

Summary Overview

There are two documents, which pertain to the 2008 APCUG presentation on "How to Create A Win-Win-Win Partnership with Vendors".

The two documents are:

- The Win-Win-Win presentation document and
- A copy of the Past Presentations webpage (under Events) on <http://www.ntpcug.org/>.

The Past Presentations webpage was captured using TechSmith's SnagIt software, <http://www.techsmith.com/screen-capture.asp>, which is an excellent easy to use tool. IMO, SnagIt is a tool that every user group member should have in their software tool chest, so that they can create more interesting presentations and product reviews. You can download a 30-day evaluation copy of SnagIt to try it out before you buy it.

I also think that every user group could use a past presentations page on their website, so that prospective members can get a flavor of the depth and quality of your vendor presentations. In addition, this may entice vendors to partner with your user group and to do a presentation.

I am currently working on collecting the last of the APCUG presentations, so that they can all be posted on the APCUG.net website. Many of these presentations can be used as a presentation in a box for your user group.

Posting these presentations on the APCUG website allows the convention attendees to review the sessions that they were unable to attend. In addition, this becomes valuable information for all of the user group members, who were not able to attend the convention this year.

How to Create A Win-Win-Win

Partnership with Vendors

By Linda Moore, APCUG Director

No doubt you are wondering what a win-win-win partnership means. A Win-win-win partnership means that it is good for the vendor, for the user group and for the members of the user group.

What do Vendors Want?

Vendors want a good ROI (return on investment) for their time and expense in making the presentation. This means that they want to see an increase in sales or other acts by the user group that will lead to an increase in sales (more on this later). Obviously, vendors want these presentations to be attended by the maximum number of the target audience for their product(s). Some vendors even set minimum attendance requirements before they will schedule a presentation.

What do User Groups Want?

User groups and their members want a quality presentation for high-quality products, which is technically oriented rather than a marketing presentation. Technical presentations can also have marketing components in terms of key benefits versus competitive products. User group members also like a presentation that concludes with raffle prizes.

How to be a Successful Program Director for your User Group

- Programs must be scheduled and confirmed 90 – 120 days in advance of the presentation.
- Program Director needs to be up-to-date on the leading edge of technology. This is a daily task and will increase your ability to identify vendors that would appeal to the user group's membership.
- When confirming a presentation, there are five primary areas that you will want to discuss with the presenter and they are:
 - **Product Review** – With the 90-120 day lead time, you can get a knowledgeable member to evaluate the product and write a product review, which will be posted on the UG's website prior to the presentation. This information will remain on the website for the life of the product.
 - **Publicity** – To the members of your UG and to the larger IT community – This is why it is critical to schedule presentations 90-120 days in advance because

the UG needs this time to properly promote this presentation. When you are posting information about the presentation on your UG's website, ALWAYS remember to include the vendor's website URL.

- **Presentation Topic**
- **Description of Presentation – 2-3 sentences**
- **Speaker's Bio**
 - **Need speaker's title**
 - **4-5 sentences about the speaker**
 - **Speaker's email address**
 - **Speaker's phone number**
- Post information about the presentation on UG's website. Other IT groups are frequently willing to post information about the presentation on their websites with a link to your UG's website.
- Send out broadcast email messages.

Set up a separate webpage for past presentations. This is important in terms of attracting vendors to make presentations. It is also an important tool to use in increasing your UG's membership. There is an added bonus that it also helps to increase the search engine results for your UG. Here is the URL for the past presentations for the North Texas PC Users Group. <http://www.ntpcug.org/prevprograms.shtml> See attached SnagIt document for this webpage information.

The past presentations webpage provides another opportunity for the program director to promote previous vendor presentations. For me it also provided easy reference as to who made the presentation and what the vendor's URL was.

- **Posting a copy of presentation to website** – If the speaker is willing to provide a copy of his presentation, then this can be posted to the UG's website, so that anyone who could not attend can peruse the materials and additional resources. Ask if the speaker's email address can be included as part of the information about the presentation.
- **Vendor Discount for UG's members only** – Many vendors are willing to offer the members of a UG a discount on their products. In return, the UG sets up a members-only page with the information about the discount and how to obtain it. The webpage with the discount information will be posted on the website, as long as it remains a valid discount.
- **Raffle Prizes** – If the speaker is going to offer products for raffle prizes at the end of the presentation, then get the names of the products. This information can then be included as part of the publicity materials.

As a UG leader are you interested in learning more about how to better manage your UG? If you are, then in the summary section of this article, you will find additional information about UG management training sessions that you can attend.

How to Create a Successful Product Review Program

- Ideally, your UG product review coordinator needs to be someone who stays up to date on technology trends and new products.
- Product review coordinator will work closely with the program director. In some cases, the product review coordinator may want to initiate a product review, even if there is not an associated presentation.
- Use a Product Reviewer Application – Sets out requirements and deadlines.
- Use a Product Review Guidelines Document – Sets out structure for review and check list for items to be included.

(As a UG leader are you interested in learning more about how to better manage your UG? If you are, then in the summary section of this article, you will find additional information about UG management training sessions that you can attend.)

Why a User Group Should Use a Blog For Its UG Newsletter

There are many benefits for a UG to use a blog for its UG newsletter, not the least of which is that it requires significantly less time for any single volunteer. The UG members and visitors to the UG's website can also post comments and questions about any article posted. This interaction will also create greater interest in your UG. The blogging format is very similar to a newspaper that has multiple columnists in specialized areas. However, in the case of a blog, the "columnist-technologist enters the post and moderates his own blog.

When UGs use the newsletter concept, which is predicated on a hard copy printed format, then that typically means that one person is responsible for everything, which is a very time consuming task.

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Summary

The steps listed above for organizing a presentation, provides multiple opportunities for promoting the presentation and the vendor's products that may be posted on your website, blog or newsletter, which are posted to the web for several years or more. This is valuable exposure for the vendor and their products.

If all of the steps above are followed, then there will be separate references for each presentation by a specific vendor's representative.

- Announcement about future presentation
- Product Review
- Vendor Discount
- Past Presentations
- Copy of presentation itself
- Broadcast email messages to members of UG
- Posting information or a link on the website for other IT groups.

Also remember to post information on any applicable IT group's list serve.

This is one of the many ways that a UG can contribute to a vendor's ROI (return on investment) for making a presentation to your UG.

Marketing a presentation in this way is also valuable to your UG in terms of attracting new members and improving the search engine results for your UG's website.

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