

CASE STUDY

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS NAB SHOW

Strategic Guidance, Marcom, Event Curation and Production

Challenge

The National Association of Broadcasters NAB Show is a longstanding, global, technology trade show and conference for entertainment professionals. After successfully expanding a decade ago to include professional content creators and service providers for feature films and cable and streaming TV, the show's engagement with these new groups and its brand reputation declined for two consecutive years. NAB commissioned me to uncover why they were losing business customers, partners, and audience in these sectors and to propose solutions.

Process

Working with a colleague, I examined the professional entertainment industry's business trajectory, performed a competitive analysis, and conducted qualitative research among current and lapsed attendees, exhibitors, partners, vendors, and staff. We presented our findings in a comprehensive report, which identified challenges to the Show's brand, business practices, product, and customer base and, as a result, its bottom line.

Solution

We proposed changes to NAB practices in multiple departments, including Marcom, PR, Programming, Operations, and AV. NAB adopted many of our recommendations, and among them were two new event programs--Birds of a Feather and CineCentral. NAB Show hired us to flesh out, launch, and create marketing materials for both initiatives.

For CineCentral, my co-worker and I developed a "neighborhood" on the NAB expo floor that provided sellers with new opportunities to connect with customers at the same time as it opened the door to deeper and more meaningful engagement by customers. The neighborhood featured how-to talks by creative and technical leaders, networking and relaxation zones, interactive demos, skills training, and more. We also solicited and secured corporate sponsorship.

Solution

We adapted the Birds of a Feather activity format to meet the demand for more interactive, immersive, and communal experiences. We oversaw the programs realization, including developing and orchestrating a submission process, writing FAQs, overseeing session content, and more.

For both programs my colleague and I oversaw the branding and wrote the marketing content, including descriptive documents, Website pages, promotional emails, and evaluation surveys.

Results

The Birds of a Feather program was among NAB Show's most successful initiatives that year. More than 50% of the sessions drew standing room-only crowds and key members of the show's constituency attended multiple sessions. Post event surveys were extremely positive. An executive from one of the Show's most important customers said in a post-show email that the program was "the most relevant content for his business sector at the event." Plans were made to expand the program by 50% the following year, but they were felled by COVID-19.

In its development phase, the CineCentral program was a strong draw for NAB business partners and attendees, promising to make positive contributions to the bottom line. Space design was completed and timely and meaningful session content, interactive demos, and sponsorship were all secured. However, the Show was not able to realize the neighborhood because it was cancelled due to COVID-19.