Why Your Events Fail to Drive Business

Spectacle is seductive, but a **Meeting Automation Platform** turns attendees into loyal customers

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Introduction

At today's high-tech conferences, attendees can expect a carnival atmosphere that has more in common with the Cannes Film Festival than it does with the Silicon Valley.

These events are usually parties of special magnificence: keynote speakers range from high-profile media personalities to presidential candidates; the headline entertainers can be big names, such as Elton John and U2; and, of course, there will be the buzz and pageantry of endless booth vendor carnival barkers to outjockey each other for the attention of attendees by relying on old tricks ranging from seductive booth sirens to ridiculous swag giveaways.

Colossal events, such as OracleWorld, Dreamforce, and CES to name a few, can attract upwards to 200,000 attendees and cost millions to produce. They are monumental undertakings. With so much money and resources required to create these large-scale productions, there's often one question that nags at CMOs and VP/Director of Events:

Is it worth it?

The ultimate goal of these events is to turn attendees into customers by virtue of having high-value strategic meetings where customers are connected to the appropriate company representative best-suited to understand and solve their business challenges.

Yet, this rarely happens. Oftentimes conference attendees are as elusive as Cinderella rushing to and from the Royal Ball. They come, dance the night away, and clandestinely dart off into the night before you've even gotten their name. If you're lucky, they will leave a glass slipper in the form of a business card tossed somewhere forgotten. But good luck trying to match that card to the needs and wants of the attendee.

With such a historically poor success rate of turning attendees into sales opportunities, VP of Events are often resigned — once the party is over and the stage is bare — to ponder these questions:

- How can I better recruit customers and prospects to attend, visit, and engage in our events?

- Why can't I turn gathered leads to business opportunities?

- Can I prove and report an event ROI while also holding costs to budget and delivering value from events?

- Am I getting the right people from my company to participate in these meetings?

- What tools will help me turn attendees into customers?

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To help companies maximize the business results of their conference events, Jifflenow, the cloud-based Meeting Automation Platform (MAP) pioneer, has created a software solution designed to increase the number and quality of strategic meetings. With input from Jifflenow, customers, partners, and top analysts, we share first-hand insights into the following topics :

- The psychology of why event marketing works

- The reasons why event marketing fails

- How a MAP advances sales opportunities, increases win rates, and significantly reduces the effort needed to book more meetings at events

- How a cloud-based MAP solution can dramatically change the outcome of your events

With a modern cloud-based MAP solution, you're not only guaranteed a party of special magnificence but an event that results in customer acquisitions, sales and an ROI of major business value.

"Meeting Automation Platform (MAP)" is a category of software that automates workflows associated with pre-meeting planning, in-meeting management, and post-meeting analysis and follow-up.

AUTOMATION

INTEGRATION

Pre-Meeting Scheduling

In-Meeting Management

Post-Meeting Analytics

SECURITY & COMPLIANCE

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The Psychology of Why Event Marketing Works

In today's digital marketing world — with Skype, FaceTime, Slack, LinkedIn, and, of course, email — some might wonder if face-to-face meetings are outdated and unnecessary. When it comes to accelerating deals and turning prospects into customers, research consistently proves that when it comes to getting deals done, meeting someone in person, making eye contact, and giving a good old fashion firm handshake never goes out of style.

Research in the **Harvard Business Review** and the **Journal of Experimental Social Psychology** proved that face-to-face meetings could be 34 times more effective than emails when it comes to influencing transactions.

From a psychological perspective, there are many "duh" reasons why face-to-face meetings surpass digital means of communication; these include non-verbal cues, intimacy, mimicry, subtlety, and humor that isn't translated well by social media, email, or even video conferencing technology. A report by the Event Marketing Institute supports this claim by stating that 98% of consumers feel more inclined to make a purchase decision after attending an experiential brand activation. Smart companies increasingly understand the power of using events to reach prospects.

> According to Event Marketer, 49% of organizations increased their event volume in 2018. Additionally, a recent study by Harvard Business Review found that event marketing drives more business value than other marketing channels in over half of the corporations they surveyed.

Research states there will be a continued evolution of brand activations at events with experiences that will be increasingly immersive, hands-on, personal—and most importantly—sharable. While only 32% of event organizers today rate experiential marketing as a priority this will increase significantly in the future.
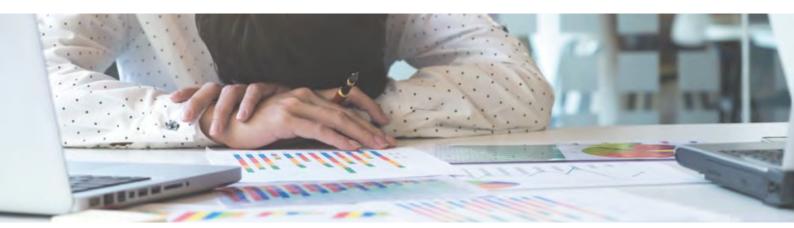
With so much good news about why events work, why are so many companies unable to take advantage of these opportunities to connect with attendees?

The Reason Why Event Marketing Fails

Before we begin to delve into buzzwords, such as "Meeting Automation Platform (MAP," "new business automation software category" and "API-enabled enterprise applications", let's define a "strategic meeting."

In the business vernacular, strategic meetings are defined as B2B engagements between Executives, Subject Matter Experts and their external target audience, such as prospects, customers, press, analysts, suppliers, investors, etc. that result in sales growth, partnerships, business development, market influence, and investments.

The dense sentence you just read literally speaks to the complexity of coordinating strategic meetings in the context of a massive event.

Historically, companies have failed to coordinate strategic event meetings due to a reliance on outdated paper-based management tools. Spreadsheet or document-based calendars and other manual meeting processes get more unwieldy and cumbersome as the number of meetings scale for an event that spans several days.

The problem with paper-based processes gets particularly worrisome when you look at the blind spots and gaps in communication that occur between each of a meeting's three stages: the planning and scheduling that occurs in the pre-meeting stage; the management of the in-meeting stage and the measurement and analysis that takes place post-meeting.

Between each stage of the meeting lifecycle, the ball gets dropped due to the large volume of requests and requirements and each company's unique need for approvals, participation criteria, and lack of information needed to make decisions. Between stages, the information when managing hundreds (or thousands) of meetings within a single conference becomes complex, error-prone, and insecure when solely depending on either spreadsheet-based tools or using basic meeting scheduling software.

One of the most obvious problems associated with manual processes is that requests for meetings are neither clearly defined nor responded to in a timely fashion. And that's just the tip of the meeting-mishap iceberg.

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According to Jifflenow CMO Ravi Chalaka, an overlooked issue associated with manual processes is coordinating meeting room availability at such events. "There are multiple places meetings can happen. It could be in a constructed room within the exhibit itself, a demo station outside the room on the exhibit floor, a nearby hotel suite, or even at the session presented by a company executive."

He continues, "These kinds of details are difficult for people to keep track of in the form of manual documents or emails or spreadsheets. When everything is automated into a single software that keeps track of what's available, what's blocked, what's not, and if a room is booked, it immediately, dynamically updates the data. Without a digitized process, trying to keep all of these meeting details straight can be a nightmare."

The phrase "herding cats" has never been more accurately applied than when it is spoken in relation to the difficulty of coordinating strategic meetings. Chalaka points out that Event Directors must play matchmaker for a cast of thousands.

"These events require the participation of Meeting Requestors (usually sales), Meeting Coordinators (from events team) or temp staff, Executive Admins (assisting C-level and VPs schedule), Event Coordinators and event staff (including temps or people from remote offices where events take place), and Back Office analysts," says Chalaka. "The handoffs can cause issues, manual errors, and wrong time zones. Meeting attendees both external and internal frequently change plans and this becomes more complicated to manage due to the duration (three to five days) of most events."

Another historical problem confounding CMOs and VP of Events is a general murkiness in the ability to measure event results. **According to a recent study by Harvard Business Review, only 23% of Event Managers say they can calculate ROI for events.**

Companies typically measure event success by the number of attendees at speaking sessions, and other customer activities, such as receptions, demos, booth tours, etc. Attendee data can be based on the attendance of customers, prospects, analysts, press, partners etc. But this hardly translates into ROI data and use of subjective surveys before and after events do little to add clarity. With the average CMO allocating 24% of their total annual budget to live events, Event Marketers are under pressure to get their data house in order or say goodbye to their event budget.

Today, CRM solutions such as Salesforce and marketing automation software like Marketo provide workflow support and visibility into where a prospect is on their customer journey; unfortunately, these applications don't focus on the significance of strategic B2B meetings. A more sophisticated modern approach to managing meetings and gathering data is needed. Modern MAPs can improve and measure effectiveness at all three phases: pre-, in-, and post-meeting.

The Power of MAP Software

Aragon Research | **According to Aragon Research, over 50% of global enterprises will implement MAP by 2021.**

To simplify, streamline and increase the scheduling of strategic meetings while creating a better experience for event attendees, more companies are investing in Meeting Automation Platforms (MAP). With more and more customers attending events in larger numbers to engage with companies and their solutions, not having a MAP is an unnecessary business risk.

MAP is a category of software that automates workflows associated with pre-meeting planning, in-meeting management, and post-meeting analysis and follow-up. A comprehensive MAP increases the number and quality of strategic meetings and is especially effective for enterprises that need to manage high volumes of strategic meetings at events, briefing centers, roadshows, sales meetings, and training forums.

A report by Aragon Research defines Meeting Automation Platform as software that offers these key meeting automation capabilities:

- Automated scheduling, management, and analysis

- Integrations via APIs

- Mobile-first apps for ease of use

- Role-based security that gives internal users access on a need-to-know basis

- Compliance to ensure that regulations such as GDPR are supported

- Enterprise-scale to thousands and millions of meetings

- Digitize meeting data for tracking from marketing and sales management software

- The ability to recommend meetings that need to take place to drive an outcome

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MAP solutions automate meeting request flows, that results in error-free meetings and a shortened approval process; which in turn, eliminates the need for back-and-forth emails, lowers risks of double-booking and time zone issues and establish a meeting request workflow that makes inviting external and internal attendees quick and easy.

A modern best-in-class MAP solution integrates with sales and marketing software, such as CRM, marketing automation, badge scanners, event registration, and event mobile applications. Additionally, MAP applications offer enterprise-class security and comply with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

But not all MAPs are built the same. A cloud solution has the ability to eliminate the need for hardware, constant upgrades, and updates. It also bridges siloed on-premise systems, and helps scale as needed. This is why Jifflenow is the global market leader in MAP.

"VPs of Events want to simplify the meeting process to increase the number and quality of meetings by sharing the right information with the right attendees ' says Chalaka. "I hear a constant need for a meeting solution that considers mobility, security, and compliance with regulations like GDPR; a solution that should integrate with existing business software to exchange meetings and customer data and calendars to notify meeting confirmations and analytics."

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The Jifflenow Advantage

With Jifflenow, companies are not just investing in a MAP solution but a complete meeting solution ecosystem. Jifflenow integrates with sales, marketing, calendaring and 3rd party event software. And the solution's robust APIs let other tools integrate and sync data with the platform.

The advanced SaaS platform offers customers superior enterprise-class analytics, security, GDPR compliance, and integration with leading sales and marketing software. And Jifflenow's Professional Services team fully customizes the solution to meet specific customer needs and use-case.

Because Jifflenow is a cloud-based MAP, it can scale to keep up with the needs of the most demanding enterprises that schedule thousands of meetings every year. That's why Jifflenow is the most trusted MAP solution in the world with hundreds of enterprise customers and over 50 Fortune 1000 companies.

A Jifflenow survey targeted at VP of Events reports an average 85% reduction in scheduling efforts, up to 40% increase in meetings scheduled and 95% meeting confirmation rate. These numbers make CMOs jump for joy.

Events are among the top two marketing expenses for most enterprises. Marketing teams want to produce higher ROI from these massive expenses and maximize opportunities for company executives and experts to meet with attendees.

"Our solution is especially effective for enterprises that need to manage high volumes of strategic meetings at events, briefing centers, roadshows, sales meetings, and training forums," says Chalaka. "The software automates meeting workflows associated with pre-meeting planning, in-meeting management, and post-meeting analysis and follow-up."

Ravi Chalaka, CMO

Jifflenow helps enterprises accelerate business growth by automating the scheduling, management, and analysis of strategic meetings at events, briefing centers, roadshows, executive sessions, and training forums. Jifflenow makes sure you find attendees, meet them, help them, and turn them into happy customers.

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ACI Worldwide is a universal payments (UP) company that powers electronic payments worth $14 Trillion each day. According to Michael Grillo, Director of Marketing the company's objective was to maximize the event ROI by increasing the customer engagement and pipeline at NRF 2018. By using Jifflenow, the company experienced the following benefits:

62%
of meetings resulted in adding or advancing sales pipeline

90%
of meetings had pre-defined objectives

68%
of meetings had CXO/VP-level participants

The impact a modern MAP has across the entire meeting management lifecycle:

Pre-Meeting Activities
Strategy:

- Identify issues that require meetings and appropriate meeting participants
- Create agenda
- Develop compelling invitation message personalized for the invitee

Management and Logistics:

- Automated meeting scheduling
- Confirm availability for participants
- Reserve/book meeting space
- Track changes

Communications:

- Invite all participants
- Provide sufficient context to entice invitees to attend
- Send reminders as appropriate and any change notifications

In-Meeting Activities
Manage:

- Record/log check-in/out of participants
- Document and display any commitments for follow-up activities

Measure:

- Automated analytics management
- Collect data for any required analysis, including behavioral notes and surveys
- Track individual contributions, questions, and commitments

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Post-Meeting Activities

Analyze:

- Use descriptive analytics to evaluate the meeting
- Use predictive analytics and/or machine learning to identify the next best actions

Follow-up:

- Send any requested/promised materials
- Schedule any activities required for commitments
- Send appropriate thank you notes
- Update institutional memory (integrated enterprise applications)

"I recommend Jifflenow because it helps streamline and simplify scheduling meetings at events.

- Michael Grillo
Director – Marketing, ACI worldwide

Jifflenow is the world's #1 Meeting Automation Platform (MAP) that helps enterprises accelerate business growth by automating the scheduling, management, and analysis of strategic meetings at events, briefing centers, roadshows, executive sessions, and training forums. This advanced SaaS platform offers enterprise-class analytics, security, GDPR compliance and integration with leading sales and marketing software. Jifflenow is the most trusted MAP with over 200 enterprise customers including numerous Fortune 1000 companies.

The company is backed by Sequoia Capital, Accel, and Saama Capital and is based in San Jose, California.

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THE WORLD'S #1 MEETING AUTOMATION PLATFORM