

Impressions

We live in the Age of Information, so it is not surprising that the use and control of information plays a central role in each of our lives. **Impression management** is the goal-directed activity of controlling or regulating information in order to influence the impressions formed by an audience. Through impression management, leadership can shape an audience's impressions of an organization (e.g. company or association), person (e.g. VP of Sales or Executive) objective (e.g., increase sales, education), or event (e.g., sales meeting, conference).

Impression management is a fundamental feature or characteristic of interpersonal experience. Impressions tie directly in to how employees "feel" and "experience" not only an organization but their product or service. People do not deal with information randomly or dispassionately. Opinions about what constitutes the "truth" are affected by personal agendas. To help us accomplish our objectives in life, we "package" information to help audiences draw the "right" conclusion. This packaging is a pervasive feature of interpersonal behavior and therefore is very important when motivating and moving an audience.

In order to communicate information accurately and without misunderstanding involves being able to gauge how an audience is responding and to package one's presentations accordingly, fitting the message to the beliefs, values, and competencies of the audience so that they will draw the "proper" conclusion.



One important way of presenting and communicating an image is through **The Meeting Communication Cycle**. This cycle takes an organization's beliefs and creates a cycle of impressions for a particular meeting and/or event.

Meetings – Events – Communications

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For example, the **Pre-Event Communications** can utilize a simple "Save the Date" postcard or unforgettable flash mail several months before a National Sales Meeting. These communications can set **expectations**, list **objectives**, and begin to set up and develop the **theme** of the event. They are very important in beginning to formulate images in your audience's mind. Most importantly, the communication with employees is consistent, clear and meaningful.

At the **Meeting or Event**, the **message development** comes alive in the presentations in the form of speeches, PowerPoint, video and/or a keynote speaker. Positive **audience reaction** penetrates even deeper with social activities such as receptions, awards ceremonies and dinners where people can meet management face to face, which enhances relationships, develops trust and **inspires** your attendees.

The Meeting Communication Cycle continues after the meeting with **Post-Meeting Communications** such as a direct mail piece, flash mail or action plan. These strong, moving communication pieces serve as a way to **reconnect, reinforce and create results!**

The Meeting Communication Cycle is a commitment to creating and sustaining an image important to an organization. A meeting or event is not only 3-4 days of information gathering and relationship building, it is an opportunity over a longer period of time to reinforce information, connect with attendees and build upon the future direction of the organization.

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