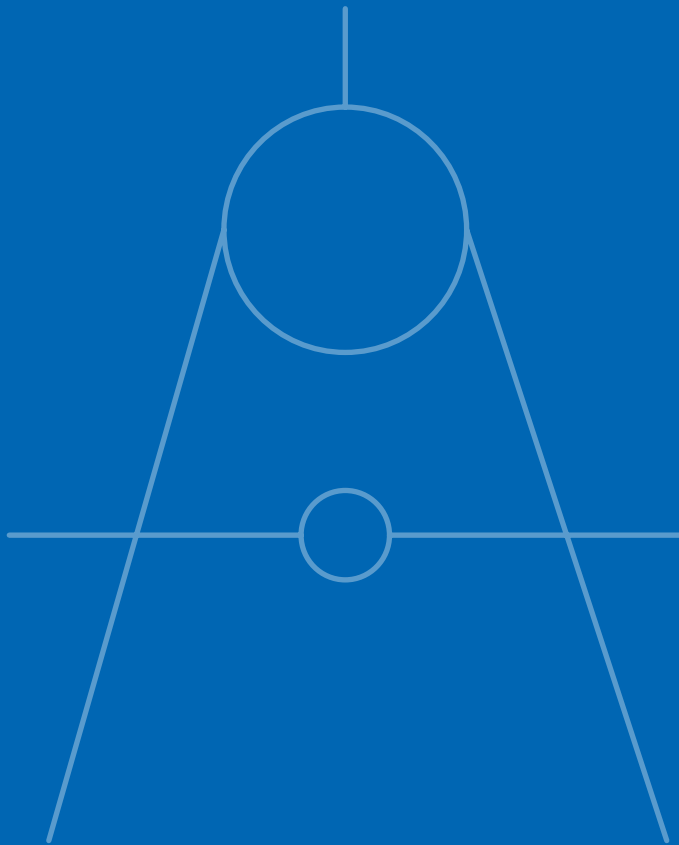




*using technology to engage
and excite attendees*

A Roadmap for Live Events in the Digital Age

*As an event professional,
you know that details matter.*



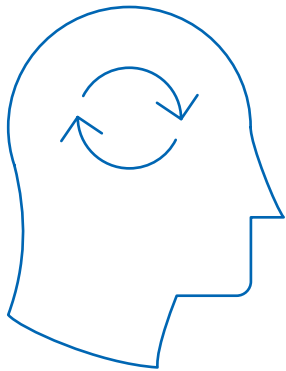
From the carpet color and depth selection to appropriately timed coffee service, you likely sweat the small stuff. But sometimes, the details can make it hard to see the forest for the trees — and they can put you behind the curve when it comes to trends and preferences driven by shifting audience demographics.

It's a new world out there: Millennials are the workforce majority, and all of us are living connected lives. Modern audiences of all demographics expect that your event will also deliver on a seamless and technology-supported experience. And while it might seem like another detail for you to worry about, it's a detail that will have a huge impact on attendee experience and event success year over year.

While there will always be a long wish list when it comes to the breadth and depth of available event technology, there are some critical must-haves that are worth the time and investment. Across your event lifecycle, there are key platforms and technologies to focus on before, during, and after the event to deliver the maximum impact. These technology details can serve as a roadmap that you can build upon to deliver a technologically supported event experience.

before:

build a solid web and social strategy

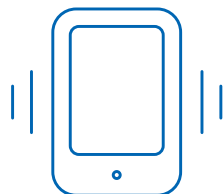


To make any event a success, information is power. A comprehensive event website with venue and hotel information, detailed agenda, and registration portal are all must-haves, but a few additions can help maximize attendance, identify attendees' technology needs, and build awareness of the services available to enhance their experience.

Of course, it's important to empower your attendees with the information they need. But how do you maximize the value of your site — and your event? Here are a few tips:



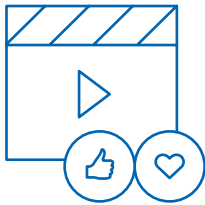
Be poised and prepped. Your attendees took the time to be at your event. Make sure they have the tools they need to make the most of it. During online registration, survey attendees to better understand how many devices they'll be packing — such as tablets, smartphones, laptops, and wearables — and how they want to use them. Not only does this help you plan for capacity, but it also gives great insight into opportunities for mobile engagement. If attendees plan to post videos, photos, and livestreams, that'll take a Wi-Fi network with more capacity. Similarly, international users will rely more heavily on Wi-Fi to avoid steep international cellular roaming fees. If the percentage is high, make sure the venue's Wi-Fi network has ample capacity.



Focus on mobile first. We live in a mobile-first world — and your event technology should reflect that. An event-specific mobile app is a great way to keep attendees informed, and makes it easy for them to stay engaged. To encourage adoption, promote your event's mobile app at registration, highlighting the key benefits for attendees, such as wayfinding, custom scheduling, social networking, and real-time interaction during sessions. And don't forget the event site itself. Take the time to design a mobile-friendly experience that translates seamlessly to any mobile device. Consider tools such as Google's Mobile-Friendly Test to make sure these and other aspects aren't overlooked. Also, remember to add plenty of power stations throughout your show floor to help keep mobile devices topped off!



Never sacrifice experience. While mobile-first is a solid approach, some prefer a full-screen experience. Sometimes mobile devices power down. And not everyone can — or wants to — take up space on their mobile device. Make sure all event information is available on any device, and make it easy for attendees to bounce and scroll through information between mobile and on-site.

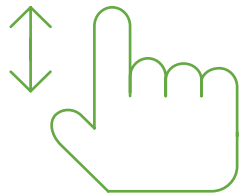


Make it a social experience. Creating an effective, informative event website and mobile experience is only the beginning. Today's consumer is more socially savvy than ever, and they expect experiences that align to the ways they use technology every day. That's why it's important to consider the social habits of your audience and provide event experiences that sync with their existing habits. Live videos, polls, and contests are all tried-and-true ways to connect with event attendees and encourage user-generated content. A well-researched, highly visible, and concise event hashtag is also an easy and inexpensive way to increase engagement. Also consider activations that encourage social sharing, like photo booths, live GIF walls, interactive art installations, and more. The resulting reach and awareness can help draw more attendees in the future.

When it comes to adopting new technologies, the enterprise sometimes lags behind the everyday consumer. But by tapping into the power of influencers and monitoring their social media chatter, you can counteract any blind spots and ensure you're creating the most relevant, topical content, and incorporating technologies to create the best event experience possible. Invite key influencers to attend — or speak at— your event. A bit of outreach will go a long way in adding credibility, relevance, and value to your event.

during:

maximize engagement through apps and second-screen technology

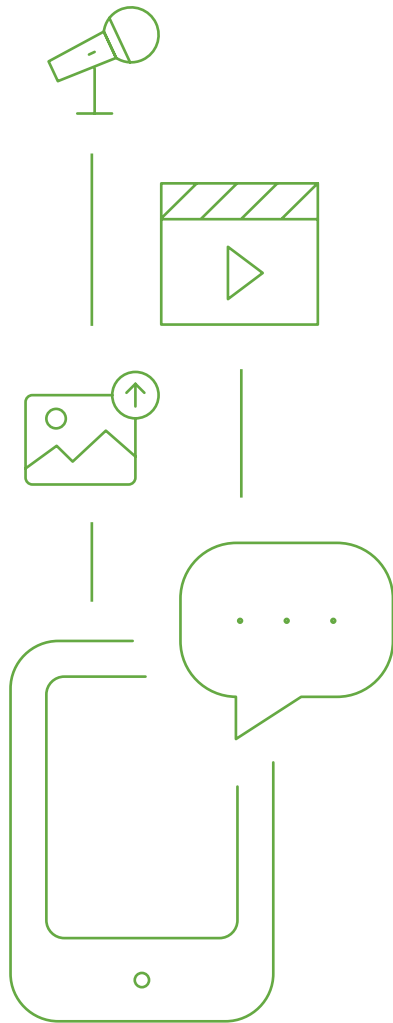


Roughly 200 million Americans — 63 percent of the population — own a smartphone, according to comScore.¹ That wide adoption makes those devices, as well as tablets, a prime target for marketers looking to engage and excite attendees in new ways.

During the event, the app or website should be more than just a venue directory and static session schedule. Follow up on your pre-event strategies to support and promote live video, polls, contests, and other interactive content.

Let's face it: Regardless of how prepared you are, things are bound to change during the event. For example, schedules need to be adjusted or sessions are moved to new rooms, and it's important to share that information in real time with your attendees. Take advantage of opportunities to ensure consistency. For example, if agendas will be updated during an event, it should take only a single entry

¹ comScore MobiLens® and Mobile Metrix®, <http://www.comscore.com>



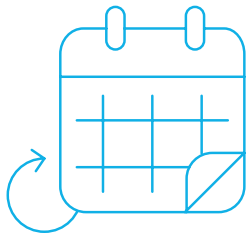
to the content management system to publish those changes in the event's app, to the venue's digital signage, and on the website. This approach benefits already busy on-site staff because they can make updates quickly and because the consistency across all channels means they don't have to field questions from confused attendees.

But you need more than a good app — and a solid content strategy — to engage your audience during the event. Encourage your audience to interact instantaneously using second-screen technology, either through event-provided tablets, an easy-access mobile website, or interactive features that integrate with the event app. Your attendees want to be part of the experience, so provide ample opportunity for their voices to be heard. Give them a way to ask questions during a speaker session; provide a poll question and display the live results; provide pre-packaged social posts that are easily shareable; or gather quick, relevant feedback through incentivized surveys as soon as a session ends. The investment will pay off in increased engagement, increased social participation, and instant insights you can use to improve and optimize your event in real time.

*Your attendees want to be part of the experience,
so provide ample opportunity for their voices to be heard.*



after:
engage them until next time

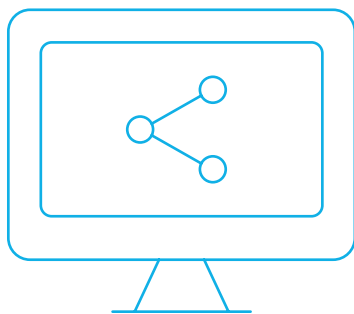


The event might be over, but that doesn't mean you should stop engaging with attendees. Post-event engagement is important when it comes to attracting repeat customers and putting a cap on a successful experience. The right technology enables organizers to maximize the afterburn of the event to boost revenue and loyalty from both attendees and exhibitors. By keeping a high profile year-round, interest and engagement stay high, helping to attract speakers, influencers, and future attendees.

No one keeps interest levels up better than professional sporting organizations. Though their seasons typically last only a few months, they engage and excite fans throughout the year via apps, social media, contests, and repurposed content. They understand that an organization is only as strong as what's being said about it — and its fan base. By keeping the conversation going year-round, they can capitalize on an educated fan base to maximize participation and event attendance.

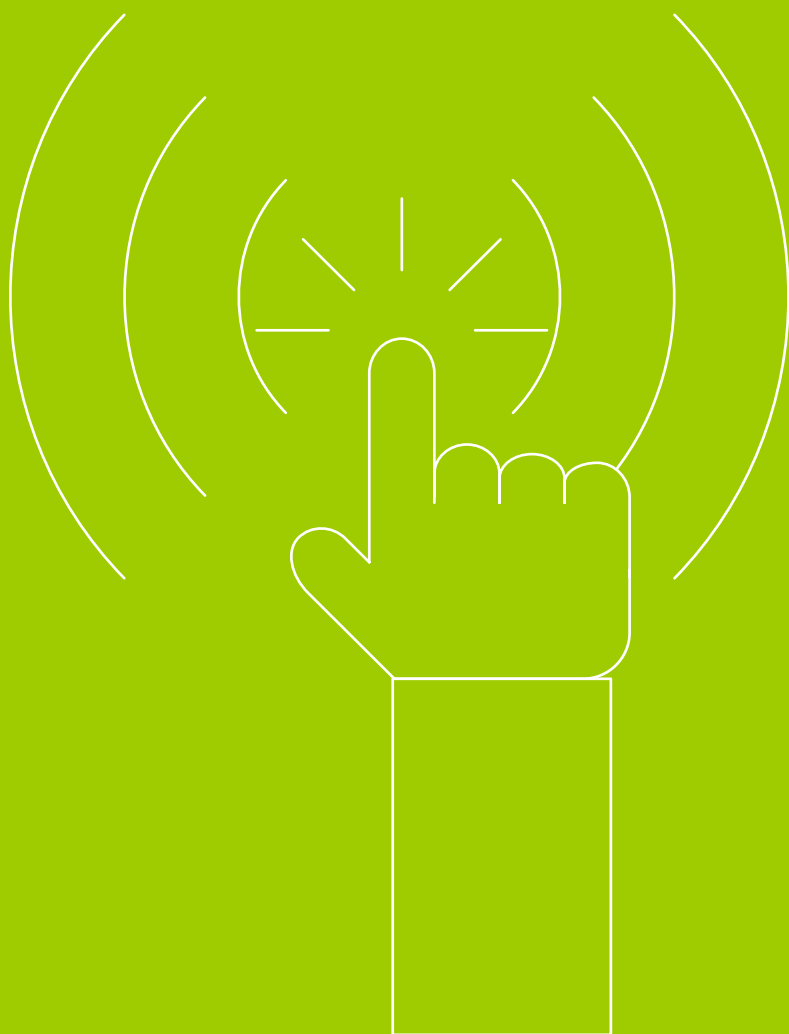
Delivering content via an event app and/or mobile-friendly website is one way to keep the conversation going. Pushing out fresh, interesting content, especially video, keeps people coming back for more. After all, in the first quarter of 2016 alone, U.S. adults watched 5.69 billion minutes of video on their smartphones, according to Nielsen.² And don't just limit yourself to brand-new content, either — repurposing other pieces or using archived content smartly is a great way to engage.

Some events don't make recorded presentations available online because they fear access to that content will discourage future attendance. Rather, events should view that recorded content as an opportunity to showcase the value of the event. This content can also be gated and used as a lead-generation or revenue-generating tool to offset some of the event's cost. Make this content easily searchable, scannable, and shareable to maximize the ROI of your event throughout the year.



Pushing out fresh, interesting content, especially video, keeps people coming back for more.

² Nielsen Q1 Comparable Metrics Report, <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/reports/2016/the-comparable-metrics-report-q1-2016.html>



take the event experience to the next level

Technology is ingrained in the modern event experience. Attendees expect an informative, engaging experience before, during, and after the event, and since technology and mobile devices are a part of everyday life, they expect that technology to be part of what makes the experience memorable.

Organizers can leverage those technologies and those habits to take the event experience to the next level, but they don't all have to be cutting edge. Invest in tried-and-true technologies with proven reach and effectiveness. When you combine that with a solid strategy, you'll have the flexibility to test new technologies and take risks to create an unrivaled event experience.



increase engagement

**To request an event consultation
with one of our experience experts,
visit freeman.com.**

LEARN MORE →