languages.

“The passion our audiences have for the content is a key driver for us in developing an events strategy



Jonathan Moore,
Senior Vice President,
Events, Bonnier US

that aligns with the content our editorial teams are producing,” says Jonathan Moore of Bonnier.

The Walrus has a specific strategy to augment the value of its events by atomising content from events, then distributing via different channels accordingly. “We realised that with the talks, we were producing great content and that there was a way to extend the events through filming and producing videos and sharing them online,” Cody Gault, Digital Director at *The Walrus*, told FIPP in 2017.²

“Sometimes the talks can be repurposed into web pieces [...] There are people who are more likely to watch a video than they are to read an article, but they’re still interested in the kinds of things that we do.”

Slam Magazine, a basketball title in the USA, manages to accumulate months’ worth of content in a single weekend via its live events series.³ Videographers, social media editors, and other kinds of content producers generate content around the top high school players who participate in the Slam Summer Classic, a two-day sporting competition held by the magazine, promoting both the players and *Slam*. Interestingly, this particular event does not make a profit for the magazine, but the opportunity for gathering content and raising the *Slam* profile makes it worthwhile.

Amplifying every event’s potential involves encouraging brands to invest in the capturing of high quality content, leading to the creation of short-term, shareable content but also some that is more evergreen in nature – and thus increasing the life cycle of events. ■

² fipp.com

³ digiday.com

04 Hands on! How to get started

EVENTS CAN'T BE organised overnight, but they needn't take daunting amounts of planning, either. One of the challenges with any new event is getting it established, points out Thomas Howie, Chief Operations Officer and one of the founding members of Evessio.com, specialists in event management software. Therefore early, regular conversations with your team are essential in order to pin down the **whats** (perceived opportunities, types of event, theme) and **whys** (purpose – profit, brand awareness, networking) of your event.

Natali Freeling, Director of Marketing at *Nat Geo Live*, notes that companies both



Associated Media Publishing's Marie Claire Power Summit in South Africa



large and small, when starting out in the events business, always find there's a lot to learn.

For this reason, she says, "it's much easier to start small with a pilot in order to avoid or minimise any potential losses, with an eye towards incremental growth year over year."

Thinking ahead

How far in advance you need to plan all depends on the type and size of event you're running, adds Thomas Howie.

"Smaller events that might be replicated a number of times throughout the year might only need a few weeks," he told FIPP. "Larger events might need 15 months (such as an awards): three months to have all the questions, categories, branding and collateral sorted and then 12 months to promote and make sales etc. Bigger international events might be two years plus in the making."



Natali Freeling,
Director of Marketing,
Nat Geo Live

Having a user-friendly website and promotions up and running 12 months before the event will help maximise returns and shine a spotlight on your event rather than competitors', Thomas says.

It's a team effort

Those brands and publishers that do succeed in events are always one step ahead behind the scenes, involving their team in the planning process from day one and taking advantage of their specific skill sets.

Like many larger brands Bonnier has a dedicated events team, but they also leverage central services and, in some markets, media sales teams to deliver their events, according to Jonathan Moore, Senior Vice President of Events at Bonnier US. Collaboration across departments ensures you look at the event from all angles, and can help with identifying improvements in the sales and promotion process.

Having a team optimised for event production is a big bonus for turnaround time, says Leigh Kinross, Managing Director at AMP. "I can confirm that the single biggest factor in success is a dynamic, can-do team," she told FIPP.

Unlike the traditional magazine-media production timelines, the AMP team can move fast: "The advantage of being a small, independent publisher is that we have the ability to be super-agile in our approach," Leigh told FIPP. "We've been known to put together a fully sponsored event for 250 people in three weeks!"

Finding a venue: a moveable feast

Location, location, location: you will know from your own data where your audiences are found. Geo-targeting can help you zero in on the best cities, towns, or even venues to host your event.

Events can be in different locations across the globe like the *New York Times'*

city tours, which they run together with Urban Adventures, a subsidiary of Intrepid Travel. Or it could have a significant virtual component such as live-streaming or online access to behind the scenes content, which can generate extra revenue. Girlboss Media's live events, for instance, are repackaged to meet bigger audiences in the form of video content for digital ticketholders – with a team of 30 people or more involved in the production. “It’s definitely more than a tripod in the back of the room,” Girlboss editor-in-chief and COO Neha Gandhi told Digiday in 2018.¹

You don’t need access to a permanent venue, although relationships with favoured venues will evolve and could be useful if you’re planning to hold frequent events. Hearst Live’s Beauty Unbound, which appeared at Westfield shopping centre in London in May 2016, is a great



Associated Media Publishing's Cosmo Hustle Summit in South Africa

example of a pop-up event. Billed as an experience, passers-by could test out grooming products and get tips from professionals about how to use them.

Tech and digital tools

Event apps, venue Wi-Fi, recording equipment, e-tickets, data collection,

social media, attendee feedback – no modern event is complete without consideration for technology.

In addition to social media, marketing, and advertising, think about how else you might reach potential attendees. You may want to consider offering live-streaming and post-event podcast and video options so that those who can't get to the event in person can still get involved.

To make it easy for people to find out about your events, a front end website that truly reflects the brands the publisher wants to promote is indispensable, says Thomas Howie. “This should be part of a user friendly, intuitive event management system that provides a great user journey to the publisher’s payment gateways,” he adds. “It should also allow the publisher to understand user patterns and interests.” He also strongly advises using CRM (customer

¹ digiday.com

relationship management) for managing data and marketing.

The ongoing changes in the wider media landscape mean that it's more important than ever for those hosting events to understand their readers' interests and to make content and events relevant to them.

“We have seen a shift in recent years from selling advertising to focusing on credible content,” says Thomas. “So, for their events, if you don't leverage event management tools then you are missing a big opportunity to understand people's interests, behaviours and buying patterns that link back to the brands and make the event relevant. We have seen clients who have grown their events by 20 per cent, 30 per cent and in some cases 40 per cent since adopting our technology as it enables them to be more focused, agile and to identify opportunities.”



Thomas Howie, Chief Operations Officer, Evessio.com

Jonathan Moore of Bonnier also highlights the evaluation of events as a core part of their marketing strategy. “We are increasingly focused on metrics and KPIs to assess our success,” he says. “Analysing marketing spend, ROI and campaign management have become cornerstones to how we market our events.”

Higher event engagement? There's an app for that

One thing which sponsors are paying attention to is the adoption of event-specific apps, which attendees now not only like, but expect. Event app adoption has increased by 15 per cent year-on-year to 63 per cent,² meaning that almost two-thirds of attendees now download and make use of the event apps that are available.

An app can be considered even if your

event is small in scale. The more tech is used to smoothly link up the online world with the offline event, the more engagement increases.

This all leads to increased engagement and that is good news for advertisers and sponsors, who are looking for responsive customers to appeal to.

Start-ups like AppearHere, which connects event hosts with short-term retail spaces, have grown rapidly in recent years. Large event spaces are also appearing, like the purpose-built, just-opened Magazine London, which with a maximum capacity of 3,000 and 260,260 square foot size, is the largest space holder of its kind in the UK capital. *Stylist Magazine's* Stylist Live LUXE, a VIP weekend of talks, poetry, and discussion newly revamped and upgraded for a bigger audience, will take place there in autumn 2019.

² Cvent's 2019 Mobile Event App Benchmark Report

Event apps, venue Wi-Fi, recording equipment, e-tickets, data collection, social media, attendee feedback – no modern event is complete without consideration for technology.

Bauer Media's Empire Awards, which has been celebrating cinematic achievement for over two decades, is a premium event which the average reader doesn't attend in person. Still, readers get involved by casting a vote in open categories and following the action on social media. Magnify every aspect of your event by using all of the digital tools and staff skills you have at your disposal.

Size isn't everything

Events don't have to be huge to be successful. In fact mini events engender intimacy and exclusivity in a way that larger ones can't. Smaller or niche media brands will find this comes naturally, since their audience is already more narrowly defined

and often more engaged. Holding an event gives readers the chance to become advocates for your brand, and to invest further in your content.

Niche media brands already taking advantage of this include the *High Times*, with their Cannabis Cup and related events, and *Burnt Roti*, a South Asian lifestyle magazine which has found that events such as one-day festivals, exhibitions, sexual and mental health workshops, and Bollywood pub quizzes can be a solid revenue driver.

"One of the things we do is get the community together, where they're talking face to face, in events," the magazine's Founder and editor-in-chief, Sharan

Dhaliwal, recently told a panel at Canada's MagNet event in April 2019.³ "Even though the print is important, I realised that events are where it's at. I can get those niche venues that want to work with us."

Niche content site theinformation.com caters to an audience that straddles B2B and technology-related interests. Their selling point is that reportage is deeply researched, and events are accordingly high-end, with VIP prices starting at US\$1,500. Subscribers are rewarded with on-stage acknowledgements, guest passes, and VIP lunches with influential people.

³ fipp.com

Club culture

With subscriptions booming, media companies ought to think about how they can create exclusivity and perks for those who are “part of the club”: we are seeing the rise of the *clubsubscription*, where clubs and subscriber models are merging.

Access to archives and early bird or discounted access to your events are clear ways to draw people in, and some publishers are going one step further to tempt readers: the *Wall Street Journal*, for example, allows digital subscribers to jump the queue and try to secure a spot in the Paris Marathon, one of Europe’s most popular races.⁴

Hear, here

Media brands running podcasts should consider live recordings, which draw upon the existing loyalty of their

fanbase. Slate has been running live podcasting events since 2009, and now regularly has sell-out shows across the United States, with bonuses like early access to tickets and a 30 per cent ticket discount for Slate Plus members, who pay US\$5 per month, and meet-and-greets with podcast hosts for an additional fee.

“None of my events are break-even because we make money on all of our shows,” Slate Live Executive Producer Faith Smith recently told *The Business of Content* podcast.⁵

WNYC’s *Death, Sex, and Money* also got creative recently when reaching a listener fundraising milestone. Subscribers were rewarded with an invite to a live workout session with the podcast’s team in New York City. The event was live-streamed for other fans to follow.

Eschewing social media, the *Monocle* brand is instead backed up by an impressive array of high quality podcasts, some of which are recorded live. Podcasts are also used by *Monocle* to extend the reach and lifespan of their events by reporting back from them, such as its Quality of Life Conference 2019.

Even a small but loyal subscriber base – say, 500 – is enough to start thinking about events. Especially when it comes to podcasts, the low-production value is part of the appeal. As Amy Martin, Eventbrite’s Content Marketing Manager for the UK and Ireland, recently wrote,⁶ “when it comes to a live podcast event, all you need is a couple of comfy chairs, a coffee table, and some microphones.” Events like this needn’t be expensive to put on or require extensive planning. ■

⁴ fipp.com/news/features/the-pivot-to-clubsubscription

⁵ medium.com

⁶ eventbrite.co.uk

The do's and don'ts of planning an event



CLAIRE JONES, HEAD OF EVENTS, FIPP - THE NETWORK FOR GLOBAL MEDIA

Do

1 Make the event memorable

Memorability at events falls into two categories. You either spend a lot of money on a spectacular experience or you give delegates the unexpected. Many FIPP receptions have been held at prestigious venues such as the Palace of Versailles in Paris and Ellis Island in New York. But as the financial landscape for the industry has changed, more creative methods for memorability are required. Toronto, for example, saw the FIPP Team open with a barn dance. All three examples remain talking points

to this day, but the latter was a free, if slightly harder idea to sell to the team!

2 Signpost and make help visible

You know the venue, the programme and where the toilets are like the back of your hand. Your audience is there for the first time. Make sure there is adequate signposting; how to get from A to B, where is food, can they charge their phone? A pocket programme is always well received. There will of course be questions you haven't thought of (I was once asked where a delegate could walk her cat), so make sure the event staff are easily identifiable too.



3 Work closely with your sponsors

Many events are not possible without sponsors. Get to know them. Needs, objectives and company culture will always differ; the package should reflect all these. Always check in on them at the event... regularly.

4 Follow up after the event

There is nothing as valuable as feedback – from audience, sponsors, staff – and it is important to study this in order to make the event better, or even lead it in a different direction. Someone will always find the venue too hot and another find too cold – but if something critical needs changing, this is where you will find it.

5 Be nice to the event team

Event management is ranked as one of the most stressful jobs on earth by research company CareerCast. It will never be a 9 to 5 job: you live and breathe it for months. If you're looking for us immediately after the event, try the bar!

Do's and don'ts (cont)

Don't

1 Separate food and beverage from the audience

The positioning of food and beverages is paramount to the flow of an event – and this is where you will find your delegates. The sponsors' area is a good site for refreshments as because of the audience interaction expo buzz. But don't have all food in one area – place it throughout the space to encourage movement. And be wary of too many chairs – delegates can be tempted to just sit and stay where they are instead of speaking to sponsors.

2 Overcomplicate your name tags

A name badge serves one purpose – to facilitate networking. The font should be clear and as big as possible. Wrap text where possible, don't

shrink to fit. Do you really need to use valuable badge space with the event logo? A single sided lanyard will always face the wrong way... it's event law. We all forget people from time to time, make your badges as visible as possible, your delegates will thank you for it.

3 Do something just because you've always done it

Events that occur regularly in a fixed location are easier to grow and repeat attendance increases as opposed to those that change location. Cost are less variable and it is easier to get the event fixed into company budgets. However, when events happen in the same venue each time it is easy to simply repeat the previous year's module.

Have regular brainstorming sessions about why you are doing something. Are you having a goodies bag, a drinks reception, a tour or a printed programme because you've always had one or because they are valued? Is there a different/more exciting way of doing it? Have at least one brainstorming session out of the office, creative thinking is easier when you don't have one eye on your in-box.

4 Play the blame game

However good at planning you are, something will go wrong on the day. It doesn't matter who forgot to order lunch, who printed the wrong logo or who doubled booked the star attraction's hotel room, what matters is you fix it. Stay calm, smile, take responsibility and advise anyone it might affect that you're on it. There is a solution to every problem. Conversations about why it happened can wait until the 'wash-up' meeting.

5 Appear stressed

It does not matter what is happening behind the scenes – the audience should only ever see a calm, smiling event team. There is a solution to every problem – you just have to put the effort into finding it... and then making it appear like it was always meant to be that way ;) ■

05 Revenue options

AS THE PREVIOUS examples show, there are tried and tested ways of monetising events. It should reassure publishers thinking about events to know that a great many others have found that the strength of their brand is enough to drive sales – and that people will part with their money in return for a unique experience from a brand they love.

“Monetisation is critical,” says Leigh Kinross of AMP. “The declining newsstand and the ongoing digital disruption in terms of monetisation mean that we have to leverage our sweet spot, which is content creation and amplification of audiences.”



B2B sponsorship can take a new shape away from the usual grid plan. FIPP's World Media Congress featured a London market.



However, breaking even to begin with can still be worth the effort if it leads to growth in the long run, says Editorial Perfil's Gustavo Bruno, Circulation Director. “During the first years [of running events], we looked for positioning,” he told FIPP. “Now is the time to look for monetisation. We’ve achieved an important loyalty among readers and we believe that it will transform into monetisation in the long term.”

Advertising and sponsorship

One of the main reasons is that advertisers who might previously have shunned the idea of a print or digital relationship become interested in

sponsoring a live event. Similarly, other forms of sponsorship or endorsement may be easier to bring in once there's guaranteed footfall. Your event guarantees access to a premium audience that would be far harder for sponsors to reach themselves.

What kind of advertising you accept should be carefully considered. As with any media product, it should align with your values as an organisation – and with the image you want to project for that specific event.

“As a media company, you only exist to serve an audience with unique and wonderful experiences,” said Chas Edwards, Co-Founder and President of *Pop-Up Magazine*, on a recent episode of *The Business of Content* podcast.¹

“That includes editorial experiences, but



Every issue of *Pop-Up Magazine* is performed in front of a live audience with writers, filmmakers, photographers and radio producers.

it also includes the advertising and sponsorship [...] if you stop delighting your audience, or if your sponsorship and advertising products aren't as delightful as everything else, you've got nothing.”

Ticketing

Events can be free to attend, while others may choose to add to revenue by charging an entry fee. Both have bene-

fits. Setting a higher threshold for entry adds to the impression of a premium experience, while giveaways may attract more people and put them at ease. On the other hand, free events have much higher rates of non-attendance than paid-for ones.

If the event is a particularly special or immersive experience rather than a browsing experience, it can constitute a significant proportion of revenue. *Pop-Up Magazine*, for example, gets half its revenue from ticket sales, and the other half from sponsors of the show. Between editorial stories on stage, there's a 30-75 second branded content ad.

Victoria Archbold of Hearst Live also understands that increased consumer expectations around what an experience should be like means that people are willing to pay, and this is good news for publishers. ■

¹ [stitcher.com](https://www.stitcher.com)

06 The future of events

IF THE TREND continues, the experience economy is set to soar. And more advanced tech is likely play a bigger role in the event experience.

“Any company, big or small, over the next 20 years, if you don’t become an AI company, you’re going to go bankrupt,” Michael Weiss, founder of the Ai4 conferences, predicted to the Event Industry News Podcast recently.¹ “The same way, as over the last 10 to 20 years, if you didn’t become an internet-first, digital company, you’re out of business now.”



Indeed, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and other innovations will continue to add new dimensions to live events. Even something like a digital photo booth, from which people can share branded images from the event online, can give events an extra boost.

Condé Nast VP of product, Lindsay Silver, recently talked to FIPP² about how he envisages the role of the company’s editors in a media world transformed by tech. “If I look at what an editor’s job is and really boil it down to the atomic units, I want an editor to be creating an

¹ eventindustrynews.com

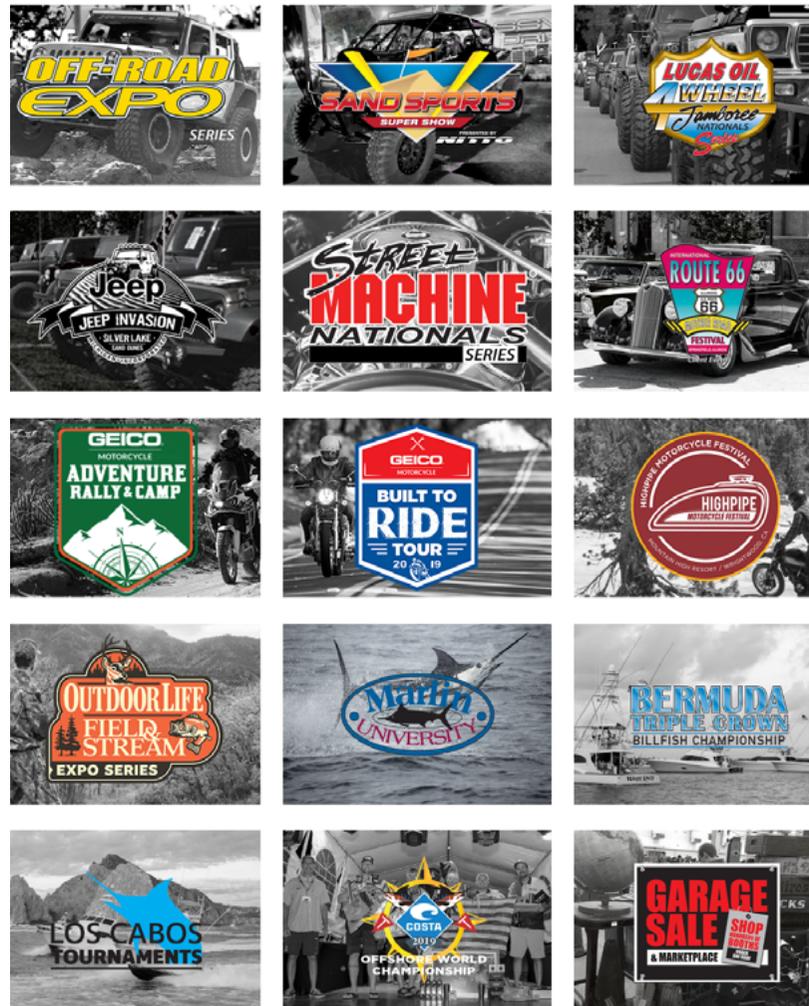
² fipp.com

idea [...] and I want them to be doing that in its purest form,” he said. “I don’t want them to be spending time building hyperlinks, auto linking products, uploading stories. That’s what AI can do.”

And as Victoria Archbold at Hearst Live in the UK points out, even really smart tech is no substitute for human interaction. The latter “will be considered a luxury experience”, she predicts, with people more willing to pay for interactive, group experiences.

Publishers will also embrace the value of their own networks and capabilities, says Victoria, and more of them will, like Bonnier and Hearst Live, leverage their skills to run events for other brands, acting as events businesses in themselves.

“As events have now become an integrated part of marketing plans, we have diversified to also offer the



Bonnier Corp’s portfolio includes over 40 events per year.

creation of events on behalf of other brands,” she says. “This allows them to use us as an event agency but also benefit from the access we have to unrivalled content, the positive premium audiences we can drive to their activation and the media amplification we can create around them, both for our own channels and theirs.”

Jonathan Moore agrees: “We have a robust event management business where we provide event services to help others execute their events. The events business at Bonnier will continue to be a core tenet of our success.” ■

07 Case studies:

Vogue Fashion Festival, France

» **The backstory** Taking place across two days, high-brow discussion meets the high fashion industry. Now in its third iteration, *Vogue's* Fashion Festival attracts over 2,000 fashion aficionados to a Paris hotel for roundtable discussions, live interviews, and master-classes on all aspects of the industry.

» **Why it works** Vogue has managed to create a physical space where important people in the fashion and luxury industries can gather and debate relevant issues. By doing this, Vogue positions itself as the go-to partner and



Vogue Fashion Festival

platform for such discussions – as Delphine Royant, publisher of *Vogue Paris*, told FIPP last year,¹ “the Fashion Festival

allows Vogue to elevate itself as the leading media partner in this sector.”

» **The benefits** Because of its broad church appeal, major sponsors were keen to get involved: the 2018 edition was held in partnership with Swarovski, and other names such as The Woolmark Company and even Google were present. At EUR€250 (US\$285) for a half day conference pass, EUR€400 (US\$455) for a day pass, EUR€750 (US\$852) for a two-day pass and EUR€45 (US\$51) to enter a master-class, the Fashion Festival both profitable and popular.

¹ fipp.com

Cosmo Hustle Summit, AMP, South Africa

» **The backstory** In May 2019, AMP ran its annual *Cosmopolitan* #BossBabe issue, featuring a collaboration with Bonang Matheba, a television personality, businesswoman, and radio presenter who is arguably South Africa's most influential celebrity. Three weeks later, the first *Cosmo* Hustle Summit was held in Johannesburg. Directly linking to the #BossBabe issue, this was a one-day speed networking event with motivational presentations and interactive demos, aimed at empowering 300 attendees to to “boss up” their online presence, career, finances, and more.

» **Why it works** Tickets sold out in three days, and the hashtag reach on the morning of the event exceeded 10 million. The event was held in collaboration with Bernini, so sponsorship and ticket sales drove revenue.



AMP'S Cosmo Hustle in South Africa

» **The benefits** For Leigh Kinross, Managing Director at AMP, the success of the #BossBabe issue as a whole was due to amplification: “We leveraged through all channels: print, digital, social, and an event,” she told FIPP. “We drove circulation by including copies of the *Cosmopolitan* magazines for attendees, as well as a database sign-up at the event.” Collaboration with a well-known figure had added benefits: a week after the event, Bonang posted an Instagram story in which she had a conversation with the President of South Africa while she was wearing a *Cosmopolitan* t-shirt. “Success all round!” says Leigh.

Women's Health Live (Hearst Live), UK

» **The backstory** Following impressive revenue growth in 2018, the team behind *Women's Health* decided to

focus on growing the events side of the business in order to capitalise on their success. They acquired an event called Be:Fit from Telegraph Events and after an overhaul, the first *Women's Health* Live took place in London in May 2019. Nutrition, fitness, health, and wellbeing were all on the agenda in the form of advice giving, panel discussions, and workout and shopping spaces. Two hundred session hosts interacted with 8,000 attendees across three days.

» **Why it works** The magazine achieved its objectives of entrenching the *Women's Health* brand and finding new ways to access the magazine's highly engaged audience. The fact that events are a live, physical experience matches well with the company's mission, too.

» As Claire Sanderson, editor-in-chief at *Women's Health*, told a recent



Hearst Live Women's Health Live in the UK

episode of the *Media Voices Podcast*,² “women really want to engage with Women’s Health at every touch point, but I would say the primary touch point is events, because wellness lends itself to experiential.”

» **The benefits** At GBP£15 per person, the event is affordable for the magazine’s target market, meaning it can attract bigger audiences while still being

² Media Voices

profitable. With sponsors keen to get involved, the event has become pivotal to the brand and is now accompanied by a range of smaller events throughout the year, showing that there is true demand and consolidating the brand’s image as a top wellness destination in the UK.

Smithsonian Magazine Museum Day, USA

» **The backstory** One day each September, Smithsonian’s Museum Day provides people with free access to all 50 states’ most celebrated cultural and historical institutions. In 2018, more than 1,500 museums participated, with Microsoft sponsoring the whole event.

» **Why it works** Museum Day is one of many events that the magazine – which is independent from the Smithsonian museum and research complex – has in its expanding portfolio. The brand has



extensive reach across the US, which means that its events already have a leg-up. “People have so many digital experiences these days, they’re craving that live experience more and more,” said Editor-in-Chief Michael Caruso to FIPP recently.³

» **The benefits** *Smithsonian Magazine*’s strong events calendar represents a tempting offer for sponsors who are interested in a broader audience. The brand can then combine its live events and sell them across all of their plat-

³ fipp.com

forms, including its print and online magazines, affiliate museums, and podcast, Sidedoor.

There are more events to come – the brand recently pulled off an 11-day ideas festival, the Smithsonian Ingenuity Festival, with less than two months’ planning. For other media brands wanting to get into events, Michael recommends repurposing existing ideas: “You’ve got to steal and adapt from people who are doing things well.”

5. La Gala de Caras (Editorial Perfil), Argentina

» **The backstory** Argentinian media giant Editorial Perfil runs events for each of its publications, but the *Gala de Caras* is one of the most notable. Now in its 26th year, this annual event celebrates the birthday of *Caras*



Caras Argentina

(*Faces* in English), one of the most popular current affairs magazines in the Argentinian market, as well as in Latin America more broadly. The gala brings together icons from the worlds of fashion, culture, and media for one evening, creating significant buzz for the magazine.

» **Why it works** The *Gala de Caras* is a chance to reiterate the fact that the brand has its finger on the celebrity pulse, generating news and excitement as readers tune in online that translates to additional interest in the magazine.

» **The benefits** Participation grows year on year, and today it’s one of the most recognised events by celebrities in the region. “All this work positions us as the largest digital audience media brand outside of the United States,” says the company’s Circulation Director, Gustavo Bruno. “In Brazil alone we have 60 million unique users.”

Hallmark Speakers series and partnered events, National Geographic, USA

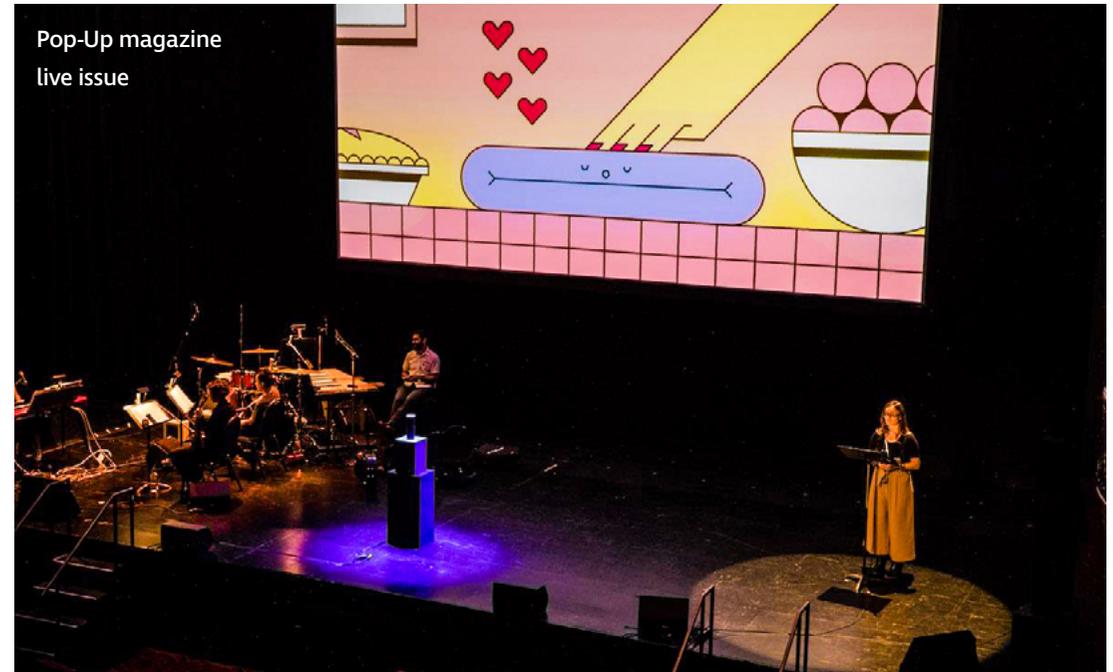
» **The backstory** *National Geographic* presents its speakers series in over 80 markets across across North America, and the demand continues to grow. The hallmark speakers series showcases a *National Geographic* explorer on stage sharing their personal journey and stories from the field, with these events currently reaching over 200,000 people through more than 300 events each year.

In addition, the company is always thinking about new event formats to engage different audiences. For one pilot programme in 2018, it partnered with California Sunday’s *Pop-Up Magazine* to host a joint programme in their style featuring *National Geographic* themes and talent in a one-night-only special. Complimentary issues of the

newly branded magazine were given away, along with Photo Ark animal posters, and the event featured a “create your own cover” selfie photo station. About 2,000 people attended.

» **Why it works** The partnership especially was very successful in drawing in a new crowd, many of whom had never been to a *National Geographic Live* event before. “More than half of the audience favoured the variety of topics and formats, which was very different from our traditional format,” says Natali Freeling, Director of Marketing.

» **The benefits** Through its Hallmark Speakers series and the newer pilot programmes, *National Geographic* can attract a new audience and consolidate relationships with existing ones by showing that they really understand what people want from them. “It’s critical to take the time to view the experience from the eyes of the cus-



tomers, and think through every moment of their experience – from before they arrive at the event to after they leave,” says Natali. “There are many touch points that can be leveraged to maximise the live event experience and create deep, long-lasting relationships with your guests.”

Pop-Up Magazine live shows, USA

» **The backstory** If there is a brand that truly brings experiential to life, it’s this one. In San Francisco in 2009, some journalists wanted to create a magazine, but there was a twist: instead of being printed or digitalised, it would be

‘performed’ live. It was a success, and by 2015, *Pop-Up Magazine* was touring the US. From ‘performing’ to 4,500 people that first year, in 2019 they’re set to reach 10 times that amount.⁴ They also created a print and digital weekend accompaniment – the *California Sunday Magazine*, found in the Sunday editions of the *Los Angeles Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* – and contains similar kinds of stories to the live *Pop-Up Magazine*.

» **Why it works** The magazine speaks to consumer desires for a special experience, and offers insight for brands wishing to get into events. The performances are not recorded, so “the format is more fun for those who attend, as it can only be witnessed in person,” said Chas Edwards, co-founder and president of Pop-Up Magazine, on an episode of *The Business of Content* podcast.⁵

The team have managed to create a scalable show that tours the US and international venues too, visiting large and small theatres alike depending on demand in that area. “When you make media on a stage, in a room, with an audience sitting together in the dark, a live magazine presents opportunities that are totally unique and totally original and can’t be replicated on other platforms,” added Chas. “We wanted to make shows that felt magical.”

» **The benefits** For many years, word-of-mouth was enough to sell out the shows, which demonstrated that there was demand. The magazine makes money through a combination of advertising (both in print and through live ads inserted between performances at their events) and tickets, which are priced between USD\$45-65 each. ■

⁴ fipp.com

⁵ stitcher.com



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