

So, you've secured a facility or grounds to host a special event for your company or organization. Perhaps it's a charity fundraiser or new product launch. Before we consider the best way to rebrand the location for such an occasion, begin by considering the special event's brand itself.



A brand is not just a logo, selected typeface, distinctive color palette or defining tagline. It's often all of this and more! Much like your company's brand, a brand for a special event will be a logo, icon and wordmark in a distinct combination that represents certain values and benefits.

In its article, *How to Brand Your Event in 7 Simple Steps*, Event Marketing suggests that the best special event brands are unique, meaningful, authentic and consistent. The branding that the event host creates will become the focal point for rebranding your venue for a one-time, special event.

CONSIDERING BRAND COMPATIBILITY

If the occasion is one that's associated with your company, organization or nonprofit, the special event logo should complement your own branding. Through design, colors, typeface and more, it should be able to live side-by-side with the original.

On the other hand, if you are utilizing a venue outside of your organization that's not related to your

operation, the design of the special event logo could include references to the locale. Better yet, through larger sizing, careful placement or even covering up the facility's own branding (albeit on a temporary basis), the special event logo should stand apart.

REBRANDING THE EVENT VENUE

For the occasion itself, you'll want to follow event branding best practices. Much of it is a judgment call. You won't want to overwhelm your visitors with the special event theme. Of course, underusing the new branding to the point where it's nearly invisible isn't optimal, either.

Survey the event venue well ahead of the occasion with your planning team. If possible, conduct your walkthrough or stroll around in the facility with your sign resource's expert. They should be able to help identify signage, graphics and display opportunities for you.

Of course, the industry's best practices in event signage and graphics will apply no matter the location. Consider tried-and-true solutions to carry the event theme. These might include:

- Awnings and event tents as a focal point (and shelter) for outdoor events
- Exterior wayfinding signage to guide guests to the main entrance
- Floor graphics to enhance event branding and/or visitor wayfinding
- Hanging signs in larger venues to lend a festive air or identify the special locations (e.g., registration tables) beneath them
- Indoor banners to support the event theme
- Inflatables if an outdoor event's premise supports their use

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- Interior directional signage to point the way to restrooms, prize tables and more
 - Outdoor banners on the grounds or on a building's façade to alert visitors at the street to the event's venue
 - Pole banners if the venue's architecture allows them, used in a series if possible for added impact
 - Posters to publicize the event's theme, inform guests to its cause or spur action (e.g., donate now)
 - Sponsor backdrops such as step-and-repeat banners to help identify the host or cause
 - Tablecloths and skirts to dress up otherwise drab, institutional tables
 - Wall graphics to underscore the event's theme
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GOING THE EXTRA MILE

In their article, Event Marketing recommends that the host consider the smaller things that don't fall under signage and graphics but will contribute to making an event more special. They suggest supporting the event's theme with branded items including:

- Bags
- Baked goods (e.g., cookies, cupcakes)
- Caps, t-shirts or other logoed apparel
- Name badges/lanyards
- Notepads
- Pens
- Water bottles
- Other event handouts

In some instances, a logo can be incorporated (or maybe even baked in) to the design. For others, printing on the item itself or affixing the event branding on it with a label or sticker will serve just as well.

REMEMBERING THE ROLE OF BRANDING

As you address the many steps large and small in rebranding the venue for a one-time event, it helps to recall the benefits such an effort can bring. Event Marketing notes that these advantages include:

- **Attracting a bigger crowd.** You'll call attention to your special event with proper branding and, while doing so, help explain why it's in your audience's best interest to attend.
- **Increasing brand awareness.** When well-executed design-wise and sufficiently publicized at the venue and elsewhere, the logo will make the event more recognizable. It can help create audience loyalty and cement their emotional and mental connections.
- **Enhancing memorability.** You should hope for the event to "live on" long after it's over. How? By being easily recognized in the photos and/or videos taken at the occasion. (Selfies, anyone?) This consideration is especially important if the event is one in a series of annual events.
- **Differentiating the effort.** Work toward creating a distinctive event brand and supporting as strongly as possible to set your effort apart. This is no small accomplishment. It's likely there are other special occasions (e.g., fundraisers, product launches) competing for the attention of your audience!



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