

Freeman<sup>1</sup>



# Event measurement reset

A new framework to gauge success



**With great change  
comes great opportunity...  
to hit the reset button.**

**One of those opportunities is reframing event measurement and new ways to think about return on objective (ROO).**

Grab a pencil (and maybe an adult beverage), because we're going to pull you out of your comfort zone a bit...

***Let's talk about measurement that goes beyond numbers.***

It may seem counterintuitive at first, but this shift in perspective can elevate your events and how they positively impact audiences.

# XLNC: A trusted measurement framework

Years of research tell us that the top four reasons attendees come to conferences and trade shows are to learn, network, conduct business (commerce), and have fun.

## A framework for all (events)

Having worked with a variety of clients, we understand that trade shows and professional societies/conferences have very different outcomes and care-about. That's what makes the XLNC (Excellence) model so helpful — you can apply it for your specific shows to determine the right approach.

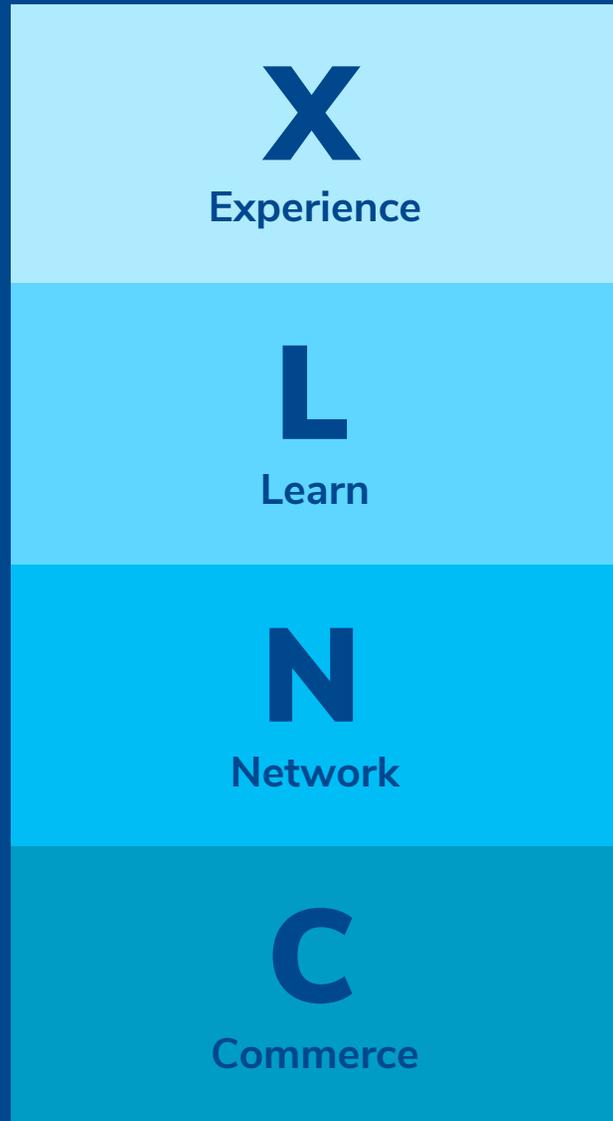
XLNC is a helpful acronym we've talked about before, but it has taken on new meaning in our current state — its event planning application has expanded to include event evaluation.

The main takeaway when using this model is it's a quick way to get to the *why* behind your trade show or conference and also better understand the *why* for your audiences.

If you can solve for these audience wants and needs (aligned with your event objectives), everything else — revenue, sponsorships, brand awareness, and, yes, attendance — will fall into place.

Measurement reset

This model is a useful way to think about your event objectives and the measurement against those goals. Nearly every show places some importance on each of these areas.





X

### To experience (have fun)

These attendees are looking for a memorable event that will take them out of their day-to-day life and transport them into an exciting, immersive experience that they can look back on fondly for years.

L

### To learn

Whether they're attending multiple product demonstrations or dashing from session to session, these attendees want to wring as much learning as possible out of the time and financial investment they've made in the event.

N

### To network

Armed with phones full of new digital contacts (and maybe a few old school business cards), these attendees want to make connections, meet key industry players, raise their profile, and/or close deals with the leads they've been nurturing.

C

### To do business (commerce)

Everyone wants to bring success to their organization, but this type of attendee is coming with specific business goals (and sales numbers) in mind. They want to network and have fun along the way, but closing the deal comes first.

Up next: [XLNC your way to quality metrics](#)

# Modern measurement mindset

With the XLNC model in mind along with the challenges of attendee acquisition and exhibitor/sponsor retention, event planners need to shift perspectives from:

## Quantity to quality

The way we connect with people matters. And connecting the right people matters even more — influencers, decision makers, your next best prospects.

That's why we can move beyond quantity — registrations, bodies attending the keynote, visitors packed in a booth.

Today, focusing on quality (over quantity) equals success. This means delivering an event that resonates with every attendee, exhibitor, and sponsor. Each person who registers is a perfect fit, the messages they hear make sense, sponsor offerings resonate, and exhibitors offer audience-tailored solutions.

This scenario benefits everyone because it drives audience loyalty, delivers on partner satisfaction, and generates growth.



## Sentiment to behavior

According to our research, 72% of attendees say that on-demand content is extremely important.\* Yet actual behavior shows less than 10% return to consume it within the first 10 days post event.\* From there it drops off quickly.

So, is the sentiment wrong? Nope.

People do intend to consume the content but then life happens, distractions happen... hello, Netflix / Hulu queue!

**What people say in a survey can be skewed by the timing and circumstance. Behavioral data, because it's happening in real time, is far more predictive than sentiment.**

Sentiment surveys are a great tool for gauging attendee thoughts during and after a show, but they're not foolproof on their own. Observing real-time attendee behavior provides next-level insights. The key then is combining sentiment and behavior data to strike a better, strategic balance that offers a truer picture of how the event affects feelings and actions.

## Find next-level insights

- What is the time spent in sessions?
- Where are they congregating on the expo floor?
- What activities are getting the most traffic?
- What's being shared on social media?

\*Freeman event research 2022

## Self-reflection exercise

Take your mind back to 2020 (we know, but stick with us) — think about all the times you registered for a virtual event and fully intended to attend and/or go back to watch later...



## ROI to ROO

ROI remains top of mind, especially in today's climate. But for trade shows, sales conversions are typically outside the time frame of the event — sometimes between 18 and 24 months unless it's a purely transactional show.\* So, focusing on ROO (Return on Objective) is a more consultative approach.

Planners should explore audience objectives for participating and then offer connection opportunities (for their Return on Opportunity) that they can maximize at the event — attendees, exhibitors, and sponsors.

### Talk to your exhibitors about connecting these attendee objectives:

- Product launches
- Press event/announcements
- Key customer/attendee targets
- Recruiting
- Certain transactional goals
- Metrics for quality meetings, demos, special event attendance
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)/ Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) initiatives

\*Freeman event research 2022

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## Attendance to engagement

It's right up there with "pivot" as an event buzzword, but what does engagement actually mean? According to Webster, it's defined as:

*An upfront agreement between parties.*

The way organizers deliver on this "agreement" is to meet their audiences' objectives by offering relevant opportunities that check all the attendee goal boxes. (See ROO, above left)

When you align objectives and expectations and then provide tailored opportunities in response (and report back the specific results of that "agreement"), THAT is successful event engagement.

Numbers matter, yes. But with these perspective shifts you can apply the XLNC framework to measure ROO (yours and attendees') and design an effective, high-quality event that meets all their needs. All while gaining data-driven insights, which leads to numbers that matter even more.



Ready to make measurement matter even more?

Our data experts can help

Design an event tailored for today's audiences.

Get your new basics toolkit

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