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Audience Acquisition

Expanding audiences for today’s events

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Go from *know* your audience to GROW your audience



Audience Acquisition

While the last few years had a lasting impact on our industry, audiences have given clear feedback: They want to attend LIVE events.

Yet, verification numbers are down, leaving event organizers grappling with attendance and seeking new avenues to grow their shows.

Basic that never changes: **Know your event audience**

New basic circa 2022: **Event audiences are changing**

Fact: Audiences are getting younger. This shift is a key factor driving show strategy and how to engage with these new faces.

To help you entice today's audiences and increase verification, our audience acquisition experts have compiled tried-and-true best practices that you can apply now to get your audiences back on track.

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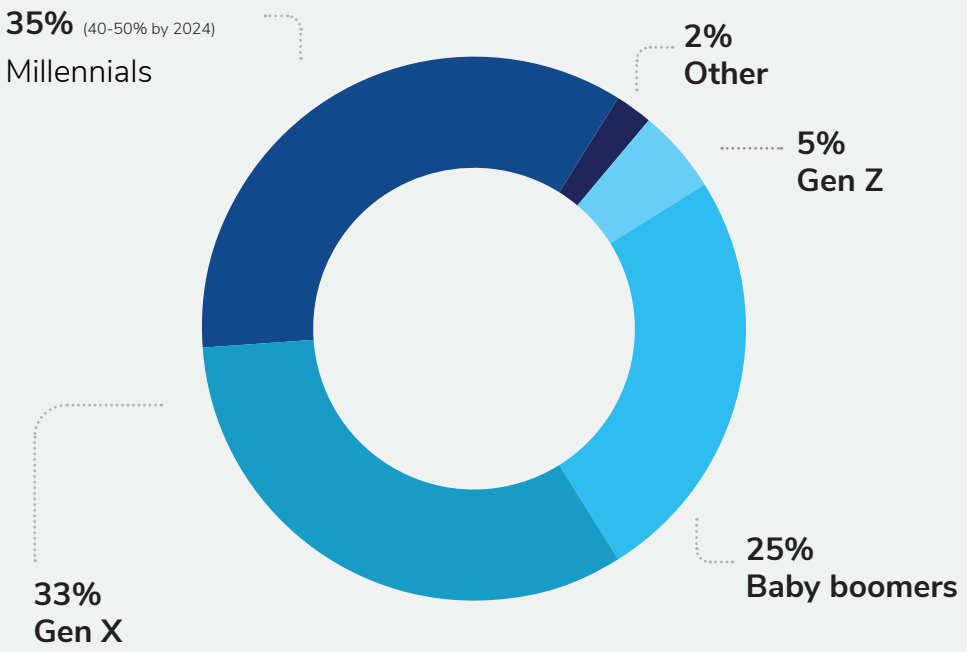
Audience Acquisition

Turn up the millennial motivation

50.3% of people over the age of 55 have left the workforce.[1] With millennials making up the majority of workers, this means event audiences are growing younger — not older.

Percentage of workforce by generation[2]



What motivates millennials to register and attend shows is different from baby boomers.

Turn the page for persona prep

Discover more about what's important to your show's attendees and what will drive them to attend by creating audience personas.

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Creating personas

Talkin' about my (or not my!) generation

Information to collect and use for creating audience personas:

- Job role
- Age
- Top professional challenges
- What success looks like to them
- How they access new information
- What they want from your event
- What might stop them from coming
- What they wish you could do differently
- Who they'd love to hear speak, meet, or, see

With this info, you'll be able to create personas and use them to help plan your marketing strategy and create messaging that engages your current contact database as well as cold audiences (more on that to come).

If your team already has marketing or audience personas, take the time to make sure they've been updated to reflect changes over the last few years.

Personas out of date? Here's what you can do now ...

Plan ahead – start collecting data on the audiences attending your shows so you'll have it ready when it's time to update personas

Cast a wider net – implement an omnichannel marketing plan to reach more potential attendees

Get the ball rolling – email the marketing team in charge of personas and inquire about updating them. Sometimes just calling attention to an issue can help move it up the priority list.



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Engage audiences before, during, and after shows

Before

Click here, click there, click anywhere

With access to an abundance of information and easy-to-click or watch formats, younger audiences tend to digest content from multiple resources. Just sending an email may not be enough to grab today's attendees.

Use an omnichannel marketing approach for the most effective way to increase engagement. B2B decision makers are using double the number of channels today to interact with suppliers, 10 compared to five in 2016.[3]

A few examples include:

- **Emails**
- **Supplier website**
- **Web chat**

During

Design a valuable experience

Use what you discover from creating audience personas and any additional event data to create the right kind of content and show environment. With the right engagement during your show, it'll be easier to bring audiences back to your next event.

After

Consistently share valuable content

Conferences today serve as an ongoing hub of content that should be churning year round. Develop an interactive destination that provides ongoing content and opportunities for constant connection.

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Take your show attendees on a nonstop journey

Consistently touching base and sharing valuable content before, during, and after your show will create the kind of constant contact that today's attendees expect.

Here's a snapshot of the journey and steps you can take (and some questions to ask) to enhance their path:



What do attendees want and what do they need? How can you help them solve a challenge they're having? How can your show make their lives easier?

Think of this part of the attendee journey as a needs assessment for your audience. What's happening in the industry, what's happening for attendees, what kind of speakers are speaking to these needs?

Consistently engage your audience to reinforce the importance and value of attending your show, even after they've registered, which will increase verification and reduce the number of no-shows.

It's showtime! Combine your event strategy, value proposition, and attendee personas for a clear show direction that gives your attendees the value they need.

Audience acquisition is a continuous journey where providing valuable content to current and cold audiences is essential to show there's value in attending your show and experiencing all you have to offer in person.

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Get in a good scrub!

Clean up and update contact databases

After COVID, databases were decimated by the great resignation, people changing careers, boomers leaving the workforce, and corporate consolidation.

47.4 million
Americans quit their jobs in 2021 (29% of the workforce)[4]

70 million
total shift in jobs in 2021[5]

Millions of contacts need to be updated every year. Updating could significantly improve your event marketing efforts.

30%
of B2B data decays every year (more in turbulent times)[6]

50%
of emails bounce back (compared to less than 20% in 2019)[7]

Implement a customer relationship management (CRM) system with technology to automate capturing contact data in emails, helping catch any changes such as new email addresses or phone numbers.

Brrr! Give cold audiences a chance to warm up to your show

There are "cold" audiences who may not understand why they should be at your event or what your show is about. Knowing what makes your audiences tick will help you define and reach these potential attendees who exist outside of your internal contact database.

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Align efforts with your overall event marketing strategy

While these audience acquisition tips will get you started (and help you get attendees to the show), they work best when part of an overall strategy that's woven into all elements of your show, synergizing the AV, expo, design, and marketing teams.

Get your strategy on with these three steps:

1. Determine and communicate the show's mission
2. Define your event objectives and set measurable goals
3. Identify and understand your audience personas



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Ready to nurture and grow your audiences?

Our strategists can help

Design an event tailored for today's audiences.

Get your new basics toolkit

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1, 4, 5US Bureau of Labor and Statistics, February 2022; 2 From Baby Boomers To Gen X To Millennials To Gen Z: Here's How IT Leaders Can Leverage Each Generation's Strengths: https://www.crn.com/slide-shows/channel-programs/from-baby-boomers-to-gen-x-to-millennials-to-gen-z-here-s-how-it-leaders-can-leverage-each-generation-s-strengths/1; 3 The new b2b growth equation: https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/the-new-b2b-growth-equation;6 Marketing Sherpa;7 Freeman Research

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