

UBM Studios helped HDI, the leading professional association and certification body for technical service and support professions, create a hybrid event solution that provided valuable education to their community and helped promote their physical conferences.



Facilitating collaboration and networking, HDI hosts industry conferences and events, produces comprehensive publications and research and connects solution providers with practitioners; all while certifying and training thousands of professionals each year. When the team behind HDI's renowned physical events wanted to develop a digital event extension, they turned to UBM Studios.

HDI knew that their community would respond to the content and support their sponsors due to previous programs with webcasting and digital content, but they didn't know how much of the face-to-face socializing and networking that takes place at the physical events would transfer to an online environment. Working with UBM Studios, the team developed a strategy for their first ever hybrid event, building on the success of their existing webcast theater.

Their goals were to:

- Build a robust, repeatable event
- Secure sponsorship to at least break even the first year
- Validate the digital event model for the HDI community
- Determine the right balance of content, social engagement and expo

Held three and a half weeks after the physical event in Orlando, Florida, HDI 2012—A Digital Experience incorporated keynote videos, three live webcasts from the top speakers/sessions, seven on-demand webcasts and an interactive expo.



The event was a success, achieving HDI's goals and establishing a model for future environments. Amid fears that a digital event might cannibalize attendance at the physical event, HDI discovered exactly the opposite. "Based upon a number of comments, we expect the digital event to actually drive physical event attendance," said Cinda Daly, Director of Business Content, HDI, "and 79% of attendees report that they are at least likely to attend HDI 2013 in Las Vegas." There was also significant crossover from their previous webcasts (43% of attendees to the digital extension had also participated in prior webcasts and digital efforts) and new prospect acquisition (17% of attendees were new to the HDI database.)

HDI's success was built on four principles:

- Keep a balanced mix of content by blending motivational, strategic, and tactical topics
- Include live webcasts, on-demand webcasts & sessions captured from physical events in your program rather than overloading your team with all new live content
- Webcasts, resource center assets, scheduled chats, informal chats, gamification and expo hall combine to offer something for everyone
- Re-connect events should be held early as two weeks, but not later than 4 weeks after the physical event

As the HDI team prepares for 2013 and beyond they're considering expanding their digital event model to other brands and verticals as well as developing robust year-round environments for continuous education and engagement. So far digital events have been a home-run strategy with the HDI community, and UBM Studios will continue to help the team expand their efforts for years to come.

