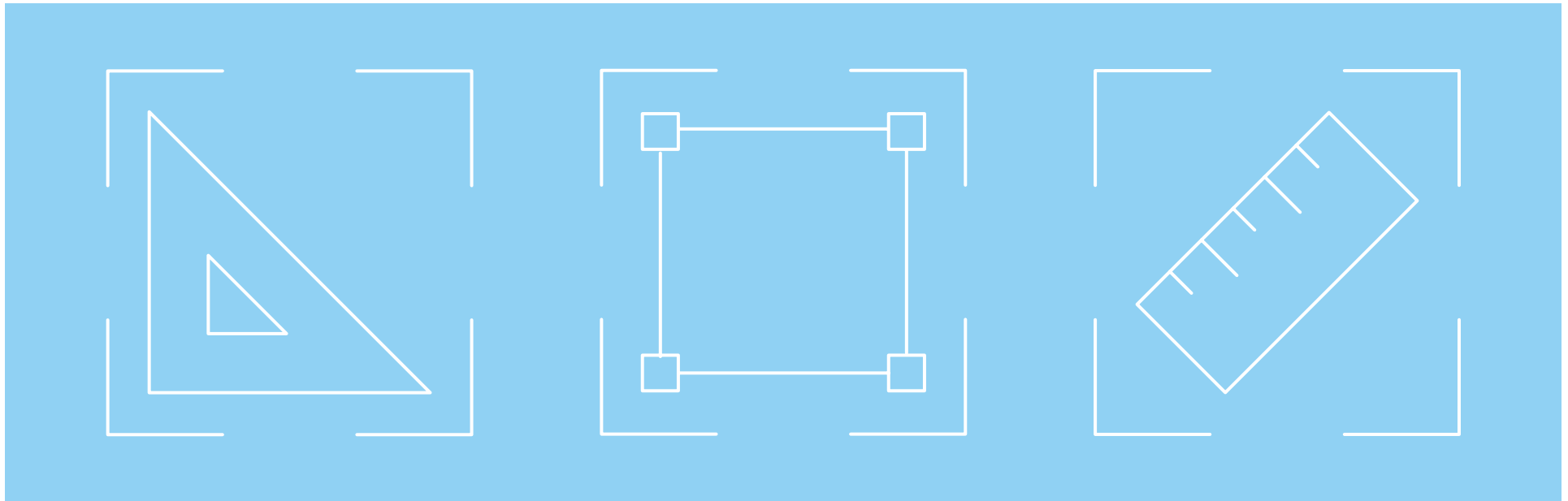




# *by the numbers*

**Using Measurement to Improve Your Brand Experience Success**



Consider the last project you worked on — what if the results you achieved weren't the ones you expected? Would you throw in the towel and give up? Or would you want to evaluate both what went right and where to improve?

How would you do this? Would you look at your approach to see where you veered off course? Would you scrutinize who was involved in the project or ask your boss for feedback?

The same thinking applies to brand experiences. Gathering the right data allows you to easily analyze the details, so you can optimize the value and effectiveness of your program.

But with statistics, the devil's in the details. Analyzing too many variables can muddy the waters with an abundance of information while obscuring the useful details. Analyzing too little won't give you the clarity you need.

Evaluating strategy execution is important, but it shouldn't be overwhelming. Start with simple frameworks and use empirical assessments to get the insights you need — without getting lost in the minutiae.

## Using a Balanced Approach with Your Data

The best insights can be gleaned from analyzing the right mix of data.

But gaining these insights requires an investment. Measurement needs to be considered at the start of any project when you are setting goals and objectives for your program. Considering measurement after the fact will make your job much more difficult. Instead, by planning for it up front, you can determine what you would like to measure based on the goals of your event.

Hard data, such as the number of leads obtained or the dollar amount of revenue generated, lets you objectively measure specific results. You can gather these numbers from your own databases, accounting systems, or business intelligence systems.

Marketing metrics, like brand awareness and perception, message communication or purchase intent, capture the event's impact on marketing results and are just as valuable for assessing event activities. You can gather these soft metrics via surveys, social media monitoring, or even staff observation.

Used strategically, both types of information work together to:

- Give you a well-rounded event evaluation
- Prove the ROI of marketing dollars, ensuring events integrate seamlessly into other marketing activities
- Clarify the event's impact on customers, partners, and stakeholders
- Provide the foundation for planning future events



*Be an Overachiever:  
Critical Business Objectives*

**While you'll always have event-specific goals, four general goals you'll want to accomplish are:**

- Increased brand awareness
- Increased demand generation and sales
- Better customer/partner relationships and loyalty
- Increased thought leadership

When looking at this data, focus on the big picture. An event is truly a success only if it is aligned with your organization's overall business and event goals. If the event doesn't achieve these goals, conducting the right assessment will show you how to revise your approach.

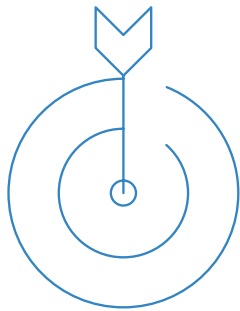
Remember this: when it comes to measurement, one size doesn't fit all. Different events have different goals; different clients have different expectations. To set yours, think about the questions you want to know about your event. These questions — and the answers you uncover — will be key to improving your event planning skills and helping you achieve your goals. Keep reading, and we'll shed some light on the questions you should be asking.

## What to Measure: Good Things Come in Threes

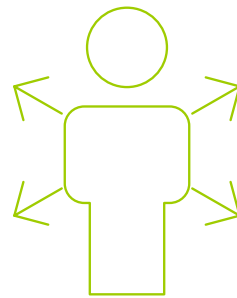
No matter the type of event — trade show exhibit, private event, or consumer experiential program — your measurement should include these three basic elements:

1. The value of target audience
2. Experience assessment
3. Marketing results and business impact

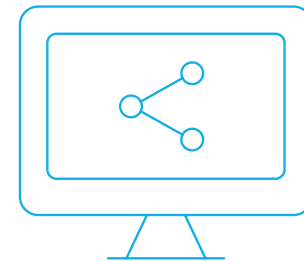
These components let you drill down and see the effect of your event on your bottom line. They also provide valuable insights that will optimize the value and cost-effectiveness of future events.



**Value of Target Audience**



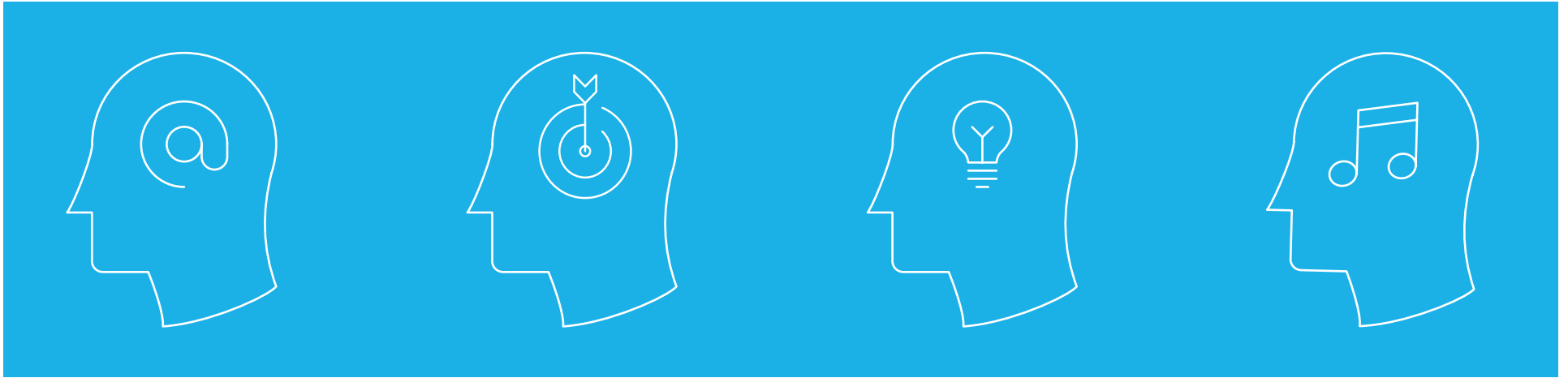
**Experience Assessment**



**Marketing Results  
and Business Impact**

**When it comes to measurement,**

*one size does not fit all.*



## 1. The Value of Target Audience

When you're planning your event, you're targeting a specific audience. You want to know who your attendees are and what they expect so that you can deliver an experience tailored to their specific wants and needs.

Take a Goldilocks approach: the audience should be not too big, not too small, but just right for your brand's goals and objectives. To be sure, you need a certain attendance number to make current and future events financially feasible. But other attendee characteristics are important, too: audience demographics and activities, purchase influence and buying power, and motivations for attending.

Why do these details matter? Isn't your current mailing list good enough?

Life today can change on a dime, and your audience is no different. The minute you start relying on assumptions, you're in trouble.

Instead, when you know exactly who you're attracting to your event and understand exactly what they expect from you (and you from them), you're able to answer such valuable questions as:

- What is the best way to align my business objectives with my attendees' objectives?
- How do I customize promotion, experience design, and content to mesh with multiple audience segments?
- If I continue to hold this event, what's my budget? How much can I justify spending before ROI diminishes?

Answering these questions will give you a basis for determining how well you reached and positively impacted your target audience. This clears the way to see if your event aligned with your business objectives — namely, did you reach the audience you intended to, and did you successfully satisfy their interests, needs, and expectations?

## 2. Experience Assessment

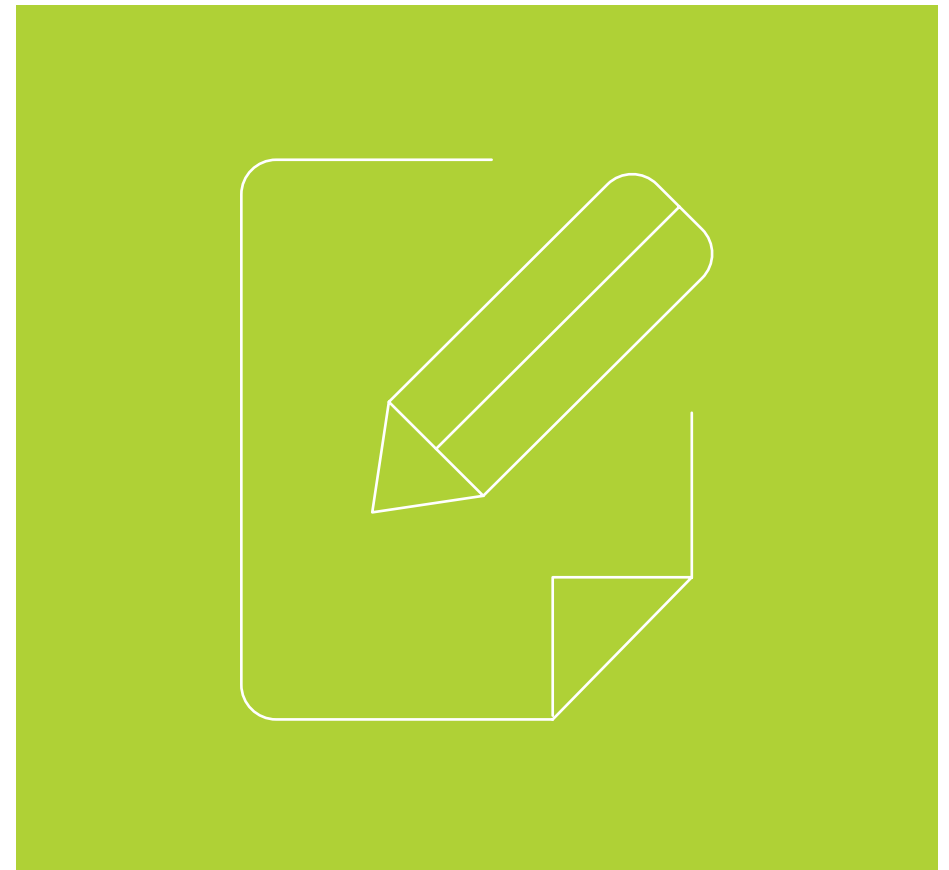
You've been cultivating your event or trade show exhibit for a while. It's time to take it to the next level through experience assessment.

To conduct an experience assessment, start by identifying the key areas that will help you improve performance and optimize ROI in the future, including:

- Audience attraction and brand reach (Did you effectively reach your target audience before, during, and after the event?)
- Audience engagement (For proprietary events: How effective were the presenters? Did attendees get the content they needed? Were there sufficient networking opportunities? For trade show exhibits: How effective was your in-booth experience and staff? Were your key messages received?)
- Logistics (Did schedules and transitions flow smoothly?)
- Cost performance (Did the program stay under budget? How did costs compare to last year's? What was the cost per visitor reached?)

Finding the value in an event is the key to future successes, and experience assessment lets you determine the key engagement drivers of value, results, and business outcomes.

If you listened to our suggestion to clarify exactly who your target audience is (don't worry, we know you did), bonus points for drilling down this assessment further by specific groups of attendees.



### 3. Marketing Results and Business Impact

If you've done your event right, you'll reap benefits long after the show closes. Good news travels fast, so one of the first things you'll see is an uptick in brand awareness and perception — often precipitated by social media. And even beyond that, you should see a strong correlation between event success and customer relationships (increased loyalty to your company), sales (actual and intended purchases), and thought leadership (your reputation in your market).

All of that is fantastic. But you're not done measuring yet.

We know what you're thinking here: Why should I further quantify the impact on my business if I'm already seeing positive results through social media or increased sales?



Numbers give insight into the nuances that aren't visible at first glance. Quantifiable data, whether gathered from surveys, social

monitoring, or from your own database, gives you access to revealing details, like:

- Did you achieve your event objectives?
- How did the event contribute to achieving your overall business objectives?
- Did the event improve key brand metrics, like increasing brand awareness or perception, the effectiveness of message communication, and the likelihood to recommend your brand Net Promoter Score®?
- How did you perform against competitors in attracting and engaging your target audience?
- Did the results justify the budget?

It's important to remember to act on these metrics, too. Simply producing a thick binder with impressive graphs and buzzwords does nothing to continue your upward trajectory. Instead, use these metrics to build upon past results and make your best even better. You'll gain important insights, justify participation in future events, and prove the value of your program as a critical part of your organization's overall marketing plan.



**Finding the value of an event is**

*key to future successes.*

## Using Additional Metrics to Tell the Whole Story

Even if you hold what appears to be the same event year after year, each instance has distinctions that baseline metrics can't fully reflect.

To get a complete picture into the success of a program, there may be additional metrics to consider beyond the three core areas of target audience value, experience assessment, and marketing results/business impact. The specific metrics you may need to consider will vary depending on the type of event; for example, while an on-site personal intercept survey can be useful for trade show activities, it may offer less value for private corporate events.

Assessing event-specific metrics alongside your core metrics can help to:

- Provide a means for direct comparisons across all of your events
- Clarify the right event mix strategy so you can make smarter investment decisions
- Identify common issues across events that might require remedial actions



## *Best Practices in Event Measurement*

**Initiating a measurement process for your event isn't overwhelming if you break it down into a more manageable, three-step process.**

1. Formulate a measurement plan.
2. Pick strategic metrics that align with and measure the success of events in meeting overall corporate marketing objectives and initiatives.
3. Use consistent metrics and methodology year-to-year and across all shows to:
  - Develop cost-effective and efficient processes.
  - Develop normative internal data for benchmarking.
  - Directly compare one show or event to another.
  - Summarize data in the method you choose, such as by time period, business unit, or customer segment.



*Understanding who your clients are and what they're expecting from your event is just one piece of the event planning puzzle.*

Of course, your numbers are only as good as the story you can tell with them. Leverage multiple reporting tools to clearly and concisely communicate results to different levels of your internal stakeholders. Scalable dashboards, executive summaries, and database reports will help you present your detailed findings logically and effectively.

## **Measuring Success, One Metric at a Time**

Properly developing, executing, and evaluating event analytics can help you quantify and prove the value of your events. There is an art and a science to this, and it is one that is constantly changing, thanks to advances in technology and data collection.

But just as important, measuring your results lets you hone your strategic and tactical planning processes for future events. With the right approach, you'll be able to transform flat numbers on paper into actionable insights that will empower you to make more informed strategic decisions, enhance your stakeholders' experiences, and improve your future marketing programs.

*want more?*

**Request a consultation to learn more  
about the value of measurement.**

**Skip Cox**  
SVP, RESEARCH AND MEASUREMENT  
+1.800.224.3170 | FREEMANXP@FREEMANXP.COM

**CONTACT US →**