

THE ATTENDANCE MARKETING BEST PRACTICES STUDY

How Leading Convention & Exhibition Producers
are Driving Attendance & Engagement



Special Report Developed by

TSNN Trade
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Introduction

The Attendance Marketing Best Practices Study: How event producers are driving attendance and engagement

Attendance size and quality is the essential element in any successful convention, exhibition or corporate meeting. Attracting high quality attendance and improving the overall attendee experience is the event management community's top priority—and challenge. In response, TSNN and Access Intelligence Research have developed this exclusive industry study to help convention and exhibition producers analyze and benchmark their attendance marketing programs.

The focus is on the most effective attendance marketing tactics and mediums, benchmarks, budget size, and other related topics and metrics. The report provides results from a survey of leading convention and exhibition producers as well as leading corporate meeting planners. A total of 304 event producers and planners responded to the survey.

Some of the key areas covered include:

- Attendance Marketing Approaches and Benchmarks
- Social Media Platforms
- Data Mining and Personalized Messaging
- How Attendees are Changing
- Biggest Opportunities

To add an additional layer of analysis, the findings are broken out separately by associations and for-profit exhibition organizers.

TSNN and Access Intelligence Research thank all of the respondents for their invaluable contributions to this study.



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Executive Summary

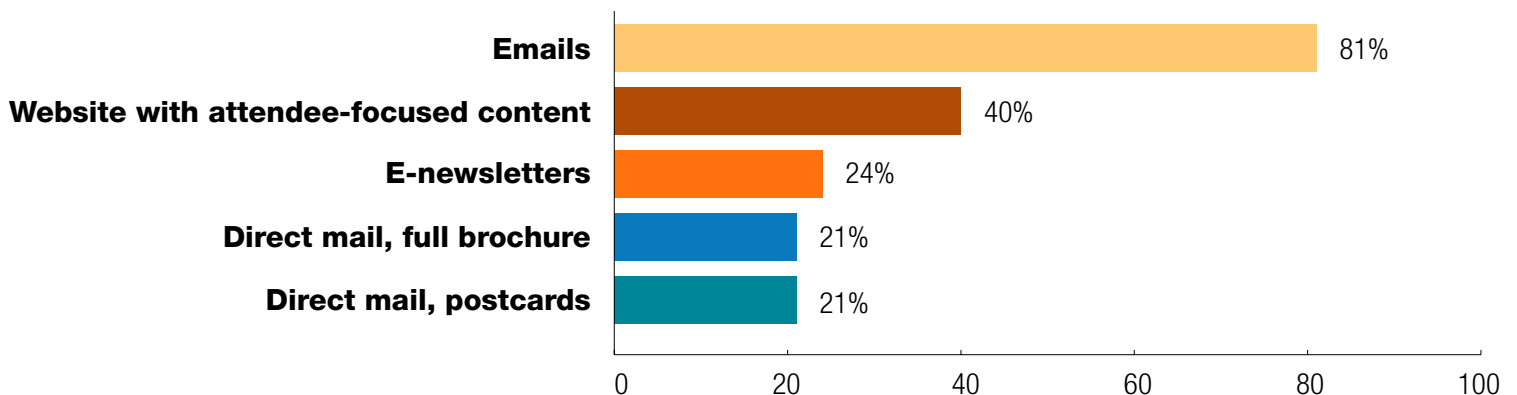
Some of the key findings along with insightful quotes from event producers are provided in this summary.

The Most Often Used Attendance Marketing Tactics and Mediums

The main medium used by event producers to communicate with attendees and reach prospects is, by far, and no surprise, still email. Websites with attendee-focused information and content and posting information to Facebook are the second and third most often used approaches. As the findings show later in the report, there are eleven tactics and mediums used by over 50% of event producers, suggesting as an association event producer said in the survey, “there is not one single most effective strategy; it’s a combination.”

Most Effective Attendance Marketing Approach

When considering the most effective attendance marketing approaches, email and websites are the two primary methods and essentially all others are considered secondary. Three of the top five most effective attendance marketing mediums and media currently are digital.



Attendance Marketing is Getting More Complex

A key finding from the study is that attendance marketing is getting more complex. Part of the complexity is the need to reach various segments of an industry that respond differently to various mediums and methods, as well as to frequency and formats. Audience generational differences and issues are also top of mind for many event producers. In short, staying on top of changing audiences is the key, and has never been more important, and as one event producer commented in the survey: “(The) biggest opportunity is gaining a better understanding of our audience.”

Attendee Marketing Challenges and Opportunities

The survey asked a number of questions about event producers' key challenges and opportunities for their attendee marketing efforts. Some of the key themes are highlighted in these comments:

- “A qualitative approach where less is more. We attempt to keep attendees warm by reducing the burn-out caused through over messaging.”
- “Behavioral psychographics, trying to understand why people attend, how often, why they don't attend.”
- “Identifying patterns to develop new messaging.”
- “Audience is aging; need to focus on obtaining the young professionals.”
- “Budget restraints and need to optimize time and money expenditure.”
- “Decision to attend closer to event. Watching their dollars closer than ever.”
- “Want more knowledge in a shorter time frame with opportunity to network.”
- “Breaking into affiliated audiences.”
- “Content marketing allows for year-round engagement.”

Why Attendees Attend

Education and networking are by far the two main reasons why attendees attend conventions and exhibitions. These are followed by seeing new products, staying current with trends, and maintaining industry relationships.

How Event Producers are Changing the Way They Present Value to Attendees

To drive attendance and add value, event producers are mainly promoting their unique and often enhanced networking opportunities. They are also stressing the business value of attending and educational content.

How Events are Enhancing the Attendee Experience

To enhance the attendee experience, event producers are improving their educational offerings as well as changing their session styles and formats. Many events are also adding more or upgrading their networking opportunities.

Marketing Efforts to Attract New Attendees

Over half of event producers are partnering with other organizations in their core industry as the main method for attracting new attendees. Nearly half of events are also doing the following: sourcing new lists; new messaging and targeting different segments; and working with exhibitors to target their clients and contacts.

2016 Attendance Marketing Budget Growth

The average attendance marketing budget has increased 4.2% for 2016.

Types of Keynote Speakers

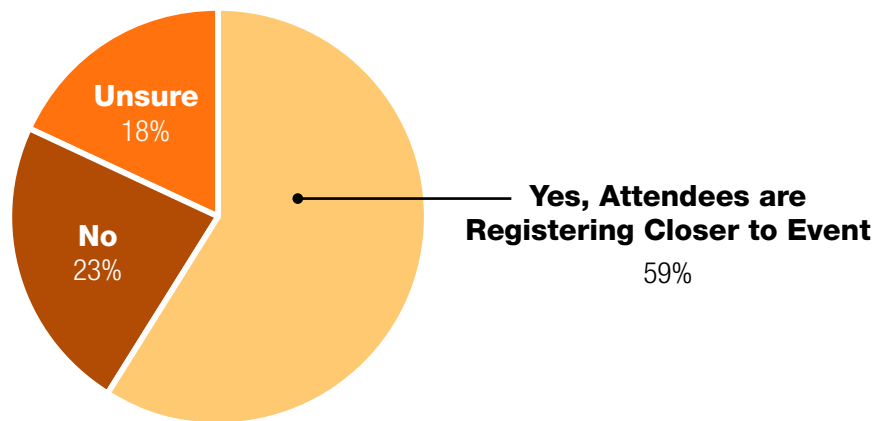
The most often used keynote speakers are industry leaders and innovators, according to 77% of the event producer respondents. Experts and authors are also booked by 48% of events.

Percentage of Pre-Registered that Attend

The average event sees 74% of the pre-registration list actually attend the event.

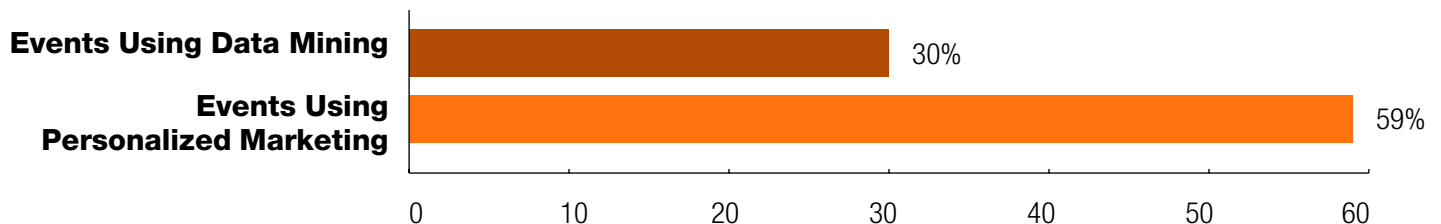
Attendees Register Closer to Event Dates

Fifty-nine percent of event producers say they are seeing attendees waiting longer to register closer to the event dates compared to a few years ago.



Data Mining and Personalized Marketing

Thirty percent of event producers are currently using data mining as part of their attendee marketing efforts, although 59% are using some type of personalized marketing as part of their audience development efforts.



The next section provides the full event producer survey findings.