
SOCIAL MEDIA

→ During the Event ←

Tip Sheet

Social media technology can maximize networking and improve event retention. Here are some best practices to keep in mind for leveraging your social media channels effectively during your event.

- ☐ 1. Create an event hashtag.....pg. 2
- ☐ 2. Engage your audience.....pg. 3
- ☐ 3. Determine the role of your speakers.....pg. 4
- ☐ 4. Drive engagement with Q&A.....pg. 5

1. Create an Event Hashtag

Define your hashtag before an event starts, and make sure to use the same hashtag across all of your social media platforms. Remember, while Twitter might be the most popular platform for leveraging hashtags, other platforms — including Instagram, Facebook, Tumblr, and Flickr — all support them, and can be very effective depending on your community.

When determining your hashtag, remember to use **R.U.S.S.**

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Relevant | Is my hashtag relevant to my event? |
| Unique | Is my hashtag unique? |
| Short & Sweet | Is my hashtag short and easy to remember? (For example, HubSpot is using #INBOUND14 for its 2014 INBOUND conference.) |

2. Engage Your Audience

Prior to your event, inform your attendees of the hashtag in emails leading up to the event. Start the conversation on the hashtag to open up initial networking and to get your audience familiar with the event's hashtag. Then, once the event starts, publicize and display your hashtag to your audience ... on collateral, on signage, and even up on stage!

Especially at large events with overlapping sessions, attendees may not be able to attend everything. Social media can help connect them to the sessions (and participants) they miss. Tricks like broadcasting event social media feeds on lobby monitors can focus the buzz. Tools like [Twitterfall](#) and [Tweetchat](#) are free and easy ways to display (and monitor) the conversation.



3. Determine the Role of Your Speakers

Displaying your social media conversation during a live event is powerful, but it also requires you to answer some questions up front—distractions and chaos can overwhelm. Will the speakers be able to monitor the feed? When is the speaker expected to be able to see and respond to questions, and how will it be integrated into the presentation? Is the organizer prepared to monitor and address “bad behavior”?

Different formats also bring their own considerations:

- **Webinar best practices:** Designate a non-presenter to track questions, and remind attendees to use hashtags to keep the conversation in one easily monitored place.
- **Panel best practices:** A moderator should remind attendees about Twitter hashtags and monitor the backchannel—but remember that this can take practice to do successfully.
- **Keynote best practices:** Realize that presenters with prepared speeches can’t really react to the social media conversation. Conference organizers must be prepared, and you should also prep the speaker. Then your speaker can participate in the conversation up until the moment of taking the stage.

4. Drive Engagement with Q&A

If you show the conversation feed during Q&A, the speaker can select questions. An emcee can also ask pre-selected questions to get things started. They can monitor questions from the backchannel during the speech and ask them on the audience's behalf—a great way to guide the discussion, represent common questions, and prevent floor-hogging.

