



MULTIMEDIA

Why is content king in the event space?

Custom-made multimedia content for your event isn't a luxury anymore – it's essential. Your brand, your message and your customers exist in an environment that now expects communication to be targeted, relevant and impressive. Cookie-cutter templates, presentations and graphics are an instant turn-off to an audience that needs to be engaged with creativity, wit and originality. It's a daunting prospect to try and compete with major brands and professional creative teams on a global stage, but it's the reality of working in marketing and events in the internet age.



Speak with one voice

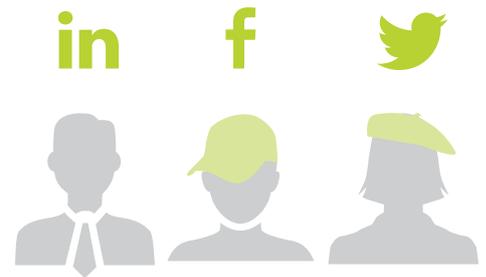
Your audience knows what is possible in event theming and branding because they've already been exposed to some of the best in the business, whether live or via the web. Australia punches well above its per-capita weight in the events industry, with production companies, artistic directors and staff sought after the world over. As a result, our audiences are used to quality. Your customers are no exception.



Know your audience's mind

When thinking about what you can do to make your next event stay in your customer's mind, start with a blank canvas. It's tempting to build on a look or theme you've used before, but you need to create a unique experience. A blank piece of paper is a hard place to start, so try asking yourself these questions; What is the truth of the product, image or idea you want to communicate? What concepts are associated with that? Most importantly, how do your audience see themselves in relationship to it, and how do they aspire to see themselves?

As all experiences can now be shared via social media, it's to your advantage if your audience share their reaction to your event on their networks. People are most likely to share things that make them look interesting, funny, exciting and intelligent. In short, all of the positive qualities we'd most like to associate with ourselves. If your custom content is created with the customer's own perception of themselves in mind, it's more likely to resonate with their aspirations.



Gather the troops

Gather all of your existing multimedia assets in one place. These include still images of staff or product, video material, design files for logos and product names and any other content related to branding, product or application. If your existing material doesn't cover your vision for the event, talk to your AV provider about the best way to go about creating it. You may need to shoot stills and video, or edit existing assets. Don't forget to bring any corporate style or branding guides that apply to what you're doing.

Audio material should also be part of your consideration. Is there existing music associated with an advertising campaign? Does your company have an identifiable branded sting like Intel or Microsoft? A radically innovative idea for an event could include its own soundtrack, audio installation or theme song. Don't rule out commissioning new material from composers or songwriters – it might just be the edge you need, and can be affordable in the long run, as digital collateral created for the event can go on to have multiple uses across the web.

Get creative

When sitting down with the creative team, including the multimedia and graphic designers that will shape your event, bring all of your material, ideas and an open mind. A multimedia designer sits across both the unlimited world of the imagination and the pragmatic realm of the technical. Technically, anything really is possible, but there will always be a limit to your budget. On the flipside of that equation, you might have a tight budget, but you would be amazed what a resourceful creative and technical team can achieve with it if you trust them to advise you.

While you may be guided by very strict corporate regulations on brand and image usage, don't forget to have fun! This is especially applicable to hosting a gala dinner or awards night. Events like these ask for a more informal touch, and with digital theming and projections, you can create any kind of environment that you can imagine. Think about what suits your audience and your message – is it edgy, elegant, indulgent or family-friendly? What can you bring to it that people will not have seen before, or won't be expecting? Staging Connections staff spend their entire professional life working on events like these, and will be able to tell you in the planning stages if you're heading down an interesting track. They can also suggest concepts and techniques that might not have occurred to you. Again, bring a flexible attitude and benefit from experience.



Making the right resolutions

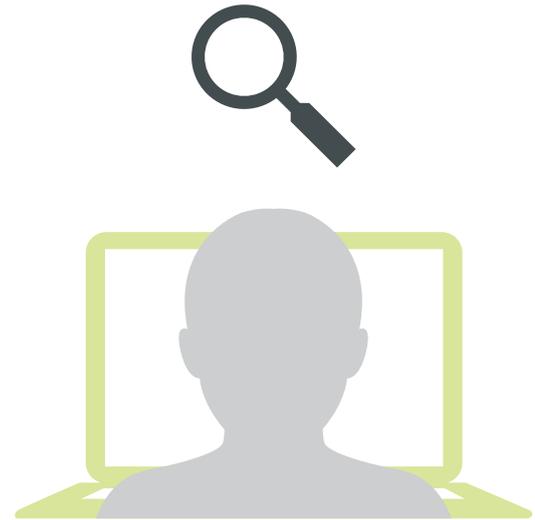
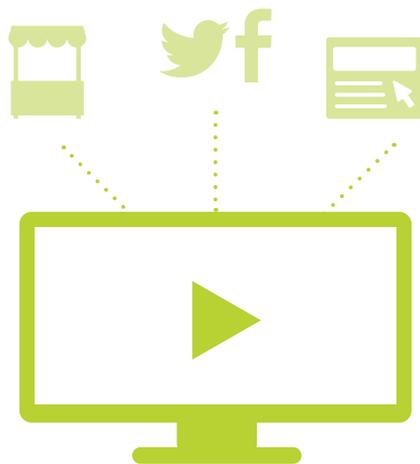
On the technical side, there are a huge number of factors to take into account when looking at projecting image, video and other digital content onto screens or objects. For example still photos or videos that seem perfectly usable on a computer or hand-held device are probably unsuitable to be blown up to dimensions possibly metres across. A good multimedia designer will be able to give you a long list of things that do or don't work when used for different applications. For example, for large-scale 2D projection mapping on the exterior of a building, high definition live video is often unsuitable. Computer animated graphics create much more successful results at that scale. It's those kinds of insights that you only get from working with experienced professionals.

For still images, logos and product branding, the higher the resolution and dpi (dots per inch), the better. It's a good idea for any in-house graphic design or marketing staff to communicate directly with your AV provider's multimedia creation team. Every multimedia creator will have a preference for what file formats, resolutions and definitions will be the most useful to them. They'll also have a mind to what kind of image canvas size (1080 x720, 180 x1920 and so on) that will ultimately be beamed onto the walls, screens and surfacers of your event. Cut out any 'Chinese Whisper' effect or tedious double-up of effort by connecting your tech with your AV's tech.

Let your mind wander

If you're unsure about the capabilities of technologies such as 2D or 3D projection mapping, get online and search for videos that include those terms. You're going to find that digital theming of an event with custom-made multimedia content can completely transform any space, big or small. While it's good to get inspiration from what you'll see, try not to be seduced by the 'wow' factor. It's all very well that you could make the exterior of your event space look like it was collapsing as your guests arrived, but it's just irrelevant if it distracts from your message.

Ultimately, engaging your audience and making your message stay in their minds is your goal. If you can do that, then the intellectual capital in what you create will translate across media. If you successfully brand a conference with new video and audio material, you have the beginnings of a major digital campaign. Integrate it with an ongoing social media and web presence, and follow-up with your attendees. Your email database will prove invaluable for this. Harvest details from everyone at the event if you don't already have them, then send out follow-up material with the same theming. Make it sharable across the appropriate social network – wherever you have invested your presence, and where your customers are.



Good ideas last

Thinking beyond the physicality of the room and the temporality of the event, you can film, broadcast, webcast and then stream an interactive, multimedia version of any conference or launch. Staging Connections have the capability to work any multimedia event into a webcast, provide tools for digital audience interaction and then package the result of the whole into a marketing asset that continues to advertise and engage long after the date. If you have the capability and desire to take advantage of this, build it into the event from the beginning. Integration of multiple digital tool such as Twitter feeds, live Q&A and remote participation can all be unified into a style or theme. Hosted on your website, your multimedia content will bring you continued return-on-investment, Use it to bring people to next year's event, capture new customers or show those who weren't there what they missed. Framing your company, brand or idea with fresh, intelligent multimedia content helps you cut through the noise of marketing in a crowded forum.

Staging Connections can provide a creation, delivery and post-event capitalisation strategy custom built to your ideals, audience and aspirations.

They offer a vertically integrated service model that delivers marketing and creative advice, custom content creation and technical production, all unified by central communications and a clear brief. The advantage of the 'one-stop-shop' model is that all departments understand each other's talents, capabilities and requirements. Our designers know exactly what specifications video and visual materials need to conform to in order for our equipment and technicians to produce the best results for you. Our event management staff know exactly what kind of preparation and vision you'll need to create the best possible look for your event.



Interested in adding extra dimensions to your next event? Contact your Staging Connections representative or call us on **1800 209 099** or email **marketing@stagingconnections.com**