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Using Offline Events to Promote Online Enterprises

It's a marketing jungle out there. Plowing your way through the leaves of advertising and thickets of promotion may leave you breathless at times.

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Running to meetings, sending out this e-mail, calling this person, calling that person, tracking down a company, HOPING you can fit in a conference call before lunch and rushing to get a new print ad in on time before you head home. It's enough to make you want to go crazy after a day in the office and online for most of the day. Breathe deep and ponder this – what about using an offline event to direct business to your online business?

“Use a strong branding concept.” – Tom Weise, rentboy/hustlaball

Think of it as a fancy way of saying, “Party until your business sales go up.” Most of us can admit we think at one time or another how much more fun we have working in the sex industry. Having fun certainly does not mean you need to stop hearing that wonderful, “Cha-Ching” in your head while you are not online. One of the ways that the sex industry jungle is a bit more fun place to be and the brush is tamed and inviting is through events. Getting your online business accomplished while you are “offline” is getting easier and easier...and certainly more entertaining. Events like cocktail

hours, circuit parties, trade shows, and even a simple networking gathering are just a sampling of how offline events can generate online dollars.

To understand this grand concept I caught up with some industry animals who lead the pack in offline events.

First I headed to the phone to talk to Tom Weise of RentBoy.com and HustlaBall.com. The Berlin HustlaBall event and the Las Vegas HustlaBall are some of the greatest examples of using offline events to promote online enterprises. They are recognized as some of the best examples of how important choosing the right venue and time are in a successful offline event. Not only does HustlaBall showcase the talents of the very people that generate revenue at RentBoy.com, but it encompasses many other online companies under the promotional umbrella. Sites like Falcon Studios, Channel 1 Releasing, PrideBucks, 1-800-Gay-Live and many others have been supporters of HustlaBall knowing that it reaches the kind of consumer that they most want to engage. Parties that attend HustlaBall are going to go right back to their homes and enjoy the online material from the Ball while they relive the sights and sounds of one of the hottest industry events around (Yup, I am biased, I work for RentBoy.com).

Weise added that one of the main ways traffic is driven to his online brand from an offline party happens when you use a strong branding concept. He said, “...brand recognition all over the place. At all of our events the online business is present on banners, posters, logos, on media presentations on video screens, tickets, and even with bodypaint on the bodies of some our models. We make sure to have our own and the sponsors online businesses present throughout

the venues at our various events.” RentBoy.com didn't create it, but certainly employs the practice. You don't want to miss the party bus and miss out on promoting your brand at an event.

In another branding issue, while I was doing my research for this article, I sent a note to COLT Studio – a company that obviously knows about branding as well. When I used the words Colt Studios, the public relations department politely corrected me pointing out that COLT is always in capital letters and there is no “s” after studio. Branding will most likely land you smiling all the way to the bank.

“It's as much a feeling as it is a brand.” – Morgan Sommer, Cybersocket

Now that I knew the power of branding in offline marketing to ensure more business online, I wanted to know WHAT KIND of events I could use to market my online brand. How do I find out about them? Where are they? How much do they cost?...to find out how and why, I knew exactly who to go to next.

I stopped by the desk of Morgan Sommer

