**NEW DIGITAL AGE: HOW TO HOST A SUCCESSFUL NETWORKING EVENT POST PANDEMIC**

**London, September 28, 2023** - [Mapp's](https://mapp.com/) Senior Marketing Manager, Hayley Strang recently shared her thoughts on how to create noteworthy in-person events with [New Digital Age](https://newdigitalage.co/general/how-to-host-a-successful-networking-event-post-pandemic/).

Successful marketers need to have many strings to their bow. One skill that is important, but not talked about often, is the ability to network and forge meaningful connections with others. A talented marketer will, above all, be a creative problem solver, a skill that needs to be practised, honed, and developed.  There’s nothing that gets those creative juices flowing like stepping away from day-to-day work and chatting to new and different people in the industry. Beyond that, networking is also terrific for opening-up opportunities, providing access to useful, up to date information and making us aware of the best and brightest people with a range of skill sets.

**Post pandemic networking**

[Research from the Harvard Business Review](https://hbr.org/2021/02/research-were-losing-touch-with-our-networks) showed that, on average, professional and personal networks shrunk by around 16% during the pandemic, as networking along with working and socialising, shifted online.

Although there is a general trend, in many industries, towards hybrid, flexible working and less face-to-face time with colleagues (which is no bad thing!) we ignore the power of face-to-face marketing events at our peril. No matter how junior or senior you might be, whether you’ve landed your first job, or you’re planning to retire soon, getting out, sharing learnings and learning from others can be absolutely invaluable.

It is, of course, sometimes challenging to ask people to leave their desks and their day-to-day jobs and come to a networking event. This was true before the pandemic and it’s certainly true now. Particularly if people are used to working remotely and crunching through tasks from home, asking them to drop things and leave work behind, even for a few hours, can be tricky. It is, however, completely achievable and, I’m pleased to say, we have recently hosted events that were full of highly engaged professionals who were happy to be there and reported high levels of satisfaction with the event.

There are some pointers, however, that will maximise the chances of holding a highly successful, well-attended event.

1. Ensure your event has a clear purpose

This is key for those you invite. When weighing up whether they can spare the time to come to your event, they need a good idea of what they will get out of being there. Are you giving a tech demonstration? Is there a well-known, inspirational speaker? And, it may sound frivolous, but will there be refreshments? If you’re getting out of bed an hour early to attend a breakfast briefing, you’ll want to know there’s good coffee and a fresh pastry to greet you when you arrive.

A lot of successful events are focused on bite-sized learning, not only from our own senior experts, but from other industry leaders. They have succinct presentations, all focused on practical advice and real outcomes with time for audience questions. Around this there is also time for mingling and networking. And, yes, there are great coffee and nibbles!

2. Planning is key

Meticulous planning is the key to making sure you have enough time to deliver useful learnings and insights, without bombarding attendees with so much data they feel they’re in a university lecture. Rather than having one hour-long presentation, it can work really well to have several shorter ones, with breaks in between. Making this work, however, does mean everything must be rigorously designed, with nothing left to chance.

Not only should you plan each event, but if you intend to host more than one event a year, think about how those events might work together. Is there a theme? What is the strategic plan? A group of disparate events with no apparent link might be confusing for your audience and dilute your brand – the last thing you want!

3. Think carefully about the venue

It’s perfectly possible to hold events in your own office if you’re conveniently located with good transport links to ensure everyone can make it with the minimum of fuss. You also need well-lit, open-plan areas that lend themselves perfectly to in-person events and the great tech so you can accommodate presentations with no problem.

If you have any worries about the calibre of space you have at your disposal, it might be a good idea to hire somewhere better equipped and more welcoming.

4. Be intentional about who you invite

It is really important that events resonate with their audience, so you need to ensure your invite list is on point. It is also important you aim for a lively, engaged, curious group of attendees so it’s worth going the extra mile to get as diverse a group as possible in the room. Of course you want well known movers-and-shakers from your industry in attendance, but might it be more interesting if you also had some graduate trainees bringing their perspective? Rather than only inviting people you know are the budget-holding decision-makers, think about those who are rolling their sleeves up every day and doing the work. Not only will they have a different take on things, but they may well be the decision-makers of tomorrow and giving them a good impression of your brand could be one of the best things you do!

5. Enjoy yourself!

This may sound trite, but because of the sheer amount of work involved in delivering an event, on the day itself, you can feel burnt out, jaded and anxious. It’s easier said than done but try to relax into the event. Not only will you appear more welcoming to all those attending, but you’ll be more open to learning and thinking creatively, which is the whole point behind hosting an event for all concerned.