



the data you need

Five Best Practices for Maximizing Event Data



In today's data-rich world, event attendees expect a highly personalized experience, while organizations want to tie event outcomes to business value.

The good news is that both of these expectations are becoming more achievable with digital tools and technologies, along with a few consistent processes that you can easily incorporate into your event planning.

Here are five important steps that identify the key processes to help maximize your event data and drive even greater business value:

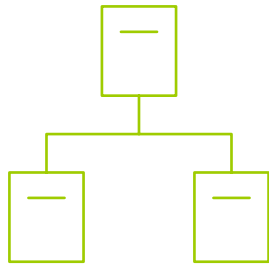
Note: While the following steps are based on the assumption that you have a data scientist or analyst on staff, many of the ideas are still applicable to non-geeks. Alternatively, you can always work with an external partner who can help in the interim.



Step #1: Collect all the data you can.

To take full advantage of event data, it's important to collect as much data as possible, from as many sources as possible as soon as possible — even if you don't have your data strategy formed. This is one of the most critical steps in the entire process, as it will directly affect the extent to which you can measure and derive value from your data.

There are many different sources of data (see sidebar) that your organization should tap into on a continuous basis, as data collection is an ongoing process that should begin as soon as possible.



Step #2: Define business objectives and goals.

Next, it's important to create corporate and event goals that are aligned with your company's business objectives. These goals vary across organizations. They typically include, but are not limited to:



Visibility and reach



Buying cycle impact and acceleration



Brand awareness and perception



Buyer engagement



Quality and effectiveness of communications



Customer path

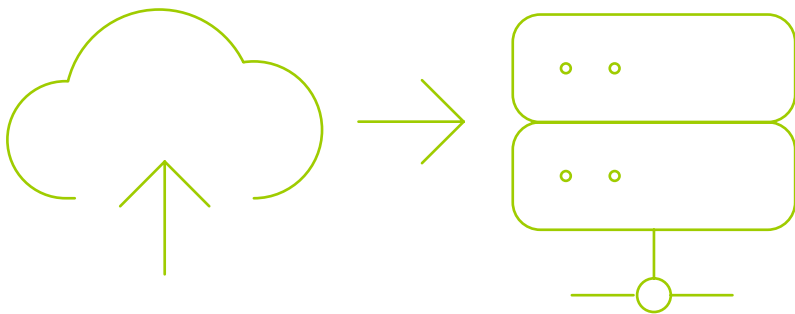


Attendee behavior

Step #3: Develop a centralized data collection and storage methodology.

Every organization has data scattered across multiple systems in multiple databases, such as email marketing, registration, leads, Google Analytics, and mobile app databases — and this can be challenging. To overcome this, you'll want to create a set of data standards and, more importantly, a governance policy that ensures data is collected and stored safely, legally, and consistently — not only for events, but also for any customer or prospect engagement.

Central to this is a schema that integrates data from disparate sources so that you can develop a core set of metrics across all activities.



There's a Wealth of Data You Can Collect, Integrate, and Leverage

AUDIENCE ATTRACTION

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Web (Google Analytics) | Who visited, length of stay, and platforms |
| Email | Click-through, open, and bounce rates |
| Social media activity | Level and reach of Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social media interaction |
| Registration | Attendee identification, event activities, demographic profile, and buying interests |

ON-SITE ENGAGEMENT

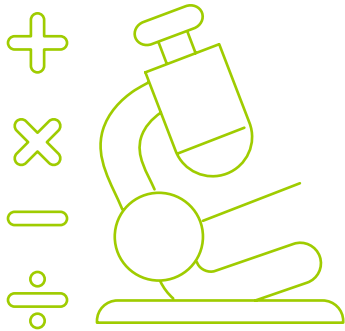
| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Mobile apps | Who's engaged and in what |
| Second screen | Real-time session and keynote data |
| Beacon | Context-aware messaging and offers |
| Lead retrieval | Level of interest and location in the buying cycle |
| RFID | Attendee activities and behaviors |

POST-SHOW FOLLOW-UP

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Surveys | Sentiments, opinions, and trends |
| Event management | Costs, budget, and acquisition and retention of sponsors and attendees |
| Overall show assessment | Event experience, marketing, and business impact results |

AUXILIARY DATA

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Existing data | CRM, sales, customer, and membership data |
| Social media content | Trending topics, attendee and sponsor satisfaction, attendee interests and behaviors |



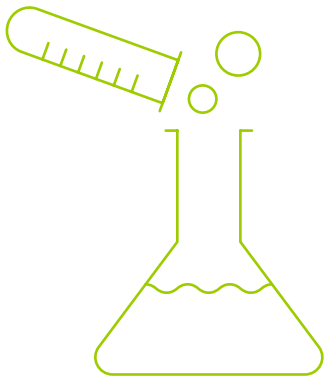
Step #4: Develop metrics and analyze.

During this step, you can develop intelligent metrics and internal benchmarks to determine how well your events met your objectives and compare to historical performance. Furthermore, you can standardize processes for cost-effectiveness, and proactively plan for future events as you refine strategies and build on successes.

In addition, with an integrated data repository, you can personalize entire attendee experiences for future events, and develop ancillary marketing campaigns with customers and prospects.

By tapping into event intelligence and data insights, executive summary reports can quickly be created for all stakeholders at various points of the event process. Plus, in-depth data on individual attendees, with insights on their interests, purchasing behaviors, and profiles, can also provide value to sales teams as they follow up on leads after an event.

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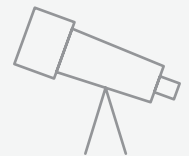
Step #5: Experiment and test.

With a centralized data repository in place, you can now analyze your data, derive insights, and develop assumptions. You can then experiment with your data, test program variables, and measure the effectiveness of your data. This is a repeatable closed-loop process that will continually help you refine your strategies over time with evidence-based conclusions to prove or disprove assumptions.

For example, you may believe that one segment of your potential attendee audience will respond better to a certain type of message versus another message. By randomly dividing a small but statistically significant portion of that segment, you can test your hypothesis before sending your message to the entire segment. It's the scientific method applied to modern marketing — and it works.

Businesses Shall Not Analyze Data by Spreadsheets Alone

Visualization tools, such as Tableau and Domo, allow you to dig deeper into your event data and derive greater meaning through experimentation. For instance, you can gain insightful intelligence on trends over time, validate hypotheses, and clarify erroneous assumptions about your event strategies through sophisticated visualizations.



Data Privacy Policies



Depending on your industry, data privacy might be a topic that is at the forefront of everyone's minds — or it might be something no one discusses, but everyone expects. Either way, it is important to take the steps necessary to protect your company and your attendees. To maintain your brand reputation and ensure the trust of event attendees, it's vital to create a comprehensive data privacy policy on the what, why, and how of data collection. It's also important to tailor those policies to location-specific government and industry regulations. For example, the European Union has far more stringent data collection and retention regulations than the United States. You'll also want to obtain corporate-level approvals, such as legal, HR, and executive, to ensure compliance. The policy, or instructions on how to access your full privacy policy, should be clearly visible on all event materials, both online and offline.

Events play a key role in your marketing portfolio, and require extensive resource investment and personnel support to create meaningful and personalized attendee experiences. Your stakeholders and executive sponsors rightly expect to reap meaningful business benefits in return. Clearly communicating the results of your event investments requires collecting the right data to begin with, and effectively analyzing and leveraging that data post-event. By following this five-step strategy for consistent, centralized data collection and analysis, event marketers can ensure that investment is leveraged to the fullest.

maximize your data

To learn more on how consistent processes can be incorporated into your event planning, visit freeman.com.

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