



what audiences want

How to Maximize Attendee Engagement



In today's technology-saturated world, delivering powerful, thought-provoking experiences is an ongoing challenge.

In order to provide what your audiences want, first step back and understand what they truly need.

To do this, we can take some cues from famed psychologist Abraham Maslow, who envisioned people's needs in the shape of a pyramid. According to Maslow, basic needs, such as hunger and thirst, must be met before higher-level needs, such as love and friendship, can be fulfilled.

As event marketers, Maslow offers us an important reminder: We must meet attendees' most basic needs first, and only then can we engage them with deeper experiences. By using Maslow's framework to pinpoint and satisfy your attendees' needs, you can prioritize the activities that will deliver the best results as you strive to hit your event and business goals.



Physiological Need: Guidance

Your attendees' primary need is to navigate your event and connect with the content and contacts that matter to them the most. By guiding them through your event, they will feel more confident and leave the event believing their experience was valuable and worthwhile.

What to Offer

- Provide self-navigation tools as well as face-to-face support.
- Make it easy for attendees to find on-site support staff for assistance.
- Use digital signage, color coding, and other elements to help attendees find their way around.



Safety Need: Value

Attendees need to know they're getting their money's worth when they commit to your event. Create value for attendees by providing experiences that are personally relevant, shareable, and offer real insight.

What to Offer

- Design "bite-sized" presentations of 15 minutes or less to mirror the way attendees consume content daily.
- Integrate digital tools to drive participation.
- Encourage social media sharing with visually engaging content.



Social Need: Connections

Everyone needs to feel socially connected, whether in business or personally. Attendees want to experience things together — to share, learn, and become part of a community.

What to Offer

- Present networking opportunities that go beyond happy hour: social media meetups, birds-of-a-feather sessions, audience-generated discussions, and group exercise classes.
- Balance in-person networking with online communities that keep connections alive long after the event itself.



Esteem Need: Achievement

Attendees want to be recognized and respected by peers and colleagues. Give attendees a sense of purpose by giving them opportunities to achieve something and to share those achievements with others.

What to Offer

- Allow attendees to crowdsource activities and influence the experience.
- Incorporate gaming to both entertain and tap into attendees' competitive streaks
- Find playful ways for attendees to engage with sponsor brands on-site and post-event.



Self-Actualization Need: Growth

People attend your event to grow, whether by improving their business or expanding their personal vision. Enhance what they take away from your event by helping them extend their experience and share it with others.

What to Offer

- Deliver content that's easy to digest and packaged for sharing.
- Keep the buzz flowing via lunch-and-learn sessions, social media, and virtual portals for selected communities.

As you become more adept at meeting the full spectrum of your attendees' needs, you'll find your event will evolve – enticing repeat attendance, increasing sponsorship, driving the engagement that everyone most desires, and ultimately delivering desired business results.



create connection

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