

Freeman<sup>7</sup>

# Freeman Trust Report 2023

The data is in: Live events  
are a pivotal driver of brand  
loyalty and trust.



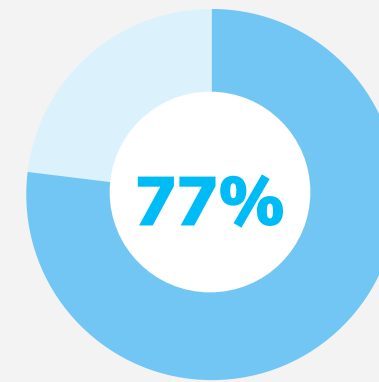


# Face-to-face interaction is good for us.

And it's good for business.

Humans thrive in community and through shared experiences — in-person connection leads to wisdom, enjoyment, and, eventually, **trust**.

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of consumers say their trust in a brand increased following an interaction with that brand at a live event.

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## The takeaway:

*In-person events are a pivotal driver of loyalty and trust.*

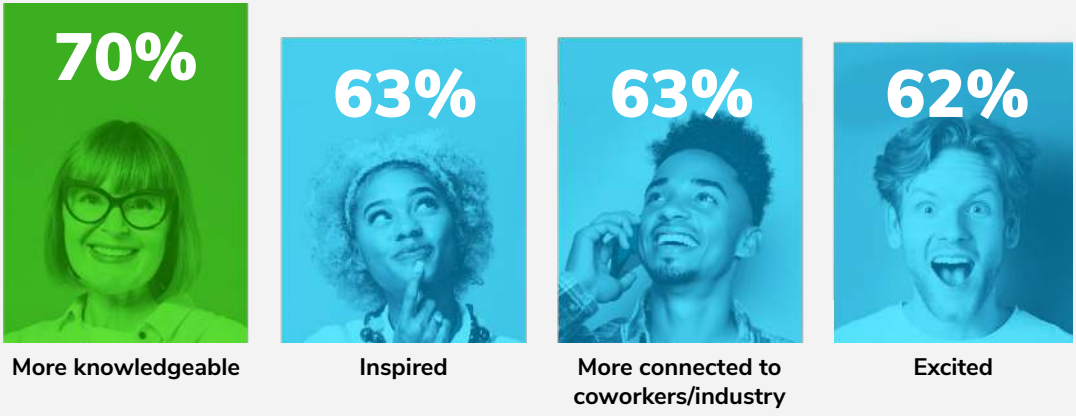
Our team witnesses the power of live events to build relationships and deepen trust daily. But we wanted concrete data to back up our observations. So, we partnered with Edelman DXI to host a study exploring the effects of live events and the tangible value they bring to audiences and brands.

On the following pages, you'll find some key insights from the findings and ideas for event marketers to apply moving forward.

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Edelman Data & Intelligence conducted the survey in the U.S. from 11/1/22 to 11/16/22. Sample included 1,800 consumers/business professionals who attended an in-person event at work or outside of work and 250 event decision makers with influence and/or decision making authority over events.

How attendees feel after attending a live event:



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Consumers trust that brands will:



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**Fact**  
Live events make people feel good

It's your superpower for deepening connection and building trust.

Following an event, audiences across all generations feel good about themselves — more knowledgeable, more inspired, and more connected to others than before. And talking to people representing brands leaves attendees with positive perspectives on the brand's character and values. Integrity makes a lasting, positive impression.

**The takeaway:**  
*Halo effects from these interactions can lead to long-term brand trust, recognition, and sales.*



## Opportunity

More events = more loyalty

If you build them, they will come.

The findings show that consumers who attended events more recently (in the past six months) are significantly more likely to have positive perceptions of brands they have purchased from before the event. Additionally, **64% of consumers retain positive impressions of brands they interact with at live events** — this positive perception lasts for at least a month or longer.

### Positive perceptions felt by existing customers:

Attended events in the past 6 months

72%

Attended events 6 or more months ago

55%

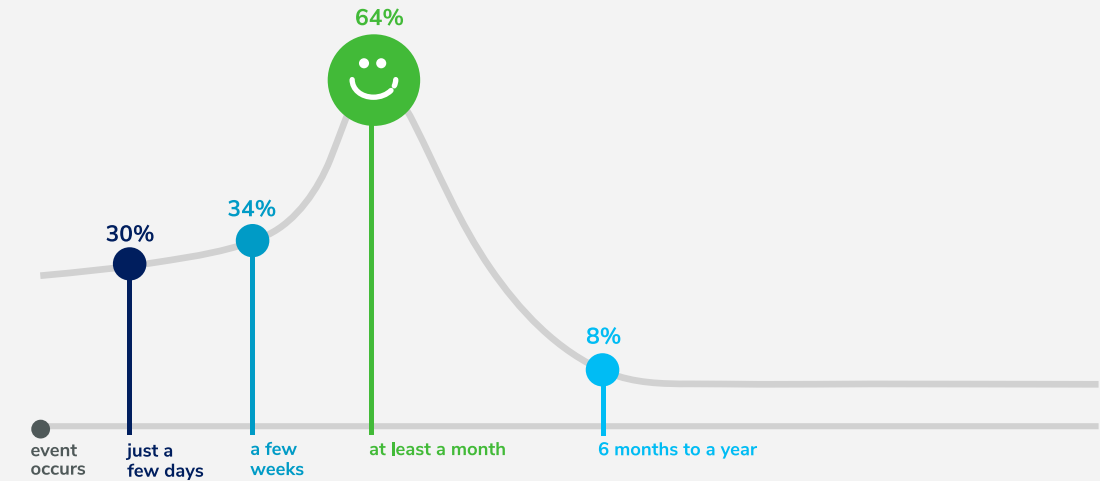
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### The takeaway:

Attending events more often leads to greater brand loyalty.

With this in mind, brands now have an opportunity to double down — increasing event opportunities will deliver a greater return. To keep trust and positive perceptions pumping year-round, think continuity when building your event strategy.

### Length of time consumers held onto positive perceptions after attending a brand's live event:



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Connection is trust in  
**action**



Fact

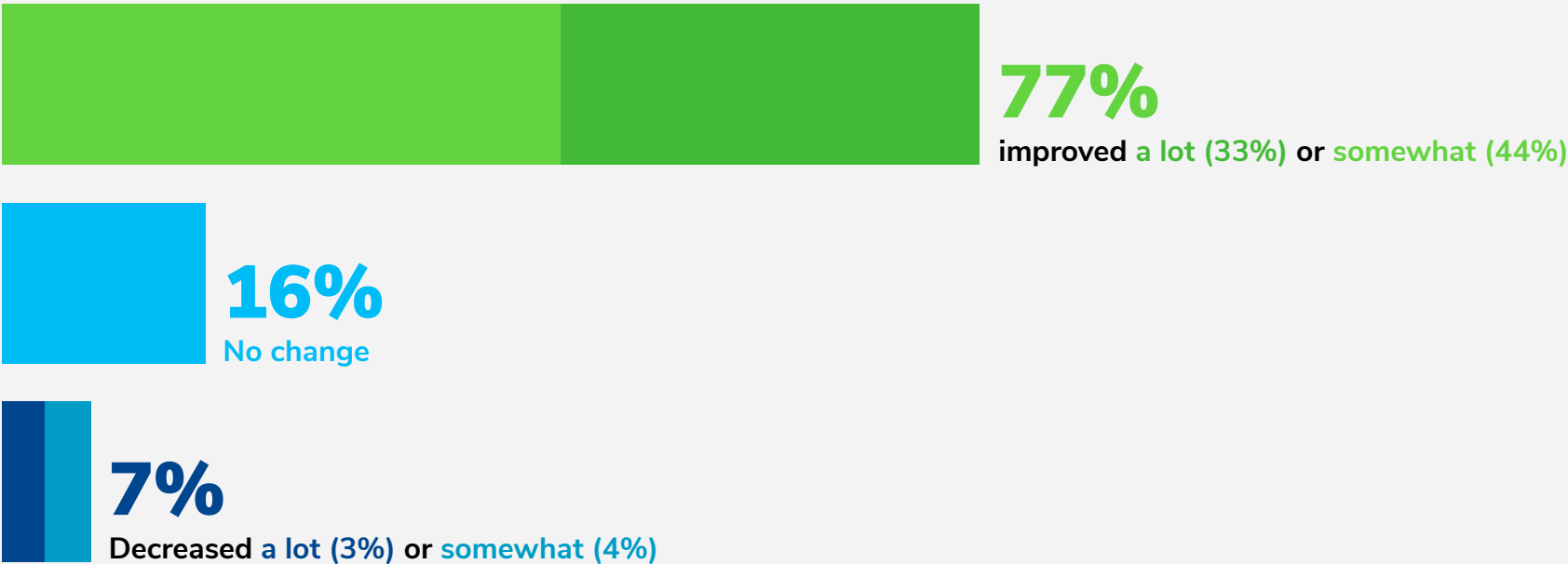
First comes trust, then comes purchase

Help them buy what you’re selling.

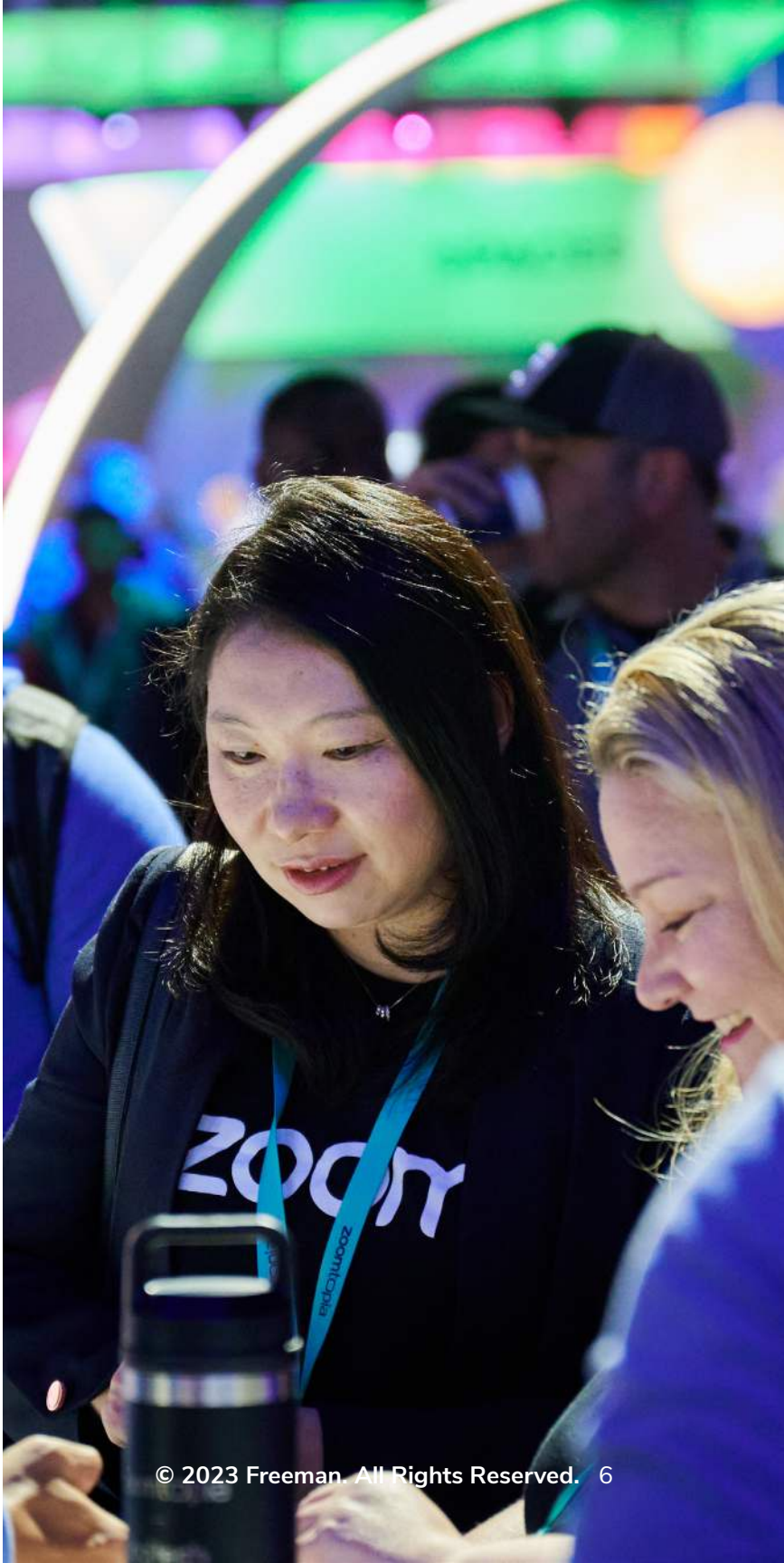
As mentioned earlier, **77% of consumers say their trust increased somewhat or a lot following their interaction with a brand at a live event.** Thus, live events build trust. And that trust lasts longer (at least a month or longer following the event) than decision makers realize.

Across generations, consumers felt that having conversations with individuals who represent a brand or company helped them have a more grounded and honest perspective of the brand’s character and values.

The change in consumer trust level following a live event:



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Assumption vs reality — what your customer actually does following a live event:

Action	Assumption	Reality
Interact with brand online (e.g. , social media engagement, search keyword increases)	70% Event decision makers	68% Consumers
Want to talk about the brand/company to others	70% Event decision makers	67% Consumers
Visit the brand or company's website	70% Event decision makers	67% Consumers

Purchase products or services from the brand or company

45% 68%  
Event decision makers Consumers

The (event) land of opportunity

Turns out, event decision makers have been banking on some imperfect assumptions and overlooking opportunities.

Only 45% of event decision makers believe attendees will purchase their company's products or services following an event, but the reality is that **more than half of consumers across generations are actually more likely to buy at that time.**

**The bottom line:**  
Trust is foundational to purchase. Successful integrated marketing strategies prioritize in-person events because those connections break through the clutter to deliver more business.



## Opportunity

New business is valuable, but don't disregard what's right in front of you

Invest in existing customer relationships because they're investing in you.

When asked what metrics they use to gauge the success of an event, 41% of event decision makers say acquiring new clients is the top benchmark.

**But focusing primarily on new customers can overlook connections with existing customers who seek out brands they know and trust at in-person events — and they're more likely to purchase from the brand following the event.**

Current metrics used to determine event success:

**41%**

Acquired new clients

**36%**

Overall revenue/sales increase

**31%**

Increased sales from current/existing clients

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## Go for the win-win

The findings also uncovered that trust increases significantly for return and future customers, which increases customer retention and potential sales.

### **The takeaway:**

Catering to existing and new customers will deliver the best return from both worlds.

The positive increase in trust following interactions at a live event:



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A man in a dark suit and tie is speaking into a microphone. He is holding a small black card with a yellow logo. The background is a blurred stage with green and blue lighting. The text "Hiding in plain sight: The impact of live events" is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

# Hiding in plain sight: The impact of live events

Customer trust is essential for business growth and longevity, so it's no wonder that deepening it tops the priority list.

**In fact, our study asked event decision makers how they want their brand to be perceived following an event, and 56% said “trusted.” Check!**

This data proves that hosting live events is a smart way to maintain and grow that trust. Putting these insights into action with year-round connection opportunities for your current customers and prospects will deliver the loyalty you seek and the leads you need.



# Insights Snapshot

1

In-person  
events make  
people feel  
good

2

Interacting  
with a brand  
at a live event  
increases trust

3

Recognize  
the strength  
of existing  
customers

4

More events =  
more loyalty

5

Trust leads  
to purchases

6

Live events  
serve as an  
ideal platform  
to build  
brand trust



Ready to activate  
your event superpower?

Let's go

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