

➤ THE NEW EVENT MARKETING OPPORTUNITY:

How to strategically maximize your event channel and take advantage of events in your marketing mix

cvent



INTRO

Cvent believes the golden age of events has arrived. But it didn't come easily. This exciting new era arrived thanks to a confluence of game-changing events that rocked the marketing world forever, from the rise of digital technology to the global pandemic of 2020.

Perhaps no other marketing channel was more impacted by the pandemic than meetings and events. When in-person events suddenly stopped, organizations were forced to innovate to survive. It was survival of the fittest, with evolution taking place in real time. Not only did organizations adapt brilliantly, they arguably changed the face of event marketing forever.

Without in-person events, marketers and event planners were thrown together, and the lines between traditional webinars and virtual events became blurred. Marketers started to think about what was possible with meetings and events, and how to incorporate marketing methodologies into the overall events channel.

Both sides saw the potential — massive audience expansion, multiple data points of

capture, digital engagement, lead scoring, and more. Now there's no going back.

This isn't a return to normal or even a "new normal." It's rethinking how marketers see, plan, produce, and even attend events. Now more than ever, marketers have an opportunity to create value and drive revenue by aligning their technology, teams, and strategy to scale the events channel and add a powerful new tool to their overall marketing mix.



PRE-PANDEMIC: SILOES & SEPARATION

Our pre-pandemic world was dominated by in-person events. Teams, roles, responsibilities, and technology were siloed. Tech existed in different places with different owners. Few teams were talking and even fewer organizations were taking a programmatic

view of their events. According to a recent Forrester survey, 66% of event managers said they executed events independently of marketing campaigns. The result? Years, even decades, of missed opportunities.



PANDEMIC: DISRUPTION & CONVERGENCE

The pandemic disrupted the status quo. This led to the convergence of functions, the technologies used to support them, and the entire events channel. Event planners and marketers adapted quickly, discovering new opportunities along the way — and laid the foundation for a new, better way in the post-pandemic world.



POST-PANDEMIC: INNOVATION & IMPACT

Cut to the present — and future. The digital revolution and global pandemic taught marketers that the status quo had to go.

Roles and responsibilities have become more fluid and organizations have started to think differently across the board. And a tidal wave of new and innovative thinking is taking place that will not be stopped or reversed:

- 73% of organizations say demand marketing is responsible for setting event strategy. (Forrester, February 2021)
- 72% agree digital strategy technologies will remain the foundation of any experience post-pandemic. (Forrester, February 2021)
- In-person events will become more digitally connected, whether they're "hybrid" or exclusively in-person.
- Marketers and planners will work hand-in-hand to craft and deliver dynamic, engaging event experiences.

- Virtual events will become more experiential due to audience expectations. An engaging webinar of 2019 won't likely cut it in today's world — webinars should operate more like a virtual event experience.

Where does day-dreaming about what's possible end and actionable strategy begin? It starts by thinking bigger than just planning events one at a time, independent from the organization's overall marketing strategy. The future of event marketing is a multi-layered, programmatic approach. We call it: **The New Event Marketing Opportunity.**

Taking advantage of the **New Event Marketing Opportunity** demands marketers align strategy, technology, and teams to deliver the right event format (virtual, in-person, hybrid) for the right event type (events, conferences, meetings, seminars, training, etc.) for the right audience, at the right stage along the customer journey. Events can't just be viewed as arbitrary dates circled on the organization's calendar; they

must be viewed as a critical part of the overall marketing mix that can support each stage of the customer lifecycle.

The big-picture thinking is simple, because simple works best. Now, how do you take advantage of the event marketing opportunity and maximize your event channel?

IN THIS EBOOK, YOU'LL DISCOVER:

- ✓ What a New Event Marketing Opportunity is, and why it's the most strategic way to think about your events
- ✓ Channel strategy: Tips on goal setting for every type of event
- ✓ Event tactic strategy: Goals and intended outcomes drive the format
- ✓ Technology: Simplifying the stack to make it more efficient
- ✓ Where do we go from here?

WHAT IS THE NEW EVENT MARKETING OPPORTUNITY?

“Be prepared for anything,” has never been more relevant. The global pandemic and the digital revolution have brought about profound changes for everyone and also tremendous opportunities for those who know how to capitalize on them.

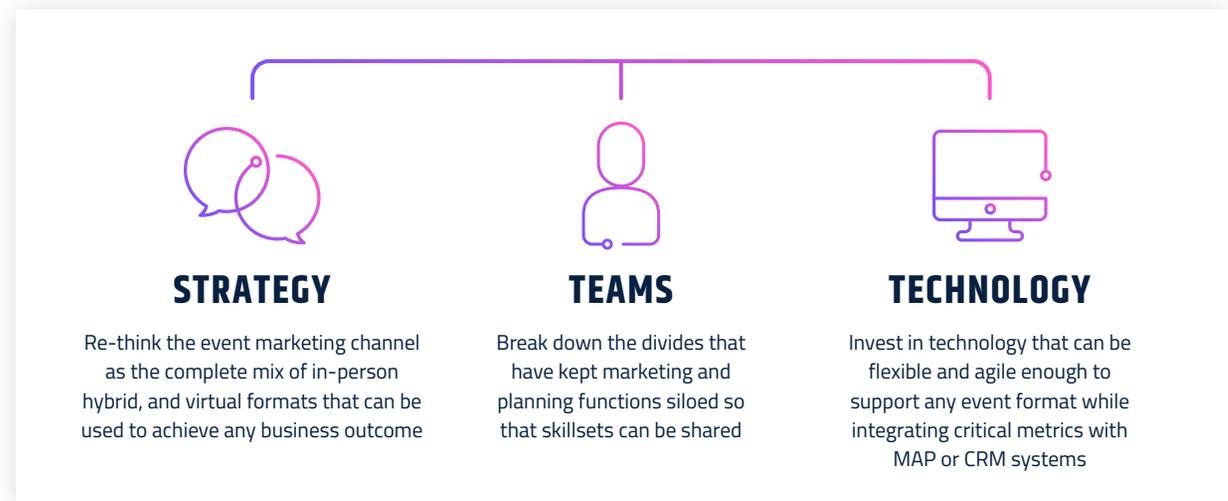
The New Event Marketing Opportunity maximizes value and manages risk by mastering event types and formats using a cohesive, comprehensive, and collaborative approach that embraces virtual technology.

Virtual events have been adopted at a breathtaking pace over the past two years. For many attendees, technology has become the new venue. Moving forward, all signs point to digital components remaining a key part of the event channel, whatever the event format. Doing things “the way we’ve always done them” is no longer a strategy for success. In fact, it’s a recipe for failure. To thrive, marketers must fold virtual and

hybrid experiences into the existing in-person event marketing channel. This shouldn’t be viewed as a burden, but as a benefit; virtual and hybrid events enhance marketers’ opportunity to reach and engage new and larger audiences, increase brand awareness and engagement, deliver more insights and, ultimately, drive revenue.

Building a programmatic events channel requires reimagining traditional roles, removing silos, standardizing processes, incorporating dynamic data, and streamlining technology across the entire marketing function.

AREAS IMPACTED BY THE NEW EVENT MARKETING OPPORTUNITY



WHY THE NEW EVENT MARKETING OPPORTUNITY?

- ✓ Efficiency at scale
- ✓ Strategic use of resources
- ✓ Mitigation of risk
- ✓ A unified, holistic strategy
- ✓ Consolidated insights
- ✓ Accelerated proof of impact

WHY SHOULD MY MARKETING MIX INCLUDE EVENTS?



Digital reaches and engages broader audiences: Expand your reach by incorporating digital formats (hybrid and virtual) into a programmatic event marketing strategy. Engage customers and audiences across the world and around the clock — many of whom you may have never “seen” or served using only traditional, in-person events.



All-in-one depth and breadth of engagement: Create stronger, one-on-one connections with customers, prospects, and brand advocates. Aim to accelerate the business cycle through face-to-face interactions in a more complete channel for engagement



Rapid insight into buyers: Get real-time, in-the-moment insights and feedback from your customers. Complete the picture of the buyer through the power of human connection.

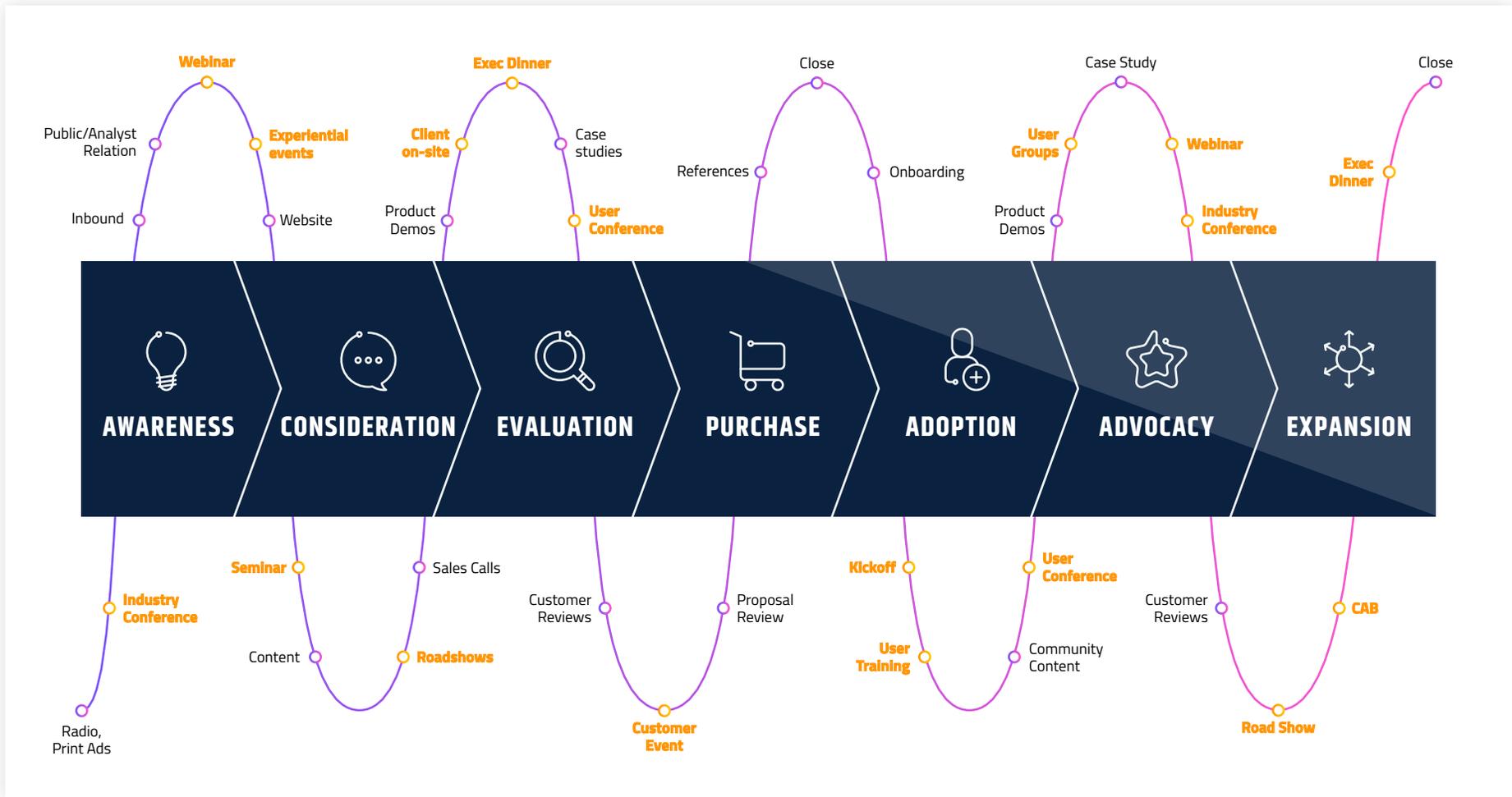
EVENTS AND THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

While the **New Event Marketing Opportunity** is a new way of thinking, marketers have leveraged the events channel for years. Face-to-face interactions at in-person trade shows, conferences, and seminars have long proven to be valuable for building relationships with the right audiences. What makes the **New Event Marketing Opportunity** different is its programmatic, systematic approach. It encourages marketers to plan events more holistically across all formats and integrate virtual and hybrid events into their total event channel strategy.

WHAT ABOUT WEBINARS?

While webinars will always be part of the overarching strategy, they should no longer sit on an island of their own. Rather, webinars should be incorporated into the overall event strategy.

THE COMPLETE CUSTOMER JOURNEY



HOW TO THINK OF EVENTS AS PART OF YOUR MARKETING MIX

Deciding to host an event doesn't come on a whim – it's part of the larger marketing process of aligning tactics based on where the target is on the customer journey — Awareness, Consideration, Purchase, Adoption, Loyalty — and getting them to the next stage.

Here's how the marketing process works: First, marketers build a program that satisfies a specific audience (customer, prospects, partners, users, supporters, etc.) to serve a particular objective (sell products, subscribe to service, etc.) at a unique stage of the customer journey (conversion, purchase, etc.). Next, marketers determine the tactic that best serves that audience and objective. Sometimes, that tactic is an event or series of events.

The **New Event Marketing Opportunity** encourages marketers to no longer think of events as something outside of their usual responsibilities, or something that is only relegated to the planning team, but as a critical and powerful tactic in their marketing arsenal.



EVENT TYPES VS. EVENT FORMATS



Event type:

A variety or category of event created to serve a particular objective – meetings, seminars, trainings, forums, summits, conferences, trade shows are some examples.



Event format:

How those event type(s) are delivered to meet the objective — in-person, virtual, hybrid are the event formats in the new event landscape.

To achieve a compelling, can't-miss experience with measurable outcomes, it is critical to align the event type with the event format — along with the teams, strategy, and technology that facilitate them — through a programmatic event channel. This demands using the right event format for the right event type for the right audience at the right time, *in support of your overall marketing effort*, to drive results across each stage in this customer lifecycle.



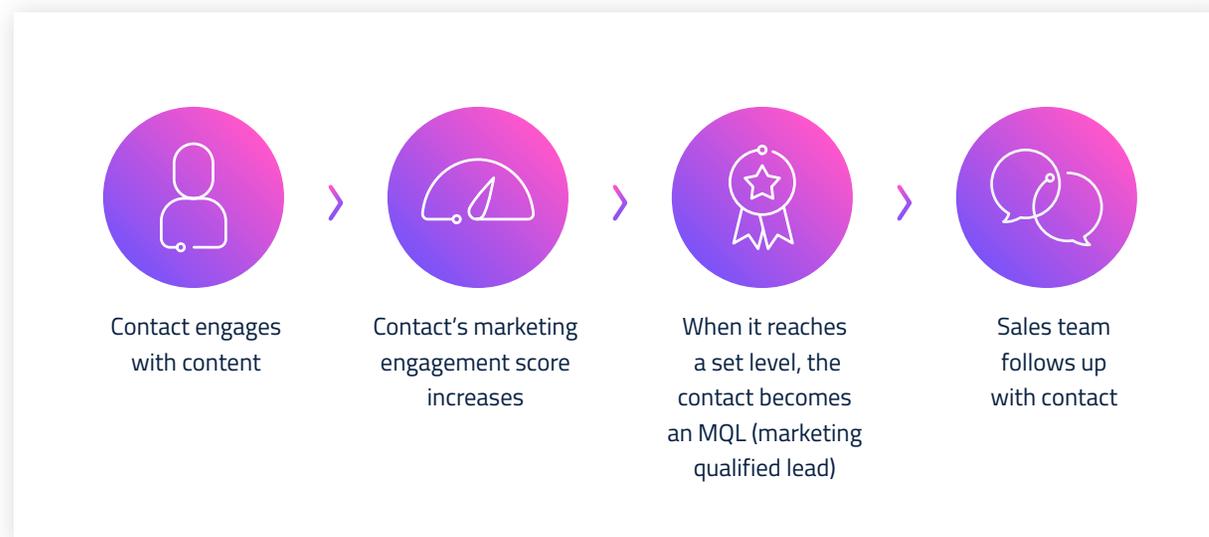
WHAT ROLE DOES DIGITAL MARKETING PLAY?

Digital marketing leads the customer through a journey of digital interactions with the product or service towards a desired outcome (purchase, engagement, referrals, etc.). It relies heavily on content that is timed to engage the customer at the right time in their particular journey. In essence, “digital marketing” is just “marketing” but uses strategies and tactics that are unique to the digital world.

VIRTUAL & HYBRID EVENTS ARE KEY TO THE DIGITAL MARKETING MIX

Virtual and hybrid events can be more robust than simply streaming your event or presentation online and monitoring the view count. Virtual and hybrid events are digital marketing tactics. They can leverage the same methodology, measure the same outcomes, and achieve the same objectives as other digital marketing tactics, such as social media, landing pages, shareable content, and more.

HOW CONTACTS BECOME CUSTOMERS IN DIGITAL MARKETING.





VIRTUAL & HYBRID EVENTS ARE HERE TO STAY

Digital experiences, like virtual and hybrid events, offer marketers and planners new and great opportunities to reach and engage with larger audiences. Events can be boundless. Connections can happen everywhere. Prospects you never would have met in person can now become loyal customers and brand advocates through the power of digital technology.

The potential is there; but how do you make it a reality? As with everything else in marketing, it takes a team.

THE PLAYERS NEEDED FOR THE NEW EVENT MARKETING OPPORTUNITY

The event channel has evolved dramatically in a short time. Roles have been modified, new players have been added, and collaboration and communication have never been more critical to success. The **New Event Marketing Opportunity** is less focused on job titles and more on a team-based approach that is aligned with strategy and technology.

When it comes to the **New Event Marketing Opportunity**, there's no "that's not my job"; it's "what can I do to help my teammates?"

THE NEW EVENT MARKETING OPPORTUNITY FOR A NEW WORLD

PRE-PANDEMIC

Planners and marketers worked independently.

PLANNERS PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON:

Visibility & control

Time, cost, & risk

- Budgeting
- Sourcing
- Logistics
- Content
- Attendees
- Vendors

MARKETER'S PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON:

Program execution

Leads, revenue, & scale

- Audience
- Insights
- Promotion
- Interactions
- Follow-up

POST-PANDEMIC

Silos are shattered and a new era of collaboration has begun.

Internal resources needed to take advantage of the New Event Marketing Opportunity:



GOALS AND OUTCOMES DRIVE THE FORMAT

Historically, event planning teams have focused on executing one type of event (trade shows, road shows, customer conferences), one event at a time, throughout the organization's calendar year. The majority of those events were in-person. Wash-rinse-repeat. Consequently, there's been a disconnect between event goals and event success metrics.

The success metrics that are typically measured by event planners are: registration numbers, attendee satisfaction, cost per attendee, and net promoter score. However, the actual outcomes companies are seeking when hosting and attending events can be much different: brand awareness, lead generation, driving sales, retaining customers and establishing loyalty.

Marketers have visibility into the programmatic, revenue-based objectives of measurement. They can aid planners and incorporate events into the broader marketing mix for better reporting and proof of impact. They also have the specific knowledge and expertise to not only measure these goals, but deliver on them. To truly measure and support your event's success, event data must be brought online, and marketers must be involved in event strategy. The **New Event Marketing Opportunity** bridges the gap between marketers and event planners for all event types and formats.

HERE ARE SOME KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU ARE SETTING AND DEFINING EVENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Who is the target audience?
- ✓ How is this event going to serve the audience on their customer journey?
- ✓ What are the primary, secondary, and ancillary objectives of this event?
- ✓ What is the experience I need to create for my audience to meet the objectives?
- ✓ What are the key learnings I want each audience to walk away with?
- ✓ How will we specifically measure event success?
- ✓ What are the critical data points I need to capture in order to prove impact?

KEEP THE BIG PICTURE IN MIND

Event goals should align with the brand's overall marketing *and* the company's mission statement.

DEFINE KEY PERFORMANCE GOALS

Event goals should be definable, quantifiable, and achievable. You can't deliver on a goal that is out of your control.

MAKE YOUR EVENT GOALS "SMART"

When setting goals, make sure they are SMART:

S SPECIFIC

M MEASURABLE

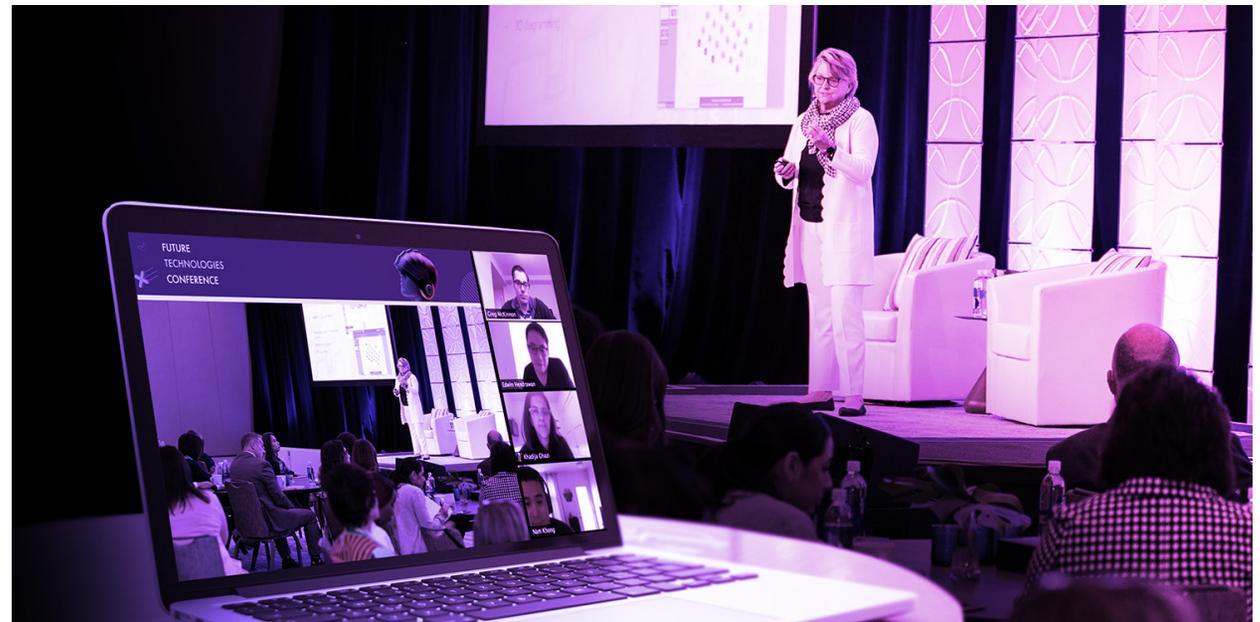
A ATTAINABLE

R REALISTIC

T TIME-BASED

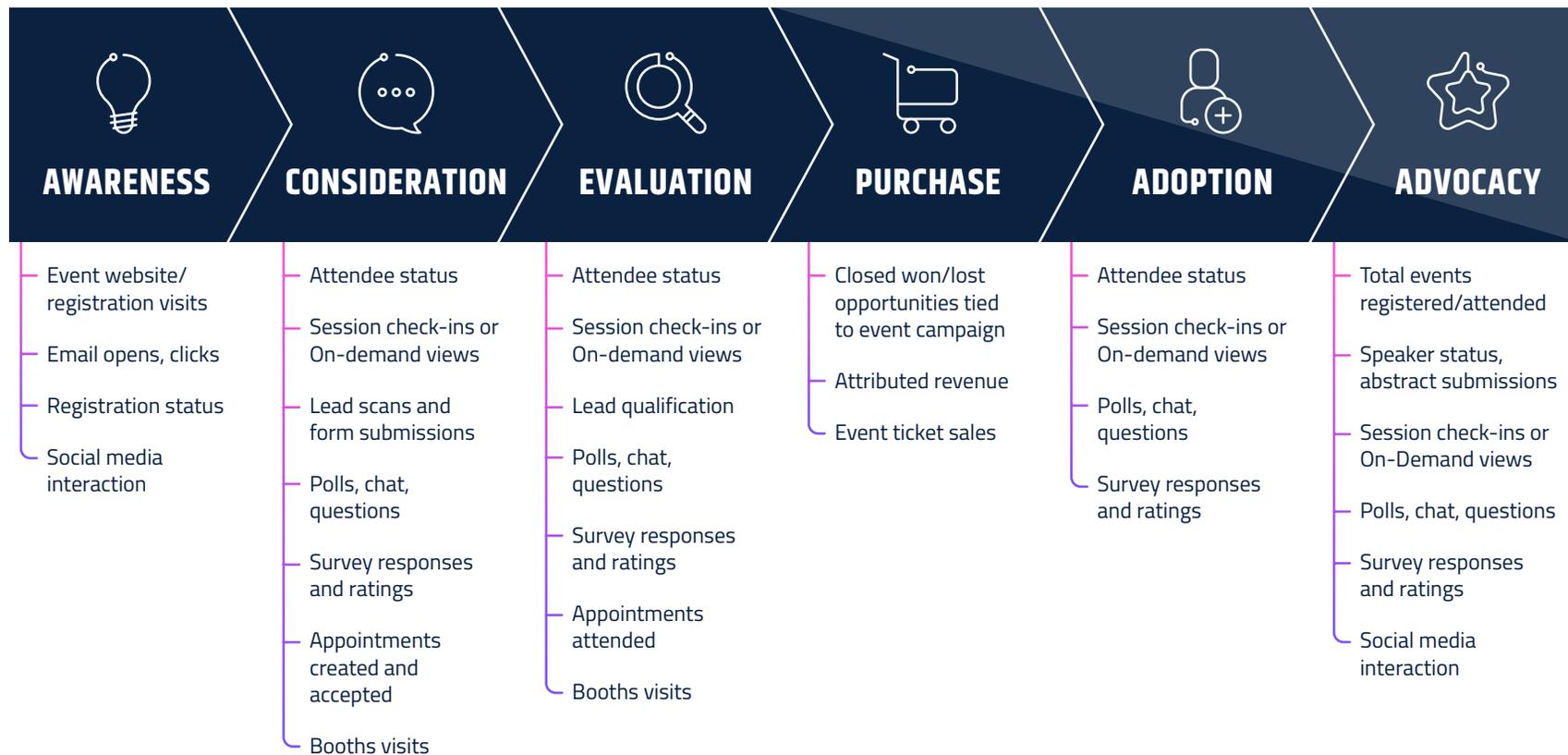
REACH FOR THE STARS, BUT THINK OF WHAT YOU CAN REALISTICALLY ACHIEVE

- *Don't* say you want to "host the best marketing conference ever." That's not specific, realistic, or measurable.
- *Don't* say you want to "plan a week-long country music festival by the end of the month." While that's time-based and specific, it's not attainable or realistic.
- Take note of ideas for the goal first, narrow the list and combine the ideas to come up with one solid goal.



ALIGN KEY EVENT METRICS TO EACH STAGE OF THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY FOR AN OUTCOME-DRIVEN EVENT.

Start thinking about the key event metrics that can be used to measure success towards the goals of your event. By no means is this list complete. Key metrics should be aligned to your unique goals, outcomes, and objectives.



TECHNOLOGY — SIMPLIFYING THE STACK TO MAKE IT MORE EFFICIENT

In fact, integrating multiple technologies to deliver the experience they wanted has been reported the most common pain reported by planners (Forrester 2021).

In the rush to “go digital,” planners and marketers scrambled to get something they could use to quickly engage audiences. This introduced a new pain point: divergent tech. But the tech used to support your event channel doesn’t have to be complex or complicated. There are many benefits when your tech is cohesive, connected, and linear.

EFFICIENT EXECUTION

A strategy isn’t successful if it can’t be executed efficiently and effectively. Streamlined technologies, templates, and workflows can deliver excellence at scale and must be considered when choosing systems and tools to plan, market, and execute your events.

HOLISTIC EVENT DATA

Marketing automation systems can become your “single source of truth” for customer and prospect information and ROI attribution, but your events channel generates a sea of its own unique data and requires specific event technology to consolidate and then integrate. MAP and CRM tools won’t cut it for events; you need registrations systems, production tools, engagement methods, and more — specific event technologies that can deliver powerful results by combining them with your traditional marketing tech stack.

By integrating marketing technologies like Salesforce, Sugar CRM, Marketo, Eloqua, and others through a single platform, you can support your events with a true, complete picture of your attendees. Technology can also help to deliver lead volume from your events, prioritize your most qualified leads to sales in hours — not days — and provide you with

real-time data reflecting attendees’ interests to determine your next best action or offer.

This process of integrating your event data with the rest of the data in your CRM and marketing tech stack finally gives your events the ROI attribution they deserve.

As attendees interact with your assets and channels, you’ll get a full picture of attendees’ interests, as well as cross-event and cross-channel visibility, which ultimately makes your entire event channel more impactful.

- Blog visits and form fills
- Webpage visits
- Virtual event attendance
- Whitepaper downloads
- Seminar registrations and attendance
- Email opens, case studies and collateral viewed and downloaded
- User conference attendance

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The events channel was tested in 2020 and proved itself to be a valued asset and key contributor to the marketing mix. Virtual and hybrid events are here to stay, and there's no going back — and we don't want to. The opportunities for growth, engagement, and ROI are too great to ignore.

But if the digital disruption is not handled strategically, your events channel could become a "three-headed monster" of in-person, virtual, and hybrid events that are misaligned. This haphazard approach not only damages your events themselves, but your brand at large.

It's more important than ever to streamline processes, learn new skills, and simplify programs — not just to survive in a projected golden age of events — but to thrive in it — by taking advantage of every benefit the **New Event Opportunity** brings. To do that, you'll need a single specialized event marketing and management technology platform to seamlessly transition between event types and formats.

The benefits of a single event platform to power your New Event Marketing Opportunity:

- A single technology vendor with a dedicated support staff
- Simplifies execution of all event formats, whether in-person, virtual, or hybrid
- Provides flexibility of experience for any event type – from conferences to trade shows, meetings, seminars or networking events
- Can save organizations money through increased efficiency
- A single source of truth for all event data
- A programmatic view of all of your meetings and events
- Captures and standardizes data sets so there is a consistent way of analyzing event success and attendee behaviors
- All events leveraging same integrations to deliver insights to sales and marketing systems for faster, more intelligent follow up that drives revenue

The New Event Marketing Opportunity is here. Now's the time to integrate marketing methodologies into your events channel to establish one program that aligns teams, tech, and strategy across every event type and format.

You should no longer think just about the next event. You should think about all events and how they work together to achieve organizational goals.

We believe the industry has been changed forever and the challenges are mounting — but the opportunities have never been greater, if you have a partner who knows how to capitalize on them.

We've prepared the platform, primed the collaborative effort, and presented the opportunity — what's next?

THE NEXT CHAPTER IS UP TO YOU.

Transform your *event planning* into an *event marketing channel* to expand your marketing mix and drive results to your organization.

**LET US SHOW YOU HOW TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
THE NEW EVENT MARKETING OPPORTUNITY.**

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