From attraction to retention:

A complete guide on audience engagement

eventscase

INTRO

Engagement has won the agendas of Event Profs who intend to attract and retain attendees.

At other times, we could take the number of registrations as the primary metric for determining the event's success. But without engaging and retaining event attendees, a good attendance is not enough.

In other words: the event market has become much more competitive and challenging.

Faced with so many digital options fighting for one's attention, engaging and retaining event attendees is the most valuable indicator to determine your project's success.

In this paper, you will learn about proven tactics for engaging and retaining event attendees.

WHO'S THIS GUIDE FOR?

This resource has been created for **Event Profs, Marketing Managers, and Executives** responsible for reporting and proving the performance of virtual and hybrid events to other stakeholders and team members. It fits the needs of both **corporations and agencies reporting directly to clients.**

WHO MADE IT HAPPEN?

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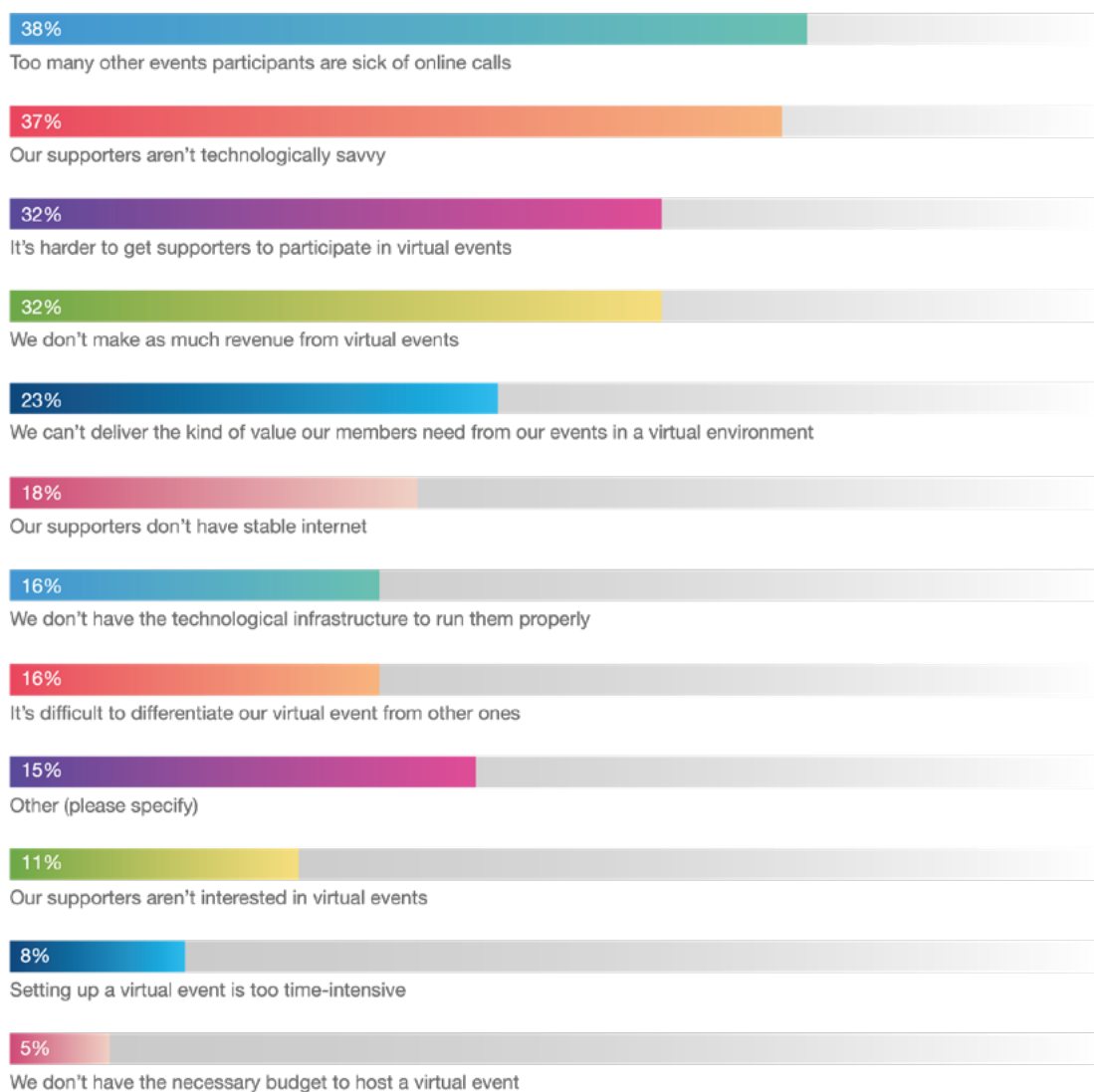# HOW IS THIS GUIDE STRUCTURED?:

Why you should care about engagement?

[49% of marketers say that audience engagement is the most significant contributing factor to having a successful event.](#)
Engaging the audience in a hybrid or virtual event is based on three pillars:

1. Firstly and above all else comes the content quality.

2. Secondly, the ability to capture and retain the attention of the audience. Especially attendees that are not physically present since they have several other distractions that can put them away.

3. Finally, it is also necessary to provide relationship experiences and knowledge exchange between participants—the old but gold networking..

What are your biggest challenges when it comes to running virtual events?

38%
Too many other events participants are sick of online calls

37%
Our supporters aren't technologically savvy

32%
It's harder to get supporters to participate in virtual events

32%
We don't make as much revenue from virtual events

23%
We can't deliver the kind of value our members need from our events in a virtual environment

18%
Our supporters don't have stable internet

16%
We don't have the technological infrastructure to run them properly

16%
It's difficult to differentiate our virtual event from other ones

15%
Other (please specify)

11%
Our supporters aren't interested in virtual events

8%
Setting up a virtual event is too time-intensive

5%
We don't have the necessary budget to host a virtual event

Source: Wild Apricot

Engagement Starts Before the Event

PLAN

When planning your event in advance, you will have time to create expectations. That's a particular time to start engaging with your audience. The sooner you start planning and promoting, the stronger the **community effect** will be. Crucial points to consider if you want to engage your audience the right way:
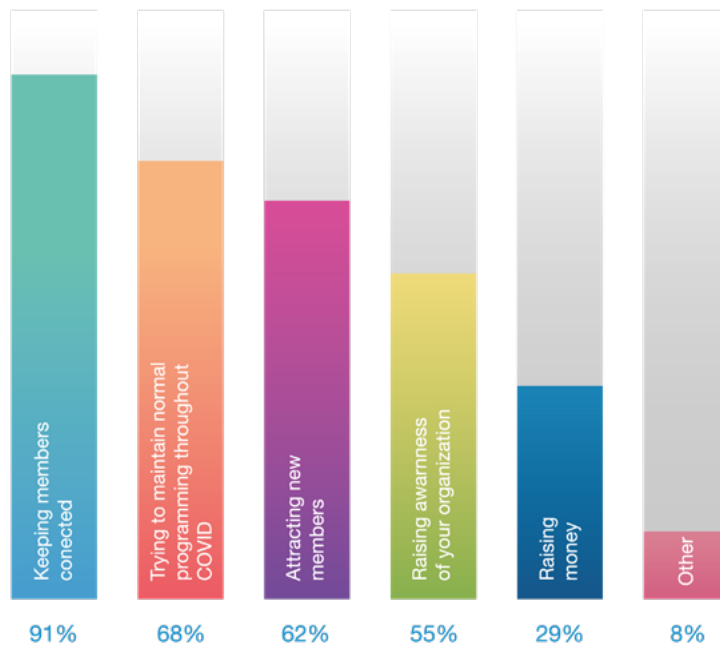
The content: *what topics will you talk about?*

The format: *what kind of approach are you planning?*

The depth *according to the persona's stage in the sales funnel, how deep should you dive into your content topics?*

The goal: *you want to sell or generate leads? Is your event open to the public or invitation only to strengthen your community?*

What are your objectives when running virtual events?

Keeping members conected	Trying to maintain normal programming throughout COVID	Attracting new members	Raising awarness of your organization	Raising money	Other
91%	68%	62%	55%	29%	8%

Source: Wild Apricot

PROMOTE

Your event's promotion phase must be through all the **channels** that you and your business know that you can find your audience: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, blog, email marketing, and others.

Then, all of the channels need to point out to your **event website**, where people will find more information about your event. Also, if it's a public event or one that has tickets to sell, it's at this stage that you'll offer the possibility to register for interested people.

KEEP YOUR AUDIENCE INTERESTS IN MIND

Both during the planning and promotion phases, keep your audience in mind. As much as it sounds like a cliché, you need to know your audience and their needs well. Only then will you know what kind of topics will be right to keep them engaged.

And not only that: having your audience well mapped, you will even know the best time and format to deliver your event.

CREATE AND CURATE RELEVANT CONTENT TRACKS

You need to delight viewers to keep them engaging with your event. Surprise them with a live sketching session or with a top-of-the-edge sound audiovisual surprise. Don't ever underestimate the power of design.

And, of course, do the basics before the fantastic. You don't want to miss registrations of interested people just because they couldn't find a button or because your website was not working correctly, right?

This will undoubtedly gain the trust of users. Consequently, the greater the chances that they will take action proposed in the transmission.

Event Day:

Best Practices to Keep your Audience Engaged

NO BULLSHIT. GO STRAIGHT TO WHAT MATTERS

Don't rely on a long "getting started" process to captivate your online audience. Be objective and straightforward!

Avoid spending too much time on miscellaneous detail and ensure that this waiting is filled out with something pleasant. For example: instead of leaving random background noises to spectators, play a countdown video with relaxing music.

Another point to be taken care of is the gear. It is not uncommon for virtual event organizers to think that things will be easier. But be honest to yourself: what was the last time you had the patience for amateurish things like a bad image or a presenter that doesn't look comfortable at all with the topic they're talking about?

Suppose you want to make a quick introduction, cool. Start with an icebreaker to get to know where your audience comes from or how familiar they are with the subject of your session.

But as the introduction is the leading hook to keep participants engaged, keep it concise. It's an excellent way to keep them listening and engaging with the rest of the event.

How do you keep Virtual Event attendees entertained and focussed?

70%	55%	62%	33%	43%
Polling	Short presentations	Videos	Gamification	Multiple speakers
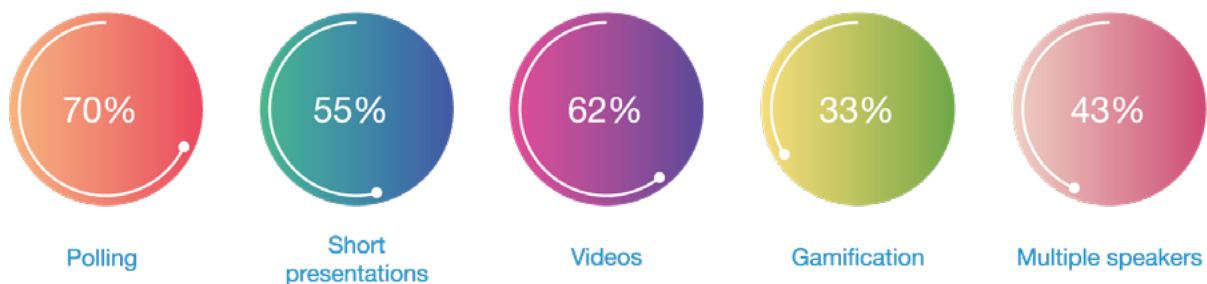
Source: Markletic

ENSURE STREAMLINE TECHNICAL OPERATIONS

Before going live, make an end-to-end test of all the gear you will use: both hardware and software.

Choose a reliable platform to carry out the event. **REMEMBER: it's highly recommended that you host your events with a professional platform rather than a webinar tool.**

*Perform audio and video checks before starting the broadcast.*

Make sure you have a strong and stable internet connection.

IT'S ALL ABOUT BEING CAPTIVATING

People love having challenges to solve. So, present information or real examples and ask for comments and opinions. This will ensure that your attendees will stay connected.

Don't just talk about yourself or promote your company and products all the time. The attendees' engagement with a given session depends a lot on the content's value, not on what you have to sell.

What is your biggest Virtual Event annoyance?

Messy backgrounds	Bad audio	Bad connection	Bad camera
12%	30%	37%	20%
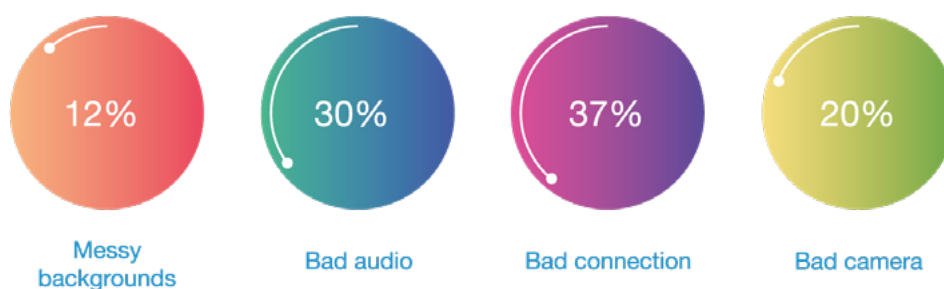
Source: Markletic

IGNITE CURIOSITY

Ignite your participants' curiosity by letting them know that they'll have something that they didn't have before at the end of the discussion.

Examples of these benefits may include free resources, promotional discounts, or even access to exclusive products and materials.

Ultimately, that doesn't even need to be a giveaway. It could simply be useful information that this attendee will carry with them for life.

Thus, people will be curious or excited about the surprise and will remain engaged and connected until the end.

INTERACT BUT WATCH THE CLOCK

Explore the chat features during the presentation. Thus, it will be possible to receive questions from the public and provide answers in real-time. Such practice creates a more natural engagement between participants and presenters.

Make room for interactions, questions, and comments throughout the presentation and not only at the end. Transform the audience into an active protagonist of their journey.
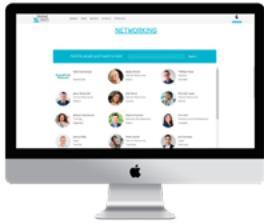
The main challenge here is: doing that, considering that your attendees have busy schedules. No one wants to enter a session and watch another attendee making interruptions no stop.

Getting started with EventsCase to increase engagement in your virtual events

1

ADVANCED ATTENDEE SEARCH WITH FILTERS / KNOW WHO IS ONLINE

Type a name or a keyword related to the attendees you are interested in connecting with and press Enter. It's that simple.

2

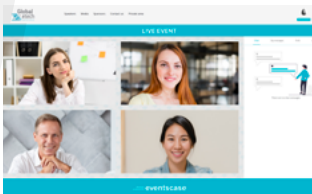## PRIVATE MESSAGES BETWEEN ATTENDEES

Attendees can instantly send private messages to each other, creating the networking opportunities they hoped to find.

3

GROUP VIDEO CALLS BETWEEN ATTENDEES

Participate in group video conferences at any time, via desktop or mobile.

4

REAL-TIME CHAT PER SESSION WITH MODERATION

Create a safe environment for attendees and speakers to speak up, sharing their experiences, and having meaningful interactions in real-time.

5

REAL-TIME POLLS AT ONLINE SESSIONS

Create your quizzes and polls with our quick and intuitive tool, with no third-party software required.

6

REAL-TIME Q&A AT ONLINE SESSIONS

Q&A's are a significant moment of any keynote. So, this feature is especially useful when you have a moderator to transmit questions of the audience to the speakers, creating a structured environment to encourage engagement during a meeting.

7

KNOW WHO HAS VISITED YOUR PROFILE

With just a few clicks, any attendee, speaker, or sponsor can have reliable and quick access to participants who accessed their profile.

8

EVENT SCHEDULE FOR IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL SESSIONS

Proporciona a tus participantes el programa Provide your participants with their entire program, including speakers and companies' profiles, enabling them to select their favorite activities. Their preferences will be saved for the whole event length, and dynamic reminders will make sure they don't miss anything.

9

ATTENDEE PROFILE MANAGEMENT

With a simple and powerful interface, you can choose to change details in any attendees' profile or provide them with the autonomy to do so. Increase networking opportunities by quickly changing names, surnames, companies, or custom fields created for a specific event.

10

MEETINGS INCLUDING VIDEO MEETINGS

Invite delegates for private meetings with all the privacy and safety you need via desktop or mobile.

11

UNLIMITED SIMULTANEOUS LIVE VIDEO SESSIONS

Whether your event has to host a few or dozens of live sessions simultaneously, it will be possible. Participants can be automatically directed to a specific session or manually browse between rooms.

Post-event:

*Turn your attendees into fans and
your audience into a community*

"There's a big difference between a satisfied customer and a loyal customer."
Shep Hyken, CS Keynote Speaker

The audience retention process at the end of each event requires the adoption of some tactics. It increases the spectator's chances to become loyal to your brand and carry on with the relationship this relationship that has just been started.

The best and most recommended ways of doing it are:

FEEDBACK FORMS

The feedback form is a rich source of information that will guide the decisions of the event managers. The efficiency of the information depends on the moment of its application, which should occur as soon as the event ends.

Here are four tips to keep in mind when preparing your feedback survey questions:

Make sure you have questions about all stages of the event.

Applied an accessible language that is easy to read

Present no more than four alternatives for each question.

Use an attractive layout to improve the customer experience.

PENDING QUESTIONS

Firstly, do your best to ensure that your event keynotes have a dedicated time and space for a Q&A. It is one of the most anticipated moments by the participants, especially in the main sessions.

If the subject at discussion is a trending topic or the speaker is a recognized professional, normally there'll be more questions to be answered than there time to answer all of them.

In this case, structure a Q&A process through EventsCase, gather all questions that could not be answered in real-time, compile them in a document and make it available to participants within 24 hours. More than having their questions answered, this is an action that demonstrates to all participants that they are an essential part of that community.

EXCLUSIVE GROUPS

Your audience interests don't end at the event venue. If they like something, they'll keep looking for information about that subject always.

Therefore, you need to carry on with people to strengthen the ties to your brand. You need to listen to them and have a relationship with the members.

This creates affinity and security. Otherwise, your community loses its meaning and, consequently, the participants' enthusiasm to be there and relate to your brand.

Digital communities are an excellent choice for that. Besides, they offer companies various opportunities to observe and understand consumer behavior, habits, needs, preferences, and expectations.

Some examples of thriving digital communities include The Delegate Wranglers (Facebook / 1k+ members), Online Geniuses (Slack / 29k+ members), and BizBash Event Pros Gather (LinkedIn / 74k+ members).

Wrapping Up

Connecting with your audience in unique ways can generate surprising outcomes. So, it is no wonder that major players in the global market are using engagement tools and techniques with great emphasis.

Today, producing a virtual or hybrid event is the most effective way to bring people together. Thus, our consolidated guide on audience engagement can help you transform the engagement of your events into a streamlined and scalable process.

Every time you apply steps 1 to 5, you'll notice learnings and improvements that will continuously optimize your results.

Through virtual events and other digital channels, we'll likely see companies selling their products and services in 2021, advertising for all stages of the sales funnel, and expanding their reach while keeping costs low.

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