

A WAY TO START IN THE WORLD OF BRAND EVENTS, PR, BRAND AMBASSADORS & MORE

by Alex H. Yong
Creator of TechMania411.net

This eBook is not meant to teach you exactly how to be an official brand ambassador (and every brand's rules are different anyway), however, much of the content you'll find here will be closely related, or touch on parallel issues. You can sort of consider the content in this eBook as:

“How to be a Brand Ambassador LITE”

First, it helps to live in a place where brands love to hold real-life promo events - more events in your area means your chances of getting an invite will be better. If you see the term “IRL,” it simply means “in real life.” An IRL event means the brand event is held in a real place, not online. Generally, especially where I live in New York City, if you don't have a blog or a social media account, your chances of getting an invite to an IRL event are slim, unless you're friendly with someone in power and they're okay with the fact that you don't have an online presence. Personally, I feel it's not exactly ethical for a person to try to get free things if they have zero clue about using GooglePlus, Twitter, Facebook, WordPress, etc. but that's just my opinion. In theory, some people can (and do) wield influence offline, so who am I to judge? If you live in a small town without a ton of brand events, don't fret. Brands are now starting to hold online events that anybody can attend for free, such as Rag & Bone (a fashion brand) and the Bob Woodruff Foundation (a non-profit organization).

FIRST STEPS: CREATE A BLOG. MAKE IT UNIQUE

If you already have a blog, great, smile! Your first action step in this journey is already done. If you don't have a blog, create one using WordPress or Blogger. It won't cost you a dime. Your next action step is to make your blog fabulous. Fill it with unique and interesting stuff.

Do NOT steal articles or pictures from other sites. You'll get in trouble not only with Google and the DMCA, but a lawyer has the legal right to send you a demand letter demanding you pay thousands of dollars!! No joke. I'm totally serious. If you're sane, you'll definitely want to avoid this horrid situation, so **be unique**. Snap your own pics with your own camera/phone, and write your own articles. Besides, it's the right thing to do.

IF YOU FEEL YOU'RE NOT A GREAT WRITER, RELAX. THERE ARE SOLUTIONS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

Maybe you feel you're not a great writer. Don't worry. There are solutions such as getting guest bloggers. A cool site for guest bloggers is MyBlogGuest.com. However, don't go overboard with inviting guests. Your blog should be a reflection of **you**, mainly. Don't invite guests to an empty blog either. It's rude in my opinion and it doesn't exactly scream to the world that you're a hard worker. Another example of a solution: Videos of yourself using your real name and sharing your sincere opinions are awesome because a lot of people are reluctant to do all that. So why not be a trailblazer, right?

ASKING TO BE INVITED TO A BRAND EVENT

The more unique and interesting your site is, and the more traffic it gets (we'll discuss that later), **the better your chances of getting an invite.** You'll either rise to the challenge, or groan with dread. I happen to think it's fun to express my unique flair and personality, and I feel it's been a positive factor in me

getting invites. I'll take a moment to point out something a little obvious, but invites are sent to you via email and they're usually from the external public relations firm of the brand. Though sometimes a brand will send invites directly through their internal media relations department.

If you aren't invited, but you hear about ("catch wind of") a brand event and you'd like to attend, try to find out who is handling the RSVPs. If you get their contact info, that's your chance to pitch them on why you should get an invite.

Here are some things you'll want to point out in your pitch and some bonus tips:

- If your website is ranked in the top 200K by Compete.com, that's something to be very proud of and point out in your pitch. If you don't like the actual Compete.com site to see your Compete rank, you can use Moonsy.com and select the Compete.com interface. It will give you the exact same data.
- Find out your website traffic by going to sites like Alexa.com or Websiteinhub.com. If you have 15,000+ unique visitors per month, that's generally something worthy of pointing out in your pitch to a brand. This mark is even more impressive if your website is somewhat new and you've attracted a lot of traffic in a relatively short time.
- If you have a lot of followers on Twitter, Pinterest, etc., point that out - and don't just say "a lot." Give an actual number. A high number of followers gives brands a clue that you're social and that your reach is (hopefully) growing. Don't buy followers. Nowadays, most people and brands can decipher or sense when that's done. Also: Find out your Klout score by going to Klout.com. If it's higher than the 50-60 range, definitely let your pitch reflect that. **If you host lots of high-quality guest writers on your blog, that's another fact to be proud of. It gives an indication that you're social** and that your blog has a degree of magnetic quality.
- If your website has a PR of 4 or higher, point that out too. PR stands for

Google PageRank and you can find your info at pagerankchecker.com.

Note: If you created your site after February 2013, your PR will show up as N/A on checker sites. You'll need to wait until Google does a refresh.

Only Google knows exactly when that will happen, but many regular people are guessing it will happen in the first quarter of 2014.

- Give the coordinating person a list of your past articles. Include links and test the links before sending. A broken link can give the other person a vibe that you're careless or unprofessional. Your articles don't need to be in date order. You can put the good/best ones on top.
- Ask to be on the press list, not the general public list if it's an event where both press and the public are invited. Also, stand on the press line/queue, not the public line. This really won't be an issue if it's a small-scale event, but be mindful of this for the larger-scale events.
- If an event gives you an ID lanyard or badge, save it for future brand events, especially if it's nice-looking.
- Know the name of the public relations coordinator who invited you before you check-in. Try to print out your invite even if you're told check-in will be digital. Bring your photo ID just in case there are any issues.
- This next tip is a little on the harsh side, but hear me out. It will save you a ton of time. If you're creating a blog solely for the sake of getting free products, **stop now. Just stop, seriously. I've seen blogs like this and they're a turn-off. More often than not, these types of blogs lack focus - and it shows - I've NEVER seen one that looks good.** In short, they stink to high Heaven. Public relations firms don't like spammy blogs either - well, the dumb ones who let interns make decisions maybe - but generally, you won't get far with a spammy "I'll review anything positively as long as it's free!" blog. To avoid a huge tirade, I'll simply say **I feel most blogs should be about clarifying, learning, discussion, inspiration, etc.** In my opinion, **bloggers should NOT hoard free things**, unless you want to be a case study on *Hoarders*. Hoarding is a real disease. Be mindful of your intentions.

ABOUT REAL BRAND AMBASSADORS

Let me take a minute here to say a few words about **true/official** brand ambassadors. First, I've never been one, so what I'll say here are more or less educated guesses and guesses based on experience. My instinct says true brand ambassadors are required to sign contracts of exclusivity. I imagine the language in those contracts state that the ambassador can't cover a competitor's products for a specified timeframe, plus a whole bunch of other rules that need to be followed. This type of strict dynamic is not my cup of tea. Am I sometimes missing out on free products because I refuse to be under a contract? Probably - but guess what? It doesn't bother me. My reason is because I don't like to feel constrained. And even without a contract and true brand ambassador status, you can still do okay with getting free things.

SOME IMPORTANT THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Here are some other terms/scenarios/facts/realities I'd like to point out. They might seem foreign to you on your first read. Hopefully I've simplified the below so they'll make total sense to you *after* you've accumulated some experience dealing with brands.

Embargo Date

This means you need to wait until a specific date passes before you can blog about a product, service, news, etc. The brand specifies the date the embargo ends and will often put the date in boldface and colored red on materials they give to you. Follow the instructions carefully. You can get in trouble if you write an article before the embargo date.

Deskside

A brand will sit with you (typically at their public relations firm's office) and discuss a product that needs promoting. This is your time to ask questions about the product and about what type of coverage the brand would like (e.g.:

video, static blog post, gift guide inclusion, etc.) You will walk away with a free product 99.9% of the time. They are called deskside meetings, or simply desksides. It's a good idea to ask about any embargo date within the first few minutes of the deskside. It shows professionalism and reinforces your memory.

Price Point

Blog owners who review and write about products are expected to know their price points. For example, with shoes, my price point is \$120 or lower, and all my blogposts and tweets reflect that. If a brand is known for creating shoes with a starting price point of \$450, then obviously that's not a brand who'll be terribly interested in associating with me.

Event Hashtag

When you go to a brand event, make a bee line to the onsite public relations team and ask them if there's an official hashtag for the event. (Eventually, you'll learn to ask early on, in your request email.) If you ask this question and you don't have a Twitter account, you just revealed yourself to be a fraud, or a very clueless person, or just plain strange. Reason: A hashtag is normally associated with Twitter. In the past, it was *always* associated with Twitter. (You need to act the part when you go to brand events. See the section where I elaborate on this.)

Media Kit

This is your best friend when it comes to delivering product coverage for a brand. They'll often give you the product media kit on a USB stick, also known as a USB flash drive. You can call it a USB drive, a USB flash drive, a USB stick - those are all fine to say - nobody will look at you like you're an alien. I can't put into words how helpful it is when brands give you a USB stick. All you do is insert it into your computer and read everything that's on it. There might even be instructions, so please remember: You need to read what you're given. Use the parts you like. Do not copy and paste - that's lazy. Instead, take a piece from here, a piece from there, do that a few times, then stir everything

up like a salad, add your own flair, and finally organize the final article as any good writer does. If you don't get a USB stick, you might get paper handouts or a URL. Is blogging tougher without the USB stick? Yes, of course it's harder, but if you want future invites, do your best with what you're given. When I say add your own flair, I mean add your own words. As a blogger, brands always want you to use your own words mixed in with theirs.

BE YOURSELF & BE REAL, BUT BE AWARE OF INDUSTRY TERMINOLOGY & NORMS TOO

Quick advice: *You need to “act the part” when you go to brand events, but DON'T be a fake.*

Let's be clear here - I'm not telling you to lie. I'm just saying it's not a crime to put on a few airs to give off the impression that you know what you're doing and what the heck you're talking about. If you're a niche blogger, you really don't need to stress out with your research - By definition, you should already be joyfully researching your niche in your spare time (or perhaps even professionally). Pick up on the lingo you see & hear before (in emails), during & after brand events. Don't overdo airs & lingo - Nobody likes a fake/phony person. Be yourself and add a little spice - that's my advice. Early on you'll stumble a little, that's to be expected. But if you're reading this eBook right now, you're a smart cookie - You can give yourself a leg up on the competition.

If you're asked “Who do you write for?” by someone at the event, you can state the name of your blog. It sounds more professional than saying that you write for yourself. I happen to guestblog for several sites, so when I'm asked that question, I just name 3 or 4. I don't name them all, because there are so many, it would sound like bragging or being obnoxious. Also, if you guestblog on different sites, it shows you've got in-demand writing skills.

OFTEN THE “LITTLE THINGS” MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The holiday season is a nice time to wish brand employees & those nice event coordinators who accepted your pitch a happy holiday season and a happy upcoming new year. One thing you can do is set a Google Calendar reminder for yourself every November, around mid-month, with a reminder note to yourself. Doing this and other “little things” can help people remember you, which can lead to more invites.

I hope you found this eBook (published Dec. 2013) helpful.

There are **lots** more tips about
going to events

that aren't covered in this eBook.

You can contact me on Skype at yhsmanhattan
or via email at alex@techmania411.net

I recommend that you visit these sites too:

1. [MyBlogGuest - official site](#)

1a. [How to promote your eBook through MyBlogGuest](http://is.gd/mbgebookgallery) (http://is.gd/mbgebookgallery)

1b. [MyBlogGuest's official community on GooglePlus](http://is.gd/mbggpc) (http://is.gd/mbggpc)

2. My directory: [Word of Mouth](#)

2a. My tech news site: TechMania411.net

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