

TAKING ARIBA'S ANNUAL USER CONFERENCE VIRTUAL

Gleans New Insights and Information on Attendee Behavior



Situation

When Ariba, Inc., the global spend management leader, started planning their 2009 user conference they knew they were facing a daunting challenge. Many of their customers signaled that they would be cutting back on attending the Live World Tour this year. Traci Oziemblowsky, Arriba's Senior Manager of Corporate Events, made the decision to partner with InterCall to convert their physical event to a virtual one. Up to this point she had attended a few other virtual shows but this was going to be the first one sponsored by Ariba.

Traci thought it would be more effective to run a hybrid event, starting with a two-day virtual conference to attract a large audience and then follow up with interested clients and prospects during a six-city tour. This change turned out to be quite successful. The main theme of their virtual conference, Empowering the Global Network, attracted a large global audience and generated a substantial pipeline for new revenue.

Solution

To help generate a truly successful user experience, Ariba leveraged the design talents of Cramer Marketing to develop effective presentations and appealing graphics. To build up internal support and customer anticipation, Traci's team created a video of CMO Tim Minahan walking around the virtual environment demonstrating what the event would look like and what attendees would experience. They sent out email campaigns describing the "Top ten reasons to attend" and emphasized the importance to registrants of clearing their calendar for several hours. This approach was successful as attendees spent nearly 3 hours at a time in this virtual environment. Leveraging the experienced InterCall support team, Ariba was able to create and load content for more than 40 simulative and live audio and video sessions. According to Traci "The synergy between InterCall and Cramer was amazing – they took our virtual environment, videos, and the entire user conference to a level we did not know was possible, enabling us to achieve results beyond our expectations".

Results

When asked how Ariba measured their success, Traci pointed to the volume of qualified leads generated, which was much greater than they would have accomplished with a live event. This was combined with the fact that they could easily track the cost of these leads. But more importantly, they were able to easily measure their Return on Pipeline. She felt that for their first virtual event the learning curve was steep. Meeting timelines and deadlines had been critical to their success Traci now believes that Virtual Engagement will become a permanent element in Arriba's marketing plans. The company is excited about InterCall's platform enhancements and they are looking forward to incorporating social networking and more extensive chat in their next virtual venue.

"InterCall provides a unique platform through which companies can engage with their clients – without requiring that they leave their offices. This allows us to offer insights and a wealth of information, while at the same time, helping our clients to curb their travel and discretionary spending."

*Tim Minahan
Chief Marketing Officer
Ariba*