

Planning a Valuable Convention for Your Franchise System

TIPS, TRICKS, AND GREAT IDEAS FROM THE FRANCHISE COMMUNITY
Gathered During a 2021 IFA Business Solution Roundtable Discussion

Virtual Engagement

- Created a 'Camp' theme for the event. Sent out S'more packages and other 'campy' swag.
- 2021 - Virtual 'Road Trip' for franchisees. Destination is Phoenix *LIVE* in 2022! Lot's of fun gamification around travel and finding destinations that tie back into the brand.
- Connecting franchisees to Vendor Partners/Sponsors: Have specific 45-50 minute breakout sessions where Sponsors can engage with franchisees. Encourage Sponsors to create a fun way to engage with the franchisees.
- Run follow-up webinars on everything that was delivered at the virtual convention. Reinforces learning, allows managers and team members to receive content and discuss as a team, allows franchisees who may have missed a session to receive the information.
- Have your platinum Sponsor co-host/ the Awards Celebration. Their spokesperson will be on the screen with your emcee or host to offer winning franchisees their congratulations. Can send Awards Night Treats and Cocktail kits. Or Doordash Gift Cards for the night of the event.
- Franchisees want to hear from Vendor Partners. Make sure there are a variety of creative ways to integrate vendor facetime with franchisees. Leading roundables, Q & A with top producing franchisees, speed dating breakouts, and be sure and add fun and gamification liberally throughout.
- Passport for Sponsor stamps or a bingo card for visiting each Sponsor in their booth. Find a way to make the interaction meaningful by asking 3 questions about the product or service.
- Three Top Level Sponsors allowed to provide as much swag as they like; Sent out packages that amounted to 150 pounds of gifts from the sponsors to franchisees before the conference to build excitement.

- Instead of creating sponsorship opportunities just for the annual convention, create year-long relationships and opportunities for Sponsors to have access to the network for the entire year. Sponsors can be featured on the weekly calls. On these calls, the leadership team can call out that Sponsor with product highlights and gratitude for the Sponsors support during the call. Recommend featuring the Sponsor in the middle of the meeting, not at the end, to ensure that Sponsor receives the most visibility. Rotate Sponsors to tie into the relevant conversation i.e. Update on new marketing tools, have your marketing partner be the guest Sponsor. WE ALL LOVED THIS IDEA!
- Sponsors hosts or professional keynote speaker or a guest expert for the network. This can be done monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly with your top Sponsors absorbing the cost. Sponsor pays the speaker fee and the speaker ties content back to the benefit of that Sponsor's product or service for the franchisees. A Win Win Win for everyone!
- The critical importance of a professional emcee for virtual events - "They are your Air Traffic Controller and can make sure every session lands with your franchisees!"
- Create gamification around going back and watching sessions that were missed. Give participation awards. Use your LMS to host replays of the most important sessions.
- Break up the key components of the annual LIVE event into shorter virtual experiences that are spread out: Example - Awards Ceremony one week, the next week a franchisee networking event, the next week a tactical learning session. One franchisor is doing monthly virtual events in 2021.

Ready to Go Back to Live Meetings?

Safety is Top of Mind for Franchisees & Franchisors

- Understand your venue's safety policy and make sure all attendees are willing to adhere to it.
- Monitor outbound franchisee communication. One brand created a policy that franchisees were not allowed to post anything about the event with the convention hashtags until that post was approved. This practice prevented any images of people not following the safety protocol from getting out on social media. SMART!
- Create a "COVID Compliance Officer"