



# 4 Proven Approaches:

## Virtual Events and Today's Business Challenges

*Steve Gogolak, Director of Media & Webcasting, Cramer*

*Liz Kay, VP, Account Strategy, Cramer*

Today's business environment is bringing new and tougher challenges to event planning, creating a real need for virtual and hybrid events solutions. At Cramer, clients tell us that competition for attendees' time is increasingly intense, thanks to tightly packed schedules and shrinking travel budgets. At the same time, companies are looking to maximize their resources as well as their impact. So how do we address these critical business issues? Here, we work closely with clients to create innovative solutions that are both effective and efficient. Virtual and hybrid events, in particular, have helped our clients solve critical business issues like lead generation, sales enablement, key customer retention and internal communications. Following are four examples that show the wide use of virtual events to drive business.

### 1 Lead Generation: Extending Reach with Virtual Events

Virtual events offer a rich, dynamic solution for companies looking to extend their reach in a way that is both effective and efficient. At Cramer, we helped a leading technology company transform their annual in-person event into a virtual experience. Leveraging pre-recorded presentations, we provided a rich palette of programming for the virtual platform. Attendees watched keynote addresses, participated in small group breakout sessions, and 'met' with IT developers in demo areas. The result was a significant increase in overall attendance rates: the virtual event drew 3 times the number of attendees as the live event and each one spent an average of more than 360 minutes over 3 days learning about the company's new offering.

### 2 Enabling and Empowering Sales

To maximize their effectiveness, sales teams need constant motivation from senior leadership. However, time out of the office, travel expenses and cost constraints are causing companies to rethink face-to-face events in terms of ROI. Clearly, there is something important and unique that occurs at large, live events in terms of relationship building. The question is how to retain this quality, while extending reach with the virtual experience. For one B-to-B client, a hybrid event proved to be the answer. They kicked off the year with a national sales meeting. A key supplier virtual event followed six months later. Content from the live event was easily transported into demonstration areas on the virtual event platform, allowing for online conversations with sales reps as well as thoughtful and targeted questions and answers. For some, who might be embarrassed to ask questions publicly, the virtual space made vendors more accessible.

Metrics for this approach were impressive. More than 2,800 attendees participated in the virtual event, which was structured regionally to manage time and resources. With 32 key supplier booths, sales reps visited an average of 26 booths each, totaling nearly 75,000 booth interactions (83% of the opportunity).



## 3 Retaining Customers

If you have a product or service that requires constant upgrades, like software, virtual events are an ideal way to provide customers and clients the information they need, while taking advantage of up-selling and cross-selling opportunities. Cramer has always encouraged clients to see their live events as more than just a moment in time. For one high tech company, we recommended that they follow up their live event with ongoing chat rooms and blogs to continue the conversation. They did, and ultimately, they were able to leverage insight from these conversations to drive keynote topics for the following year's live event.

Currently, another software company is taking this approach one step further. Understanding that a major user conference is key to their success in 2011, they are utilizing a virtual event platform to test content, keynote speakers, and various features in advance. In doing so, they hope to gain valuable key customer insight and buy in. For this client, the virtual event experience goes beyond a flat landing page, microsite or online bulletin board. It tests assumptions by bringing the experience to life in a way that will drive the key customer experience, and help them recognize the value of the face-to-face event.

## 4 Internal Communications & Sales Training

Virtual events are ideal for large organizations with dispersed teams that can't easily be brought together. They provide a dynamic and interactive format for information to be exchanged that is far more engaging than intranet solutions. This proved true for a leading bio pharmaceutical company that needed to communicate timely product launch information to their entire team, including their sales force. By using a virtual event platform, they were able to provide an impactful experience that allowed executives to speak into the camera and, ultimately, directly to the team, increasing motivation and message importance. This approach also took the 'hearsay' equation out of the mix. An ongoing virtual platform allows this company to supplement executive sessions with best practices, downloads, podcasts and even surveys and testing. It is a strategy that is paying off in a fast-paced and competitive environment.

About Cramer

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Cramer is a digital marketing and event solutions agency that fuses creativity and technology to design experiences that move audiences. For more than 25 years, we've helped the world's leading and emerging brands win and retain loyal customers, launch products and inspire sales teams. Our communication solutions include: product launches, lead generation and retention campaigns, event solutions and sales enablement. Cramer's clients include Boston Scientific, Progress Software, EMD Serono, Inc., Bayer Healthcare and PricewaterhouseCoopers among others.

