

SOCIAL MEDIA SUCCESS

Brandywine Strawberry Festival

CHALLENGE: The annual Brandywine Strawberry Festival had a serious challenge reaching and engaging Festival attendees outside of the four day event. A large portion of the ad budget was tied to printing a newspaper tabloid guide (and the associated sponsor ads). While festival sponsors needed the physical piece as justification for their donation, it offered little value in marketing the event itself. The typically under age 35 attendees don't read the newspaper and thus never saw the supplement.

The Festival needed a path to build excitement for the event a few weeks in advance, and attract attendees back for additional days.

SOLUTION: A social media strategy including a Facebook presence better targeted the largest demographic group attending and leveraged their existing communications habits. Although that gave us access, we knew that a Facebook page focused on info on a four day event wasn't likely to excite people; they could already go to the web site to get information on daily schedules, etc.

To launch the effort, I seeded the site with over 1,500 photos from the previous three years (which had not been previously published) and started a "find and seek" campaign for previous attendees. That drove immediate traffic and page "likes" six months prior to the event.

EVENT PHOTOGRAPHY: During the event, I took hundreds of attendee photos daily and posted them after the event closed each evening. Attendees looked for photos of themselves, their families and friends immediately after attending and tagged (identified) them. People who didn't attend that day saw postings on their connections' updates and got exposure to the festival. We have now successfully used the strategy three years running.

RESULTS: Over 12,000 unique individuals saw posts and photos relating to the Festival during the week surrounding it in 2012. By the end of the third year, we grew friends to over 3,000. As predicted, all of the traffic was driven by activity surrounding the photographs.

The Festival now has an effective way to reach attendees and prospective attendees during the event and throughout the year.

"The Facebook strategy has yielded great results for the Festival and our marketing efforts. It is and will continue to be an important factor in reaching our target audience."
- Dana Heiman



GARY ZENKER

1243 Eastwick Circle, West Chester, PA 19380 • 610883.2346 • garyzenker@aol.com

