



## Generating ROI from an Effective Event Strategy

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Kiran Patel, Marketing & Communications Director at LehmanBrown International Accountants recently spoke at the British Chamber of Commerce in China MarCom Forum on Generating ROI from running an effective events strategy. The following article summarises the presentation and provides best practice pointers for success.

Events can be costly in terms of time and financial resources; however operating an effective event strategy can also be highly beneficial for your business if executed well. For an event to be successful, it requires significant effort to not only organise, but significantly to ensure adequate generation of Return On Investment (“ROI”). This ensures that the event organiser achieves a solid return on resources committed to an event marketing activity. ROI generation and measurability is particularly relevant given the squeeze on marketing budgets caused by both the evolution of marketing practices and a more challenging and competitive business environment globally. However, your event will generate the return desired return if it is well planned and executed.

By using the British Charity Ball and LehmanBrown’s involvement as an example case study, we can illustrate how to capitalise on running effective events as part of a community driven marketing strategy.

The British Charity Ball is a large community event in Beijing with over 750 guests, run largely by a combination of LehmanBrown staff and volunteers who donate their personal time and often whatever resources are available, towards making the event a success. Last year the British Charity Ball raised over 400,000 RMB for our two selected local children’s charities. Additionally it also provided great marketing opportunities for the event’s partners and sponsors. LehmanBrown is a leading sponsor of the event and has engaged substantial partners such as British Airways, Standard Chartered Bank, Tesco, BMW, Mini, DHL and Airbus amongst numerous others in recent years to support the activity.

Being a part of this event has multiple benefits. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Charity forms a major pillar of LehmanBrown’s marketing strategy, because it creates benefits for the community, creates conversation and awareness of the challenges that a charitable cause is operating within, as well as raising LehmanBrown’s brand awareness. Being able to attach a company’s name to an event that is full of positive social outcomes develops significant goodwill towards the brand. Additionally the event attracts high profile figures from the business and diplomatic communities in Beijing enhancing opportunities for all event stakeholders to capitalise.

## Pre Event

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One thing to keep in mind when scoping out an event is to actually plan for ROI and to structure the event accordingly so as to allow for maximum benefits. Whether this is information on attendees, an opportunity for networking or even just building on brand awareness, events can easily burn resources if not properly managed and goals are not clearly defined.

When planning the event some basic considerations are listed below, although the key thing is to start planning as early as possible allowing at least 16 weeks preparation time. For the British Charity Ball, it takes the team at least 8 months to plan and deliver the event. The next most important consideration is budgeting and this needs to needs to lay out clearly where revenue will come from and the expenditure. A buffer zone of 10% is recommended to cover any unforeseen expenses and safeguard against risk of losses.

Suppliers and partners are a critical aspect of an event, especially in the case of the British Ball being a non-profit event geared towards fundraising. Choosing the right partners is important to achieve shared objectives and as the organiser, you should be prepared and willing to compromise and work with them. Remember that they want to achieve ROI as well!

## In-house or Outsource

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This is a key question that the event planner needs to decide upon. Being able to carry out certain aspects of event planning and delivery in-house helps to minimise costs, but often companies, particularly SMEs do not have the resources or expertise in-house to carry out professional design, production of collateral or large-scale event management for example. When deciding on an outsource partner or event production house, it would be prudent to first assess their capabilities, connections and access to resources that will add value to the event.

Marketing can make or break an event. Identify your target audience and then figure out how you will get the word out. You may even want to contact the VIP targeted attendees directly. Using tools such as social media, blogs and media partners are ideal mechanisms to cascade your promotional content. Creating an atmosphere of hype around the event can work wonders but remember to also keep the event branding consistent throughout the process.

Depending on the size of the event it may be a good idea to create dedicated phone lines, email accounts and websites. Something that can help establish an online presence is obviously critical in the modern world. As for takeaways at LehmanBrown we have a soft toy that is branded with our company Logo and built into all relevant events that we organise.

## At The Event

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On the evening, seamless execution is paramount. You should ensure that all staff and volunteers are clear on their tasks and well briefed with a structured rundown and timeline to adhere to. Also, it is of fundamental importance to build up a rapport with the venue staff, as it will improve communication and allow for a collaborative atmosphere when encountering any problems. Be prepared for the unexpected as while your guests might think everything is going well (hopefully!), from your perspective as the event organiser, you must be ready to improvise if necessary.

As the event progresses, you want to start capturing leads for your business. Name drops, information opportunities, prizes, incentives, casual and more prearranged meetings are all good ways to make connections. Make sure you try to communicate with as many guests as possible, to subtly promote your company's brand. But most importantly you need to actually join in the mingling, actually get in there and do meet and greet activities; the guests are in large part coming on the basis of your company's invitation.

## Post Event

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Gaining business cards, email addresses and basic information is all well and good, but once the event is finished you need to initiate follow up. Organise meetings with your prospects, take them to lunch, and grabbing a coffee together are all basic but effective ways to develop your potential leads into customers. A follow up marketing release is great, advertising how successful the event was, how much money or goodwill the event achieved for charity. Also don't forget to thank your supporters. Make sure that they benefit so that next time, you can get them on board easier. You can also conduct data analysis on information captured. Examine who attended the event; you could do a demographic study on who came as well as updating your database. All this is information

that can be used at a later, but not if it isn't captured. Capitalise on your investment, generate some ROI through new customers, new networks and enhanced brand. It is important to do a comprehensive follow-up because if you have this information, you're in a position to be able to go back to your management and show what the event activity has contributed to the business.

Finally the last step in event marketing is to debrief thoroughly and you should conduct a post event wrap up with the planners and all stakeholders involved. This is vital in ensuring that you identify the key areas of improvement, seek open feedback from your partners on the activity and use this information to improve and secure the long-term future of your event activity.

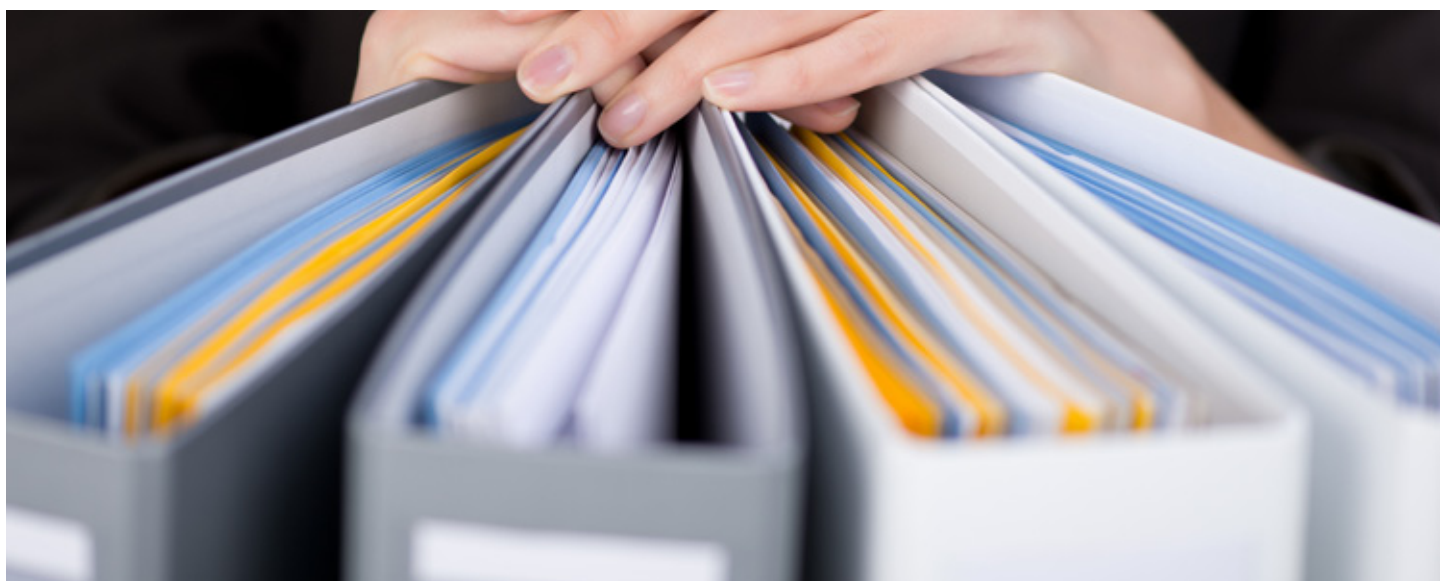
You can learn more about LehmanBrown's CSR and the British Charity Ball in Beijing, [here](#). Also, this PPT can serve as a complementary resource to this article. Good luck with organising your events.

## Some Final Tips

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1. **Hire a good photographer/videographer** – you want to be able to capture the event and be able to resell it in the future. The goodwill gained is an asset after all.
2. **Permit/VISAs** – Make sure that all logistic loose ends have been completed. There is nothing worse than planning an event and then finding out just prior before that the band you've hired can't get into the country, your insurance policy for performers not comprehensive, the catering hasn't been secured or you do not have the relevant clearance from the authorities and inspectors.
3. **Do a Pre & Post - Event Stock Take** – make sure that all items have been accounted for.

You can learn more about LehmanBrown's CSR and the British Charity Ball in Beijing, [here](#). Also, this PPT can serve as a complementary resource to this article. Good luck with organising your events.



## About Us

Founded in 2001, LehmanBrown is a China-focused accounting, taxation and business advisory firm, operating in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Macau, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Tianjin. Our firm also manages an extensive affiliate network, providing service throughout China and reach across the globe.

Combining years of international expertise with practical Chinese experience and knowledge, LehmanBrown offers expert advice and support to both local and international clients. Within the mid - tier, we are regarded as a market leader and our clients enjoy access to a combination of senior and experienced counsellors from both China and abroad.

At LehmanBrown we recognise that you are unique, that you have unique requirements and we are committed to providing individually tailored financial solutions. LehmanBrown is dedicated to providing personalised service by working closely with our clients to understand your individual business needs. This enables us to offer the most up-to-date and expert advice.

## 关于我们

雷博国际会计成立于 2001 年，是一家获得许可，主要从事有关中国范围内会计、税务和财务咨询服务的公司，在北京、上海、香港、澳门、深圳、广州和天津设有专门办事机构，正积极在全国范围内建立广泛的联合专业服务网络。

综合多年的国际经验和对中国市场的深刻理解和实践体验，我们向广大国内外的客户提供高质量的专业服务和意见帮助。在雷博国际会计的服务过程中，我们作为市场中的佼佼者，您将得到来自中国本土以及其它国家的高级资深专家热忱的咨询帮助。

我们深刻认识到每一位客户都是独一无二的，并都有其独特的业务需求。雷博国际会计承诺将根据客户的不同业务需求，为客户提供个性化的财务解决方案。我们的专业人员将密切与您合作，以充分了解您独特的业务需求，从而提供满足您所需要的高时效、高质量的专业服务。

## Professional Services

### Audit & Assurance

#### External Audit

China Statutory Audit

US GAAP Audit

IFRS Audit

Hong Kong Statutory Audit

#### Internal Audit

Fraud Investigation

Forensic Accounting

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Royalty Audit

Capital Verification Audit

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Damage Assessment Valuation

Intellectual Property Valuation

Asset Valuation

Special Purposes Valuation

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Debt Restructuring

Acquisition, Disposal & Financing

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Transaction Advisory

M&A Divesture

M&A Integration

Financial Due Diligence

## Business Services

### Company Registration & Maintenance

Market Entry Advisory

Updating Company Certificates

Annual Inspection & Reporting

Company Secretarial Services

Company Ownership Transferring/Corporate Restructuring

Background/Credit Checking

Company Deregistration & Bankruptcy

### HR Support Services

China Visa Services for Expatriates

Social Welfare Structures

## Outsourcing Services

### Accounting & Bookkeeping

Budgeting & Forecasting

Financial Statement Preparation

Head Office Reporting

### Financial Management

Interim Financial Management

Finance Manager Function

CFO Function

Cash Flow Management

### Treasury Management

Set-up of Bank Account

### Payroll Services

Payroll Processing Setup

Expatriate Employees

Local Employees

Secondment & Temping Service

Chop Custodian Services

## Taxation Services

### Individual Tax Planning (IIT)

Tax Immigration & Investment Review

US & Overseas Personal Income Tax Planning & Filing

IIT Tax Payment Facilitation

Application for Individual Income Tax Refund

Expatriate Staff Individual Income Tax Staff Filing

Local Staff Individual Income Tax

### Company Taxation (CIT)

#### Tax Consulting

Corporate Tax Planning

Business Restructuring

Value Chain Review

Onshore / Offshore Investment

Transfer Pricing

#### Tax Compliance

Tax Due Diligence

Tax Deregistration

Negotiation of Tax Penalties

Tax Refund Application

Tax Representatives for Tax Audit

VAT & Customs Duty Clearance

PRC Tax Receipt Verification

VAT Application

VAT & Sales Tax Filing

Corporate Income Tax Reporting

## Specialist Accounting & Risk Management

### Internal Controls

Systems

Risk Management

Sarbanes - Oxley (SOX 404)

### GAAP, SEC & IFRS Compliance

#### US GAAP

US GAAP Financial Statement Preparation

US GAAP Conversion

#### Other GAAP

GAAP Conversion

Public Company Compliance

Financial Statement Preparation

#### IFRS

IFRS Accounting Repackaging

IFRS Financial Statement Preparation

IFRS Public Company Compliance

#### SEC

SEC Public Company Compliance

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### Legal Advisory

#### Labour Legal Advisory

Workforce Downsizing Advisory

Labour Tribunal Assistance & Advisory

Labour Law Review & Audits

Review & Preparation of Employment Contracts

#### Corporate Legal Advisory

Legal Due Diligence

Corporate Restructuring Advisory

Review & Preparation of Articles of Association (AoA)

Review & Preparation of JV Contracts

Review & Preparation of Repatriation Agreements

#### Other Legal Services

Dispute Mediation & Advisory

Trademark & Intellectual Property Advisory

Debt Collection Assistance

Litigation Support

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International Accountants



## Contact Us 联系我们

For further information about how we can add value and support your individual or business needs, please contact us.

如需为个人或企业获取更多的增值服务及业务协助信息，请与我们联系。

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