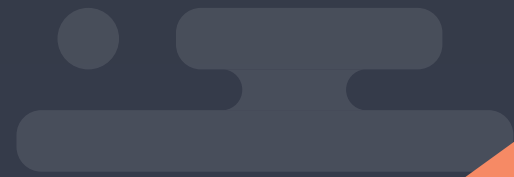




# THE BIGGEST EVENT TRENDS OF 2018

STAY LIGHT YEARS AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION



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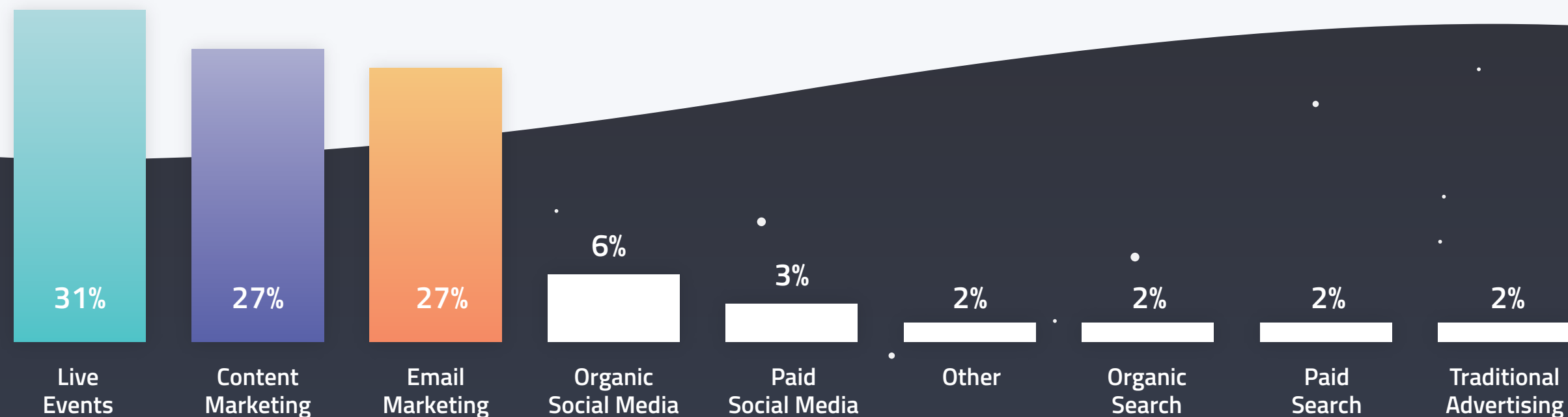
Have any questions?  
Get in touch with us!



# INTRODUCTION

It seems like it was only yesterday that we were discussing all of the ways that 2017 would bring new technology, methods, and best practices to the events industry. But just as an events team begins to prep for the following year's event as soon as it's possible, now is the time to anticipate the changes that 2018 will bring. As any great event marketer knows, the key to success is anticipation, preparation, and execution. 2018 will be full of industry shifts and trends that will continue to push the events space forward. One thing we can say for sure is that the events industry will only continue to grow bigger and more prominent, further establishing itself as one of the largest professional fields in the world.


The statistics fall in line with the narrative. According to reports from Frost and Sullivan, over **\$500 billion** is spent on event and meetings annually.<sup>1</sup> As the technology for live events continue to grow, the industry as a whole is expected to follow suit. Additionally, key decision makers are investing more time and money into their event strategy. According to Forrester Research, Chief Marketing Officers spend **24%** of their annual budget on live events.<sup>2</sup> This includes exhibiting at conferences as well as hosting their own events. Further research from the [2018 Event Marketing Benchmarks Report](#) confirms a strong and growing events industry. Out of eight other channels, the majority of event marketers (**31%**) believe events are the single-most effective marketing channel, beating out email marketing and digital advertising.<sup>3</sup>



1 Frost and Sullivan. Financial Analysis and Marketing Sizing of the Event Manager Software Market

2 Forrester Research: 2016 Budget Plans Show That It's Time for a Digital Wake-Up Call.

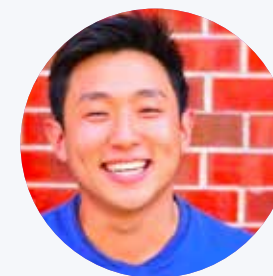
3 Bizzabo: Event Marketing 2018: Benchmarks and Trends



Stats like this make it clear that people are craving the face-to-face interactions that have become a less common form of communication. In fact, the Event Marketing Benchmarks report showed that **95%** of respondents believe that live events provide attendees with a valuable opportunity to form in-person connections in an increasingly digital world.<sup>4</sup> Live events simply provide a sense of real and genuine connection that digital channels cannot. This widespread sentiment coupled with the increasing technological advancements of event tech explain why the events industry is continuously growing year over year, with the event planner profession expected to grow at a faster than the average pace.<sup>5</sup>

Now with 2018 upon us, the only way to keep up with such a quickly evolving industry is to accurately anticipate future trends. Being fully aware of the tech advancements and social trends that await on the horizon is directly related to one's success in this space. In this ebook you will find a thorough breakdown of the trends that will shape the future of events. The content is divided into three sections: technology, business, and attendee experience. Though this list is by no means exhaustive, our in-depth research and collective years of event experience suggest that these will be the most important trends to look out for in 2018. Having a firm grasp of these topics will result in a deeper knowledge of the industry and a stronger sense of confidence as an event marketing professional.

We hope that this ebook will be as enjoyable as it is helpful. And though event professionals may disagree on which trends will be the most impactful, one thing we can all agree upon is that live events have the potential to make a global impact that will benefit not only those who work in the industry, but more importantly, everyone who believes in the power of people.



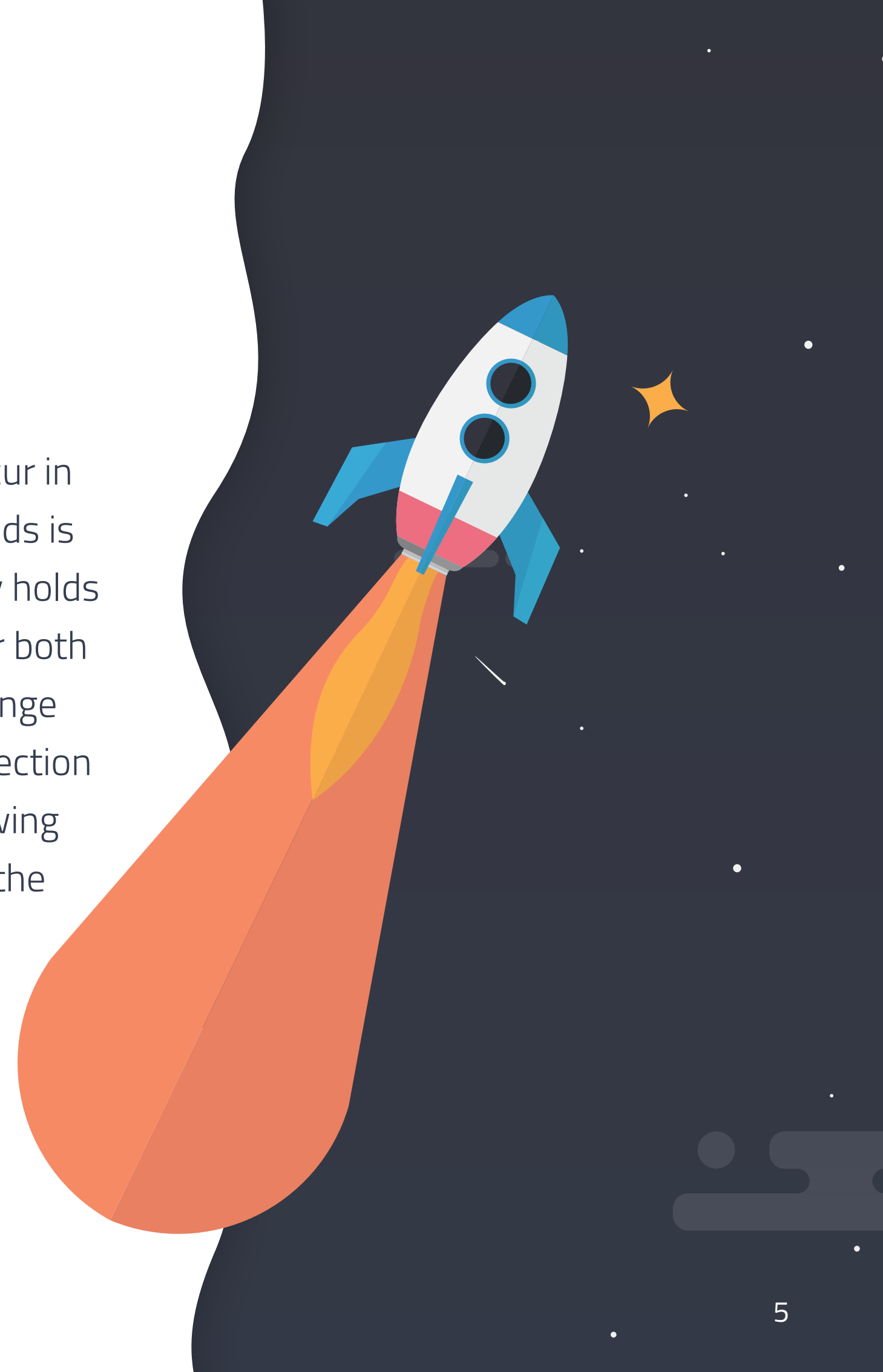
**Stephen Kim**  
Content Marketing Strategist  
Bizzabo

<sup>4</sup> ibid

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics: Meeting, Convention and Event Planners.

# 01: TECH TRENDS

With each new year, technological advances are expected to occur in any professional industry. However, staying on top of these trends is particularly important for the events industry because technology holds a pervasive influence over all aspects of the event experience, for both organizers and attendees. As 2017 has shown, one simple change could have massive ripple effects throughout the industry. This section will dive into the changing landscape of the event app, the growing importance of data integration, and the global implications of the increased importance in data security.





## THE RISE OF THE EVENT APP

Though the event app is surely nothing new, its prevalence will only grow in 2018. As each new year brings more tech-friendly gadgets and best practices to the events industry, the event app will become that much more of a widely used tool. This should come as no surprise as event apps continue to improve in their capabilities and versatility.

Event apps cover a range of functions—from maximizing attendee engagement with live polling features to providing event attendees with valuable networking opportunities with extensive networking communities. **For many attendees, event apps have become an increasingly expected part of the live event experience; for many event organizers, event apps present a valuable opportunity for better managing and measuring live events.**

Today, event apps are big. According to a study conducted by Event Manager Blog, over 40% of event planners use event apps. In a more recent study that we conducted, over 80% of the participating event professionals that we polled said that they use an event app for their event strategy. And as event professionals continue to embrace tech and data-driven solutions, apps will become an increasingly significant part of the live event experience.

However, an important step in this process is to thoroughly understand the landscape of apps at large and how certain changes may have specific implications for the events industry. Having a firm grasp on the current event app climate will help you to decide and strategize on the type of app that will most directly serve your needs.

## THE NEW APP GUIDELINES

At Apple's *2017 World Wide Developer's Conference* (WWDC), the brand released several updates to their App Store guidelines. While Apple has announced App Store cleanup in the past—often targeting broken or duplicate apps in an effort to improve the user experience—this App Store

cleanup carries with it far-reaching implications centering around **App Store Guideline 4.2**:

*Your app should include features, content, and UI that elevate it beyond a repackaged website. If your app is not particularly useful, unique, or “app-like,” it doesn’t belong on the App Store. If your App doesn’t provide some sort of lasting entertainment value or is just plain creepy, it may not be accepted.*

And while the above statement had long been a part of app store protocol, **Guideline 4.2.6** was newly announced in 2017 and is written as follows:

*Apps created from a commercialized template or all generation service will be rejected.*

This new guideline directly addressed the oversaturation of white label apps that were common in the events industry since many of these event apps were based on the same template that would be used for other events. Apple made it clear that bloating their app store with slightly altered versions of the same app was not going to cut it. Though such a process was very applicable for event organizers with hundreds of different events, Apple clearly wanted to prioritize quality over convenience. In turn, event professionals must begin to do the same.

One of the first ways to prioritize quality is to embrace the type of event app that will be the best solution for the event organizer given these new parameters: the branded universal event app.

## BRANDED UNIVERSAL EVENT APP

Given the new guidelines rolled out by Apple, the challenge is now to invest in the type of app that will maximize event success while still adhering to the new app stores rules. Considering these factors, it seems that the branded universal event app will be the solution that makes most sense for event professionals. Here are a few reasons why the branded universal app will be best for increasing event exposure.

**1. Better Attendee Adoption:** All of the contacts that an attendee creates in a standard event app at one conference are deleted with the rest of



the app once the conference is over. A universal event app provides an alternative. It designates one “conference app” for attendees to use for all of their conference needs and increases the chance that they will digitally engage with your event.

**2. Cross-event Analytics for the Event Organizers:** Event apps provide organizers with an unparalleled method of gathering data about their attendees. With a universal event app, organizers can easily compare all of their event data through one easy-to-read program. Everything from most popular sessions to most popular attendees can be tracked and compared across your year-long event line-up.

**3. Cost-effective While Still Remaining Branded:** Branded universal apps give you the greatest return for your investment. As mentioned above, universal apps can be designed to provide attendees a branded experience from the sign-in screen. Custom-made white label apps are not only expensive to create but they are expensive to maintain, as vendors often charge for support. Plus, once the benefits of having a universal app integrated with an all-in-one event success platform are added in, an event organizer’s return on investment skyrockets to even greater heights. For these reasons, the branded event app will be the app to invest in for 2018. As the event app landscape continues to evolve and adapt, one thing to count on is that the universal event app will be the go-to solution for event professionals.

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## MEASURING EVENT APP PERFORMANCE

With each new tech solution comes another way to properly measure its impact. The event app has obviously been a solution that has existed for a few years now, but the reason it will still be an important trend in 2018 is because we are finally starting to better understand how to measure its impact. Each new year brings with it increased technological capabilities and event apps are no different. Better harnessing these capabilities means better understanding important event metrics.

Consider event app adoption. App adoption can mean many different things. Are you specifically focused on how many times your app is downloaded?



Perhaps the number of messages sent within the app is a more important metric? How about the number of times each page is viewed? If you are able to clearly establish your goals, you are more likely to increase the event app adoption rates as well as construct an effective mobile marketing strategy. The following are a few examples of metrics you can focus on.

- Downloads - This metric can be seen as the “first domino” because it is impossible to measure any of the other metrics if the actual event app has yet to be downloaded. The early stages of your app promotion campaign should focus on driving downloads—but by no means is this the only important metric.
- Messages Sent/Received - This metric displays the extent to which the app is used as a form of communication. If these number are lower than you would like, think of creative ways to encourage more communication through the platform.
- Page Views - Because the app is also a hub for event content, it is worth measuring the amount of times each type of page is viewed. This will also give you a good idea of which pages are most popular among attendees, helping you to better structure your app for future events.

Being intimately aware of how your event app makes an impact is an important part of the overall event strategy. By focusing on the above metrics, you will be able to better measure how effective your event app is and thus more accurately adjust your strategy throughout the year of 2018.



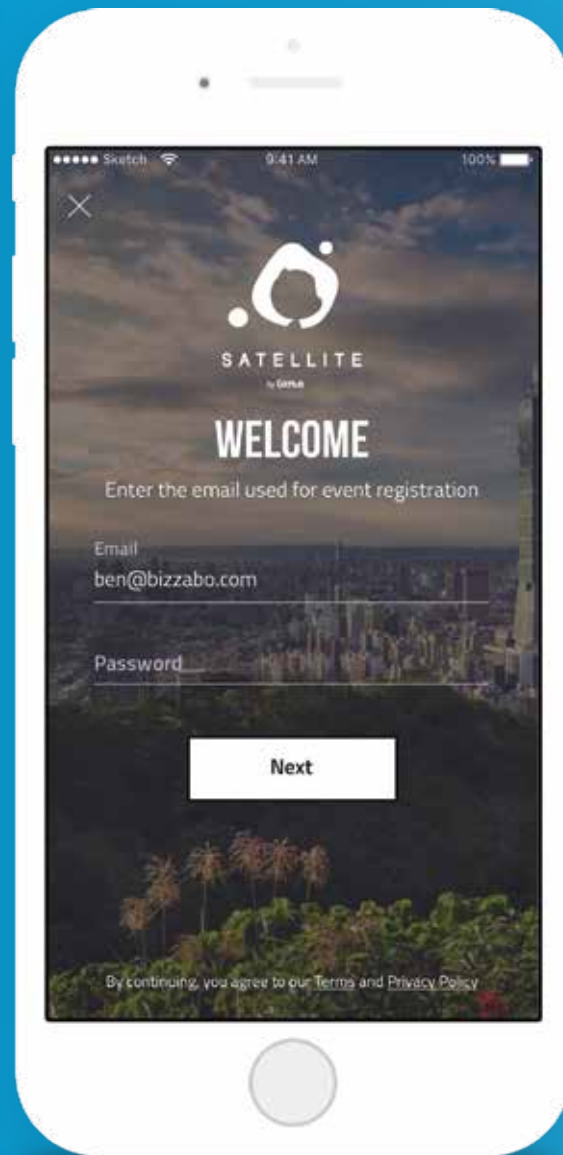
Event Overview



Agenda



Speakers Profiles



Community



One-on-One  
Messaging



Sponsors

## BIZZABO'S BRANDED UNIVERSAL APP

From colors and fonts to logos and banners—fully customize every tab of your events app.

Build a community around your event that lasts forever with private-one-one messaging, LinkedIn integration and comprehensive attendee profiles.

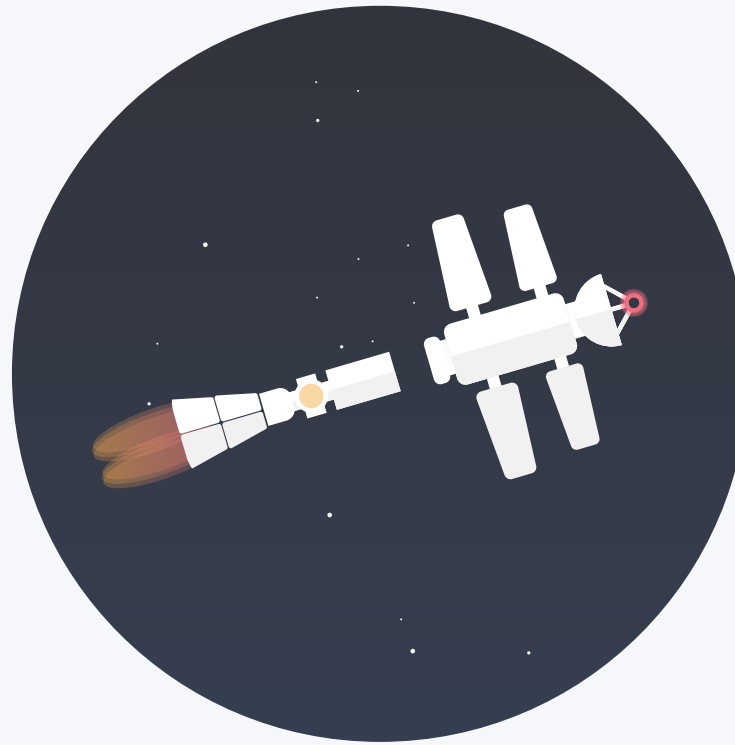
Personalize the experience of each attendee so that they only see what's relevant to them.

Build an on-brand and responsive agenda that shows off your agenda and speakers.

Drive partner ROI through the Bizzabo app's dynamic sponsorship capabilities.

Engage your audience like never before with real-time polls and surveys.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT BIZZABO](#)



## DATA INTEGRATIONS

As event technology becomes more prominent, the amount of data that is accessible through the software will become so, as well. When there is a lot of data to analyze, integrations is key to achieving campaign success. There is no point of having advanced and highly capable software if the data from that software is siloed. **The best way to make sense of and reach important conclusions with the data is to integrate across softwares.**

## BENEFITS OF INTEGRATION

Of course, data integration is nothing new to the events industry. Setting up interconnected software has long been a first-choice solution for many event professionals. However, the reason we are focusing on this trend in 2018 is because the ability to integrate and the types of data that are now available are improving dramatically.

Data integrations in 2018 will be more impactful than ever before. By integrating multiple softwares—from event management for marketing automation—you are able to create a unified event experience that provides a better overall process for both organizers and attendees.

Event integrations refer to the synthesis of different automation platforms with a central event management software. For example, integrating a marketing automation platform (like HubSpot) with your event software would be considered an event integration. And when done properly, these integrations can yield high impact results as shown below.

### Streamlined Processes

Event software integrations create a much more efficient planning process by consolidating steps and optimizing workflows. This in turn saves the organizer precious time and energy which can then be devoted to other parts of the planning process such as securing sponsorships and finding speakers.

### Valuable Event Data

Event data is instrumental for drawing key insights which in turn help organizers make the right decisions to create a spectacular event. An integrated event marketing platform provides synthesized insights that would otherwise be impossible to access with a fragmented system.

### Actionable Insights

It's one thing to collect data but a completely different endeavor when harnessing the data to reach actionable insights. Knowing how to utilize the data is crucial for event success and this can only be achieved through the right insights. This wouldn't be possible without event integrations which requires an interconnected system.



Alon Alroy  
Co-Founder & CMO



"It's not about integrating everything with your platforms, it's about identifying the specific KPIs that are relevant to your goals and then figuring out how you can get them to flow between your systems. A great flow of information between your systems will help you focus on the success of your event and not on managing it."

# TYPES OF DATA TO INTEGRATE

The data that event organizers have collected as a result of a live event goes a long way in helping other business departments and teams achieve their goals. If, for example, organizers know which sessions existing contacts attended during an event, this information can be used by the marketing department in future promotional emails to send relevant content to contacts.

Below you can find several data points divided by their source. Depending on which data points are relevant to you, you can devise an integration strategy that takes into account some or all of these data points.

## REGISTRATION DATA

- **Industry** - Understanding the industries of your attendees will give you meaningful insight into how you can better structure your event for your attendees.
- **Job Function** - (instead of Job Title) There are a number of different job titles out there, but a finite limit to the amount of job functions. This is one instance where drop-down boxes can be extremely useful. They help you keep your data clean and neatly formatted, which makes for easier analysis and integration further down the line.
- **Geography** - Knowing your attendees' geography will assist in future marketing efforts. For instance, you may wish to initiate geo-targeted campaigns on paid ad platforms (like Facebook and Twitter), local SEO, and even Snapchat Geofencing.
- **Session Registration** - Session registration data will provide rich insights on the sorts of sessions that are most popular. Knowing this information can help to provide more relevant content and to better nurture a contact through a funnel.





# Networking Platform Engagement

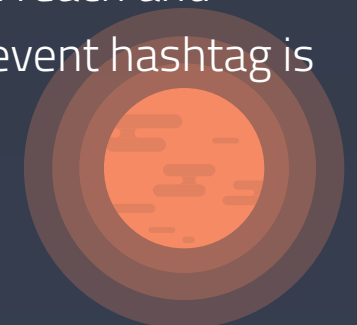
- **App Downloads** - If app download numbers are low during the start of the event, it's time to encourage attendees to start using the app. If app metrics are high, this is a good sign. High app downloads also mean it will be easier for organizers to send real-time push notifications and polls to event goers.
- **Messages Sent** - A simple way of gauging how your attendees are networking.
- **Agenda Engagement** - Many networking platforms allow attendees to "like" or comment on specific sessions. Take a look to see if some sessions have great engagement—if so, you might want to ask that speaker back next year.

## Surveys

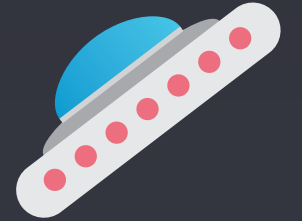
- **NPS Score** - Net promoter score is a useful metric for measuring an attendee's satisfaction based on simple criteria.
- **Did this event live up to your expectations?** - By asking this simple yes or no question, event planners can get a quick check on the success of their event.
- **Logistical** - Asking event attendees about various logistical questions related to catering, transportation, venues, and more can help to improve otherwise hidden problems that are dissatisfying event goers.

## Social Media Chatter

- **Event Attendee Connections** - The number of connections formed by event attendees on other social media platforms may be a good indication of this.
- **Mentions without the Event Handle** - Calculating the number of mentions of a handle or of an event name on social media and determining how many are positive vs. negative can provide a good indication of attendee satisfaction
- **Event Hashtag Usage** - A great way to calculate reach and engagement is to determine how frequently an event hashtag is being used on a platform like Twitter.



Now here are some platforms you can use to properly integrate your data. All of these platforms are powerful by themselves but when they are connected with one another, your event insights will increase significantly. Take a look at this list and see which tools would be a good fit for your integration strategy.



## Bizzabo

It would only make sense that the central hub of integrations begins with the event management software. Bizzabo's platform is able to connect with a wide variety of software and then draw key actionable insights from the rich dataset. Bizzabo is able to sync with a wide variety of marketing, CRM, and analytics platforms that makes event marketing a holistic experience.

Bizzabo's platform is also fully integrated with the Bizzabo branded event app, allowing for smooth communication between the two systems. By having an app fully connected with the Bizzabo software, organizers are able to do a number of things. Event organizers can send push notifications in real time, invite attendees to fill out surveys, or update attendees about room changes. Having an integrated event app is a true game-changer and gives the event organizer full range to organize and execute on a great event.



## Mailchimp

Email will most likely be the main form of communication between you and your attendees. Mailchimp is an email marketing platform that allows you to send automated email campaigns to a preset list of contacts.

By integrating MailChimp with your event management software, you can capture registration information from your event website send it directly to your MailChimp email lists. You can then send scheduled email campaigns to inform attendees of important updates, remind people to register for sessions or send push notifications in real time. There's no need to manually enter each email address into MailChimp with this event integration. Easy!





## Hubspot

According to a Benchmark Report by the Content Marketing Institute, professional events are one of the most popular B2B marketing tactics. With that in mind, it makes sense for event marketers to connect their event data with a marketing automation software to make sure all contacts and data from the event are being properly passed on to the marketing database. Hubspot is one of the leading marketing automation softwares in the world and they offer a full marketing suite that complements any live event initiative.

A Hubspot integration will allow you to avoid the hassle of manual data entry and allow registrant information to be directly updated to the Hubspot database. Once a contact is uploaded in Hubspot, you're able to utilize the contact for future marketing campaigns that are done through Hubspot.



## Boomset

Checking in attendees as they arrive at your event sounds like a simple enough task. However, one small mistake can easily snowball into complete chaos. Luckily, there are companies like Boomset to help avoid such catastrophes. Boomset is an onsite event management solution that provides an array of awesome capabilities such as self check-ins, on-demand wristband printing, QR code scanning, and anything else you'll need for an incredibly smooth on-site experience.

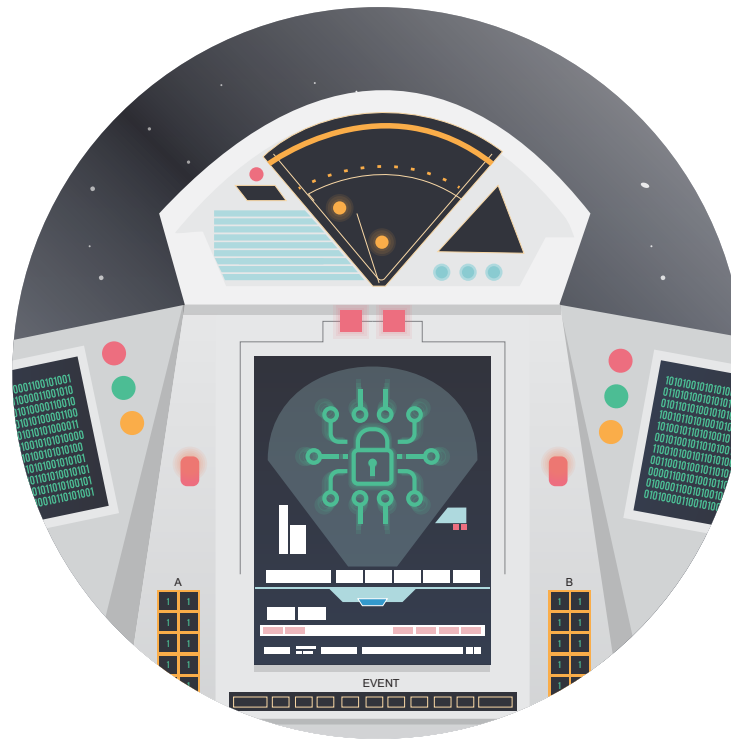
Any event organizer can easily see the benefits of integrating Boomset with their main event management software. This integration allows event organizers to have check-in information be automatically uploaded to their database, eliminating the need to manually update each check-in. A Boomset integration also means you'll get to enjoy everything that Boomset has to offer, which is a first class on-site experience.



## Payment Gateway

As a website visitor and potential event attendee, there's something slightly inconvenient about being redirected to another site when purchasing an event ticket. The abrupt break in user flow makes for a poor user experience and may even give reason for potential attendees to doubt the credibility of the event. To avoid such situations, payment integrations are the way to go.

By embedding a payment gateway right onto your event website, attendees can enjoy a much more streamlined experience. This gives your website and event overall a much stronger feel of professionalism and reliability. These are key characteristics to impressing and engaging your attendees.



## DATA SECURITY

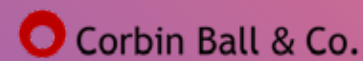
With so much data to analyze from a variety of sources, ranging from event apps to event management software backend platforms, there is a growing voice of concern over consumer protection and privacy.

As mobile app capabilities, social network connectivity, and over technological improvements span the globe, the sheer amount of data that is collected and made accessible is mind-boggling. And though we've discussed how data-driven solutions give event organizers in-depth insights that elevate their event strategy, it should be noted that these improvements are never at the expense of the attendee.

As society collectively becomes more tech-savvy, their desire to use products that have their best interest at heart will be the ones that they remain loyal to. This is no different from event attendees and other stakeholders. **The events that will have the most consistent success in the long run are the ones that will have a clear and transparent data policy.** Fortunately, it is very much possible to create data-driven strategies while being responsible with the information you have access to.



Corbin Ball  
Founder



"Increasing data and privacy protection will be needed. The recent data breaches of Equifax, Sony, the DMC and international ransomware attacks point to increased and more sophisticated hacking activity. Hackers will almost inevitably target some events via an online registration system and/or a mobile event-related app (likely an Android version) in the near future. As a planner, make sure your registration company is PCI compliant and take other steps to guard attendee information captured. Also, be aware of the coming GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) a sweeping set of privacy regulations that will affect any event with European attendees or members regardless of where the event takes place."

## GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

One clear sign that evinces the increasing significance of consumer data protection on a global scale is the General Data Protection Regulation that was passed by the European Union that is set to come into full effect on May 25th, 2018. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all companies handle data through secure and transparent methods.

While this regulation was passed by the EU, it is imperative to keep in mind that this applies to all companies who sell to, hire, or engage with EU citizens. In other words, GDPR is relevant to all companies who strive to achieve a global presence, which is essentially all corporations. And because the business of live events is such a global industry, GDPR is especially relevant to event professionals who use leverage data in their event strategies.

While the full scope and legal implications of GDPR are beyond the scope of this particular ebook, there are a few basic steps that can be suggested to help you and your team better prepare for a year full of stricter data regulations.



## STEPS TOWARD DATA TRANSPARENCY

Though this list is by no means exhaustive, these are a few tips to help ensure that your event strategy as a whole is not only GDPR compliant but also adheres to the general practice of responsible data management.

### **1. Opt-in Process**

Whenever you are in a position that requires information from the attendee, make sure that they are fully aware of the data they are sharing and that they must actively choose to offer their info. Some platforms are designed so that data collecting is the default and that users must actively choose to opt-out if they no longer want to use the service. This oftentimes leaves a bad taste in the user's mouth as it feels sneakier than it should be. Make sure to make your data collection an opt-in process that requires active engagement on the side of the attendee. This way, both organizer and attendee are fully transparent right from the start.

### **2. Understandable language**

When it comes to legal rhetoric, it becomes very easy for one to get lost in the jargon or simply tune out the confusing language. In order to avoid this sentiment among your attendees and other event stakeholders, take the time to break down your basic data policy in a way that can be understood by the average person. Doing so will be much appreciated by attendees and help to establish your event brand as one that places attendees' well-being as a high priority.

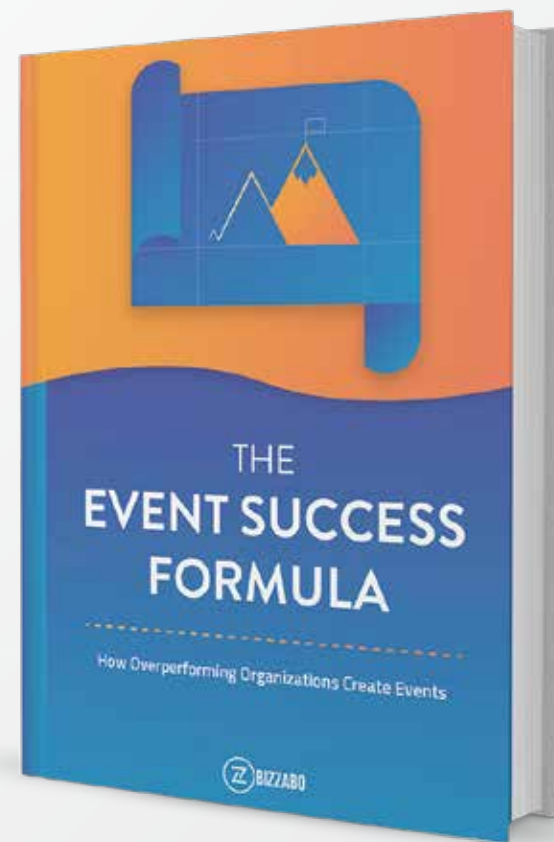
### 3. Educate the attendee throughout

If we are specifically talking about registration platforms and the data collection that happens during this user interface, there will be many opportunities for educate attendees or prospective attendees right within the platform. Whether that be through pop-up windows that give in-depth explanations or info-boxes that appear when hovering over an icon, make your registration process as user-friendly as possible when it comes to educating people on your data policy. This small investment will pay off in a strengthening of your event brand and reputation.

Data security will surely be a significant topic to be debated upon not only within the events industry, but in the world at large. Given how the live events industry is by nature a global business, it only makes sense for event professionals to lead the charge in being responsible, accountable, and transparent with how they manage data across all platforms.

***Disclaimer:** The above should not be taken as legal advice. For a more formal understanding of the GDPR and its implications, please consult with a legal professional.*

# LEARN HOW THE BEST ORGANIZATIONS CREATE EVENTS



- Featuring insights drawn from a 400-person survey
- Key findings that will transform your view of the events industry
- In-depth knowledge on how to improve your events strategy

**GET THE EBOOK**





## 02: BUSINESS TRENDS

If 2018 is surely to bring about waves of change in the sphere of technology, it is worthwhile to explore how those changes will in turn affect the ways in which business is conducted within the events industry. Technology is only a tool until it is applied in tangible ways to produce certain results. This section will dive into the main business trends that have already begun to make ripples in the events industry and further explore how each will create its own massive wave by the end of 2018.



## EVENT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Perhaps the most important business trend to pay attention to is the industry that is rapidly growing within the live events industry: event management software. According to a financial analysis from Frost and Sullivan, the “event management software” industry is worth **\$28 billion** and is projected to have a CAGR of **3.3%** moving forward. The same study finds that while the industry is already large, only **80%** of professional organizers planning B2B events currently use some sort of event management software, meaning the industry will continue to grow as those organizing professional events increasingly embrace technology.

## VOTES OF CONFIDENCE FOR EVENT TECHNOLOGY

The significant business decisions being made in the space is also a clear indicator that the large companies and investors understand the value of event technology and the unrealized potential of its upside. In 2016, a privately held investment firm called Vista Equity Partners purchased Cvent for **\$1.65 billion**, an event management software provider founded in the 1990s.<sup>6</sup> The same investment fund purchased another legacy solution, Lanyon, for **\$1.05 billion**.<sup>7</sup> Major acquisitions like can be seen as votes of confidence for the event management industry, further establishing its influence and longevity.

## INVESTING IN INNOVATION

While legacy event planning solutions have been consolidating, new players are successfully expanding and raising new rounds of investment. Bizzabo recently announced a \$15 million Series B investment to support the rapid revenue growth and personnel growth over the past year. The company has announced plans to grow teams across all departments in order to continue to focus on delivering an innovative platform with world-class customer service.

6 April 17, 2016 SEC 8-K Filing

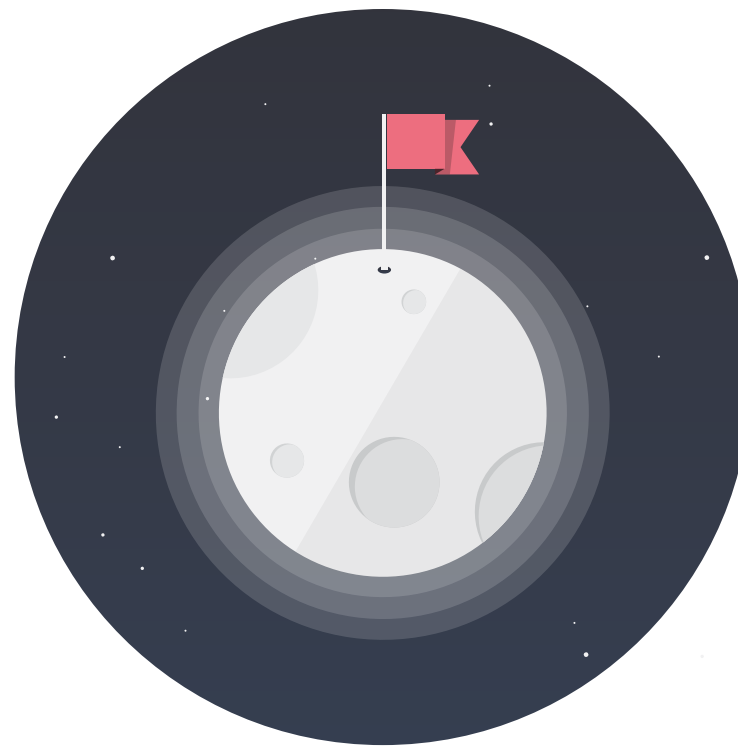
7 Wall Street Journal: Vista to Take Active Network Private in \$1.05B Deal

Over \$50 million was invested in modern event management solutions in 2016, which is a record-setting year. Some of the companies receiving venture funding include Social Tables, Event Farm, and Splash, among others. It indicates that financial experts see a clear market for innovative software to help those planning professional events.

## PROVIDING INSIGHT-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS

Based on the current state of the industry, we expect the importance of professional events will continue to grow. A reflection of this will be increasing spending on event management software, and as a result, increasing investment in providers offering effective solutions. As event organizers, marketers, salespeople, and HR specialists continue to invest in professional events, it's expected that some providers will begin offering "insight-driven" rather than "data-driven" solutions.

We expect that, thanks to improved reporting and integrations, some providers will be able to help organizers build event attribution reports that track a contact's interactions from online to offline to online again. This will help organizers create better experiences for event-goers in addition to better understanding ROI. As made evident in the next section, event professionals will surely invest more in ways to clearly distill attribution for event marketing strategies, a key trend to look out for in 2018.



## EVENT ATTRIBUTION

Prior to the introduction of technology solutions within the industry, live events was very much considered an offline marketing channel. Event professionals lacked the proper resources to accurately measure the impact that events had on the bottom line. However, current tech capabilities have made it so that live events comprise an online, measurable strategy. Going hand-in-hand with the topic of integrations, the data that is now at our fingertips makes it possible to clearly understand the overall effect of an event strategy. The key now is to apply the correct model to the data.

# EVENT MARKETING ATTRIBUTION MODELS

To better understand event ROI, we will first take a look at four fundamental models for tracking event attribution: the First-Touch model, the Lead Conversion Touch Model, the Last-Touch model and the W-Model.

## THE FIRST-TOUCH MODEL

The first-touch model is one of the simplest models in theory, but in practice proves quite hard to track. It attributes 100% of the return generated to the marketing initiative that drives someone to interact with your brand. To be clear, this is not tracking a conversion or someone submitting their data to your company. It is tracking that first activity that would lead to a conversion.

Given that first-touch occurs before a conversion happens, it can be difficult to track. Advanced attribution and analytics tools (like Google Analytics and Bright Funnel) can help event marketers keep track of this metric for most online interactions. However, a bit of guesswork might be required when it comes to offline interactions.

***For Example:** Someone visits your blog, then visits your event website, then attends an event. In this case, 100% of the credit goes to whatever blog brought that person to your website.*



## THE LEAD-TOUCH MODEL

The lead model attribution model is probably the most simple and popular one. In this model, the return generated is 100% associated with the first marketing initiative that causes an individual to convert and become known to your company.

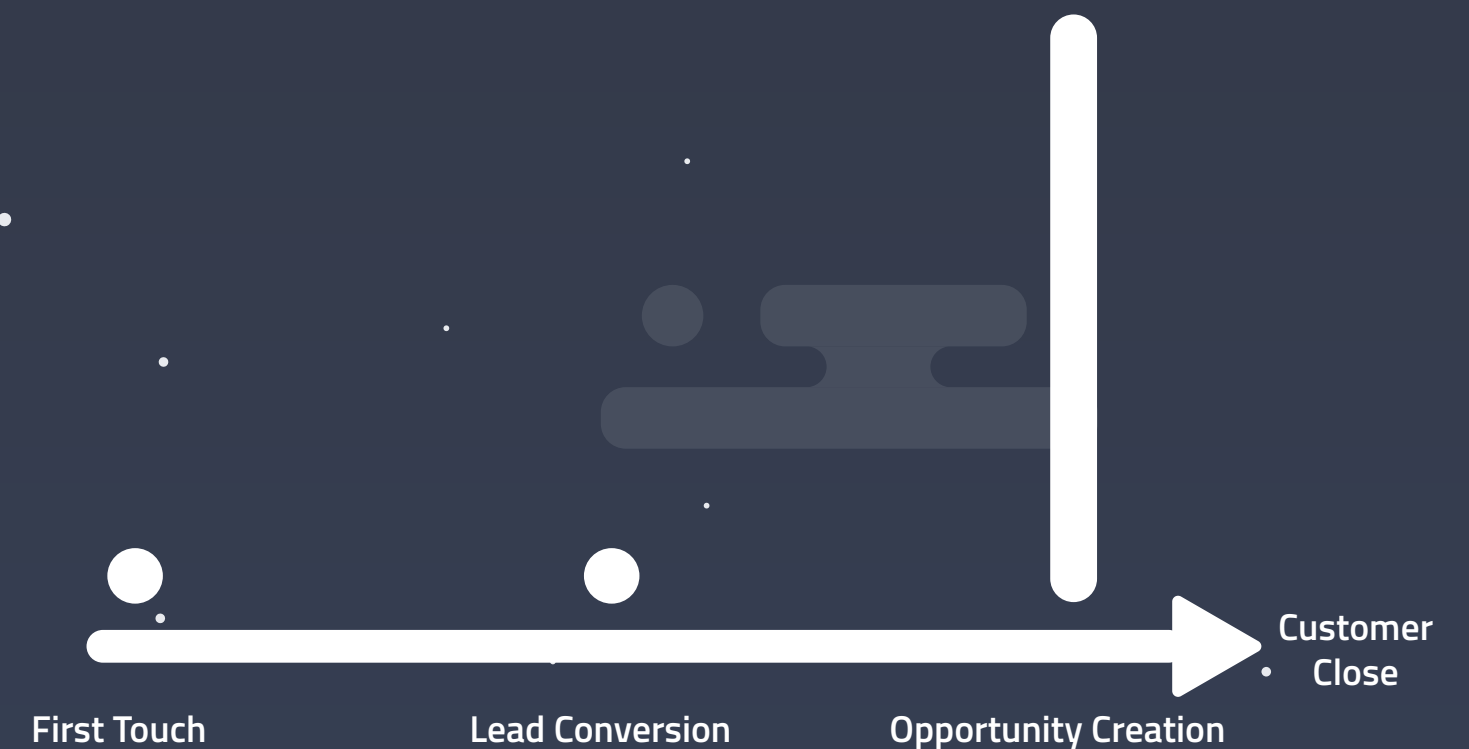
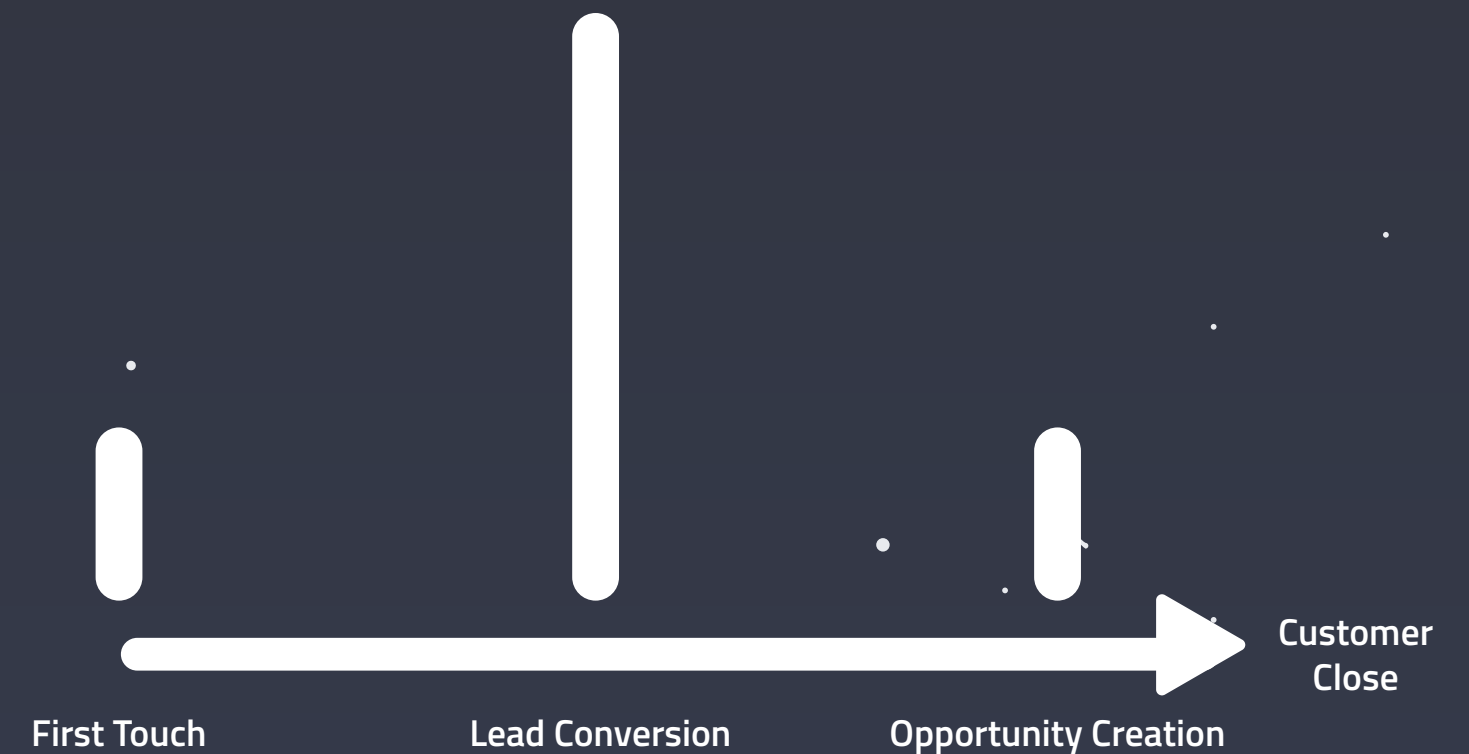
**For Example:** Someone who is an anonymous contact visits your website and submits a form to download a white paper. In this case you may want to nurture this contact by inviting them to an event. According to the first touch attribution model, even though this person attends your event, the event does not get any credit for the return.

If someone is not known to your company and then they attend an event, then the event will receive 100% credit for the return.

## THE LAST-TOUCH MODEL

In the last-touch attribution model, the return generated is 100% associated with the action that someone takes immediately before converting to an opportunity or customer. Like the first-touch model, the last-touch model is relatively easy to implement.

**For Example:** If someone becomes known to your company by submitting their information for an ebook, then downloads a webinar



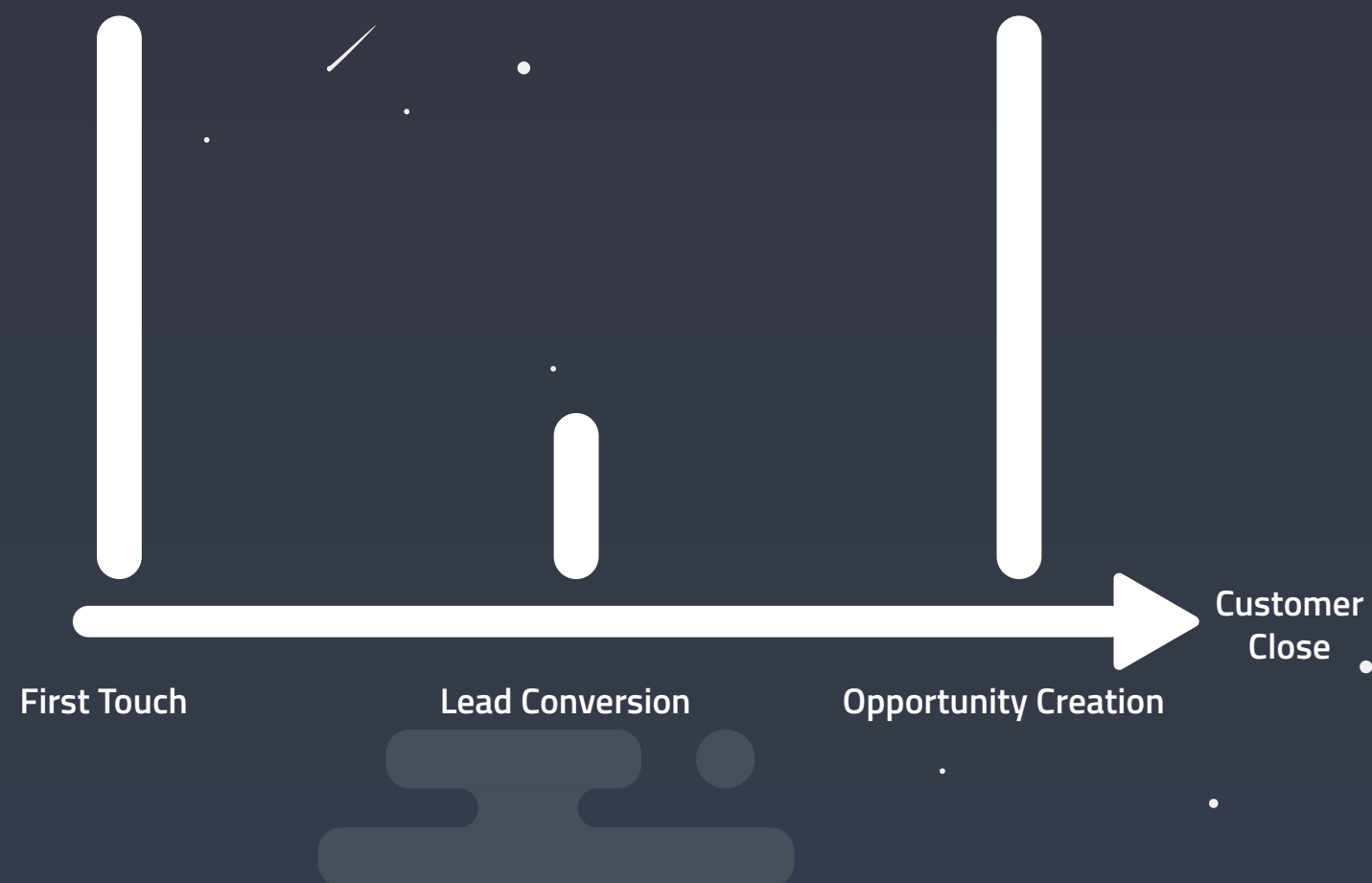
and then finally attends an event before becoming a customer — only the event will receive credit for the return generated.

## THE W-SHAPED MODEL

The w-shaped model is the most accurate and robust model for attributing event marketing ROI. It's also the most difficult to implement. It takes into account all of the points of contact and marketing initiatives that have caused a contact to finally close.

It distributes a portion of the return across each marketing initiative. The question for the marketer is the percentage of the return that should be attributed to each touchpoint. This is left to the marketer's discretion.

**For Example:** Someone becomes known to your company by visiting your blog, converts on an ebook, attends a webinar, attends an event and then finally becomes a customer. In this case, a marketer might attribute 30% to the blog, 20% to the ebook, 20% to the webinar and 30% to the event.





# CALCULATING EVENT ROI

Another way to understand attribution is to calculate the return on investment of a specific events strategy. 2018 will see a greater emphasis placed on calculating event ROI as improved technology and software integrations make it possible for a more accurate measurement. There are several different models for measuring ROI. Each presents its own strengths, weaknesses and levels of complexity. Even if you choose the Return/Investment model, you'll find that there is a room for complexity. As discussed above, event value can mean revenue generated directly from the event (registrations, sponsorships, customers), but it can also mean a variety of other goals and metrics that may be easy or next-to-impossible to ascribe a dollar value to (leads generated, brand awareness, customer lifetime value).

Whatever definitions of event value and event cost you end up using, the below models will help you calculate your return. You'll notice that we use the term event revenue, but between you and us we're really talking about the overall event value.

### 1. Simple: Return / Investment

The simplest model is the return / investment model mentioned near the top of this piece. It's ROI in its purest form. How much did you get out of the event? How much did the event cost? Simple.

ROI

=

Gross Revenue

Event Expenses

### 2. Advanced: Incremental Revenue

In the incremental revenue model, things get a bit more complex. Rather than just looking at the event revenue over the event expense, we are looking at the event profit over the event expense by taking a look at the profit of your event and then seeing how much profit you are getting for your investment.

ROI

=

Gross Revenue

- Event Expenses

Event Expenses

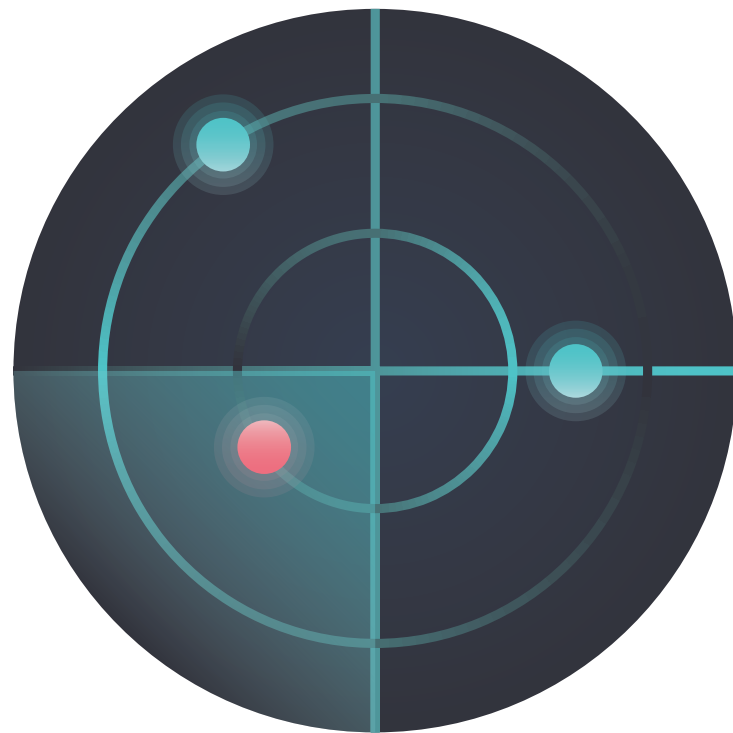
### 3. Complex: Incremental Margin

For an even more complex break-down, try the incremental margin model. This takes into account the gross margin instead of event revenue. The gross margin can be found by subtracting the cost of goods sold (COGS) from the revenue of event. The result is a much bigger picture of event ROI.

COGS may vary depending on the type of event that you are holding or on whether you are holding an event or attending one. It could include various line items such as swag, design collateral, food, dinners and drinks. If this sounds very similar to event expenses, that's because it is. More often than not, COGS will be smaller than your event expense. It's also thought of as something that is absolutely necessary for making a sale happen.

If you have questions about what is considered COGS for your event and what is considered event expenses, you might want to reach out to an accounting professional. If someone with accounting acumen is out of reach, you might want to stick to the incremental revenue or the return/investment models.

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{Gross Margin} - \text{Event Expenses}}{\text{Event Expenses}}$$



# ACCOUNT-BASED EVENT MARKETING

Just as event attribution can be made more accurate due to rich data that results in more actionable insights, account-based marketing for events is also more attainable due to the same reasons. In order for any form of ABM to be successful, there must be an ample amount of contextual data to create a strategy that can effectively win over a specific client. But before diving into how this strategy can be combined with live events, let's properly define account-based marketing

ABM centers around the idea of targeting a specific list of key accounts whose needs perfectly fit your product offering and thus add most value to the company. The campaigns for each of these accounts are then personalized to ensure maximum engagement. ABM campaigns typically focus on outbound marketing efforts (direct intervention with leads to move them through the last stages of the buyer's journey), but they may include inbound efforts (blog posts, social media, webinars), as well.

Account-based marketing is nothing new—the strategies behind it are arguably the same ones instituted by Madison Avenue in the 1960s—but the advent of a series of technological tools, including advanced event success platforms, has made it easier and more effective than ever to incorporate ABM into marketing processes. This is good news for event marketers as face-to-face conversation has long been the crux of ABM campaigns. In some ways, it has never been more exciting or fruitful to pursue an event ABM campaign.

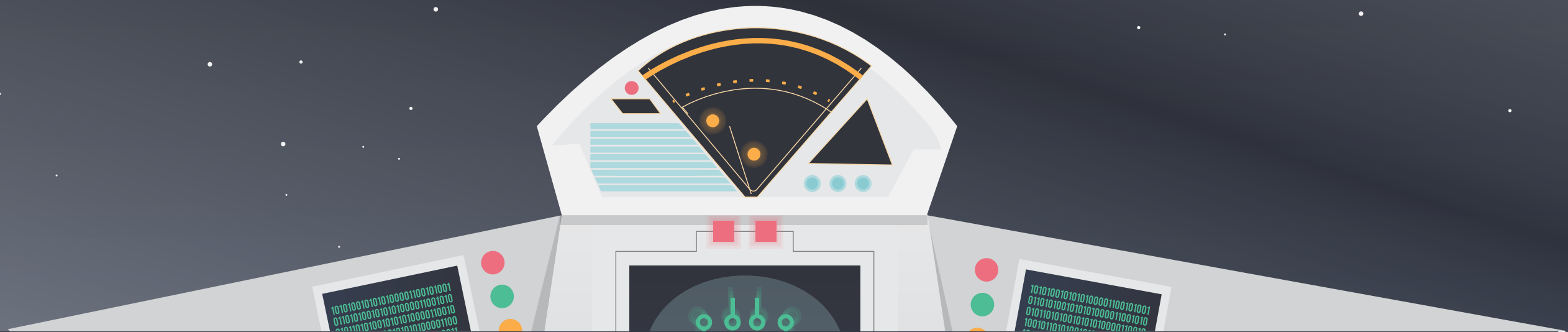


Gaetano DiNardi  
Director of Marketing

▲ SALES HACKER

"ABM is all about personalization & targeting. It's all about clearly defining your target accounts and key players. Pick the right channels and execute flawlessly, then measure and optimize."

# R.A.I.S.E



## HOW TO APPLY ACCOUNT BASED MARKETING TO EVENTS

When applying an ABM strategy to event marketing, marketers benefit from the power of live events coupled with the deep impact of a more personalized marketing strategy. Striving for an account-based event marketing strategy involves many of the traditional principles of ABM that are executed through the live events channel. This hybrid solution just may be the perfect way for develop sustainable, long-lasting relationships with key prospects. We recommend using the RAISE model for staging event ABM.

**1. Research** - *Having enough of the right prospects in your database.* The first step in an ABM strategy is the consolidation of a list of targeted accounts. For event marketers, these are the accounts that they plan on engaging before, after and during an event.

**Key Metrics:** # of accounts in database, # of account-specific content, # of stakeholders identified

**2. Attention** - *Having enough of the right prospects paying attention to your brand.* Once you have the list of target accounts, you should be measuring how much they interact with your brand. This can be through email open rates or website traffic from target accounts. For event marketers, this means the number of visits to your event website (top of the funnel) and the number of stakeholders targeting an event (bottom of the funnel).

**Key Metrics:** # of event website registrations, # of targeted accounts attending, # of targeted stakeholders attending

**3. Interaction** - *How often the right prospects are interacting with your brand.* It's one thing for your targeted accounts to be aware of your brand, it's another thing for them to engage with it. This is nothing foreign to event marketers as attendees engagement is popular metric for measuring event ROI. With ABM event marketing, it's about focusing on the engagement of your targeted accounts. Top-of-the funnel interactions include the number of events attended by a given brand, whereas other features such as the number of interactions with targeted pages in your event app and on-site demos are towards the bottom of the funnel.

**Key Metrics:** # of events attended, # of visits to your booth, # of on-site demos

**4. Scope** - *How successful your campaign is in reaching target accounts.* Once your ABM strategy is in motion, you'll want to measure the scope of your efforts. This criteria, measured in a percentage, will help you determine what is working, what can be better optimized and what resources can be better allocated elsewhere.

**Key Metrics:** % of closed accounts from specific events, % of targeted accounts attending

**5. Effect** - *How effective your event ABM campaign is across the board.* This extensive criteria focuses on the big picture effect of your ABM strategy. A number of metrics fall into this category including NPS scores (top of the funnel) and average customer value or ACV (bottom of the funnel).

**Key Metrics:** Average event survey NPS score, average deal time close, win rates



## 5 TIPS ON HOW APPLY ABM TO YOUR EVENTS STRATEGY

### 1. Establish Clear Criteria

The most important aspect of account-based marketing is your portfolio of accounts. Because you will be spending significant time, energy, and resources on a select list of companies, it is imperative that you choose the ones that are most attainable and, at the same time, hold the most potential value. Make sure to create a crystal-clear set of criteria that you will use to make your list of target accounts.

How large should the company be? If you're specifically targeting their marketing department, how large should their marketing team be? Which industry should you focus on? Which subset of this industry should you focus on? The more specific your questions are, the more granular your criteria will become which is ideal for ABM strategy.

### 2. Find Points of Contact

Once the list of accounts is finalized, find the specific points of contact you will want to stay in communication with. More often than not, you will want to keep in contact with the individuals in the company who have decision-making power.

If your ultimate objective is to have them purchase your product, maintaining communication with senior executives will best serve your goals. You may even want to find several points of contact for the same account, especially if the company is large and will require multiple touchpoints for you to stay top of mind. Start at the top and from there identify other significant contacts.

### 3. Create Personalized Content

When reaching out to your specific account contacts, take it a step further by creating personalized content that is directly



relevant to your points of contact. According to the Harvard Business Review, customers who perceive supplier content to be tailored to their specific needs are 40% more willing to buy from that supplier.<sup>8</sup>

Since creating individualized content for each contact might be too demanding, try segmenting your accounts list by subgroups and devise a content strategy in which you generate relevant content for each subgroup. For example, your list of account contacts may consist of experiential marketing

managers, social media strategists, and B2B marketers. For a list like this, you will want to create content that touches on these three topics. By tailoring your content, there is a higher chance that it will resonate with your contacts and, in doing so, raise the likelihood of them continuing to engage with your brand.

#### **4. Send Out Pre-Event Surveys**

You've now set a solid foundation for a consistent account-based marketing campaign. Great work! Now that you've established relationships with your account contacts and have a better idea of what they are looking for, you are ready to start planning the content for the event. To get an even clearer understanding of what your account contacts are hoping to learn, send out pre-event surveys asking which type of event content would be most helpful to them. This will greatly assist in helping you find speakers, organize sessions, and finalize the value offerings of the event.

#### **5. Conduct Targeted Display Ad Campaigns**

Once you know enough about your account contacts, you can use those same characteristics to run targeting display ad campaigns. A popular tool for such campaigns is Google AdWords. Just specify the traits that you are targeting from and Google will place your ad on its multiple networks and make sure that your targeted demographic (in this case, your account contacts) see the ads while they surf the web.

8 Harvard Business Review: Making the Consensus Sale. 2015





## 03: ATTENDEE EXPERIENCE TRENDS

Another sure thing to count on in 2018 is the drastic shift in attendee experience. Given both the technological and business trends that will shape the upcoming year, the combination of both will result in an experience that is new and novel for a majority of attendees. Some of the ways this will happen is through enhanced artificial intelligence, virtual reality technology, and innovative experiential strategies.



## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Over the years we've seen artificial intelligence become a part of mainstream consumerism through a variety of products. Whether it be virtual assistants such as Amazon's Alexa and Google Home, or smart thermostats like Nest that predict your home's heating and cooling needs, different forms of AI have already entered the daily routines of many people. Thus, it is no surprise that this technology is becoming more widely used in the realm of live events. Below are the 3 main ways that AI will most likely make an impact on the industry in 2018.



Trey Smith  
VP of Events  
 HUMAN CAPITAL MEDIA

"Artificial intelligence and leveraging the capabilities of this technology will make a big impact in 2018. It will allow us to create more personalized content for attendees and deliver sponsor advertisements in new and unique ways at just the right time."



## CHATBOTS

The use of chatbots at events has already begun but given its growing popularity and improved accuracy, 2018 will surely be seeing more examples of chatbot usage. They can be applied in a variety of situations.

For example, using chatbots for monetary transactions will save significant time and labor cost. Purchasing tickets, booking venues, and renting booths would all be much simpler and cost-effective if the process was carried out by a chatbot. In addition to improving the organizer's experience, chatbots can be used to enhance attendee experience as well. They can be used to field common attendee questions such as:

- What's the wifi password?
- Where is the booth for this company located?
- What time does this session begin?

For the 2017 SXSW festival, the events team offered a fully capable chatbot, named "Abby" to help attendees with FAQ's. Over the course of the week, over 56,000 questions were asked to Abby through the event app, assisting attendees with venue maps, schedules, and other quick-to-answer questions.<sup>9</sup> The bot was designed to be conversational and casual, aligning with the tone and event brand of SXSW. You could see it in action below:

Having a chatbot readily available to answer these types of FAQs before, during, and after the event will help to save precious event planning time as well as provide a smoother user experience for the attendee.

9 Oates, Greg. Skift. "Behind the Rise of Chatbots in Meetings and Events" <https://skift.com/2017/09/06/behind-the-rise-of-chatbots-in-meetings-and-events/>

# FACIAL RECOGNITION

Soon enough, the days of manual on-site registration will become obsolete. With facial recognition now available on the common smartphone, using this technology for event registration will soon become the norm. Not only can this save significant time, but it will also leave a lasting impression on the attendee by creating a feeling of futuristic efficiency.

Perhaps the most important use case for facial recognition would be to maximize event security. If your event is hosting thousands of attendees, a security breach becomes much more difficult to defend against and the possible consequences could be devastating. Using facial recognition will ensure that only those who are authorized will be able to access an event. Facial recognition will be a complete game-changer for on-site event security.

An example of this technology being put to use was at the International Corporate Events (ICE) Awards in London this past summer. Out of the 250 attendees who attendees, 126 used facial recognition to check-in and saved significant time during the process. Overall, the check-in process was five-times faster than the ticket scanning system they had used last year.<sup>10</sup>

[Zenus](#) was the face recognition software of choice and given how well it worked, the ICE Awards plan to use it again in the future. As use cases like this become more prominent throughout the event industry, facial recognition will soon become the norm for onsite check-ins.



Attendees using facial recognition software to check-in  
(Source: ice-awards.com)

<sup>10</sup> Poe, Shelly. Skift. "How Facial Recognition is Shaping the Future of Conferences" <https://skift.com/2017/09/13/how-facial-recognition-is-shaping-the-future-of-conferences/>

## EVENT PERSONALIZATION

At the end of the day, attendees want to feel that the event was meant for them. The sessions, the speakers, the people they're about to meet - they want to know that the event is relevant to their professional needs. Fortunately, improved AI technology has now made it possible to provide a thoroughly personalized event experience. Offering individualized attention has become more scalable due to rises in AI's capabilities. For example, the event app can work as a matchmaker, recommending other attendees to meet with based on other people's profiles. The app can also suggest specific sessions to attend based on your previous behavior and social media profiles.

Another use case would be to provide a "personal assistant" throughout the event through the app. The device can send you reminders, answer FAQ's regarding the event, and so forth. And because AI technology will only improve in the coming years, its role in creating a more personalized event experience will also become more accurate, resulting in an enhanced experience overall.

## VIRTUAL AND AUGMENTED REALITY

Extending the conversation to the visual realm, virtual and augmented reality will surely play an even larger role in the events industry than before. General technology trends have shown that virtual and augmented reality are becoming much more accessible than they once have been. Samsung's VR headset easily attaches to Samsung smartphones, making the VR experience available for anyone with a Samsung Galaxy and a headset. Just this year, Apple announced how the iPhone X and iPhone 8 will have significantly enhanced augmented reality features that are built into operating system. Having such technology now available at our fingertips will create more ways for organizers to expand their event offering and to create another layer of experience.

## VISUALIZING EVENT SPACES

The advancements in AR technology have significant implications on the planning process for event organizers. When choosing between venues, organizers can use their phones to superimpose different furniture, booth setting, and overall layouts to accurately visualize how the space will look like. This will be a complete gamechanger in terms of creating an atmosphere that most closely resembles the vision within the organizer's mind.

## INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES

Both VR and AR technologies allow for much more engaging and interactive experiences for attendees. For example, AR can provide attendees with heads-up, turn-by-turn event directions. They can also immediately know who they're speaking to by donning a headset equipped with facial recognition software.



(Source: [blog.vntana.com](https://blog.vntana.com))

For certain types of large events such as trade shows, this type of technology could save significant cost by having the products be tested through virtual or augmented reality. Car shows for example require hundreds of square feet to accommodate all of the vehicles on display. AR and VR technologies can make venues like this a thing of the past, giving customers the ability to engage with the cars directly through their headsets.

In fact, the above example is no longer hypothetical. Companies are already taking advantage of AR technology to transform the automobile industry. VNTANA is an interactive hologram technology company that is building a hologram car configurator that will allow consumers to actually see themselves inside their dream car.<sup>11</sup>

Their hologram product display will surely transform the traditional forms of consumer-product engagement, creating new ways for people to perceive the personal value of a specific good.

11 Crowder, Ashley. Endless Events. "Augmented Reality for Events and Experiential Marketing <https://helloendless.com/augmented-reality-events-experiential-marketing/>





## INNOVATIVE EXPERIENTIAL STRATEGIES

A good way to anticipate attendee experience trends for 2018 is to learn from example. The largest and most recognizable conferences in the world are often times leading the charge in introducing new ideas into the event space. Here a few examples of large conferences that are bringing new and creative ways to engage their attendees.

### AMAZON'S RE:INVENT - LETTING THE CLIENTS TAKE THE STAGE

An impressive feature of **re:Invent** is its emphasis on peer-to-peer education. A lot of the learning that takes place during the three day conference comes from not only AWS developers but AWS customers. Netflix, one of AWS' biggest clients, held 10 separate sessions to educate users on how the Netflix team takes full advantage of AWS' capabilities. From large sessions to casual conversations, it's clear that the experience is very collaborative and shared among all attendees.

Many AWS clients such as Nike and Netflix held multiple sessions to explain how they best utilize AWS products. Not only does this allow clients to rave about the product, but it lends credibility to AWS and its impact on users. Very valuable and honest lessons can be shared through this structure.

# MARKETO'S MARKETING NATION ROADSHOW

A recent trend has been for events to take their brand directly to the people. Event roadshows have become a core part of companies' event strategies and given their perceived benefits, it seems the trend will only continue to grow. Some of these benefits include:

- Expanding the reach of your event brand
- Extending the event marketing campaign from a few days to a few months
- Gaining richer insight into different demographics and geographic regions
- Using this opportunity as a "dress rehearsal" to fine tune your event content for the larger user conferences you plan to have in the future



(Source: Marketo Blog)

In order to realize all of these benefits, a roadshow must be well planned and executed. Some tips to keep in mind is to create a detailed and well-researched journey map. This map will determine not only where you have your event but also the specific audience you will be engaging with. Make sure much strategic planning and research is being conducted. Additionally, tailoring the event content to make sure it relevant to the specific audience at each stop of your roadshow will ensure that your event brand stays strong and memorable for all who come across it.

An example of a successful event roadshow would be Marketo's Marketing Nation Roadshow that took place in Boston, Chicago, and London all within the same month. Compared to their flagship event in San Francisco, Marketing Nation Summit, which costs \$1395 per ticket, the roadshow is \$99 per attendee and a one-day event for each location. Lowering the price point while still maintaining the Marketing Nation brand made the event much more accessible, thus allowing Marketo to stretch their brand to people and places that may not have otherwise been able to engage with it.



# COMBINING DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT AND IN-PERSON EXPERIENCES: AMERICAN EXPRESS

While many of the trends described thus far have centered around technology, it's important to keep in mind why we use this technology in the first place. The primary goal for events is to facilitate the connections between people. Tech should be seen as a means to achieve more engagement and interaction between people at the event as well as those who are not there. Creating shareable moments, both in-person and digitally, will be a trend to look out for and to embrace for 2018.

A great example of how an event combined tech with in-person interactions and shareability would be American Express's 2014 U.S. Open experiential event. The onsite experience included a 180-degree rally cam which featured a video camera and backdrop of Arthur Ashe stadium, allowing fans to take pictures and upload them to social media. Additionally, there was a life size hologram of tennis champion Sloane Stephen with whom AmEx card member could pose for pictures with. Finally, the on-site setup included a text cafe that served as a digital hub of sorts, allowing attendees to charge their phones while watching a live news feed aggregator of US Open fan buzz from all over the world.

The key to success here was to provide moments of interaction that ensures the event is still rooted in the power of in-person. Thus, have opportunities for people to interact with one another at the event while also being able to share those moments through their social channels. This way, you are able to magnify the potential of brand visibility.



Allison Lucey  
Senior Managing Director of Events  
**TEACHFOR  
AMERICA**

"An important trend to focus on in 2018 is "head up technology." This will help ensure people are engaged at the event, but also compelled to share their experience digitally. These engagements are always crafted with the digital share in mind, ensuring that the end result is a photo or post that reaches the social or professional circles of attendees to further generate interest or engagement with your organization."

# CONCLUSION

Live events are a rapidly changing space and the key to success is to stay ahead of the competition. As 2018 gears up to be an exciting year for the events industry, this content is meant for you to better anticipate the changes that are to come. Keep in mind that this list is by no means exhaustive, but rather a collection of the trends that we believe will be the most significant and influential over the course of 2018. We hope that this ebook will be a continuously helpful resource throughout the year. Now go out there and put this knowledge to use! **The future is here.**

**Have any questions?**

Get in touch with us!





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Emily fullmer  
Global Events Manager,  
Greenbook



2017 Shortlist for best  
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EVENT NETWORKING TECH  
EVENT MARKETING TECH



2015  
BEST EVENT  
MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE  
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