



**5 Proven Strategies
to Drive
Attendee Engagements
at Events in 2022**

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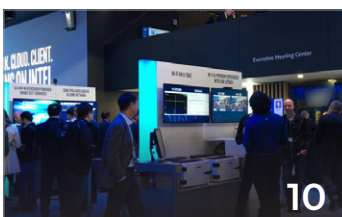
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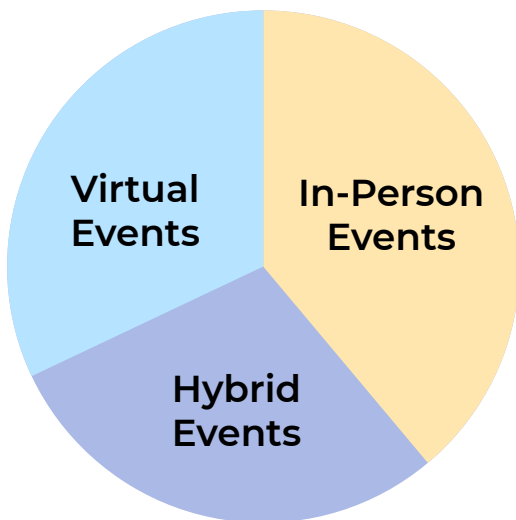
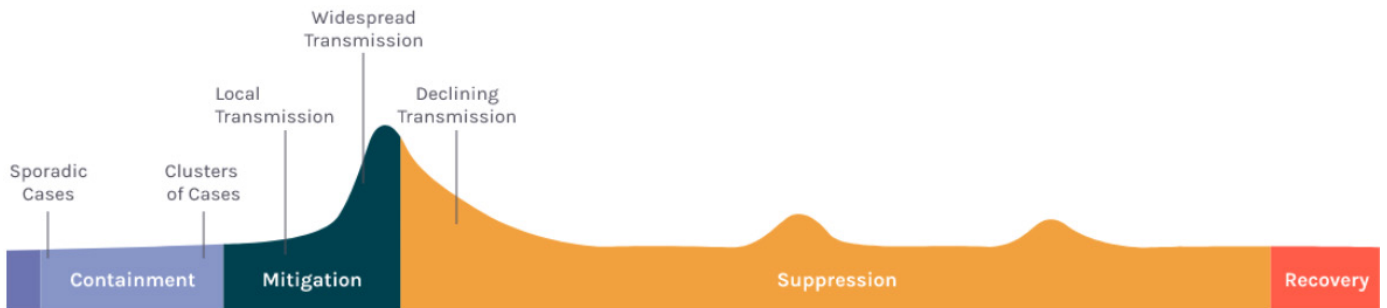
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Complexity in Managing Events

Conferences and trade shows as we know them have changed radically over the past two years. Based on past pandemics, we can expect events in 2022 to come back in the stretched-out “suppression stage” which can include a few disruptive bumps as we recently experienced with variants.



2022 New-Normal

However, event marketers are adopting new processes and applying enhanced tools to manage events during this period with a combination of hybrid, virtual and in-person events depending on location, regional restrictions, tools, and budgets.

While on one hand the level of complexity in managing events has risen, the opportunities and options to drive more value from events as a source of customer engagement is reasserting itself based on attendee interests and the enterprise’s desire to re-engage.

Understanding the new technologies and tools to increase event effectiveness from all the choices can be daunting in this era of uncertainty. However, the goals are clear and have always stayed consistent for more than a decade. This is best illustrated by a survey of event marketers. Back in 2019, 82% of event marketers believed that “live engagement” is an important KPI to measure success at any event.

A simple definition of live engagements is, they are real-time conversations between two or more businesses, irrespective of whether they are in-person or virtual.

Live engagements can be 1-to-1 business meetings such as demos, an expert on the executive meetings, PR or AR meetings as well as 1-to-many business meetings such as breakout sessions, booth tours, and roundtables. The goal of these real-time business meetings is to advance the buyer’s journey for a fruitful business outcome for all parties.

Live engagements involve striking up real-time conversations between two or more businesses at any stage in the sales process

1-to-1 Meeting

Simplify the booking of more expert and executive meetings, and product demos at user conferences, trade shows and roadshows

1-to-Many Engagements

Increase attendance for tracks and sessions, booth tours, webinars using inbound and outbound methods

In this white paper, we will review 5 proven pragmatic approaches that have helped event marketers like you to optimize and get the right kind of attendee engagements at their events in 2022.



Strategies to take your event to the next level

The objective of any industry or corporate event is usually to create and advance business opportunities. Events are a perfect opportunity to meet a lot of customers and prospects in a quick time frame. Therefore, employing best practices to bring about the best result is crucial to having a successful event.

1. Always plan for hybrid meetings

As the uncertainty of events continues, your target customers still want to meet your experts and understand your offerings to achieve their business goals. However, the choice of their mode-of-attendance can be different. Many wish they could meet in-person for a better experience while others prefer to work from the comfort of their homes and avoid the challenges of travel and crowded areas.

A recent McKinsey survey suggests that 90% of organizations will adopt hybrid work culture as they emerge from Covid restrictions. However, each hybrid event plan will have varying levels of emphasis for in-person and virtual/digital activities. This new model will require a change in the way in which B2B meetings are managed. Meetings at events that provide the option for in-person attendees and participants that also join remotely seem an inevitable component of our “new normal.”

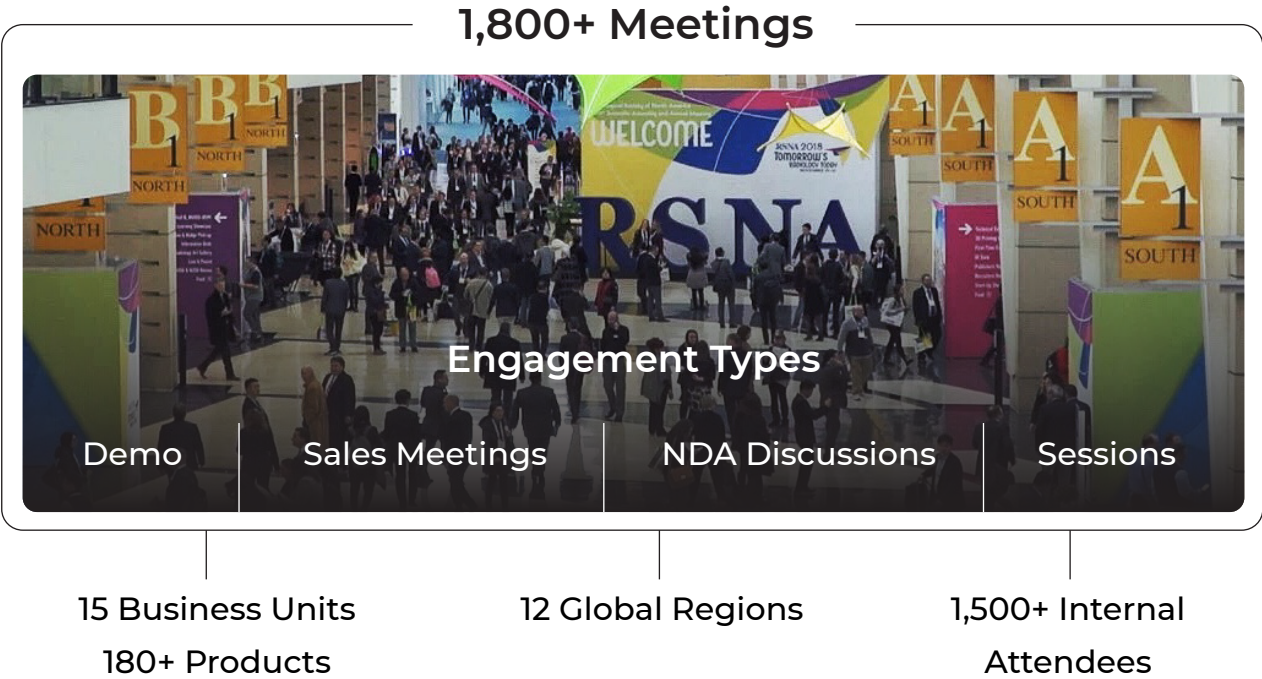
Many companies are also innovating tools and processes to enhance the meeting attendee’s experience.



As Satya Nadella, Chairman and CEO at Microsoft, recently mentioned in his article - The hybrid work paradox - [We want to ensure those joining remotely are always first-class participants.](#)

Several customers discovered the value of hybrid meetings in the event mix to drive a number of customer engagements and drive better results. One multinational healthcare device provider planned and executed hybrid strategies for a variety of meeting types including demos, nda discussions, sales meetings, and sessions which enabled more than 15 business units across 12 global regions were able to drive more than 1800 meetings and many of them were hybrid ones.

Global Healthcare Company at RSNA



One essential step for any event in 2022 is to give your attendees an option to join meetings remotely. This flexibility removes the anxiety about committing to a future meeting when the global travel restrictions and constraints play a significant role in deciding in-person attendance. Customers and prospects would love to know if they are able to meet the company expert or executives even when there are any changes.

When hybrid meetings are always made available, irrespective of the event type, external and internal meeting participants are given the flexibility they need to match their preferences for business to business engagements. Let's look into how to easily manage hybrid meetings.

2. Enable customers and partners to request and book meetings

Let's look at the traditional way of booking meetings back in 2019, salespeople try to find out which of their customers are attending a particular event. They know which executives and experts from their own company are available to meet during the event. This allows them to schedule meetings, demos, executive meetings or dinner meetings, or whatever best suits the stage of the sales process..

With the advent of more virtual and hybrid meetings, more digital tools have become popular to manage events. One significant advancement that many event planners have been able to offer is to enable event attendees to directly request meetings with experts or executives online. These are known as inbound meeting requests. These start with links that can be embedded in the event websites, landing pages, and other customer-facing touchpoints. The inbound meeting request workflow provides a flexible way to capture meeting context, requested time slots, support for time zones, and video conferencing links to process the meeting request. The attendees can click a link and submit a meeting request that can be either automatically approved or manually processed for approval.

Landing Page

Appointment Booking Page

Add a link to Meeting Request into your event site, to allow attendees to select engagement type, topic of interest and available time slots

3. Know your team member's availability and exceptions

A big challenge is tracking your internal attendee's availability for customer engagements. What are their profiles? What is their topic of expertise? This is important to take sales to the next level, i.e taking a hard qualified lead to the meeting level. Especially when you need to know what time zone a prospect is available to speak.

You need to be able to track the movement and availability of experts and executives. For example, if you have 20 people coming in, you might be able to track it on a spreadsheet. But if you have two hundred people coming in or more, it becomes quite tricky and you need a way to solve that.



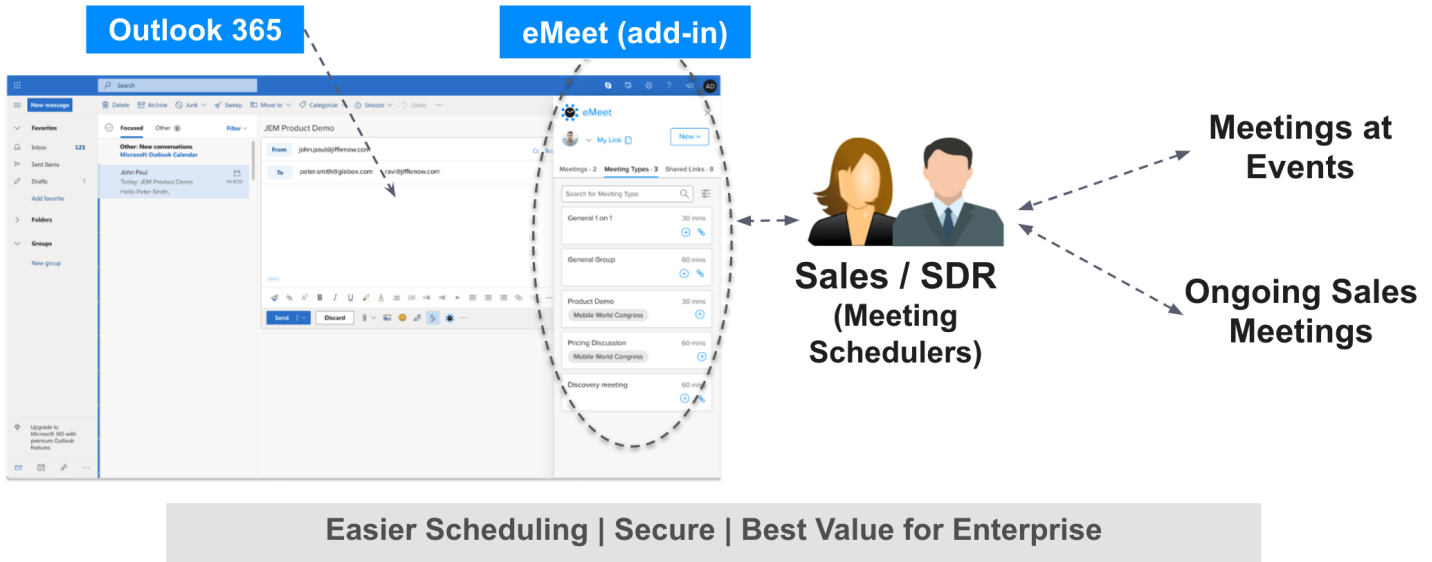
The manual process to find availability often requires back-and-forth emails and calls and often to team members who are in different time zones. This is where you need to streamline the scheduling experience and create an efficient system to book more meetings with customers.

Utilize a digital way of tracking all internal event attendee's profiles with their current location (needed in case of remote participation) as well as their contact information. The system needs to allow them to set their own availability hours and days of the event. People can set their availability for every event or campaign. They should also be able to set exceptions for certain days and hours depending on travel and other commitments. This makes it really easy for event managers, campaign managers, and marketers to be able to automatically find the right resource to book and schedule meetings.

4. Fix the sales pain point

The fourth strategy that we'd like to recommend is fixing the pain point that salespeople face. Meetings at events or ongoing sales meetings with customers advance the buyer's journey and yet the sales teams find it requires sending emails back and forth to external and internal participants to check when they are available for meetings. This can be frustrating and time-consuming which impacts the number of business engagements they can pre-schedule. Calendaring softwares such as Outlook and GCal are used to send meeting invitations after many emails or phone calls to find the best time to meet, or it gets rejected for lack of unavailability. Sometimes these processes can require as many as 14 emails to book a meeting.

Whether you plan to have a group meeting or 1-1 appointments, sales reps want to ensure that they have the right internal experts and executives available to make most of the customer engagement during the event. A scheduling app that is embedded into Outlook email/calendar software can be used to send an email with a meeting link with just a single click. This link shares the availability with external invitees. All the processing to find available time slots, desired duration, location, video conferencing can be automated. The scheduling app takes care of reminders and notifications for meeting participants based on user preference settings.



5. Customer engagement journey increases event value

Events are a hub of activity and business advancement. Attendees consider events as an investment that will help them further business objectives. For event marketers and sales teams, meetings are the building blocks of marketing campaigns. Most often, the number and quality of meetings that are being organized is a direct indicator of the company's efforts and strategy.

Prospects and customers are all in different stages of your sales cycle, so to achieve the best outcomes your event strategy should also offer various types of engagements. One size does not fit all. There are two broad categories of engagement types.

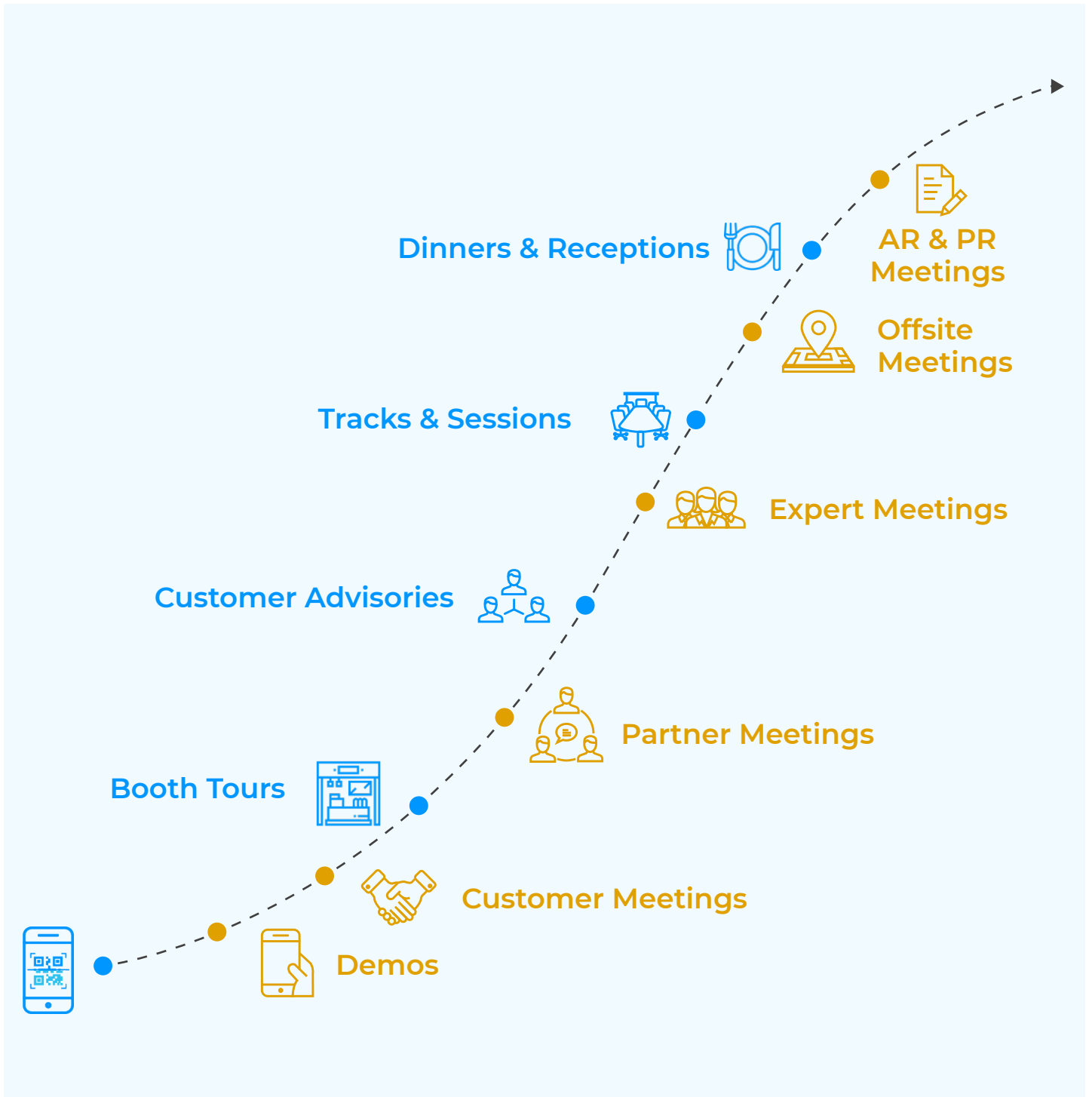


One-to-one business meetings offer a variety of meeting types such as product demos, expert meetings, executive meetings, roundtables, press meetings, and analyst meetings. All these meetings can have unique workflows tied to specific experts and executives so the scheduling experience can be automated.

One-to-many engagements typically involve more participants from multiple businesses. These are the formats where you can have expert-led sessions for educating attendees on your product and services, managed booth tours where you can showcase your exhibits to a broader audience while also capturing notes, feedback, book follow-on meetings.

Before you plan these engagements, map out the journey attendees may take at the event. These steps should be relevant and offer a natural flow from one activity to another. For example an attendee may start with a demo and express a desire to have an expert meeting or attend a session on the topic, similarly, a booth tour can result in a sit-down meeting or an expert-led-product demo.


Engagement journeys increase Impact of Event





Conclusion: Stay the course

Last two years have witnessed a shift in event experience and expectations. In some ways, hybrid events offer the best of both worlds. Whether it's an in-person meeting onsite or a virtual meeting in the weeks that follow, there are hundreds of ways to engage prospects and customers so you can educate, boost consideration and build your sales pipeline and revenue potential. The trick is to provide as many pathways and opportunities as possible for key prospects and customers to self-book and define their own buyer journey. If you can also automate the entire meeting set-up and follow-up process, you'll be well on your way to maximizing the results of your virtual, hybrid, and in-person events this year.



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at Events to Build a
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