

42*chat

YOUR SHOW'S BEEN CANCELED— HERE'S WHAT TO DO NOW.

April 2020



So, your show's been postponed, or even worse, canceled. Now what?

These are unprecedented times, and you've already made the difficult decision to postpone or cancel your show, and you've decided a virtual event isn't an option.

Given this, your job now is to do everything possible to ensure that when your show does return, it comes back as strong as possible.

To get your show in the strongest possible position to recover, you need to quickly shift from logistical show implementation to relationship management. That means nurturing and maintaining relationships with all of your key constituents—attendees, exhibitors and speakers by keeping them engaged with your brand. By doing so, you can ensure they'll come back as soon as your show is back on.

Here's an approach to doing just that.

STEP 1

Stay connected with all your audiences with an AI chatbot

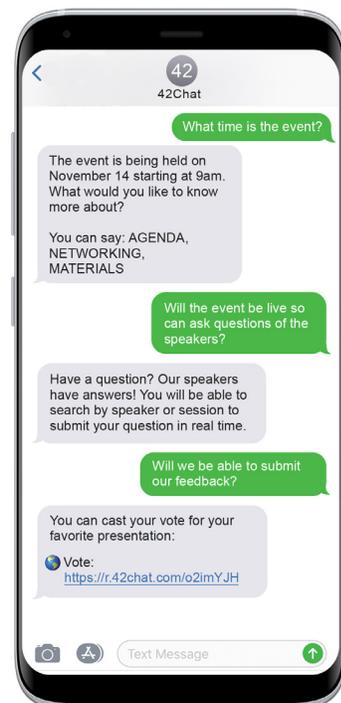
Right now you're probably getting slammed from all directions with inquiries about your show's status.

The first step in your relationship management campaign is getting everyone the answers they need as quickly as possible.

But with so many questions coming in, it's hard for your team to focus.

That's where a conversational AI chatbot comes in.

An AI chatbot provides instant answers to your audiences' important questions and keeps them up to date on what's happening with your event.



An AI chatbot provides numerous advantages:

- It can be deployed on your website in 24 hours with just a few minutes of your time
- The bot can provide instant answers to your constituents' questions in 3 seconds or less with a 95% Correct Response Rate
- AND, if you've collected cell numbers, you can send out instant notifications – and with text open rates of 98% you'll know your messages have been read

Most importantly, because your bot can answer most of the questions you'd likely be asked, it frees up your team to stay focused on making sure the show comes back stronger than ever, giving you time to implement PART TWO or your recovery program.

And then, when your show returns, your bot can transition into providing specific logistical information about the event itself—"Where is the keynote?" "How late is registration open?" etc. It makes for a wonderfully seamless process, guiding your audiences through the postponement and into the new show.

So start first with this fast, easy, low-cost way to keep ALL your audiences up to date, leaving you free to focus on what's next—nurturing exhibitor, audience and speaker relationships, so they return to your show.

**STEP
2**

Audience-specific retention efforts

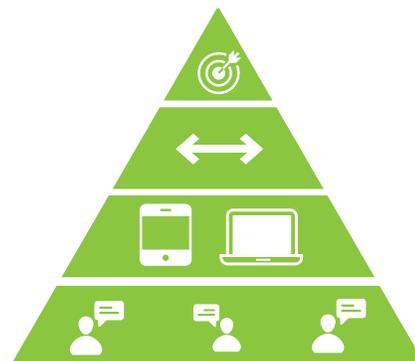
Now let's move to the audience-specific actions you should take, so your show comes back as strong as possible.

EXHIBITOR ACCOUNT BASED MARKETING (ABM)

An Account-Based Marketing (ABM) strategy is the best way to make sure your exhibitors—particularly your key exhibitors—stay committed to participating in your show.

ABM concentrates sales and marketing resources on a clearly defined set of target accounts and employs personalized campaigns designed to resonate with them.

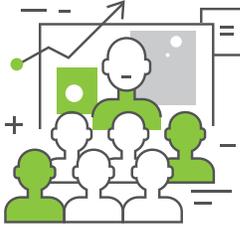
You have VERY valuable data that enables you to segment your exhibitors for nurture campaigns based on their value to you.



Here's how an ABM campaign would work:

Key Exhibitors: These are your largest and/or most strategic exhibitors, who warrant ongoing, personalized campaigns from their Account Executives.

You should do more than just keeping them engaged. You should treat them as the partner they are.



Here are some hugely valuable ways to communicate with your Key Exhibitors:



A **commitment communication** from your CEO, President, or Executive Director – the most senior executive in your organization



Quick surveys about what your Key Exhibitors would like to see when the show returns in terms of service, features, communications, etc.



Updates on efforts to keep attendees engaged, to give your Key Exhibitors confidence that attendance will be strong when the show returns



Regular updates on any new developments related to the show—especially any exciting plans in the works



Potential **free sponsorship opportunities**, such as webinars, podcasts, and other ways you're engaging attendees on their behalf



A highly personalized “**Can we count on you?**” campaign as you get closer to re-launch

Core Exhibitors: These make up the bulk of your exhibitor base. You can communicate with them via a more mass-email nurture campaign—though if communications can come through their assigned CSR, that'd be great!

Content for these Core Exhibitors can be similar to that developed for the Key Exhibitors:

✓ **Quick surveys**

✓ **Regular updates**

✓ **Ongoing attendee engagement plans**

First-Time Exhibitors: If this would have been their first time exhibiting at your show—and especially if it would have been their first time exhibiting at any show—then their anxiety level will be quite high. It's especially important to show these exhibitors that you understand their anxiety, that their participation is important to you, and that you'll keep them updated.



SPEAKER ENGAGEMENT

Maintaining strong relationships with your scheduled speakers isn't just important to ensuring that they return when your show does. It's critical to your whole engagement strategy.

Giving your speakers an online audience where they can present their work benefits everyone:

- The speaker gets to leverage the work they've done for your show and build their personal brand.
- Attendees still get to experience the show's content.
- Exhibitors see you're maintaining valuable relationships with your attendees.
- You and your show stays front-of-mind for everybody involved.



ATTENDEE CONTENT MARKETING

By delivering valuable content to your attendees in ongoing, bite-sized pieces, you keep your attendees engaged with your brand, showing them you can still add value even without a live event.

By thinking of your event content as episodic, you can leverage part of what is great about your event and deliver it over time to stay engaged with attendees, helping make sure that when your show returns, they return with it.

Here are some forms of content your audiences will love:

WEBINARS

Collaborate with your speakers to host webinars where they get to present what they would have presented at the show.

- Use coordinated social media and email campaigns to drive registrations
- Implement your webinar easily with tools like Go-To-Webinar
- Record the webinar (again, easy using Go-To-Webinar) and post it on your website
- Promote the recording via social media and email

PODCASTS

- Collaborate with speakers and conduct podcast interviews with them
- Collect questions for your speakers from your attendees to emulate the feeling of live-event Q&A
- Record, edit, and post podcast episodes using your cellphone with tools like Anchor. Find it at [Anchor.fm](https://anchor.fm)
- Record the podcast and post it on your website, as well as traditional podcast channels
- Promote your podcast via social media and email

SLIDE SHARING

- Collaborate with speakers to publish their slide sets on your website, and then notify your attendees when they become available
- Promote their availability via social media and email

SUMMARY

STEP
1

Right now: Start with a conversational AI chatbot on your website to answer the flood of questions all your audiences—exhibitors, attendees and speakers—have about your show's status

STEP
2

Ongoing: Launch audience-specific relationship-building campaigns:

- a. Exhibitor Account Based Marketing: To maximize retention, connect with exhibitors and engage with them throughout the process with relevant information
- b. Speaker Engagement: Collaborate with speakers to digitally deliver the content they've worked so hard developing
- c. Attendee Content Marketing: Add value to attendees by delivering show content digitally over time, elevating your brand, keeping your audience engaged and ensuring they show up when your show returns

Take these steps and we're confident that you and your show can bounce back stronger than ever.



AUTHOR

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Ken Dec is Chief Marketing Officer for 42Chat, charged with driving company growth by developing, implementing and optimizing brand, marketing, demand generation, sales enablement and analytic strategies for the company.

He is a 30-year global marketing veteran, building brands, branded experiences and driving demand for IBM, Toyota, Citi, Salesforce, nVidia, Akamai, Bloomberg, PTC, GlaxoSmithKline, Raytheon, Humana and more, from leadership positions at Havas Worldwide, GPJ, Interpublic, MC2 and The Expo Group.

Ken is a published author, whose articles and opinions have appeared in The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Ad Age, Adweek, Marketingpros.com and more.

Ken also teaches Experiential Marketing to graduate students in Emerson College's MFA Strategic Communications for Marketing program (since 2012), and has just completed his 5th year as a technology/marketing mentor at MassChallenge, a global accelerator program.