

# 4 Keys To Track & Optimize ROI From Events

Tips & Tricks To Help Marketing, Sales & Marketing Ops Maximize The Impact Of In-Person Investments To Increase And Measure ROI



**“There is simply nothing that can replace meeting your customers and prospects face-to-face.”**

- Matt Heinz, Heinz Marketing

Despite the explosive growth of digital marketing over the past decade, research shows that in-person events have remained one of the top drivers of demand and revenue for most B2B organizations.

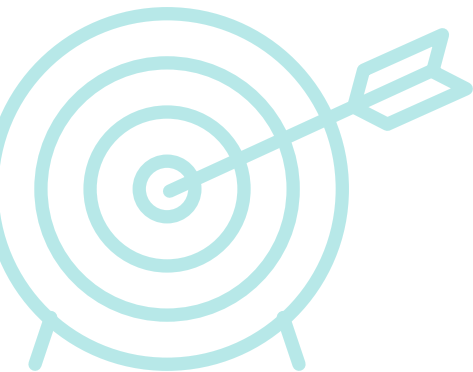
In fact, [new research](#) from *Demand Gen Report* found 68% of respondents said in-person events were the most successful of all marketing tactics at generating qualified leads for top of the funnel. Also, according to a [recent Salesforce report](#), trade show leads have a 29.6% open-lead (MQL) to closed lead percentage, which is significantly higher than marketing and advertising campaigns (21.8%).

These findings come as no surprise to industry experts, who point out that even the strongest of marketing tactics or campaigns have struggled to have the same impact as being in front of clients and prospects.

“There is simply nothing that can replace meeting your customers and prospects face-to-face,” said Matt Heinz, President of [Heinz Marketing](#). “A 500-word blog post pales in comparison to just a couple minutes with your dream client live. It’s not about closing the deal but creating a great first impression and helping to loosen the status quo such that you establish a foundation that leads to higher conversion rates and longer lifetime value.”

In a recent [blog post](#) on LinkedIn, author and industry consultant [Ruth Stevens](#) pointed to research from Forrester which showed events and trade shows represent the biggest line item in B2B budgets, at 20% on average.

Jim Obermayer, Founder of the [Sales Lead Management Association](#), added that events are only increasing in popularity because brands can track closed deals to in-person meetings. “Research has proven that people do business with people they have met, have spoken to and shaken hands with at corporate events and trade shows. This is what has fueled the huge growth in corporate events.”





# Increased Event Investments Equals Need For Deeper Metrics

**68% of marketers said they are currently tracking and analyzing event ROI, with another 18% planning to add measurement capabilities.**

With investments in face-to-face events on the rise, there is also a growing need among marketing teams to mirror the insights they are now getting from digital tactics by tracking attendee behavior at events.

The reality is that many B2B marketers are continuing to put significant spend toward events, without a real ability to appropriately measure their impact – especially related to specific revenue contribution. In these scenarios where metrics and intelligence are lacking, marketing teams often miss out on attaching the proper attribution to events and presenting an accurate impact on pipeline influenced. Without accurate ROI metrics, many brands are making poor decisions when it comes to event budgeting and strategies.

According to [recent research](#) from *Demand Gen Report*, 91% of B2B marketers said measurement and reporting was a growing priority for their organization. And the top drivers for increased measurement were the need to show marketing's impact on pipeline and revenue (72%) and a desire to track ROI from all marketing investments (68%).

That same research found only 68% of marketers said they are currently tracking and analyzing event ROI, with another 18% planning to add measurement capabilities.

In addition, a [global CMO study](#) from SiriusDecisions shows that the biggest barriers CMOs believe will inhibit their company's ability to measure marketing's contribution to revenue are: insufficient processes (25%), insufficient data (18%) and not having marketing's business objectives tied to its measurement efforts (16%).

In the following white paper, we will share tips and tricks companies can use to secure executive buy-in for making event investments more strategic. Specifically, it will provide tips on what leading companies are doing pre-, during- and post-event to help their sales, marketing, and marketing operations teams to measure and articulate the actual revenue impact of your face-to-face event investments.







# The Executive Impact On Event Performance

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Tracking and optimizing ROI from events requires significant collaboration across multiple factions of your business, including marketing, sales and the marketing operations teams who manage CRM and marketing automation systems.

The role and contribution of each of these teams for events typically includes:

**Sales:** A typical B2B event intended to generate demand relies heavily on sales to drive attendance and then follow-up on potential renewed interest generated with your event content.

**Marketing:** Owns and controls full execution of the event, defines the event intent and subsequent event agenda, content, and goals.

**Marketing Operations:** Controls the systems and strategy required to manage and measure performance against your event goals, as well as manage pre-, during- and post-event data.

All three factions need to understand the overall event intent, unique steps required pre-, during- and post-event to execute against that event intent, and the performance measurement goals associated with measuring the event's impact.

Without executive buy-in, (CMO, CEO) getting all three to cooperate is like pushing a rope. With executive buy-in, you have an escalation point should one of the three factions stray from your overarching goal; generating and measuring the value of interest your event created, as well as the impact it had on pipeline.

In the following sections we'll examine how each of these roles can help to address the performance and ROI of events, with specific breakdowns for tips on pre, during and post strategies.





# Setting The Stage: How Key Teams Can Optimize Pre-Event

**Marketing needs to define the content and strategy associated with driving customers, prospects, and partners to attend the event.**

Assuming your event is intended to generate demand for your solutions and services, some of the most important decisions and planning needs to be in place and prepared before you arrive at the event. Industry experts suggest these tips for various roles as they prepare to capture and measure how well your event did from a revenue contribution perspective.

## **Marketing**

Marketing needs to define the content and strategy associated with driving customers, prospects, and partners to attend the event. Identifying this event content will ultimately help speed up the buying cycle by providing relevant and contextual information.

There is no better format to do this than through live presentations, product demonstrations, educational seminars, and live experiences. Each of these can create renewed interest and excitement to accelerate the decision to buy. To optimize these opportunities, experts suggest marketing functions focus on the following items:

- Identify all these touch points / experiences;
- Determine the ideal means of expressing value for each;
- Develop the messaging to drive attendance;
- Set event goals;
- Select event measurement criteria and evaluations; and
- Educate and garner input from sales on overall event intent, content and agenda.

Once defined, the event's agenda should be the focus of your measurement criteria. More specifically, you want to know which sessions or product demonstrations attendees participate in and, more importantly, are they interested in learning more.

Many pre-event registration platforms allow for agenda building. This is a great means of gathering information pre-event to help adjust your agenda, room configurations, repeat sessions and more based on pre-event selections and trends. Regarding event goals, if your event intent is to generate demand, goals should be tied to revenue.





**According to a Salesforce report, trade show leads have a 29.6% open-lead (MQL) to closed lead percentage. That's higher than marketing and advertising campaigns (21.8%).**

From an event perspective, capturing and measuring the “renewed interest” your event content generated is the best means of knowing if you’ve impacted a decision to buy, which in turn influences and grows pipeline.

### Sales

In addition to owning a quota, sales should provide your company with a direct conduit to customers, partners and prospects. Provided they are on board with the overall event intent and contributed to the construction of your event content and agenda, they should be incentivized to drive attendance simply because the event aligns with their overarching goal of making quota.

Sales needs to do everything they can to get their customers, partners and prospects to not only attend the event, but also attend those sessions, product demonstrations or educational seminars that will help accelerate deals.

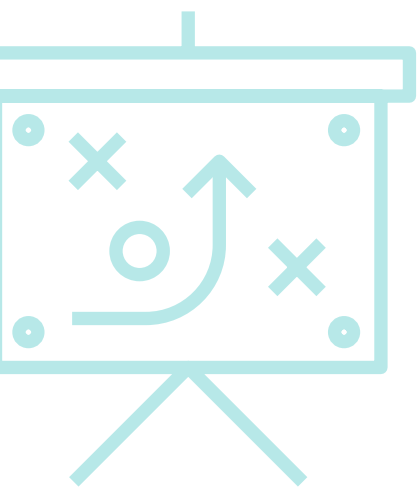
As Ruth Stevens wrote in her [recent LinkedIn post](#), scheduling meetings in advance of an event can be key. “If your objective is to have lots of conversations with prospects—which for most people it is—encourage your teammates to make appointments in advance. This extremely effective technique is often overlooked.”

### Marketing Operations

Assuming marketing operations is responsible for managing your lead CRM and marketing automation technology stack, the aforementioned marketing agenda is the framework for your lead management foundation. Each of these touch points should have a repository, (campaign) setup with member status values that align with how the content impacted the audience. More specifically, each repository should contain two values that you can apply to each record:

1. Who attended; and
2. Who is interested in learning more.

Once your systems are aligned with the overall event intent, you are ready to begin measuring pipeline post event. We’ll explain how, in the Post Event section.



# And We're Live...How Your Teams Can Cash In On-Site

**More marketers are encouraging attendees to provide feedback while these experiences are live and adjust your agenda or content if some presentations are resonating more than others.**

Once the framework for your event has been established and is set in place prior to the event, the next key step is to do everything possible during the event to insure you're meeting your goals.

Much of this revolves around understanding your audience needs, driving attendance to event content that aligns to your goals, and adjusting based upon what you learn.

Here are some during event tips industry experts suggest for all three groups:

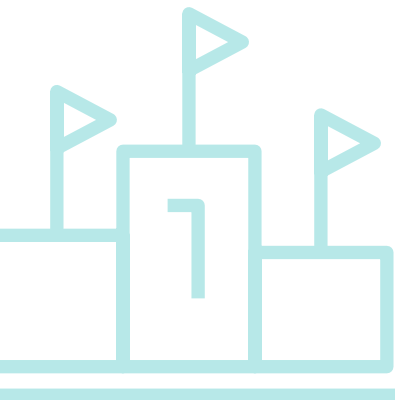
## **Marketing**

Events provide an ideal environment to network and learn from other peer companies, with similar wants and needs. Therefore, marketing is typically charged with driving engagement and collaboration. This can be done many ways; through mobile applications, unique wearable credentials by attendee type, experiential games and more.

There is great value in knowing why your attendees are there, perhaps captured via pre-event registration inquiries, and or session building tools. However, events can be overwhelming for a variety of reasons, such as there is so much content to consume and people to meet. During the event, technology can assist by delivering bespoke messaging based upon real-time activity that:

- Encourages like attendees to meet;
- Encourages additional session or product demonstrations based upon actual activity; and
- Delivers content that aligns and assist attendees.
- In addition to collecting new contacts, industry experts suggest using events to measure the effectiveness of your content delivery, such as speakers and product demonstrations.

To address this, more marketers are encouraging attendees to provide feedback while these experiences are live and adjust your agenda or content if some presentations are resonating more than others. Marketers are often using new evaluation tools and mobile applications to accommodate this feedback loop in real-time.





## Increase ROI By Providing An Opt-In

Event engagement and evaluation platforms can also provide attendees with the ability to opt-in which can be incredibly valuable in driving demand and pipeline. Within your evaluation tool, allow attendees to respond to a “call to action” question such as; would you like a sales person to follow-up?

Experts suggest marketers capture these responses within your lead management foundation and make sure these “hand raisers” are treated appropriately.

While event apps are growing in popularity and adoption, many industry watchers suggest it is still wise to utilize both in-app, during event, and post event email reminders to collect feedback.

**Your systems should be responding live during the event with content intended to accelerate the buying process that aligns with attendee behavior.**

### Sales

As a Salesperson, your primary role during the event is to make sure your customers and prospects are attending the appropriate session /product demonstrations and keep an eye out for those new hand raisers. Some new event platforms allow for sales to have a real-time snapshot of individual attendee activity on the show floor.

### Marketing Operations

Assuming your lead management foundation has been properly prepped pre-event, your systems should be responding live during the event with content intended to accelerate the buying process that aligns with attendee behavior.

If an attendee is tracked at a session, have your systems send additional content that builds on what is being presented onsite. If an attendee has raised their hand via an opt-in, marketing ops teams can set an automated task for sales that notifies them to respond.

## Case Study: B2BMX Engages Attendees Pre, During & Post Event

The B2B Marketing Exchange recently drew approximately 1,000 attendees to Scottsdale, AZ, and given that their audience is made up of marketing executives, effective engagement was a top priority.

The event organizer utilized the Validar platform to embed evaluations into its mobile app, and also emailed the same mobile evaluation solution to registrants.

By combining the two methods of engagement, the B2BMX team saw a 25% response rate.



# The Aftershock: Maximizing Revenue Post Event

**Make sure your post-event treatment extends beyond what was presented at the event.**

Events are sometimes compared to “raising a cloud of dust” because so much effort goes into generating buzz during the event, then there are challenges deciphering how effective the event went about meeting overall goals and objectives specific to revenue.

If the aforementioned pre- and during-event tips have been implemented, you now have the foundation in place to truly understand the “revenue impact” of your event.

Event marketers don’t get the credit they deserve simply because measuring event revenue impact is difficult. Assuming your event agenda aligns with your lead management foundation – i.e. you have a campaign repository for every session and product demonstration provided at your event – you’re now in perfect position to measure revenue.

## **Marketing**

Get your hand raisers converted to opportunities.

When you log into your CRM system, you should know for each agenda item (unique campaign) who participated and, more importantly, who raised their hand and requested more information. These “hand raisers” are a badge of honor and should be converted to opportunities against that campaign by sales. You’ve influenced or created this opportunity through your content. Make sure your systems know this and, with appropriate executive sponsorship, you can now understand the economic value of the renewed interest you created with your event content.

Make sure your content extends beyond what was presented

Not everyone will raise their hand, but they may remain interested – or they wouldn’t have attended. Make sure your post-event treatment extends beyond what was presented at the event: mark the attendance within your lead management foundation (campaign) and continue to incubate for conversion. You’ve influenced this potential buyer, mark and take credit for this influence.





**Research from Certain shows that some 73.5% of respondents say their firm takes four days or longer to follow up with event leads. Just 2% of respondents say their firm follows up with event leads on the same day.**

#### Measure performance

Some of the metrics you can now track would be:

1. Which sessions or content performed the best; i.e. who created the most hand raisers (conversions)?
2. Which sessions or content performed below expectations?
3. Average conversions per measurable agenda item?
4. Total conversion value per agenda item (lead management foundation campaign)?

#### Sales

If done well, sales follow-up activity should be set up and highly targeted. Make sure you are touching base with everyone that attended a session or product demo and raised their hand requesting more information. Also, make sure these attendees are converted to opportunities. Help your event team help you, by capturing this renewed interest for measurement purposes.

#### Marketing Operations

Now that your marketing automation has been prepped to consume and treat overall event and individual attendee activity, it's important to watch conversion activity specific to how content is resonating and if sales is truly converting "hand raisers" to opportunities. If you see some content is working better than other, notify your content team and adjust your incubation strategies. This should in turn increase conversions.





# Conclusion: Measuring & Maximizing Event Performance

**“If you don’t have a solid lead management process in your company, don’t spend a penny on events.”**

– Ruth Stevens

With a centralized approach and strategy — as well as the right tools — events should provide a consistent and measurable part of the marketing arsenal. It’s critical that the intelligence gathered from events is captured, shared and entered within CRM and marketing automation platforms.

In addition to connecting with new prospects, industry experts recommend using event automation tools to help companies view events as a venue to gather intelligence by understanding what attendees have learned at an event.

- What breakout session did they go to?
- What did they think of the content of that breakout session?
- Did they visit your booth on the show floor?
- How did you do against certain performance objectives?

While industry experts agree that events have seen renewed interest and impact, they caution companies not to limit their focus to the few days when the event physically takes place.

“Post-event is where the real revenue-driving activity happens,” wrote author Ruth Stevens. “So, make sure you focus on how you will capture contact information, and make a record of what happened during the conversation, and what your team should do to follow up. If you don’t have a solid lead management process in your company, don’t spend a penny on events.”



# Want To Learn More?

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Validar is a B2B Lead Management company that specializes in events. This white paper aligns very well to our value proposition and the solutions that we offer. We firmly believe events are the very best way to drive customers to buy, and we also believe event marketers are devalued due to the nebulous nature of event measurement.

Recognizing there is a ton to digest here, reach out to Validar to learn more about measuring revenue impact from your events. Our solutions are designed to help you better understand your value as an event producer.

206.264.9151  
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