

putting event data into action

A Smarter Perspective on ROO



Until recent years, event marketers were desperate for data. The prevailing wisdom held that by gathering as much data as possible, marketers could propel their event to greater heights. But as the saying goes, be careful what you wish for.

Today, event marketers are drowning in data, with more and more being collected at each event. Indeed, 46 percent of respondents in our [Data Benchmark Study](#) felt their top data challenge was not gathering enough data, but analyzing the data they have.

Clearly, event marketers are still struggling to use data to make decisions and accurately measure their return on objectives (ROO).

Part of the problem is the difficulty in identifying exactly what should be measured. It's tempting to focus on what's easiest to measure. But that is akin to planning a road trip and only identifying the destination: You see where you want to go, but you have no information that tells you how to get there.

In events, measuring the right things makes all the difference. The challenge, then, is to figure out what those “right things” are.

38% of B-to-B event marketers and 32% of B-to-C marketers said lack of actionable event data “leaves important questions unanswered.”¹

Attendees: The Lifeblood of an Event

In life, it's natural to view things from one's own narrow perspective. But when it comes to events, this can be a mistake.

With events, the key perspective that matters is the attendee's perspective. After all, attendees are the lifeblood of an event, and the reason exhibitors and sponsors want to be there.

So... how does an event marketer figure out what the attendee really wants? The good news is that, in general, all attendees want at least one of these three things: to learn, to network, to have fun.

If the event marketer can solve for these attendee wants and needs, everything else — revenue, sponsorships, brand awareness, and, yes, attendance — will all fall into place.

65% of marketers use data to inform strategy, objectives, and planning.²

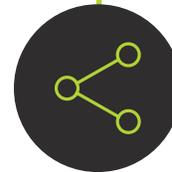
The bottom line is this: Help attendees meet their goals, and they will return again and again, becoming brand advocates and creating the kind of positive buzz that marketers dream of.

2. The Freeman Data Benchmark Study



To learn

Whether it's 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.



To network

Armed with a two-inch stack of 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 working via phone and email.



To have fun

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

to learn



to network



to have fun



activity

Jot down some ideas on how your event delivers against the above attendee goals.

Data: The Key to Understanding Attendees

Perhaps attendees mainly want to learn, but also have some fun after hours. Or perhaps they want to have fun, but also wish for networking opportunities.

Marketers must understand what the mix of these goals looks like on a deeper level. And to do that, it's vital to understand that attendees aren't products, and they aren't just 9-to-5 professionals.

They are people — real, living, breathing human beings.

Just as our personal and professional lives have grown increasingly intertwined, so have the personal and professional needs of event attendees. Think about attendees from a whole-person perspective and obtain data that provides the complete picture of those people.

It requires effort and time, yes.

But this data can reveal surprising and fascinating trends, enable marketers to segment their attendees in new and impactful ways, and completely transform the way marketers structure their events to better meet those needs.

Activity

What if half of an event's attendees described themselves as introverts? And what if the primary goal of these attendees was to network? But what if the only networking activity offered at the event took place in a large, crowded room with loud, thumping music, making one-on-one conversations almost impossible?

What ideas do you have for creating a more appropriate networking program for this type of attendee? Write some suggestions here:

88%

of companies use event data to inform other marketing strategies.³

Centralize

When data can flow smoothly between technology platforms, marketers gain a more accurate picture of each attendee.

Unfortunately, much event data remains locked up in individual databases, applications, and technology platforms (just look at that list on the previous page!). Even when marketers receive data sets from their technology vendors, they may have no easy way of compiling the data into a master set.

Names, addresses, email addresses, formatting — all of these data points and more could have been collected differently or incorrectly, resulting in myriad records for a single attendee.

38% of marketers indicated that a major data-related challenge is getting complete data.⁴

4. The Freeman Data Benchmark Study

Integrating data across platforms typically requires custom integrations to be developed by the platform vendors, or many man-hours collecting, sanitizing, and normalizing data across disparate sources.

An alternative option, such as our [Fuzion by Freeman™](#) solution, creates a centralized, easy-to-use data hub that facilitates the flow of data — effectively eliminating silos and giving event marketers the complete data picture.

Standardize

Integrating data sets is important to obtain a complete view, but without context, raw data has little meaning. Standardizing the data establishes a baseline against which specific metrics can be judged, allowing event marketers to set the stage for the story their data is telling.

When selecting standards or benchmarks, it's best to look at things from multiple angles, reviewing not only data from past event performance but industry benchmarks as well.

One caveat: In event marketing, it's often difficult to determine the effectiveness of a strategy until after the event is over. And while that may provide useful information for the next year, if things are going south during the event, there may be no way of knowing it in real time.

Solutions like our [Quant by Freeman™](#) offering provide industry benchmarks and real-time data dashboards that event marketers can monitor to determine what's working and what's not to adjust their strategy on the fly.



Activity

Write down 3 to 5 of the key benchmarks you use to measure the performance of your event. This can include industry standards or your own event's previous performance.

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5. The Freeman Data Benchmark Study

Analyze

Finally, with the data integrated and benchmarks identified, marketers can ask the question that matters most: What is the data saying?

Given the quantity and complexity of data that marketers must wade through, this can quickly become an overwhelming process. The data pyramid model can provide helpful structure here.



67%

of top corporations are increasing investment in marketing data and analytics for 2019.⁶

Integrating and benchmarking data creates a solid foundation of data and information. To attain knowledge and wisdom, event marketers need to apply the data they have against their attendees' goals to understand how well their event helps attendees learn, network, or enjoy.

This is where things can get complicated, particularly when companies lack data analytics skills or in-house resources. Many marketers at this point choose to partner with an experienced solutions provider who has the tools (and time) to turn data into actionable insights. Freeman specializes in helping brands drive decisions and prove value with event data.

Now, Drive Decisions!

Once an event marketer has clear insights, either from their own efforts or the efforts of a partner like Freeman, it's time to spring into action and start asking big, strategic questions:

- Does the event generate a strong return against primary attendee goals?
- How well does the attendee ROO align with the event's ultimate business objectives?

As marketers, a common pain point is a lack of control over many of the levers that dictate how well an event meets its objectives. For example, marketers tasked with increasing revenue usually can't directly book sales appointments or close deals. However, they can directly control how well attendees are able to learn, network, and enjoy themselves at the event.

So by connecting these audience objectives with the overarching business objectives of the event, the marketer finally gains that elusive ability to directly move the needle on ROO.



77% of event marketers believe better data would increase revenue at least 10 percent.⁷

The result? A must-attend event with the right people at the right time in the right context, with devoted attendees who not only return again and again to the event but help proactively grow the event and make the marketer look like a hero.

⁷. The Freeman Data Benchmark Study



want more?

**Request a consultation to learn
how to put your data into action.
Contact us today.**

About Freeman®

Freeman is the world's leading brand experience company. We help our clients design, plan, and deliver immersive experiences for their most important audiences. Through comprehensive solutions including strategy, creative, logistics, digital solutions, and event technology, Freeman helps increase engagement and drive business results.