

When it comes to sales, nothing works better than trial—getting the product into consumers' hands and having them see it, touch it, try it out. Whether you're selling food or beverages, a fancy new smartphone or a hip, eco-friendly car, bottom line, trial pushes consumers further down the sales funnel and ultimately toward purchase. It also gets your brand known and talked about.

As a tactic, trial is more effective than advertising and social media. Advertising creates awareness, drives opinion and reflects a brand image. Social media, likewise, doesn't really drive sales. Experiential marketing and trial, on the other hand, provides a one-to-one opportunity to shape peoples' opinions and influence buying preferences. But you have to reach the right consumer in the right environment and stop him or her in their tracks with the right story. Trial is a way to win people's hearts and minds, and lead them down the aisle to the cash register. So how do you recalibrate your event programs around trial and transform your awareness campaigns into profitable experiential trial-driving efforts? Below are some tips.

10 TIPS FOR PUSHING TRIAL

1. FOCUS ON RECEPTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

The activation, as well as location, time of day, even the mindset of the target audience should align with the brand.

2. AMBASSADORS ARE YOUR ASSET

The ambassador is the first impression the consumer associates with your brand. Select them carefully and train and manage them. They can make or break the interaction.



3. EXPLOIT THE RAN-OUT FACTOR

The idea of limiting whatever you are sampling is an oldie but goodie. It creates interest and causes people to line up and look, and they are more likely to give you information to participate in the trial.

4. MAKE THE OFFER MATTER

Consumers understand whether an offer has value or not, and the better it is, the more likely they will give their information in return.

5. CREATE A RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Tap into the consumer's reason for attending an event and you have a sure-fire winner.



6. DEVELOP A UNIQUE HOOK

One that draws people to your activation. And it doesn't have to be the most high-tech or the most complex, but an effective one.

7. BE PATIENT ON THE PATH TO PURCHASE.

Trial can generate leads and start a conversation, but rarely results in on-the-spot purchases.

8. MAKE IT WORTH THE WAIT

There is a fine line between attracting a long line and turning people away. The key is to get them through the experience quickly and still have a meaningful engagement.

9. GO EASY ON THE DATA COLLECTION (but don't ignore it either)

A trial-oriented event is not a research tool. The research will come from the relationship that results, not the other way around. Collect peoples' names and email addresses, and ask them to opt-in for offers or further information, but don't be overbearing about it or make it too hard.

10. MAKE EVERYONE FEEL LIKE AN EARLY ADOPTER.

While only 15% of us fall into this consumer category, we like to feel we know things that others don't. Successful trial experiences tap into that desire and make participants feel special.

GNF has extensive experience launching both new products, as well as marketing established brands, on both a local or national basis across a wide range of industries and product categories. Notably, our expertise includes the food and beverage categories, spirits, and beer. We've contributed to the success of small start-ups and global brands with expertise to transform events into high-engagement trial experiences that impact the bottom line.