

Case in Point

A Roaring Success: NEMEA Security Services Takes Its Trade-Show Program Over the Top

By Catherine Eberlein Pfister

While attracting the attention of any trade show attendee is a challenge, it's even tougher to capture the interest of C-suite passers-by. They've pretty much seen it all, been there, done that. So what can a new startup company do to make a connection with and impression on top-level decision-makers?

Think big and be bold.

That's what new company NEMEA Security Services LLC did in 2008, when the barely-1-year-old startup faced the challenge of marketing to information security and compliance officers such as chief executive officers, chief operating officers and directors. The company, based in Dulles, Va., exhibits at more than 25 trade shows each year, and targets primarily Fortune 1000 companies in the financial sector (banks and credit unions) as well as healthcare, utilities, pharmaceuticals, information technology and the federal government sector.

NEMEA is a service provider and offers on-demand, fully-hosted software that helps a company determine its compliance posture, according to whichever standards and mandates the company operates with.

The software also helps to determine company risk and helps a company to be audit-ready.

"It helps companies to determine how they are going to run their business, what we call governance," explained Pamela Zacha.

Generating Leads

Zacha's mission as director of marketing was to capture qualified lead information into a database, providing leads to the company's sales force.

NEMEA had already decided to develop a trade show lead-generating program around a "Discover the Power of the Lion" concept because it related to how the company got its name. (The name comes from Greek mythology, and the ferocious lion with impenetrable skin that lived in the ancient city of Nemea.)

"I remember going into a meeting with an exclusively minted coin that we'd decided to use, and we discussed possibilities for getting the attention of corporate executives," Zacha said. "One of our sales directors had just received an experience—a helicopter ride—as a personal birthday gift from a relative. Thinking that this was pretty unique, we found out the name of the company that provided the experience (Excitations), and the idea of offering experiential rewards for our program kind of took off from there."

In developing the trade show lead-generating program and contest logistics, Zacha created a 9-by-13-inch scroll to explain what the recipient needed to do to enter the contest and build excitement for the prizes. The types of experiential prizes selected by Zacha certainly didn't come cheap, but they offered the "wow" factor and the attention-getting results the company wanted. "Excitations gifts were a perfect vehicle and so unusual. They achieved the goal of influencing our potential customers," she said. "Our response rate to the 'Discover the Power of the Lion' program is more than 20 percent, which is pretty phenomenal in the response world," she added. "It has helped us get out of the startup gate and helped us to build a really good, solid foundation for lead generation. We get very good data."

"Our goal was to get people to the booth or onto the Web site to become familiar with the specifics of our product. At the booth, our salespeople can meet them face-to-face, qualify them a bit further and immediately set up a demonstration appointment," Zacha added.

The demonstration happens online and often is done with a large group of people so that no one has to leave their office. NEMEA also sets up webinars and Web promotions for several people in a company to learn more about its products.

"We've also found that this program goes beyond the trade show and becomes a very personal exchange. It's a lot of fun to tell people about the contest and the prizes," said Zacha. "The experience of receiving the program materials is, in itself, very tactile."

The contest presentation scroll is placed inside a blue organza bag along with a silver coin featuring a lion's head. Most often, these blue bags are placed on the recipient's hotel room pillow, providing a very personal connection. In this case, recipient names came from trade show sponsor mailing lists. Sometimes, however, they are given to executives outside of the trade show venue at other events such as networking opportunities.

Zacha reported that word-of-mouth around the contest travels fast at trade shows. "We've had people who have not received the coin from a mailing list who have come to the booth to ask about it," she said.

One side of the coin tells the recipient to bring the coin to NEMEA's trade show booth to exchange it for an exclusively minted brass coin. Each coin is valued at \$5 and features a number on the back. The recipient is instructed to go to the company's Web site to register the coin and to enter the contest.

One of the requirements for contest entry is that the executive must complete a product demonstration. Once they've done that they can click on a button that takes them to the registration page. Here they fill out all of their information so that the marketing department captures it, and they are entered to win the contest.

Experiential Prizes Provide the Unexpected

Every quarter there is a contest drawing and NEMEA adds travel vouchers on top of the experience (\$500 for airfare and \$500 for hotel). The experiences selected for the program include:

Great White Shark Dive: The recipient of this adventure is sure to come home with an amazing fish tale to tell. The day is spent traveling off the California coast with an expert shark diver in search of a unique array of sharks and marine life. Following safety training, recipients sink down below the surface in a strong, steel safety cage that provides a safe barrier, yet allows a face-to-face encounter with these inspiring creatures.

NBC VIP Studio Tour: The reward winner and up to five of his or her friends get a behind-the-scenes look at 30 Rockefeller Center through both sides of the lens. Led by a knowledgeable NBC Page, the tour provides exclusive access to areas of the studios never seen by the public. This includes its state-of-the-art control room, the studios and sets of programs like the Today Show, Saturday Night Live, Late Night with Conan O'Brien and the Nightly News with Brian Williams. The tour also ventures behind the scenes to the incredible prop and wardrobe rooms, and the Green Room, and finishes with an exclusive look at its one-of-a-kind digital facility.

Fighter Pilot Experience: Recipients who want a challenge can experience firsthand the thrill and excitement of military air-to-air combat, engaging an opponent in six actual dogfights. After reporting to the command post to get suited up in a flight suit, parachute and helmet, pilots head to the flight line for an introduction to basic air combat. Here they are briefed on mission tactics, maneuvers, safety considerations and the rules of engagement.

New pilots cover basic maneuvers including formation flight, gun sight tracking, high and low yo-yo's and multiple aerial dogfights. Then they climb into their aircraft alongside an instructor to begin their mission. Using a state-of-the-art electronic tracking system aboard a real military fighter plane, they then engage an opponent in six dogfights. The whole experience is recorded and reviewed in a flight de-briefing. Recipients take home a commemorative DVC.

Petrossian Caviar Tasting & Dinner: Recipients enjoy an elaborate three-course dinner for two along with a selection of fine spirits at this New York landmark restaurant.

At the end of the year there is a grand-prize drawing, which offers three ultimate experiences. On top of the grand-prize options, NEMEA adds travel vouchers (\$1,000 for airfare and \$1,000 for hotel):

Ultimate Dream Car Road Tour: This experience puts recipients in the driver's seat of up to five exotic sports cars—all in the same day—for an adrenaline rush like no other. They can select from a fleet that includes the Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorana, the Lamborghini LP 560, the Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren, a Ferrari F430, a Callaway C16 and an Alfa Romeo C8.

After learning about each vehicle's unique driving specifications and handling techniques for each vehicle, recipients can head down the scenic open road to relish the fit and finish of each vehicle then share their experience with other drivers at the end of the day. "We packaged this for two people so that spouses can go out and spend the day driving all of these wonderful cars. It's a huge hit," Zacha said.

Meadowood Sport & Spa Getaway: Recipients can escape the everyday with a sport and spa getaway for two at this premier Napa Valley estate. After check-in, they are welcomed with an early evening wine reception in the main lodge. Then they settle in for a luxurious night in a beautifully appointed guest room, complete with stone fireplace, to enjoy the beauty and serenity of this scenic, secluded destination. After breakfast it's off to explore the grounds and enjoy an array of activities including tennis, spa, hiking and golf. Included in the experience is a private croquet lesson on a championship course and a rejuvenating therapeutic massage for two.

Create & Design Your Own Wine: At Crushpad, the country's premier small-lot, custom winery, recipients enjoy the ultimate winemaking experience—creating 300 bottles of wine exclusively tailored to their tastes. An experienced winemaker guides them every step of the way, from defining the style of wine and choosing the grapes to designing the label and selecting the packaging. They can be involved in the process as little or as much as they wish.

For instance, recipients can participate in the harvesting, crushing and fermenting of the grapes or watch the progress online. They can visit the winery for barrel tastings and to make blending decisions as it ages or just monitor what's happening at the vineyard with online updates. Once bottled, the recipient takes home 25 cases of their own signature wine.

While stats on ROI and conversion of leads to sales isn't yet available, Zacha reported that "the entire program has worked incredibly well for us." She added, "When people hear about what we're doing or they receive one of our blue bags, their response is phenomenal."

[Find Out More](#)

For additional information about the experiential reward industry, its providers, and how other companies are using them in a wide range of employee and consumer programs see this issue's story, "Create Lasting Memories: The Power of Experiential Rewards".