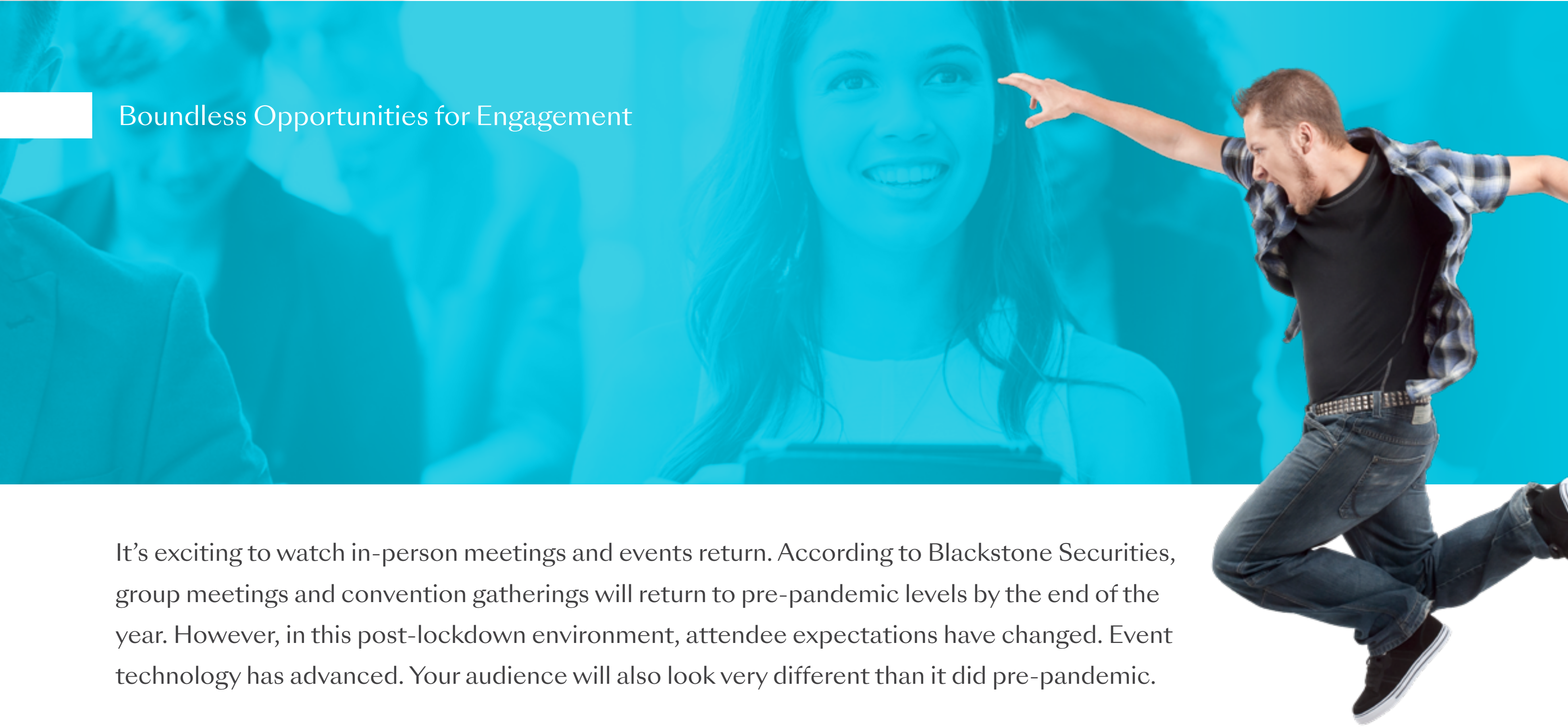
Boundless Opportunities

for Engagement

encore

EVENTS THAT TRANSFORM



It's exciting to watch in-person meetings and events return. According to Blackstone Securities, group meetings and convention gatherings will return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of the year. However, in this post-lockdown environment, attendee expectations have changed. Event technology has advanced. Your audience will also look very different than it did pre-pandemic.

Consider these February 2022 findings from the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics:

50.3%

of people over the age of 55 have left the workforce

9%

of the entire American workforce (47.4 million people) quit their jobs in 2021

59%

of US workers who say their jobs can be done from home are working from home all or most of the time

23%

Pre-pandemic, only 23% of US workers worked remotely

(Pew Research Center, Feb. 16 2022)

According to the Q1 2022 U.S. Travel Association Business Tracker, business travelers say developing relationships is the most important aspect of their business trips. Education and networking traditionally are the No. 1 and 2 most-important reasons to attend events. But the way education and networking components engage participants needs to change. No one is coming out of this pandemic with the same set of values or expectations they had going in. And that creates significant barriers to enjoyment if you intend to plan your events the same way.

All this means event designers must adapt to meet evolving audience expectations.

As an event designer, you have the opportunity to meet these new challenges and exceed participants' expectations for engaging, transformative event experiences. Your organization needs new event strategies and help discarding their outdated ones. There's never been a better opportunity to position yourself as a strategic team leader. The rules have changed. It's time to step up your game.

This guide will help you adapt, transform and outperform expectations.

Are you ready to play? Game on!

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Think 'in-person+'

Consider the following:

The number of in-person events are increasing as fully-virtual events decrease, yet nearly a quarter of all meetings will remain hybrid through 2022.

Source: Encore Planner Pulse Spring 2022 Report

Association professionals report their second and third quarter 2022 events will be more than 50 percent hybrid and 35 percent digital/online.

Source: PCMA Convene Covid-19 Recovery Survey

This data signals a need for meeting and event professionals to shift their mindsets. If between 25 percent and 50 percent of an organization's events will be hybrid, it might be useful for organizers to think of hybrid events as being 'in-person+' rather than just added work or a passing fad.

What do we mean by in-person+?

We mean that technology developed for virtual event platforms can be adapted to enrich the in-room event experience and allow in-person attendees to switch between real-time and on-demand engagement, as needed. For example, if a participant gets an important call during a session and has to leave the room, they could use the event platform Chime Live to consume the content virtually and toggle back to the in-room experience once the call is over.

Virtual attendees are valuable members of any meeting community. Research by MPI and PCMA have proven that virtual events don't cannibalize in-person attendance. In fact, people are more likely to attend an in-person event after experiencing it as a remote participant. Offering that virtual option allows people who can't attend the in-person gathering to still experience your event's content and community. It broadens your reach and helps you engage new audiences. It also amplifies your event return on investment (ROI) by increasing potential participant engagement, transactions and revenue from sponsors and exhibitors.

One of the best ways to create a seamless experience is to focus on engaging both the in-person and remote viewing audiences. Let this document be a guide to help you navigate the process of innovating your event and content design processes so you can access the boundless opportunities for engagement in-person, hybrid and digital events offer.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

What's in this guide

The purpose of this guide is to help you navigate these new opportunities by focusing your attention on seven key areas:

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Developing an Innovation Process for Event Design

How to generate, select, and evaluate ideas as well as how to catalogue and store ideas for future use.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Step 1 Identify what needs to change

> "Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat."
>
> – Sun Tzu

If you begin the innovation process without knowing what needs to change, you're prioritizing tactics over strategy. That's why it's important to look at data and feedback from past events or marketplace research before you design your next event.

Look for:

Data-point outliers

In which areas did your event score the worst? Where did it score highest? Build upon your successes. Look for areas of opportunity. If something isn't working, either tweak it or stop doing it.

Strong anecdotal feedback

Survey results don't tell the full story. What kind of feedback did you, event team or staff gather from hallway conversations or complaints? Note: People will be more forthcoming and honest with an independent third-party auditor.

Customer or industry pain points

What keeps your customers up at night? What arethe industry's biggest pet peeves? These are friction points that your event might be able to solve.

Big fails

Was there anywhere else you feel your last event (or other events by your competitive set) fellshort?

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Step 2 Invite the right people to generate ideas with you

If everyone in the room looks the same, has the same background or works in the same department, chances are that they'll generate similar ideas. You don't want an echo chamber. To generate ideas, you need diversity of perspectives, backgrounds and opinions.

To achieve this, invite a cross-section of key stakeholders and internal team members, including people who may not be directly connected to your event team. Make sure they all feel welcome, included and have an opportunity to share their voice.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Step 3 Lay down some basic rules

If you don't lay down a few basic rules for idea generation, you'll end up with a brainstorming session dominated by a few people.

Avoid this by:

Making space for introverted contributors

Before group conversations or any sharing begins, let people have five to seven minutes to write down their ideas on a set topic or question. This allows people to generate ideas without fear of being shut down.

Create a clear activity schedule

Idea generation should be a time of pure brainstorming. Help participants resist the urge to start shooting ideas down or discussing them by creating different time-bound segments of the idea generation process.

For example:

- Make it clear that idea generation time is solely for generating ideas without discussing or debating them. If you allow people to start judging ideas now, you'll shut everyone down. If anyone offers an opinion, remind them there will be time to discuss the ideas later.
- Follow idea generation time with an activity that allows groups to add bullet points or creative strategies to ideas that speak to them. For example, if you've got five areas to innovate, divide the participants into five groups so there is one working on challenges and solutions for each area.
- After these ideas have been fleshed out and contextualized, give groups time to present on the challenges and solutions they worked on. Now is the time to discuss, debate, tweak and improve.

Develop a parking lot

When people get off-track, gently steer them back on course. One of the easiest ways to do this is to take items that they want to discuss and place them in a "parking lot" that you can come back to later, if time allows.

Decide on winning ideas and innovations

Ideally, the group in the room can also make the go-ahead decisions. But if that's not possible, enlist their help in creating the presentations, videos or pitches required for the senior leadership team or event decision makers during the idea generation session.

Determine how you will measure success

This is an important item to discuss while you're debating and discussing the ideas. Once you know how success will be measured, then identify who will be responsible for implementing, tracking and reporting those measurements so you can evaluate the success of the experiment post-event.

Remember:
You don't need to change everything. Trying one to three new things may be all you can handle.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Step 4 Capture the ideas and innovations generated

Document the process

Film the presentations, assign dedicated note-takers for each group, or capture what is discussed in some way that makes it easy to archive.

Create a knowledge database

Sometimes you'll discover a great idea or innovative process that won't work for the current event, but which you'd like to try at some point. Don't lose these ideas. Instead, create a knowledge database.

Keep records of your experiments

The knowledge database is also a phenomenal place to keep track of what happened when you applied your grandiose ideas and innovations to your event.

Step 5 Analyze results and iterate on your success (or failure)

Analyze the results

What did you learn implementing this idea or innovation? Why did it work or not work?

Present your findings

Who is invested in the success or failure of your event? What is the best way to communicate this information to them?

Iterate and build on your success

Innovation is an iterative process, not a one-and-done thing. That's why it's important to examine and improve on your innovations, even if they were successful. If it worked, is there a way to build on that success? If it didn't work, is there a something you can tweak that might help it work next time?

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Leveraging Event Technology for Engagement

The basic tools, technologies and best practices you need to engage dual remote and in-room audiences.

©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

What are your hybrid essentials?

It's exciting to watch in-person meetings and events return. According to Blackstone Securities, group meetings and convention gatherings will return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of the year. However, in this post-lockdown environment, attendee expectations have changed. Event technology has advanced. Your audience will also look very different than it did pre-pandemic

What do you need?	Wired internet	Additional displays	Enterprise video-conferencing tool	Laptop rental	Event technology provider
Reliable, high-quality video feed	✓				✓
Collaborative environment		✓			✓
Secure, controlled streaming platform			✓		✓
Freedom to work during the conference breaks				✓	✓
Peace of mind that everything is set-up and configured correctly					✓

©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Basic event technology requirements

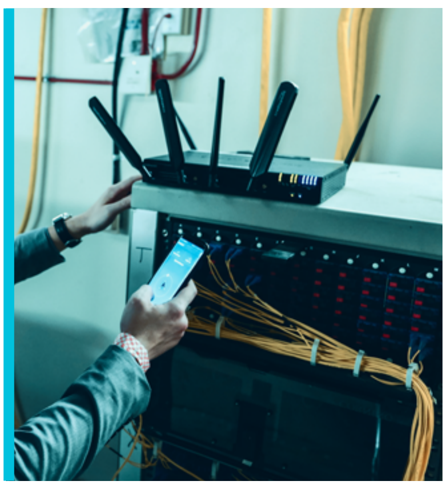
Camera and audio

For small, hybrid meetings, most cameras offer integrated audio and speaker solutions. For larger events, you may want an external camera or a broadcast-quality setup. The three main considerations that will help you select the right camera and audio for your event are:

> **Connectivity:** Will the camera/audio be integrated into a laptop, plugged in via USB, or will it be a broadcast solution connected via SDI or HDMI?

> **Field of view (FOV):** Do you need a camera that swivels 360 degrees? Or is a static shot with fixed angle of 125 degrees or less sufficient?

> **Zoom type and quality:** How do you want the viewers to see speakers or audience members when you spotlight them? Optical zoom typically provides higher quality images than digital zoom, regardless of the level of magnification.



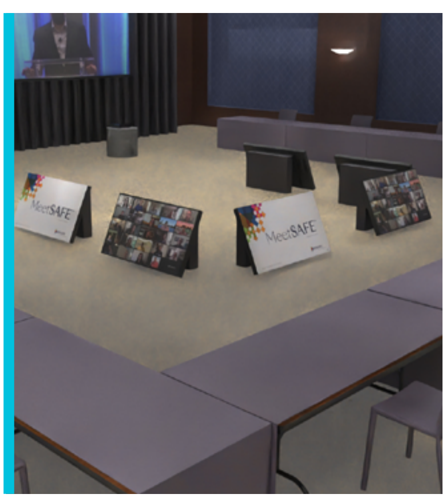
Wired internet

Pre-pandemic, wireless internet was the standard, but for broadcast events, you need a wired internet connection.

> **Simple wired internet (3 MB)** is ideal for 1:1 videoconferencing but not great for webinars.

> **Superior wired internet (5 MB)** is ideal for webinars, but not great for hybrid conferences.

> **Dedicated bandwidth (varies depending on need)** is ideal for hybrid conferences and broadcast events but is overkill for 1:1 videoconferences and most webinars.



Additional displays

If your event is a one-way broadcast, then you don't need to worry about additional in-room displays. But they are phenomenal at increasing engagement between remote and in-room audiences. They help these dual audiences see and talk with each other.

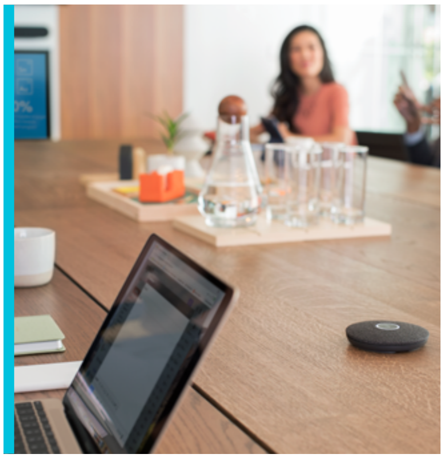
> **Traditional tripod screen kits** are ideal for educational meetings, standard presentations and large conference rooms. They're not great for rooms with limited space or interactive sessions.

> **Large format monitors** are idea for board meetings, rooms with limited space, collaborative sessions and large conference rooms. They are not great for single-focus meetings.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Enterprise videoconferencing tool

When you're broadcasting content, you need a reliable videoconferencing tool to stream content. Encore offers an enterprise videoconferencing tool through Zoom that guarantees the highest quality stream available. Encore also provides platform solutions and onsite support for technologies such as Chime Go℠, Chime Live℠, Cvent Attendee Hub® and Notified Virtual Event Platform®



Laptop rental

If you want to be able to show up and start your meeting, or if you need to check email and work during breaks, then invest in a rental laptop. For a relatively small investment, it provides huge peace of mind and frees up presenters and planners onsite. Having a dedicated laptop for your event guarantees:

> Properly configured software and broadcast settings
> Full integration with technology services
> Required processing power needed to display rich media content without glitches

Event technology provider

Producing a hybrid event means you're designing two simultaneous experiences. With one of them being face-to-face and the other existing in digital spaces, this creates additional layers of complexity and potential errors. Partnering with a trusted event technology partner, like Encore, can eliminate human error, turnaround professional-quality events in an abbreviated period, and help you exceed expectations. Contact Encore for a free consultation.

Want to read more about hybrid essential technology?
Download the free Hybrid+ Essentials Workbook for Small Meetings **here**.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Mapping the Attendee Journey

How to map the customer journey for your event participants and key stakeholders so that your event design achieves your desired outcomes

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

What is the attendee journey?

Events have the power to educate, connect, invigorate, and create change. That's why Encore enables meeting and event organizers to create transformative experiences. When an experience is transformative, it changes the perceptions and behaviors of its participants. The path a participant travels from the moment they first hear about your event to the post-event survey is called the attendee journey. Mapping this journey is an essential design tool. Here are the steps you should take:

Step 1 Define your core customer segments

Gather your event team and key stakeholders to discuss each customer segment. Who does your event serve? Which audiences are the most important ones your event serves? Examples might include employees, ticket-buyers, sponsors, exhibitors, educators, host committee, board of directors, and so on.

With your event team and key stakeholders, take turns exploring customer insights and discussing each group:

- What do they want?
- What are their pain points?
- What would make their lives easier?
- Why would they come to your event?
- What are some of the reasons they would not come?
- Do you have any qualitative or quantitative data on these segments?
- What about data or feedback on their reactions to your previous events?

Decide on the top three customer segments you want to zero in on and create an avatar for each customer, encapsulating who this person is and what they expect, need and want from your event as well as the challenges you might face attracting them or keeping them engaged.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Step 2 Identify your event goals for each customer segment

What are you trying to achieve within each customer segment?

For example:

> Do you have a sales number you need to hit with sponsorship?
> Do you need to create training for employees that integrates essential job skills?
> Do you want the host committee to invite your group back?
> Write down these overarching goals/reactions to your previous events?

Now break them into S.M.A.R.T. objectives that are smart, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based. Do this for each customer segment so you can create a system of measuring success.

For example:

"Improve year over year employee retention by 5%;" "Generate $1M in exhibit booth sales for the Q4 2023 event;" or "Increase educational satisfaction scores from an average of 3.9 in 2021 to an average of 4.1 in 2022" are all S.M.A.R.T. objectives that tie into a specific customer segment.

Step 3 Describe each customer's entrance behavior

Who is your target audience?

Select one avatar to represent each segment. Now talk about who this person is and what their pain points are.

> When this person shows up for your event, what are they thinking about your event?
> Do they know anything about it?
> Are they concerned about something else?
> Are there challenges you'll face getting and keeping their attention?
> Are they superfans, disgruntled, or somewhere in-between?

See if you can define who this person is, what they're feeling, saying and doing when they arrive. The more specific you can get about their needs, wants and hopes, the more helpful it will be to your mapping and design process.

Step 4 Describe each customer's exit behavior

Just as you defined each customer's entrance behavior, take some time to talk about what you hope this person will feel, say and do at the close of your event.

> Are there specific actions you want them to take?
> Do you hope they tell their peers or boss something specific? When they think about your event, how do you want them to feel?

Record what you want each customer will feel, say and do post-event.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Step 5 Map out the attendee journey to the goals and behaviors

Now, consider the different entrance and exit behaviors for each customer segment.

How can you get them from point A to point B?

Example 1

Customer Kay needs to generate leads and will have to prove to her boss that she did so post-event. She's arriving with a bad attitude because of past experiences with other events. She's not that interested in attending educational events unless they speak to her sales role. She's more interested in networking activities. You want her to leave with 50 viable leads and to tell everyone that your event is worth the investment.

> How would you develop a program to suit their needs?

> Are there other ways you can maximize their potential to network during breaks or transition points during the event?

> Are there technology tools that could help facilitate the exchange of information and lead capture?

> What else could you do to reduce the friction they might have experienced in the past?

Example 2

Customer Tyson is interested in career advancement. He's been stuck in middle management for longer than he wants. He is hoping to learn new things at the conference that will make him more attractive for a promotion at his current job or equip him to get a better job somewhere else. He's not sure what to expect or what to do to achieve his goals. You want him to leave feeling like he's learned valuable job skills. You also want him to have gained the confidence and connections to take that next career step.

> How can you help him find the education he needs?

> How will you prep the speakers to provide relevant, engaging material?

> Are there technology tools that could help Leon retain and capture the information he's learning onsite?

> What additional programs or activities might help him achieve his goals? For example: mentorships, speed-meetings, career hubs, etc.

Example 3

Customer Lex must attend a mandatory event, but they're doing so virtually. They won't have the in-person perks of their co-workers, and they may be distracted by workday tasks/emails during the event. They've been to the event before, but they've never engaged before. You want them to lean in, be part of the conversation and feel connected to what's going on. You want them to say they're looking forward to the next event.

> How will you engage them before the event to get them excited about coming?

> How will you make them feel like they have a voice during the event?

> What are some things you can do to encourage them to interact with the content and event community?

> How can you leverage technology to keep them off their phone/email during the event?

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

The benefits of attendee journey mapping

Attendee journey mapping is important to do before line items are finalized because it creates a heatmap that will help your event evolve to fit your customer's shifting needs.

By doing this exercise with each customer segment, you'll learn what the most important event elements are for each audience you serve. You'll also learn very quickly if there are areas you're spending time and money on that aren't serving your customers well. Or if there are elements you lack and need to develop.

The attendee journey map will also help you select the event technology you need to achieve your goals. When you investigate tools like event platforms, you'll be able to better identify which features — polls, surveys, Q&A upvoting, data dashboards, etc. — are most important. And if you don't have time for that investigation, it provides a clear roadmap for conversations with your event technology provider so they understand exactly what you need.

In this way, mapping the attendee journey helps you identify the most important event elements you need to invest in. It will also help you recognize areas and items that might be a waste of time, money and resources.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Creating Healthy Event Ecosystems

Events comprise multiple components, or ecosystems. This section will help you test the health of each one and fix unhealthy ecosystems.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

What are event ecosystems?

When we hear the word ‘ecosystem’ we often think of nature. For example, a desert ecosystem, an ocean ecosystem or a rainforest ecosystem. In nature, an ecosystem is an environment where distinct species of animals come together and interact.

At an event, people are animals interacting in different event environments. So, when we talk about event ecosystems, we’re talking about the world we’re bringing different types of people into onsite or on digital event platforms. Our event ecosystems could be a large or small in-person gathering, digital/virtual only or a combination of the two.

Which species will be in attendance?

If office humor is any guide, then it’s obvious that the people in sales, marketing, operations, executive leadership and creative departments are varied species. With a large corporation, workers for each business line might be its own species. If you’re organizing a hybrid event, then you may have distinct species of in-person and remote audiences. If the event is international, maybe it’s more useful to think about culture and language denoting each species.

Think about each of your customer segments as being a distinct species. If you’ve already done your work mapping out the attendee journey, then you already have a promising idea of some of each species’ defining characteristics and needs.

Now think about how these distinct species in your event ecosystem.

> How will these species naturally interact with each other?

> Are there natural antagonisms or other barriers to healthy communication and collaboration?

> How can you ensure that each species feels safe, welcome and well cared for?

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

How do you know whether they are healthy

With digital events, it's easy to see who's coming to the event platform and how they're engaging.

Indicators of health include:

> User activity
> Comments
> Q&A/poll responses
> Duration on platform
> Video watch time
> Downloads/clicks

With in-person events, the evidence might be more anecdotal. But the use of event apps and social media monitoring can help.

Indicators of health include:

> Session attendance
> App and social media activity (positive mentions)
> Q&A and polling engagement
> App engagement

Signs of unhealthy ecosystems

In both digital and in-person event ecosystems, indicators of unhealthy environments are similar:

> Lack of engagement
> Dropping out of conversation/sessions
> Interacting with phones rather than content
> Negative mentions on app and social media

Auditing the event

For in-person events, some organizers engage third-party auditors or trained facilitators to wander the halls and capture data from audience members, sponsors and speakers to test the health of the event.

Useful information to gather includes:

> What's registration like?
> How was the wayfinding and onsite signage?
> How much trust do you have in the content?
> How comfortable do you feel onsite?
> How much credibility did the event have, in general?
> How reliable has this event been over the years?
> Have you found it consistently valuable?
> How much of this event is about you getting your value out of it and how much is about the event owner getting their value out of it?

While post-event surveys are convenient and valuable, having a human being from an impartial third party surveying participants while the event is happening will give you a better snapshot of what the true sentiment about your event is.

Combine data collected through this method with your digital analytics to get a full picture of your event ecosystem.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

How do you fix an unhealthy event ecosystem?

Each ecosystem and combination of attendee species might encounter specific challenges. However, the common thread in all event ecosystems is humans interacting with other humans or getting content from other humans. To that end, here are some solutions to those two key areas.

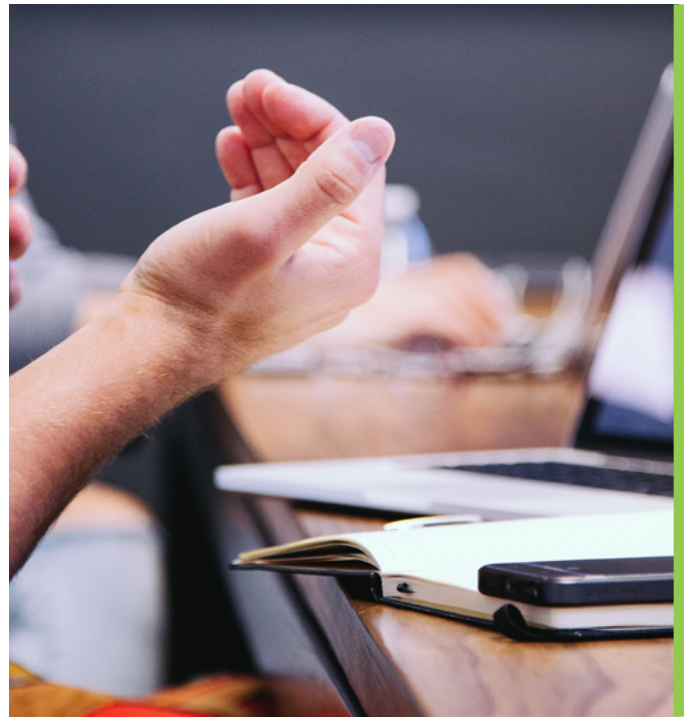
Human to human interaction solutions

> **Create environments where each species feels comfortable.** For example, an introvert-only networking event.

> **Leverage technology.** Democratize the process of giving and getting feedback. For example, an event platform that allows participants to submit and upvote questions anonymously.

> **Give people permission to be uncomfortable.** If you are doing something different in advance, communicate that to your audience. When they have time to prepare themselves, they will be more open and receptive to new things — even things that might be uncomfortable. They may find change is not as bad as they feared.

> **Map the attendee journey.** Creating a different map for each species will help you identify potential areas of friction or fun to fix or amplify.



Content delivery solutions

Address the neurodiversity of audience members. Not everyone learns in the same way. For example, some people love jumping right in and talking about ideas while others need time alone to think before they want to share their ideas. Some people enjoy listening to lectures while others would prefer hands-on education. If you have the time and resources, survey participants before you secure speakers to identify needs and preferences that will affect your content so you can program to suit those diverse needs and coach presenters on tailoring content for your audience.

Experiment to try things out. There's value in experimenting. Examine the data you have, talk to your customers and create some program experiments to see what works and what doesn't. For example, present a session in two diverse ways: one for lecture-lovers and one for kinesthetic learners. You'll learn a lot about how your participants want to learn and engage with content by promoting diverse ways for them to choose their own event journey.

Our sections on Practicing Radical Inclusion and Designing Engaging Educational Experiences contain other ideas that might help you increase the health of your event ecosystems.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Practicing Radical Inclusion

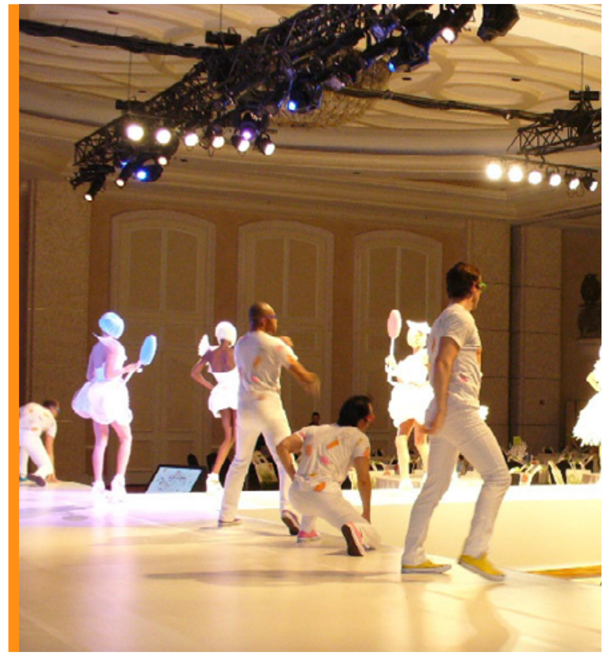
How to avoid common problems that leave attendees feeling disengaged, unwanted and excluded from your event experience.

©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

What does it mean to be radically inclusive?

Receiving an invitation to an event doesn't mean you'll feel included there. Remember the awkwardness of school dances? For many people — especially first-time attendees and introverts — events can be as awkward and painful as attending one of those socials and never being asked to dance.

Being radically inclusive means that you're looking at your event ecosystem to identify and eliminate any barriers to enjoyment. It signals that you're taking active steps to engage people investing in your event to meet them where they are. When you do this, participants feel well cared for, important and appreciated. This is important if you want them to recommend your event to others and want to attend the next one.



Common mistakes and solutions

There are more than 200 ways in which humans differ from each other. That makes it incredibly difficult to accommodate everyone. But here are some common mistakes to avoid as well as potential solutions.

1. Scheduling events on religious or cultural holidays.

Want to send a message to an entire group that you don't care whether they show up? Schedule an event for a day they must be in religious observance or that has deep cultural meaning. You can't avoid every event, but at least look at the calendar before setting your date.

2. Doing something that's 'cool' without considering audience limitations.

Have you ever tried to get food from a food truck while on crutches? How about sitting in a beanbag chair with fifty-year-old knees? If you're going to experiment with trying something new, don't forget to add elements that accommodate the needs of people who may find that option uncomfortable. For example, a mix of high, low and standing seating. Or 'comfort concierge' who can aid people in need of assistance by offering guidance to open areas or even offering an extra set of hands, eyes or ears, if needed.

3. Setting rooms too tightly.

Don't forget that once people are in the room, bags and other personal items are going to clog passageways. If you don't want people with mobility issues stuck in the back of the room, think about how to create a space that's easier for people to navigate, whether it's on one or two feet, sticks or wheels. If someone needs to travel with a companion, is there a way to guarantee that they can always sit together?

4. Crammed agendas.

Tight schedules aren't good for anyone. It makes it difficult for people with physical challenges to get around. They're difficult for people with limited attention spans or who get overloaded. And even the well-rested attendee will get frazzled having to run around without getting time to rest. Make sure there's time for people to process what they've learned and enjoy the synchronicity of making new connections without having to run to the next thing. Adding space will also help them learn better.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

5. Lack of ground rules.

Diversity is the cornerstone of innovation. However, if you're bringing people with diverse backgrounds and points of view together, you need to do so thoughtfully. Lay down some commonsense ground rules for participation and/or hire a qualified facilitator to navigate sensitive conversations. This will help you create a safe space for conversation where everyone feels invited to contribute. A healthy event ecosystem is one in which not only does everyone have a seat at the table, but also they know they are being seen and heard.

6. Not doing your research.

Knowing who your event participants are and what they care about will help you craft thoughtful programs, marketing campaigns and onsite event experiences. For example: If you must ask for titles like Dr. or Ms., also include non-binary or non-gender specific ones like Mx. Paying attention to minute details like that can have a significant impact on participant happiness. Show your customers you care by treating them the way they want to be treated.

7. Allowing event team members or organization executives to indulge in outdated tropes and jokes.

Some people may find it disorienting to be told something they grew up joking about is now considered offensive. But it's important to point out when it happens or talk with them beforehand, so it stops happening. As Maya Angelou said, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." The cost of not being considerate and promoting tone-deaf content or making off-color jokes is alienating whole segments of your audience. Knowing better and doing or saying something inappropriate tells those communities that you don't care about them, and that they're not welcome. That's not a message anyone should want to send.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

How to be radically inclusive

To be radically inclusive, you want to troubleshoot your event, inside and out, and look at what the experience might be like for different segments of your audience.

Your goal is to make sure everyone feels comfortable, welcome and engaged. Here are some ways to do that.

1. Know your audience.
During registration, give participants a chance to volunteer their preference, allergy, alcohol-free and disability status. Assure them that you are collecting the information only to make their event experience more enjoyable, and that it will be kept private. Make sure that you have contact information so you can send special instructions or know how to get in touch if you have follow-up questions.

2. Walk the event with your participants' challenges in mind.
Walk through the physical space as well as your program and identify any areas of potential challenge. For example: Are there accessibility options for the hearing or visually impaired on your event platform? Also mentally go through program and content to identify opportunities to be more inclusive. For example: Are additional wayfinding signage and break stations required for the passageway to ADA-accessible ramps or shuttles?

3. Ask for help.
Don't assume that you know best. Some situations may be temporary, some are permanent, and how the affected individual wants to be treated might differ than what you expect. For example, hiring a real-time American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter for your hearing impaired audience might seem like an innovative idea. But if they don't speak ASL, they still won't understand your content. Rather than assume, ask the person who's affected. They might give you more effective solutions and help you avoid actions that might be unintentionally offensive.

4. Communicate what's available, early and often.
The best plans in the world will fall apart if anyone along the chain is uninformed. For example, it's not enough to educate the banquet captain about allergies and special needs, banquet servers need to know as well. The participants need to know how to receive their meals or ask for them, and who to ask. And the registration desk may need training on how to communicate the instruction during check-in. Think about sharing essential information three times in three different ways, so no one gets missed.

5. Make exceptions the rule.
It's easy to get overwhelmed when you look at requests as individual needs. But what if you looked at them as parameters and worked to use those limitations to create something that everyone could enjoy? For example: Challenge the chef to prepare a menu free of all reported allergens rather than individual allergy-free meals. Or, during Ramadan, make sure meals are available before sunrise and after sunset.

6. Be flexible.
If someone needs a caregiver or companion, it might be tempting to ask for them to register for the full conference rate. But if this caregiver or companion doesn't come, then the individual probably would not attend either. Consider a policy that covers any hard costs you need to cover but doesn't penalize the participant for having this additional need. Or waive the fee completely for caregivers/companions.

7. Apologize quickly, and then make good.
You can't troubleshoot everything. There will be some mistakes. If there is a misstep, the best thing you can do is apologize and make amends. Then take note so you and your team can avoid the situation in the future.

8. Don't forget the shy people in the back.
Extroverts have no trouble mixing and mingling, but what about people who aren't as confident? How will you help them find friends to navigate the experience with? Consider an ambassador, buddy or first-timers program as well as quieter spaces and distinct types of networking events that favor those who aren't so bold.

©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Designing Engaging Educational Experiences

How to help event participants engage with content before, during and after your event in ways that will help them learn, remember and value your conference content

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

What is educational engagement?

No matter the age of the learner, no one thrives in a lecture-only environment. Learning comprehension increases when you can apply what you've learned or discuss it with others. We've all had to cram for an exam. How much of that content did you remember a week later? Studies show that as quickly as we learn something, we're prone to forget it. That means the conference high might evaporate before attendees return to the office.

Yet, what do conference organizers typically do? Overstuff agendas with multiple sessions, give attendees very few breaks or opportunities to refresh themselves, and rely on lecture-based or minimally interactive sessions. That traditional model does nothing to engage audiences, help them learn or retain information.

What should you do instead?

Remember the 3 core content concepts

When you program a conference, remember these three rules to help people engage with content

1. People can only remember three things at a time.
For example, three facts from a presentation or three lofty ideas per conference day.

2. If you want people to remember, tell them three times.
There's a reason why TV commercials repeat a phone number or website. Repetition helps people retain information. Three times is a magic number.

3. Tell them in three different ways.
People learn in diverse ways. Help them process information by diversifying the way it's delivered. For example, during a session a presenter can mention a fact, get people on their feet for an interactive role play, then conclude with a story contextualizing what was learned.

Resist the urge to overstuff your conference agenda

Look at the survey data from your last conference. Now parse it by the time the sessions were delivered. Notice a pattern?

Chances are people will report being more engaged and enthusiastic about sessions that were delivered before lunch than after. Why is that? It's because in the morning, they are fresh. They fill their heads with added information. At lunch, they have the chance to discuss what they learned. So now they're invigorated by social interactions. Then we interrupt those connections by rushing them off to learn more. It doesn't work because they're already full. We need to give them more time to digest the content.

Most conference organizers know that the easiest way to do this is to reduce the amount of content available and increase the time allocated for breaks. But they may be overruled by event owners who are tied to the status quo or are afraid that less content will make the event less attractive.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Invite participants to engage with content before, during and after the event

What's the solution? Invite participants to engage with content before the conference happens.

> Have presenters record short "teaser" videos you can distribute and promote via email and social media.

> When participants arrive, highlight core concepts on signage in the pre-function area or via short videos playing before the presentations begin.

> During the presentation, dig a little deeper into the content.

> Before the presentation ends, share how participants can continue the conversation.

Examples include:

> Post-presentation Q&A

> Post-presentation discussion/brainstorming/laboratory session

> Online forums or activities

> Post-event webinar or online discussion

> Video archives

> Engage a team to develop content for you. The Encore Creative Team can develop video stingers, walk-on and B-roll sizzle reels, short or long-form video or animated content, as well as graphic elements to keep in-room and virtual audiences engaged.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Give learners engagement options

People learn in diverse ways and may have diverse responses to the same environment. That's why you can increase engagement by tailoring the educational experience to your audience's preferences. If you don't know your participants well or can't do a pre-show survey, run content experiments during the conference. For example, offer the same session in two different formats: an introvert-friendly version at 10 a.m. and an extrovert-friendly version at 11 a.m. By comparing the data and talking to people who attended both sessions, you'll learn a lot about how your participants want to engage with content.

Here are some examples of ways you can customize content:

- Sessions for introverts vs. extroverts
- Sessions for kinesthetic vs. visual vs. auditory learners
- Walk and talk sessions (where you solve problems as you move with a partner)
- Group work sessions
- Simulations/escape rooms
- User-generated content sessions
- Chunked content delivery (for example a presenter may be scheduled to talk on a topic and do differently timed versions, e.g., 15-min., 30-min., 60-min. and 90-min. People can opt to attend as many or as few as they want.)

You can also play with having a designated quiet area or whitespace room that is open during educational hours. These quiet spaces can help people to digest what they've learned and recharge, and retreat to if they're feeling overwhelmed.

Increase engagement with event technology

Not everyone is comfortable stepping up to a microphone and voicing their thoughts. That's why having an event app or digital event platform, like Chime Go, Chime Live or Cvent Connect, that allows audiences to submit and upvote questions is so valuable. It gives everyone at your event a voice.

Second-screen technology, like Chime Live-enabled iPads, put the presentation in participants hands. Using the iPad allows them to take notes, rewind presentations and zoom in on valuable information. Activities that keep them engaged and off their phones.

When there is a hybrid element to your event, it's so important to have an event platform that facilitates communication and connection between your in-person and remote audiences. Encore offers a variety of solutions and free consultations.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Maximizing Return on Education, Return on Objective and Return on Investment (ROE, ROO and ROI)

How to analyze event data, report results and use them to improve the event experience, revenues and ROI

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Why is event data important?

Event data illuminates what works and what doesn't work about an event. It highlights the areas of opportunity and areas of weakness. It shows event organizers where they need to focus resources. And it gives them the tools they need to reshape how they're viewed inside their organization. This is incredibly important if you organize events for people who think of you as a glorified checklist person or menu maker.

Knowing how to tell the story of your event through data positions you to become an important strategic advisor to the senior leadership team. It provides the proof you need to go to the mat over important decisions. It helps you see where you need to cut costs or reapportion resources well before they're needed.

There are three key areas that will help you tell this story: education, objectives and investment.

Return on Education (ROE)

What do adult learners want? They want to sharpen old skills or learn new ones that make their jobs easier, help them make more money, or could help them get a new job. If it's not something they can apply to their work or life, they may not pay attention. If you want to prove your return on education (ROE), you need to measure how successful you were engaging and educating them.

Most event organizers use satisfaction scores to do this. For example, they will ask: On a scale of 1 to 5, five being the highest, how would you rate this session? This tells you something, but it doesn't tell you if the content was effective. What does a satisfaction score tell you? That the session was entertaining. It tells you that the learner might have enjoyed the speaker.

Therefore, you want to measure the ROE provided at your event more accurately, consider doing the following:

> Test the learner's knowledge before the session and then after to see how much they learned.

> Test the learner's knowledge two weeks after the conference to see how effective the presentation method was in helping them retain what they learned.

> Include questions in the post-event survey that measure how well the learner feels they can apply what they learned on the job.

> Ask an open-ended question on how the learner intends to apply what they learned to their job.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Return on Objective (ROO)

What are the goals for meeting? Ever meeting should have one to three main reasons for being, or it shouldn't be happening. If you're unclear on the goals for your event, talk with the event owner and define what you're trying to achieve.

If you've developed an innovation process, you may already know the most important goals and objectives for meeting. Make sure that each objective is S.M.A.R.T. so you can measure success. Or if it is more intangible, develop a definition for what success 'looks' like. This way, you can at least collect anecdotal evidence that gives you a sense of how well you achieved your objective.

If you want to maximize your return on objective, then it's essential that you tie each objective to your event design. One of the easiest ways to do this is through mapping the attendee journey. Firmly rooting achieving ROO in your event design also helps focus your key stakeholders and event owner on what is important. Anything that is a primary objective should be where you invest the most time, money and resources. If a last-minute idea pops up, you can ask how it helps you achieve your event objectives. If it does not, then you can make an easy case for saying 'no.'

Return on Investment (ROI)

Attending an event is an investment: of time, money, and resources. This is not an investment people take lightly. That's why it's important to be able to prove to your sponsors, exhibitors, attendees and event owners that your event generated significant ROI for them.

How do you do this? One of the best ways is to define what they want out of your event and then map their attendee journey to discover how you will help them achieve their goals. By designing your event with the end in mind, you increase the chance of participants leaving feeling like they generated significant ROI.

You can also survey participants in advance to identify what the goals for each of your customer segments are and collect data that will measure whether they achieved those goals.

S.M.A.R.T. objectives

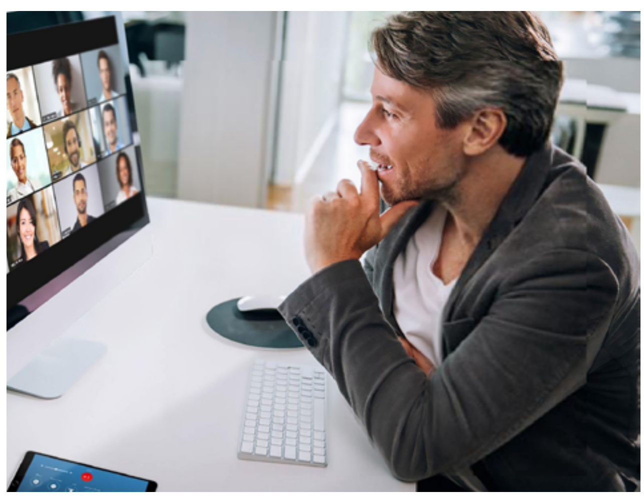
It's important to define the event objectives before you start making a budget or any design decisions. Get the event owner(s) and key stakeholders together to discuss what the overarching goals are. Have them prioritize until you have no more than five main goals for this event. Ideally, you'll have between one and three.

Once you know what the goals for your event are, you can create specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based (S.M.A.R.T.) objectives that will help you measure whether these goals were reached.

For example, if you're doing an internal training on a new process and the goal is to save time, you might have a S.M.A.R.T. objective that looks something like this:

Reduce the time spent on XYZ process in Q1 2023 by 5% as compared to Q4 2022.

It's specific (reduce the time spent on XYZ process), measurable (by 5%), achievable (it's not a huge percentage), relevant (you're doing the training to teach them the XYZ process) and time-based (comparing Q4 2022 numbers to Q1 2023 ones).



 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Creating the data collection plan

Once you have defined the S.M.A.R.T. objectives, create a chart that outlines the data collection plan.

You want to record for each objective:

> What data is needed to prove whether the objective was achieved?

> How can it be collected?

> Who on the internal or external team will be needed to collect this information?

> When does this data need to be collected?

> Who needs to know the results?

In addition to digital data collection methods — like kiosks, post-event surveys, and pulse surveys on the event app — consider using people at onsite events to conduct informal 'intercept interviews.' These are when interviewers approach attendees in the hallways, identify themselves as an impartial third party and ask participants to give their candid opinions about the event.

Calculating ROI

The formula for calculating ROI is as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Benefit generated} - \text{Fully loaded costs}}{\text{Fully loaded costs}} \times 100 = \textbf{ROI \%}$$

For example, if the cost for attending the conference, including transportation and hotel, was less than the benefit received by attending, then I had positive ROI. Let's say that it cost $4,488 to attend. While I was there, I closed a $9,000 contract and was able to shake hands on a couple of larger deals, worth $25,000.

Being conservative and plugging in only the deal that closed, this is what their ROI looks like:

$$\frac{\$9{,}000 - \$4{,}488}{\$4{,}488} \times 100 = 101\% \text{ ROI}$$

Knowing that benchmark could help you tweak elements of your program to make sure that you can under promise and overdeliver on what they need to feel like your event is valuable.

When you're calculating ROI for your organization, make a list of all the benefits, even the intangibles. It's important to remember that just as there's an average cost per lead, there's ways to quantify soft benefits and attach dollar values to them so you have a true picture of the full benefits of your event. A great resource on how to do this is outlined in the book, Proving the Value of Meetings and Events.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Benefit to cost ratio

Another helpful calculation is the benefit to cost ratio. This can be used to assess risk of proposed projects or to calculate the actual benefit of completed ones.

$$\frac{\text{Benefit}}{\text{Costs}} = \textbf{Benefit to cost ratio (BCR)}$$

For example, if you generated $1.6 million with your event and it cost $1.2 million to produce, your BCR is $1.6M/$1.2M or 1.33. Anything with a BCR greater than 1 is generally considered worth the risk.

Another way to interpret BCR is that for every dollar you invest, the BCR is the amount you generate. In the example above, your event generated $1.33 for every dollar invested or a 30% return.

Analyzing the results

Once the data is collected, look at what the numbers tell you about the objectives that were your top priority. Also look at data about the general health of your event, like satisfaction scores, attrition rates, revenue numbers, and so on.

If you didn't achieve an objective, or if the ROI numbers look bad, don't despair. Look for positive numbers that can provide a good balance. If you learned something, then it wasn't a failure. Similarly, if something in business doesn't pan out, it might signal that a course correction is warranted. That potential area of opportunity should also show up in the data. And you get to be the person to point it out.

Not a numbers person? Find an internal or external resource to help you with the data analysis. They also may be helpful in creating the data story, which you can then tailor to present to each audience that needs to hear it.

Reporting out

Different audience segments have distinct levels of interest in the event data. What you share with event participants is going to differ wildly from what you present to the C-suite or internal team.

Identify who's interested and invested in the results and then customize what and how you share with each group. For example, maybe the internal team will be best served by including a blurb in the company newsletter. When you promote next year's show, you can promote any changes you're making based on attendee feedback. Not everyone needs a PowerPoint or a bound report. So, tailor your message and format.

Reporting formats include:

- Social posts
- Emails
- Newsletters
- Press releases
- PowerPoints/presentations
- Formal/board reports
- Video highlight reels
- Internal reviews

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

Iterating and innovating

Remember how this guide started with the process of innovation? Data is the end as well as the beginning.

Once you've had a chance to digest the data, discuss it with your event owners and key stakeholders. Let the data illuminate the successes you'll want to build on and areas you need to improve.

Armed with this information, begin your process of innovation anew. Now you have a baseline of measurements against which you can measure progress year over year.

This year, your focus is creating boundless opportunities for engagement. Next year ... the opportunities are endless.

 ©2022 Encore Global LP or its subsidiaries.

encoreglobal.com

Speak with our experts about your next event. **Contact us »**