ABM Event Council Census: Conference, Trade Show and Awards Revenue

1) Industry Revenue Overview

- Event revenue constituted 45 percent of the entire b-to-b media and info landscape in 2013.
- Event revenue increased industry-wide last year, rising 3.3 percent from $11.66 billion in 2012 to $12.04 billion in 2013. (Source: CEIR, ABM’s BIN Report)

Applying the ratios below to the industry total revenue data above, revenue per event type can be estimated industry wide:

- Trade shows with no paid conference - $4.94 bil
- Hybrid conferences - $2.17 bil
- Trade shows with paid conferences - $1.69 bil
- Other event types - $0.96 bil

2) B-to-B Event Revenue By Type of Event

Note, though, that this weighted-by-total-event-revenue pie chart primarily reflects the priorities of the largest companies.
For companies with large event revenue, almost half (49%) of that revenue comes from pure trade shows (without paid-attendance conferences). Trade shows with conferences (14%) and hybrid conferences (16%) put the top three types of conferences as the source of about 80% of event revenue at large companies.

Medium size companies seem to have developed niche businesses in award programs and conferences, which perhaps offer insufficient revenue to interest the largest players.

Both kinds of trade shows (and sponsored buyer events) are the tail that wags the dog for small companies that derive most of their event revenue from them. Training, single-sponsor, and other events each contributed 0%.
3) B-to-B Event Revenue Sourcing By Event Subtypes

Sponsorship and exhibit revenue constitutes more than half of revenue at both awards programs and at hybrid conferences.

4) Profitability of Event Brands

Event profitability scales dramatically for larger brands.

In comparison with event brand overall profitability of 44.6%, overall print brand profitability is 32.9%, and digital brand profitability is 48.2%.

Note that these profitability benchmarks are brand-level only, and do not reflect company-wide expenses.
5) Value of Events to Marketers

Marketers see events as highly useful. 95 percent of them rate audience demographics from events as useful, and 85 percent value in-person event attendance metrics.

Marketers also rate event attendance and sponsorship as highly successful in creating new product awareness (89 percent and 76 percent say so, respectively) and in lead generation (90 percent and 76 percent) - the top scorers in rating success in those categories.

Misc Takeaways:
- 80 percent of b-to-b media audiences attend events and/or conferences.
- 46 percent of publishers expect events to become more important over the next 3-4 years.
- 43 percent of b-to-b media consumers use events to research work-related purchases.

6) Sources


Event revenue breakdown by event type, as well as revenue streams for awards and hybrid events, are conclusions drawn from a new Event Council survey of 20 ABM member event and media companies conducted April 2014.

Data on profitability derives from ABM's 2014 Managing Profits Report.

Takeaways on value of events to marketers are taken from ABM's 2013 Value of B-to-B report.

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