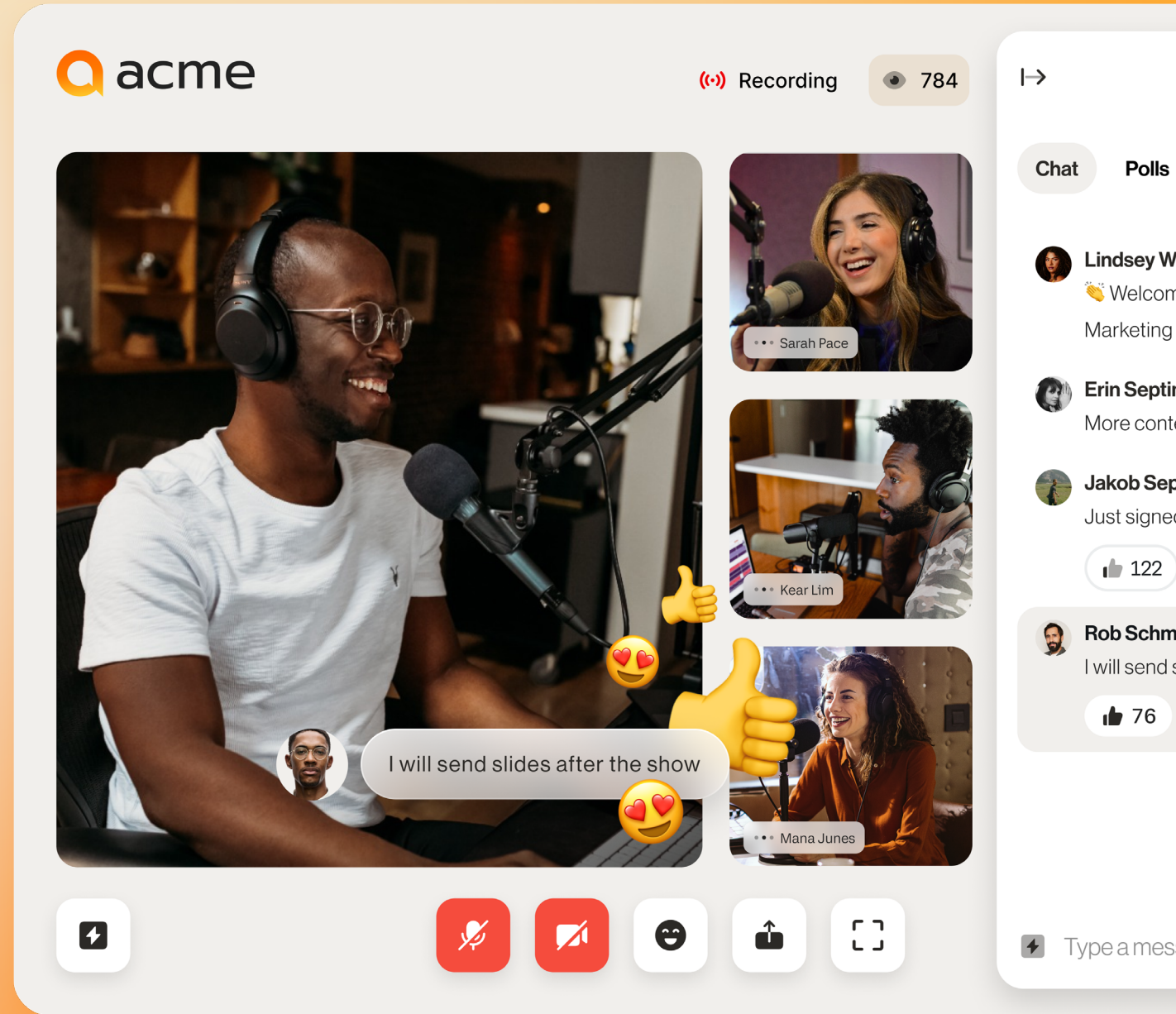


The critical role of events in modern marketing strategies



Introduction: The transition from traditional channels

With traditional marketing channels facing challenges like ad fatigue and declining returns on investment, a shift towards more innovative strategies that prioritize audience engagement and interaction has been slowly building steam.

One part of the marketing mix that is undergoing possibly the most significant transformation as part of this trend? Events.

81%

To a certain extent, this change has been out of necessity. It's not as easy anymore to throw splashy and expensive events, thanks to marketing budgets falling to a post-pandemic low.

Leaders have also been driving this reset in strategy—81% of US CMOs believe their customers are suffering from digital fatigue and need an elevated event experience to drive and maintain engagement.

Event marketing is no longer about just putting on a big annual conference and coordinating venues, hotels, and logistics. It's also about being more thoughtful and strategic when it comes to audience engagement, customer-centricity, and experiential marketing—an undertaking that starts months before the event itself, all the way to months after it ends.

While it may seem like a lot of work, it's worth it—other than events, there are just no other marketing channels that provide this kind of scale and potential for two-way engagement and community building.

In this guide, we'll walk through how to thoughtfully integrate events into your marketing strategy and turn every event into a content and insights engine that keeps attendees engaged, invested, and coming back—long after the post-event party has wrapped and everyone has logged off the final keynote.

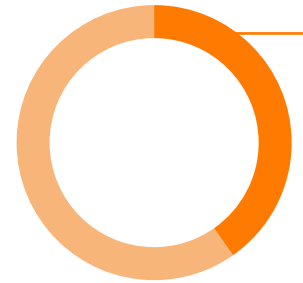


Revenue driver, content engine & engagement hub: The role and impact of events in modern marketing

Events in the past tended to be time-consuming, expensive, and high-effort. But for many companies, it was justifiable because they were seen as the best way to foster meaningful interactions, build communities, and cultivate lasting relationships with customers in different regions. On a more concrete level, marketing teams also leaned on events to build awareness, drive new leads, and also nurture existing leads.

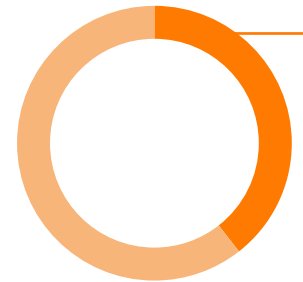
Events can still do all of those things today. But how they do them has changed.

Even though in-person events are making a long-awaited comeback, companies aren't exactly returning to the "old normal." Virtual events aren't just a phrase—and they're not going away anytime soon. The cost of putting on in-person events has only increased, with



47%

[of event planners and managers](#) saying that costs are the top area of dissatisfaction



53%

of respondents in [The Freeman Trends Report](#) say that online events are a top source for training and educational content

The benefits of virtual events, like sustainability, lower costs, greater accessibility for attendees, and more accurate tracking and reporting data, all remain the same. Plus, event technology has advanced significantly to make it incredibly simple to set up and run everything from small CAB (Customer Advisory Board) sessions to full-scale conferences. That's why it's crucial to consider an integrated in-person and virtual approach when it comes to your events strategy, whether you're running field events, webinars, or user conferences.

An event shouldn't be just a big one or two-day affair that happens in-person once a year—and to still treat it like one means you're missing out on an opportunity to:

- Power a self-sustaining social, blog, and video content engine.
- Create an experience that engages audiences for months, not days.
- Build long-term connections for your brand.
- Increase CLV (Customer Lifetime Value) by creating more engaged customers who are likely to make repeat purchases and remain loyal to the brand over time.
- Experiment with higher-frequency, lower-complexity events to create more community-building touchpoints.
- Amplify and integrate events into broader marketing campaigns.

... Just to name a few.



9 ways to modernize your event strategy.

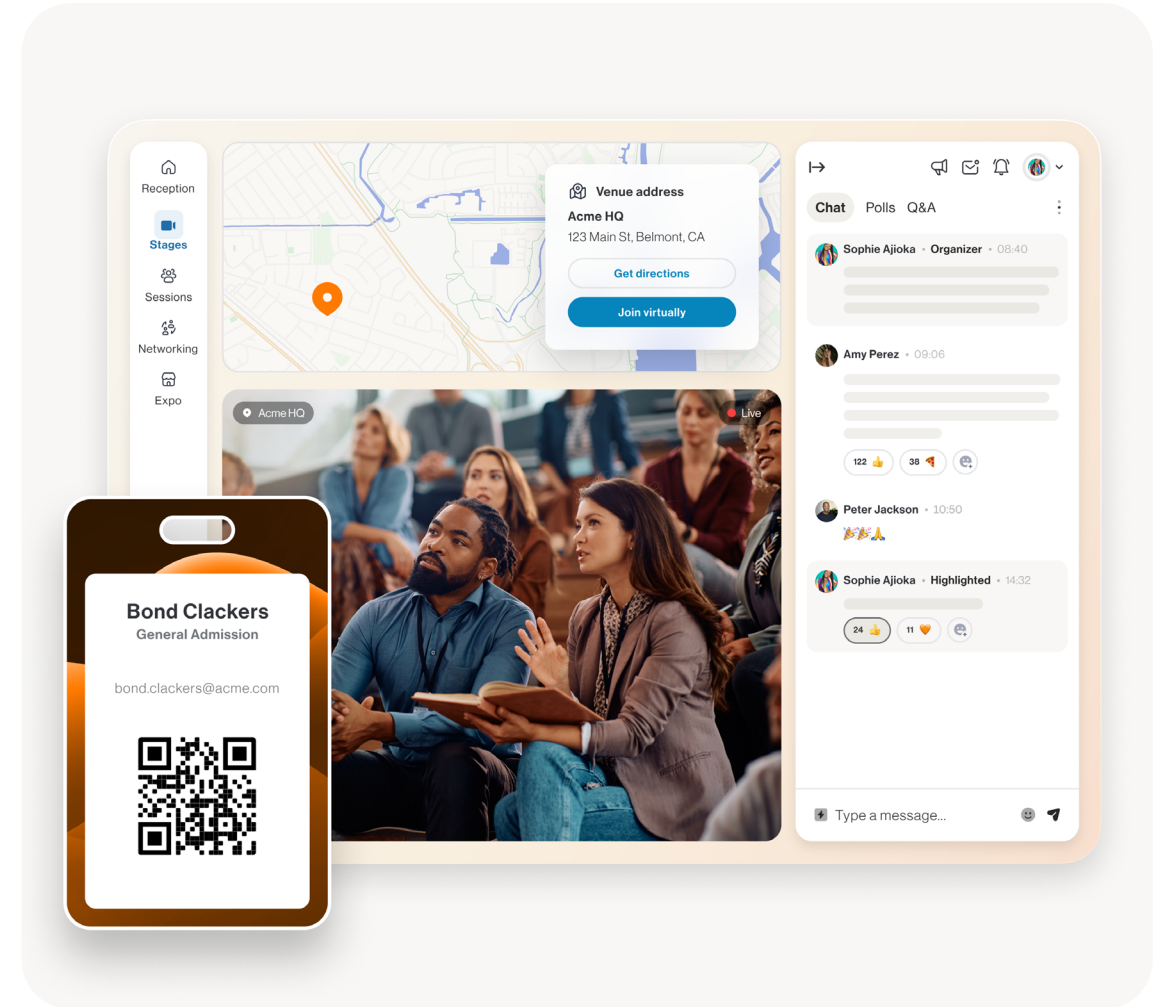
So, how can marketing teams create shared experiences through events and strengthen bonds with attendees, turning them into loyal advocates for the brand? Here are nine ways to maximize audience engagement at every step of the event planning and execution process:

1. Use a streamlined tech stack

Almost a fifth (19%) of marketers have to manage [four to seven different event technology providers](#) to meet their needs. Add other day-to-day tools like communication and file sharing apps to that list, and the average event marketer is likely juggling 10 or more apps every day.

A streamlined tech stack doesn't just improve efficiency and productivity by reducing the sheer number of tools and windows that event teams have to constantly toggle between. It also means that event data is centralized—or at least, consolidated in fewer tools—so that marketers can automate repetitive tasks (like syncing data) and access insights more easily.

This saved time and effort not only frees up your time to focus on finding ways to engage with attendees, it also simplifies the tracking of event-related data. It may seem like a small thing, but having data in a single source of truth (instead of three or four different tools) makes it much easier to find and analyze information about attendee interactions and preferences. And ultimately, this enables marketers to tailor their messaging, content, and engagement more effectively.



That's why it's important to have a complete event management solution (instead of one tool for webinars and another for video conferences, for example) that offers a high level of flexibility for webinars, virtual, hybrid, and in-person events.

A large app marketplace with integrations to tap into existing apps and streamlining your workflows will also help you save a ton of time and minimize manual data entry like copying and pasting contact profiles back and forth.

2. Use interactive elements

Incorporating interactive elements during the event is also important, both for engaging attendees and also to elicit real-time feedback.

From live polls at in-person sessions to virtual chat threads to social media monitoring, there's a huge variety of interactive elements you can leverage to talk to attendees and get feedback instantly.

This strategy is especially useful for virtual events, where it can be challenging to keep attendees engaged throughout the entire online session.



“Incorporating polls into the webinar, encouraging people to drop things in the chat, and using breakout room functionality [create] incentives for people to stick around for the whole event.”

Source: Survey response from a 2024 RingCentral Events survey of Demand Generation and Growth Marketing Directors, Marketing Directors, and Brand Marketing Directors

3. Don't just focus on in-person

While it may be tempting to dedicate more planning and resources to creating an excellent in-person experience, don't forget about your virtual attendees.

Try to ensure that you've got as much parity as possible between your in-person and virtual event experience. Leverage interactive elements such as live polls and breakout rooms, and use social media and event apps to keep virtual and hybrid attendees informed and engaged before, during, and after the event. Maybe you can create exclusive content or provide perks for online attendees, such as virtual swag bags or special virtual meet-and-greets with speakers.

With event platforms like RingCentral Events, you can build out a full virtual venue with a main stage, breakout sessions, networking, expo, and more. And the experience is fully customizable too—upload your company's branded banners, branding, logos, and text.

The screenshot displays the RingCentral Events interface for an event titled "First-Gens in Tech 2024" hosted by Acme. The interface is divided into three main sections:

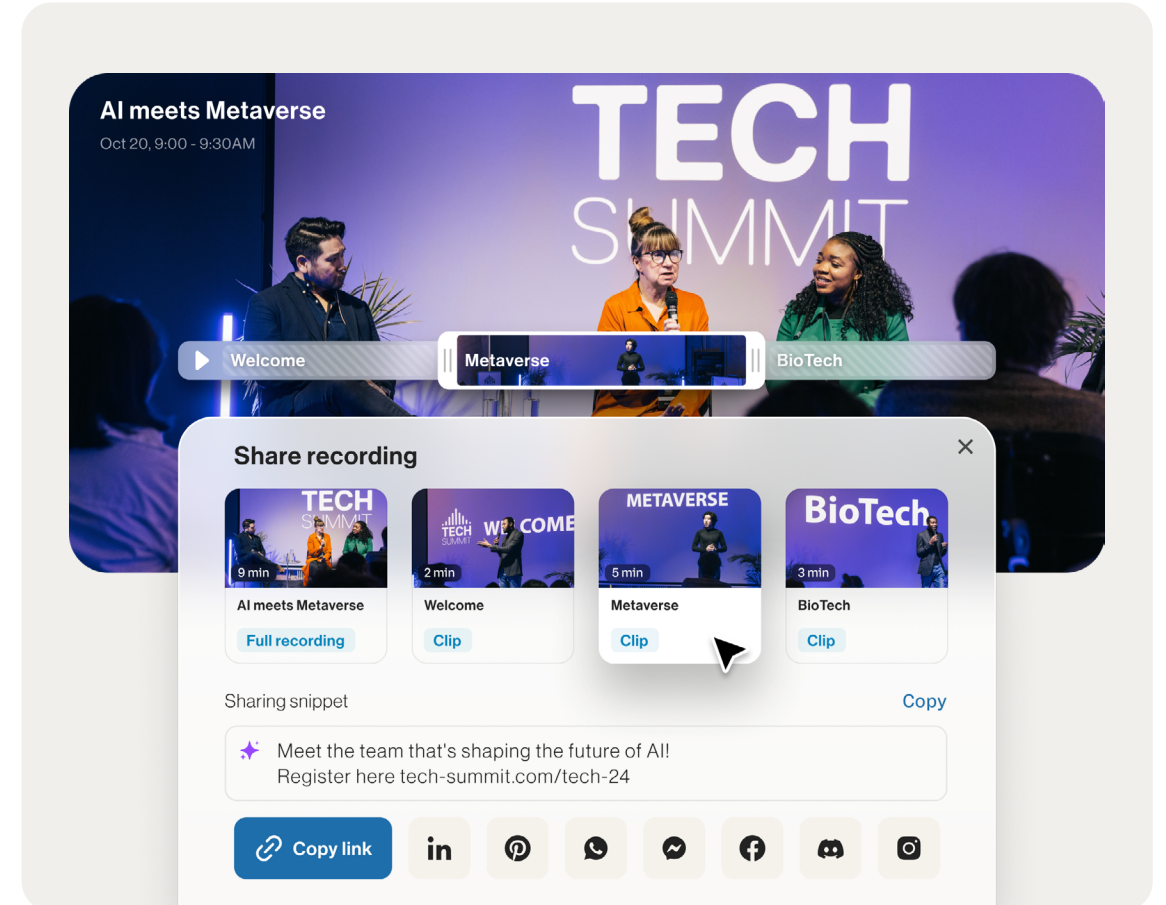
- Left Sidebar:** A vertical navigation menu with icons for Reception (highlighted), Stages, Sessions, and Networking.
- Main Content Area:**
 - Header:** A large orange banner with the text "First-Gens in Tech" and a smartphone graphic.
 - Event Details:** "First-Gens in Tech 2024" hosted by Acme, with a "Time left" indicator showing 12h:33m.
 - Navigation:** Buttons for "Description" (highlighted), "Schedule", and "Speakers".
 - Text Content:**
 - Section:** "Acme's Commitment to Respect Each Other"
 - Text:** "Respecting each other in the workplace is of paramount importance and that's why Acme strives to create a discrimination and harassment-free environment for everyone working for Acme. Acme emphasizes this commitment to respect each other as a vital aspect of its corporate culture, highlighting its significance in fostering a positive and inclusive work atmosphere."
 - Image:** A photograph of a woman with curly hair talking on a smartphone.
 - Section:** "Drive Revenue"
 - Text:** "Marketing Acme gives your team the tools to tailor offers and messages to your audience. Those insights and personalizations make your offers relevant, attracting quality leads who are ready to convert." and "Now you can create marketing strategies that align with customer needs, and help your business grow."
- Right Sidebar (Chat):**
 - Navigation:** Buttons for "Chat" (highlighted), "Polls", and "Q&A".
 - Messages:**
 - Lindsey Workman - Organizer:** "Welcome to our monthly Enterprise Marketing webinar!"
 - Erin Septimus:** "More content like this please"
 - Jakob Septimus:** "Just signed up for a full course" (with a green checkmark icon)
 - Engagement:** 122 likes and 3 shares.
 - Rob Schmidt - Highlighted:** "I will send slides after the show" (with 76 likes)
 - Input:** A text input field with the placeholder "Type a message..." and a send button.

Even networking opportunities don't have to be exclusively in-person anymore. Encourage attendees to post and share photos using event hashtags, and if you don't have an event app for attendees, set up a social media group or event page to keep conversations going between sessions.

By balancing accessibility, personalization, and more diverse opportunities for interaction, event marketers can ensure that both their in-person and virtual attendees are staying engaged—and getting a great event experience.

4. Create a post-event content engine

One of the most significant benefits of modern events that has come to the forefront is their role as a powerful content engine that drives continued, long-term engagement long after an event has ended. This is one way to get even more value out of events, and it's more crucial than ever, with many marketing teams still needing help getting value out of their events strategy.



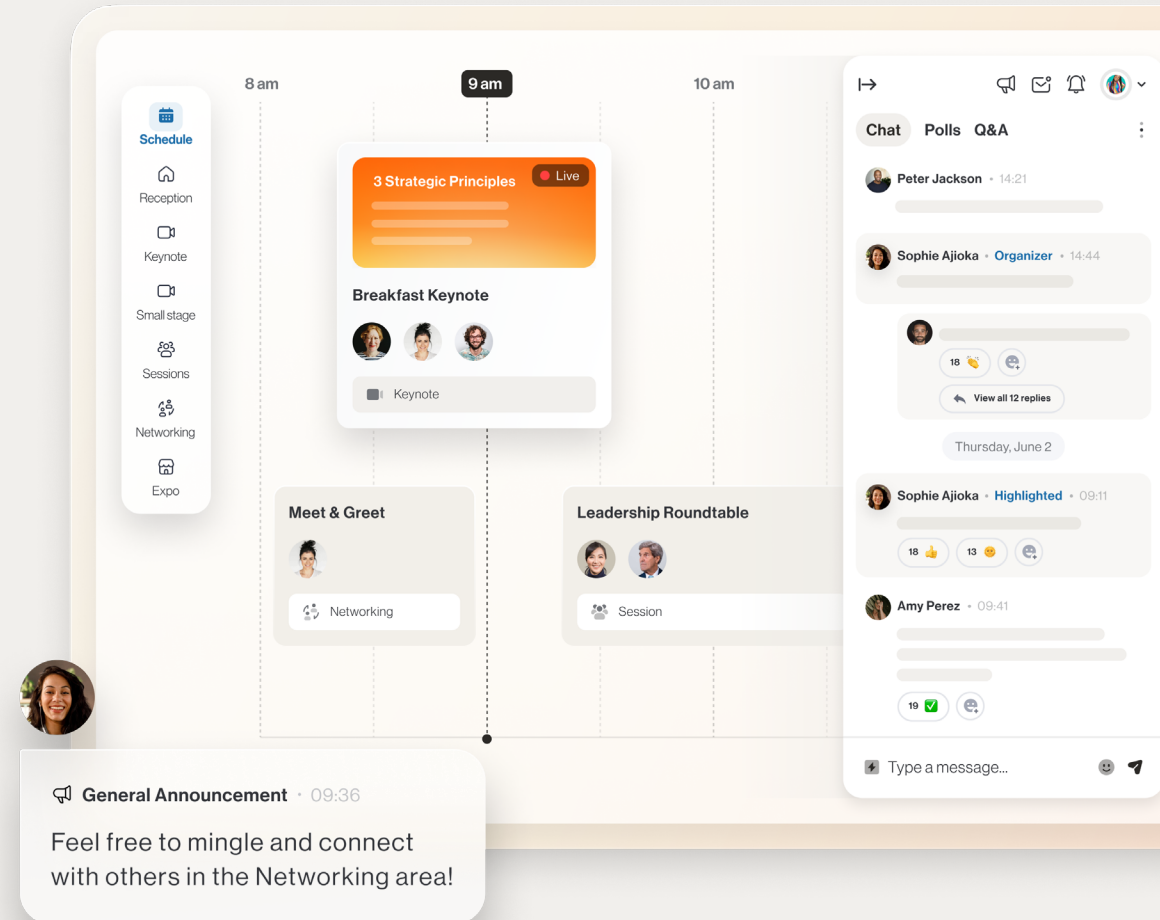
And on the other end, event attendees are making it clear that they want this content. In [The Freeman Trends Report](#), 60% of respondents said the most important factor for choosing an online event was the ability to access the content on-demand.

Many common types of content, like blog posts and explainer videos are easy to create, and much easier for competitors to copy. But an event's keynotes, roundtable discussions, and product workshops are a different story.

Every event is a source of engaging, proprietary, and most importantly, hard-to-duplicate videos and audio clips that can be promoted across various channels like social media and email.

But turning events into a content engine doesn't just help maximize engagement before, during, and after the event. It also makes it easier to prove ROI—every engagement and conversion from a piece of repurposed content extends the impact of that event on pipeline, revenue, and company goals.

While this may not have been feasible to do for every event due to the resources and budget needed before, that has changed. Today, AI-powered event platforms with features like smart editors are enabling marketers to quickly create owned content hubs, making it much easier to ensure that every valuable session at your event is housed and accessible to engage customers and prospects—whether they were attendees or not—anytime.



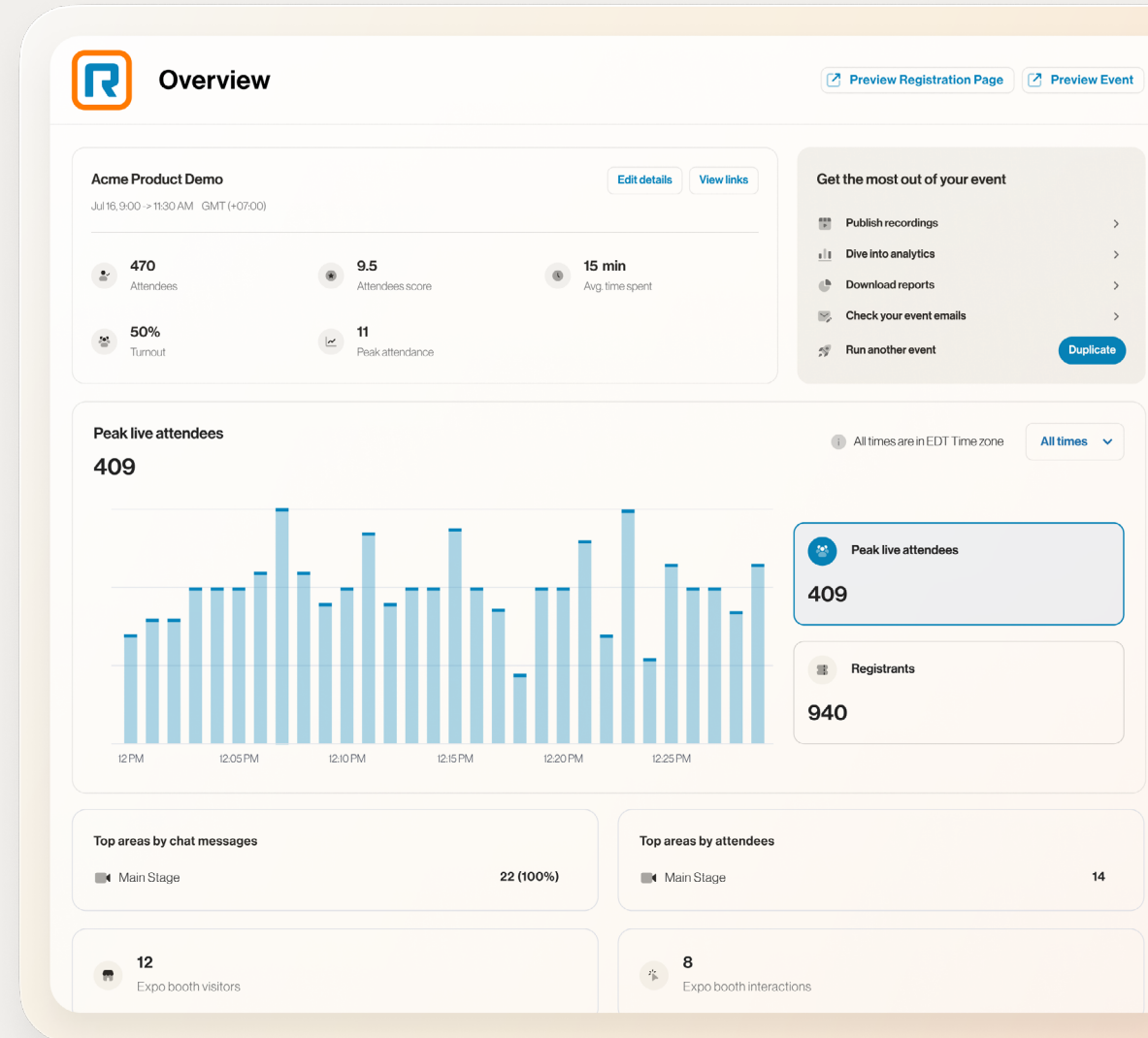
5. Leverage event analytics

Although event analytics are useful for improving lead qualification and showcasing impact on pipeline and revenue, they can also unlock and help drive up attendee engagement for both in-person and virtual events.

For example, a live poll or survey can be added at the end of every session to gauge attendee satisfaction and feedback. Speakers could also use this data to modify their sessions and content based on real-time feedback of attendees' interests to keep them engaged.

High engagement rates often lead to increased conversion rates as well, with engaged and qualified leads from events more likely to convert. In our survey of Marketing leaders, one out of two respondents said the percentage of event attendees that convert into leads or customers is 10% or higher, which is significantly higher than more [traditional channels' conversion rates](#).

Through data like survey responses, engagement scores, and session attendance rates, event marketers have access to more insights to engage—and convert—attendees than ever before.

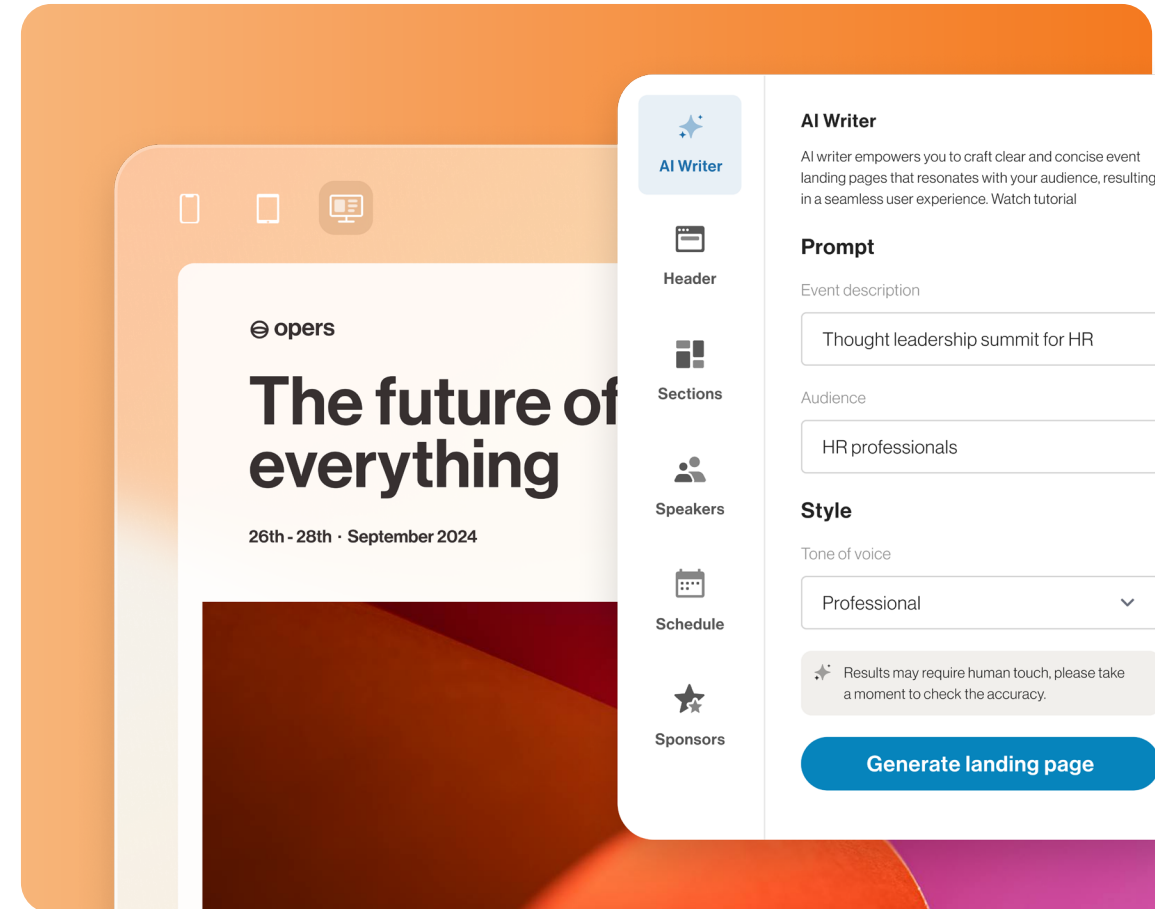


6. Explore ways to leverage AI

The vast majority of marketing teams aren't sure what to do with AI yet. [Eighty-seven percent of marketers](#) say they're in learning mode, but a majority believe that AI will fundamentally transform how they plan and execute events within the next 24 months.

AI has already proved itself to be a useful tool—throughout the event planning and execution process. For example, AI can be used to:

- Create promotional content (like landing page copy) more quickly
- Create video and audio clips of event sessions (for repurposing on other channels such as social media) in seconds
- Translate events live in real time for a global audience
- Automatically categorize Q&As to help reduce the burden on moderators, who often have to keep an eye on multiple things happening during an event
- Analyze attendees' profiles and preferences to offer tailored content recommendations and personalized agendas
- And more



7. Choose the right event format

Choosing the right event format is crucial for engaging event attendees effectively. Audiences may prefer different formats, such as keynotes, workshops, or roundtables, depending on what they're trying to get out of the event. In our survey of Marketing leaders, the most popular events formats are:

Practical workshops and interactive sessions

86%

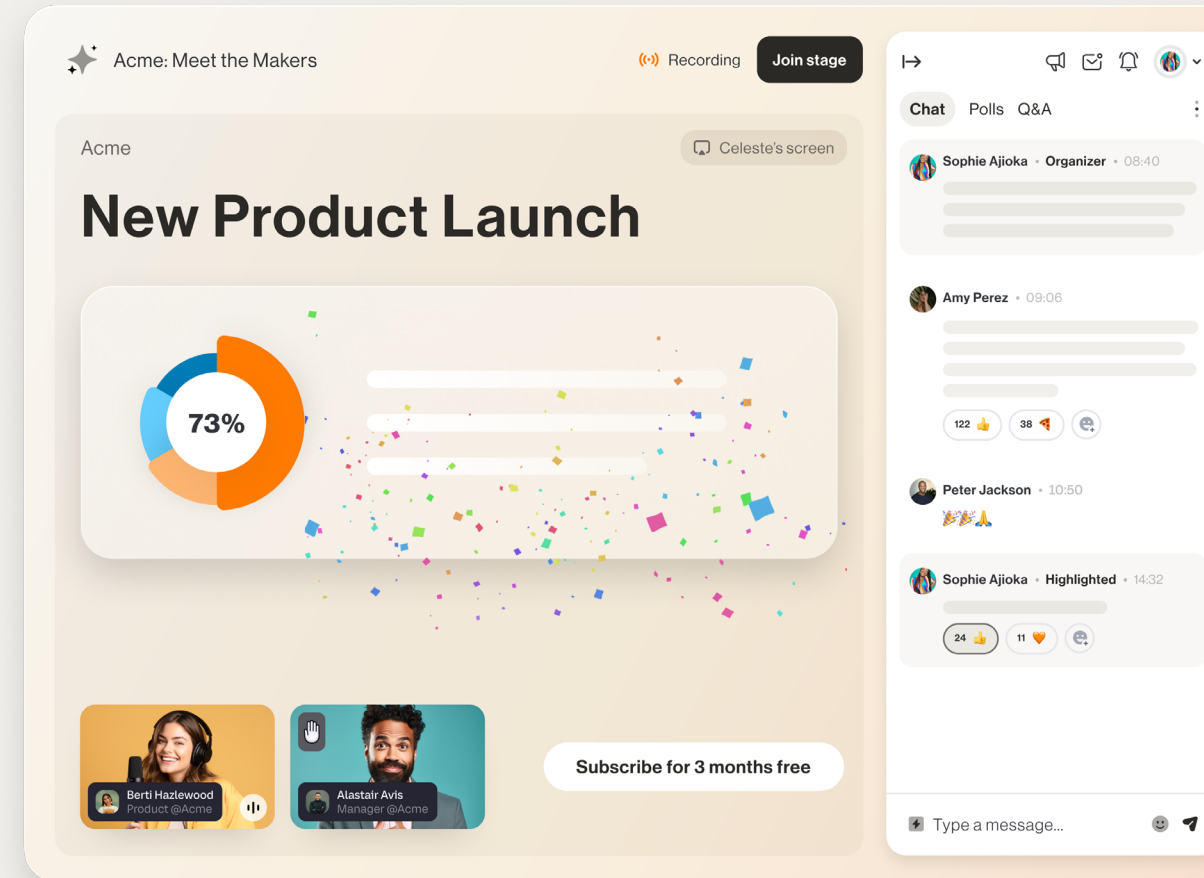
Keynote speeches and panels

48%

Product / application-oriented content

36%

Every industry is different, and the best way to determine the best formats for your events' sessions is to ask your audience, whether that's through an emailed survey or a poll on social media.



“We’ve surprisingly had the most success with product-centric webinars. Workshops tend to do well for us, especially if they are practical sessions with tactical takeaways. The most impactful formats have been presentation styles for us with some audience engagement via polls.”

Source: Survey responses from a 2024 RingCentral Events survey of Demand Generation and Growth Marketing Directors, Marketing Directors, and Brand Marketing Directors

8. Wow attendees with niche and exclusive experiences

Events are a huge opportunity to connect with your audience in a unique and memorable way. Seventy-seven percent of people—and more than 8 out of 10 millennials—say they trusted brands more after interacting face-to-face with them at live events.

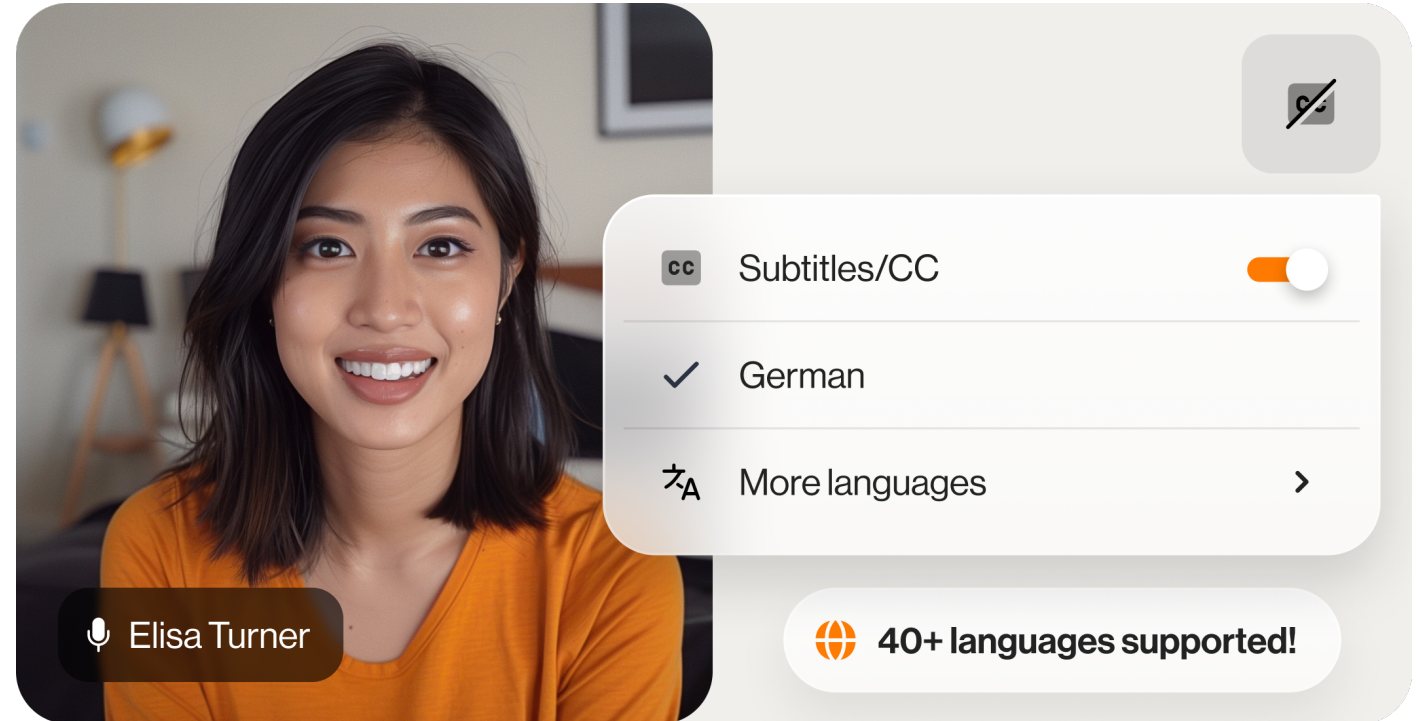
Instead of simply choosing the flashiest or most expensive venues, how can you create a truly distinctive brand touchpoint? From immersive AR/VR experiences to creating networking opportunities for a niche subsegment of your audience (e.g., social media creators rather than simply marketers), to arranging meet-and-greets with high-profile speakers or backstage access for VIPs, there are many ways to get creative with unexpected elements to engage attendees.

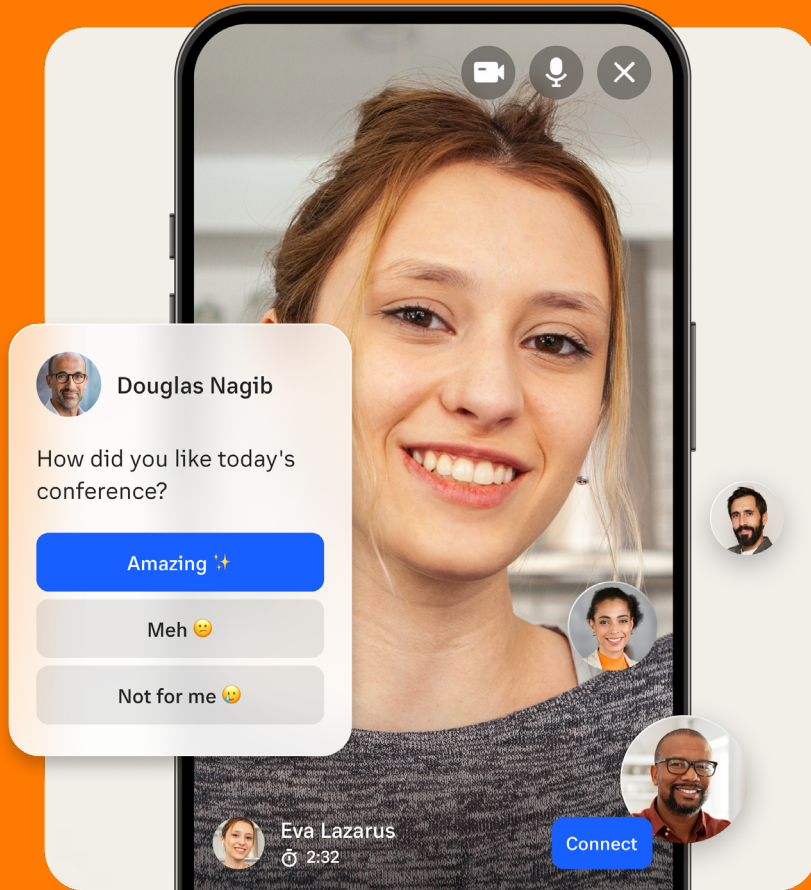


9. Prioritize inclusivity and sustainability

Event attendees have a higher awareness of inclusivity and sustainability, which means expectations on event organizers are higher than ever. This includes making sure:

- In-person events are accessible
- There are virtual options for attendees, which helps reduce travel emissions and increases sustainability
- Captions and translations provided for attendees who don't speak English as a first language
- Sessions are recorded on-demand for attendees to watch in their own time zone





Conclusion

Events have emerged as a cornerstone of modern marketing strategies, playing a pivotal role in driving brand awareness, building customer loyalty, and generating demand and revenue.

Transitioning to an audience engagement approach isn't optional anymore—it's essential to succeed in an increasingly hybrid world where attendees have more distractions and events to choose from than ever before.

By finding new ways to build connections through personalized content, data-driven insights, and innovative virtual experiences, it's possible to forge deeper customer relationships while turning attendees into brand advocates.

Start modernizing your event strategy today. Drive engagement, pipeline, and revenue with **RingCentral Events**.