DEVELOPING A DIGITAL EVENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

pcma | Digital Experience Institute

Long Game Focus

The industry is evolving from one that is focused on the quantity of the audience to the quality of the audience at events. It is no longer the more the better, but rather the type of targeted audience you reach and their behavior patterns that are important and valuable.

When creating a digital event, determining your desired outcomes and goals must be established first. Your goals must focus on the "long game" opposed to a single point in time event. You will gain insight into your customer's behavior and the engagement they have with your organization. This will drive your strategy and

Quick Tips

Every time you produce a digital event, ask yourself:

Q: Who do I want to reach?
Existing members, new members, industry insiders

Q: What are my desired outcomes?
Provide education, increase membership, improve engagement

What type of success metrics and analytics should you establish?

Metrics and Analytics

The type of success metrics and analytics you establish must depend greatly on your organization's business objectives.

Some organizations hold digital events as a member benefit while others produce them as paid content or an extension to their face-to-face event.

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

It is vital that metrics must be considered at the start of any project when you are setting goals and outcomes. By planning for it up front, you can determine what you would like to measure based on the goals of your event.

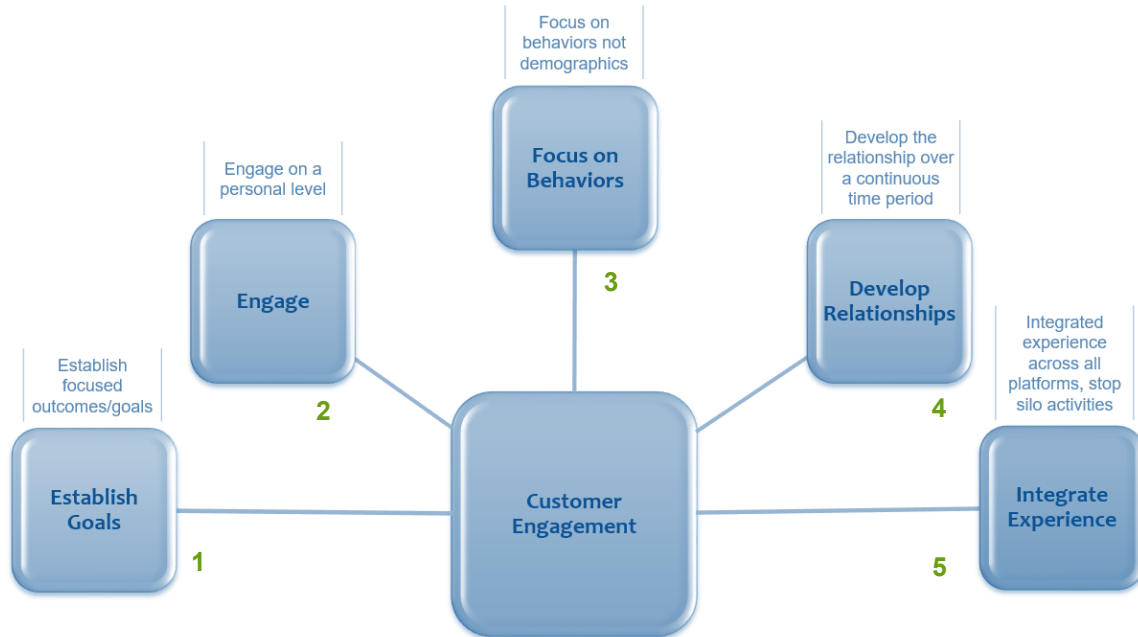| Types of Data	Examples	Data Impact
Hard Data	Number of leads or the revenue generated	Measures specific results objectively
Marketing Metrics	Brand awareness and perception, message communication or purchase intent	Valuable for capturing the event's impact on marketing results and assessing event activities

It is important to track this over a period of time (3 to 5 +years), business unit or customer segment. Below are a few options to consider for metrics:

- Number of registrants, attendees, registered but not attended, new attendees

- Number of attendees who are engaged (chat, downloads, time in event, completed sessions)

- Access to on-demand access after live event

- Revenue sales of both live and post event

- Lead generation for sponsors

- Customers purchases of other products such as: paid content, membership (new + renewal), F2F attendance

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

An engagement strategy will be your guide to engaging with the customers (member/non-member) by creating a personal journey. Personal interaction among the customers will allow you to build an active community for long-term opportunities. The customer journey focuses on building, engaging and retaining your audience.

Five critical steps for developing customer engagement:

Focus on behaviors not demographics

Focus on Behaviors

3

Engage on a personal level

Engage

2

Develop the relationship over a continuous time period

Develop Relationships

4

Establish focused outcomes/goals

Establish Goals

1

Customer Engagement

Integrated experience across all platforms, stop silo activities

Integrate Experience

5

Return on Investment (ROI) and Return on Engagement (ROE) Funnel

Focus on navigating your audience through desired outcomes. For example, the goal could be paid content or increasing membership or F2F event attendance.

By developing the engagement strategy which stretches across multiple platforms will set you in the path to reach your ROI and ROE.

Digital events can lead to incremental paid content or products by creating an active online community. The steps that follow will build, engage, and retain a community.

By engaging with this audience, your organization will be the industry thought leader and the audience will keep coming back, and they will ultimately be willing to pay for content or other revenue generating products.

Level 1
Awareness/Website

Level 2
Assets/Articles/Resources

Level 3
Social Media

Level 4
Digital Meeting/Webinars

Level 5
Paid Content/Products

PRE-EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Start the process of building a community with these steps below.

Activities:	Action Items:	Why:
Open your event early	• Provide sneak-peak to the content to a live moderated chat • Encourage attendees to create profiles (photos + bios)	• Encourages pre-event networking
Engage on social media	• Post topic discussions • Begin a campaign to get attendees excited • Create "bite-sized" information to be easily consumed • Focus on increase content sharing, benefits of attending, add pre-video of event, share blog posts, etc. • Participate in the discussions, demonstrate your interest and engagement for/with the audience	• Increases attendee participation • Nurtures the online conversations • Builds excitement about the event
Train speakers and moderators	• Create guidelines and best practices for moderators • Conduct a walk-through or practice session as needed	• Empowers presenters and moderators on how to best engage the remote audience • Familiarizes novice or new speakers to your process of moderating a session

IN-EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Design community engagement to create opportunities for active learning, not just passive learning.
Try some of the following ideas to get started.

- Group Chat
- Attendee warm up questions
- Gamification
- Exit action to group chat

- Second Screen
- SME in online chat room
- Virtual audience ability to ask live question
- Display live Twitter/Facebook feed

Quick Tip

Listen to what people are saying online.

By encouraging people to actively participate in conversations on social media will also allow you to see what people are saying about your event as your event is happening.

If someone is unhappy with something about your event and tweets about it, you'll be able to respond in real time and turn a potentially unhappy customer into one who feels valued.

POST-EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Send personalized emails.
- Thank them for coming.
- Remind attendees on-demand content and other event opportunities.
- Ask for feedback with a post event survey use incentive to secure more responses.

Continue the conversation on social media.
- Plan ahead which content to share after event, include photos, videos, interviews, etc.
- This will create a buzz around the on-demand content and keep attendees engaged after the event.

Host a live event and continue to promote.
Consider hosting a post live event to remind customers of your event's on-demand access.
- Online Forum
- Live moderated chat with SME
- Replay recorded session with live Q&A from speaker

Promotion Examples:
- Promote metrics – sessions viewed, time spent, continuing education credit
- Customer testimonials
- Memorable quotes of speakers and attendees
- Information on on-demand content
- Package content into channels – create learning paths for incremental sales

Establishing the "long game" can prove the tremendous impact of ROI and ROE to your organization. By following this approach, establishing the goals and outcomes at the beginning of your process, measuring metrics over the determined period of time and creating an engaged community, you will construct the key to success in creating a long term plan with significant ROI and ROE.

Remember, if you don't know where you are going (goals), you won't know when you get there.

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