How to Accelerate Revenue with Intelligent Events

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As a Marketing Leader, You're Increasingly Responsible for Your Company's Growth Agenda and Top-line Revenue

This challenge must be met even in an era where customers drive the buying process and have the ability to navigate their way far into the purchase process with readily-available online information and well-informed social media connections. To win, you need tools and strategies to bring your company closer to customers and help them take the right steps toward your brand.

> *The challenge for the marketing leader is dealing with self-educated buyers. These are the smart, resourceful, and socially connected consumers who do their own research before ever entering the formal channels of a vendor's marketing and selling apparatus.*
>
> **– Rich Vancil, IDC Group Vice President**

Events Have Never Been More Important

Events designed for revenue acceleration offer a unique opportunity to get closer to your customers, propel them through the buying process, and cultivate brand enthusiasts. Unlike other marketing programs, events let your team deliver valuable education and connections to prospects based on their stage in the buying cycle.

Events extend your brand's reach and cultivate influencer and customer enthusiasts who will echo your messages through social media channels to existing prospects and new audiences. And events offer a wealth of information and customer insights to improve future marketing and sales efforts.

Representing nearly one-third of a typical marketing budget, turning events into revenue accelerators can make a significant positive impact on achieving revenue and other corporate objectives.

Successful Events Focus on the Attendees

The key to unlocking your event channel and accelerating revenue is to turn the traditional view of events inside out. Rather than focusing on the goals of your organization as the "owner" of an event, marketing leaders need to put the needs of attendees first.

Event technology platforms can help you capture and understand the needs and preferences of your attendees and **deliver highly personalized event experiences** that transfer exactly the right information and **orchestrate exactly the right connections** to maximize their experience – and in the end, **accelerate your revenue cycle**.

This guide will review and explain:

• **Today's Challenges**
• **The Role of Events in a Digital World**
• **How to Accelerate Revenue with Events**
• **The Role of Event Management Technology**

Let's get started!

Today's Marketing Challenge

As marketing leaders strive to meet corporate revenue objectives, they must do so in an increasingly complex and challenging world.

Buyers Are in Charge: Brands need to get closer to customers.

> "
> *Today's buyers might be up to 90% of the way through their buying journey before they reach out to the vendor.*
>
> **– Forrester Research**
> "

The customer's journey through the buying cycle (and marketing's role in the process) has changed. Marketers no longer drive the buying process. Instead, customers forge their own way, using an ever-expanding number of channels to discover, research, review, obtain recommendations, and compare products and services. To the surprise of many, these buyers often are only reaching out to vendors at the final stages of the buying cycle.

To win, marketers need to get closer to their customers. They need to:

- Understand a customer's individual needs and preferences.
- Get into the buying cycle early by adding value and building personal relationships.
- Cultivate enthusiasts from influencer and customer communities to speak on their behalf.

Channels and Devices are Multiplying: Marketers must understand, measure, and optimize each.

Most of us can remember a time when marketing budgets were divided among a handful of activities: TV, direct mail, a few key trade shows, and select magazines. Today, we're allocating budgets across a wide range of digital, experiential, and traditional channels, targeting fragmented customer segments, and communicating through devices we couldn't have imagined just a decade ago.

The scope of the challenge is astounding. As a marketer today you must understand the role of each channel, measure its contribution, and then have the tools to optimize it as part of the larger revenue cycle – including your event channel.

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The Role of Events in a Digital World

In today's digital world, events enable companies to build personal connections with their prospects and customers and in doing so, gather in-depth intelligence on their needs and interests.

Events not only help you address today's realities, but play a unique role in overcoming them.

Unlike other marketing programs, well-designed and well-executed events deliver value through personal connections and education, provide a deeper understanding of customers, build customer loyalty by bringing brands and customers closer together, and in turn, accelerate the revenue cycle.

Events Deliver Connections

A recent study by Certain found networking was the top reason people attend events. Education is a close second.

Even in today's hyper-connected online world, face-to-face interactions still power business. Events let buyers network with other buyers, colleagues, and educated influencers and establish long-term, valuable relationships.

With larger and more complex purchases the "connection value" of events is further amplified, allowing for more in-depth discussions and connections to help customers understand product complexities, establish vendor trust, and reduce perceived risk.

Events Educate

Events provide an effective and efficient means of delivering valuable information to help customers learn more about products and solve problems. General sessions deliver broad-based education; focused sessions allow for connection to subject matter experts; and exhibits and networking activities help later stage prospects gain a deeper understanding of product features and usage.

Events Help You Understand Your Customers

Events help you understand your customers. Events allow companies to paint a more complete picture of their customers as they collect intelligence from the registration process and event behavior. These deeper profiles can be fed directly into marketing automation and CRM platforms to give marketers and sales professionals more meaningful information from which to tailor additional nurturing and sales-related activities.

Events Bring Companies Closer to Customers

Events offer a unique opportunity for prospects and customers to experience your brand. Through events, customers can discover, compare, try, vet, and interact with brands, products and individuals in ways not possible with traditional or even digital communication. Away from their office environment and home distractions, buyers can focus on learning more about your products, differentiators, and best practices. They can experience your culture, take products for a test drive, interact with your staff, and build personal connections. A meaningful event experience can increase loyalty and brand enthusiasm by bringing customers closer to your employees and your brand.

Events Accelerate Business

" *Organizations are now beginning to recognize the irreplaceable role of face-to-face meetings in solidifying relationships, closing business deals, consulting stakeholders, and deciding major policies or strategies.* "

– Meetings Deliver, Meeting Professionals International (MPI)

Events help speed up the revenue cycle by immersing prospects and customers in a high-touch, engaging environment. Event marketing extends your reach to new prospects and accelerates the sales cycle as prospects learn more about your products, network with other customers or influencers, and meet with your product experts and sales staff.

Revenue acceleration is what this guide is all about. So let's dive in deeper to learn how to drive revenue with events.

Accelerating the Revenue Cycle with Events

- **Marketing of events**

AWARENESS

- **Unstructured event activities**
- **Word of mouth**

CONSIDERATION

- **Sessions, exhibits, demonstrations**
- **Connections with customers, influencers, subject matter experts**

RESEARCH

- **Engagement with individual brands, products**
- **1:1 connections with sales and product experts**

ENGAGEMENT

- **Data-driven nurturing and sales follow-up**
- **Build loyalty and cultivate enthusiasts**

BUY

Enthusiasts perpetuate Word-of-Mouth

Set Goals Tied to the Revenue Cycle

Bringing events into the revenue cycle requires marketers to set goals that in fact, tie into the customer's actual buyer's process. Sounds obvious, but far too often event goals have no clear connection to revenue.

Event goals should be related to the following types of outcomes:

- Generating more raw leads

- Capturing lead intelligence to accelerate the sales process

- Providing valuable content to facilitate the buying process

- Building a more holistic profile of leads and customers

- Creating a closer connection to customers

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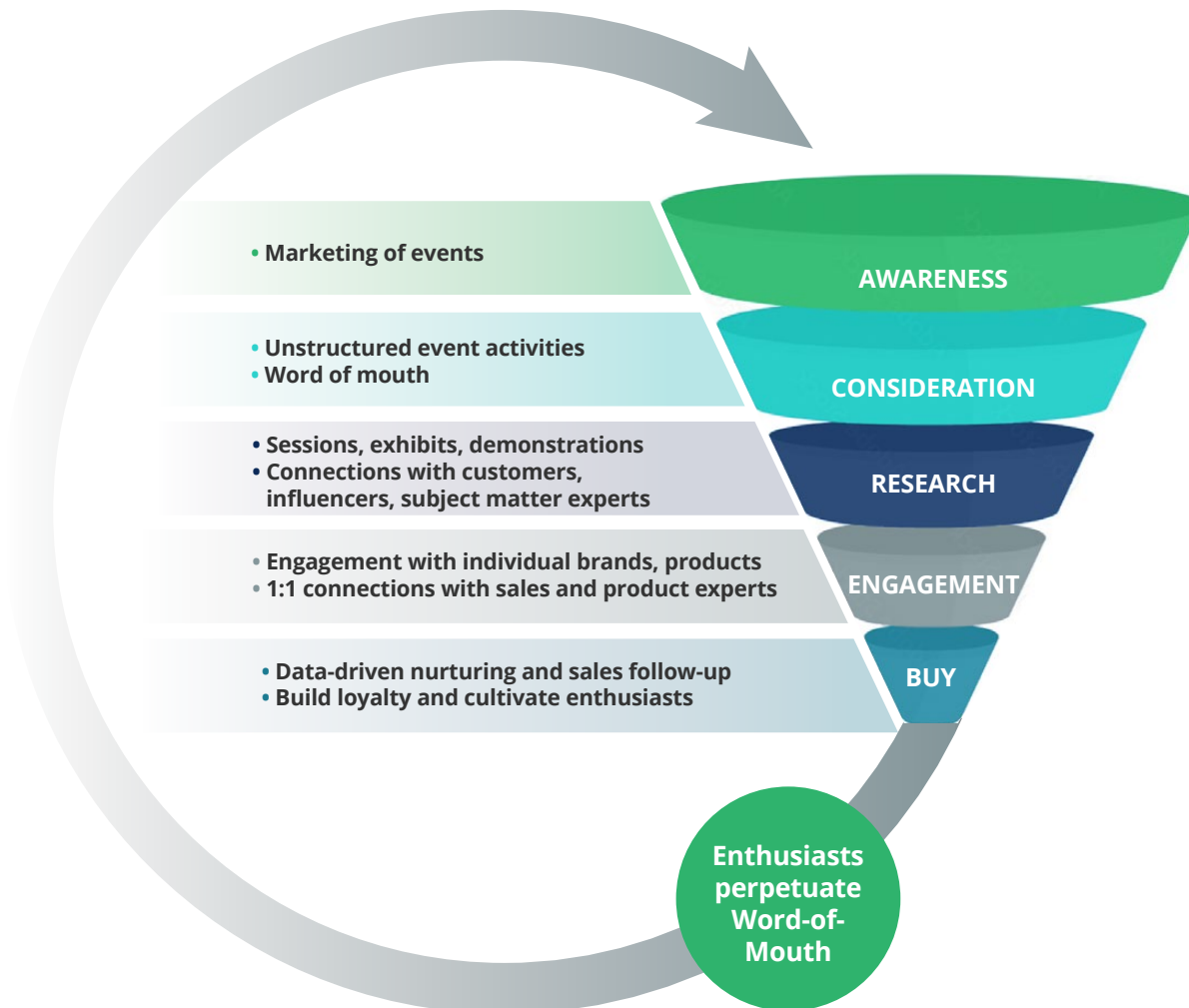
Design for Attendee Type and Stage

The ultimate key to any successful event is to understand what attendees want and to deliver on those expectations.

While attendees generally attend events to learn something new and make meaningful connections, marketing leaders must think more specifically about each buyer type attending the event and their individual needs at each stage in the buying process. What exactly do they want to learn? What types of connections will they find most beneficial? For example, the needs of an executive leading a search for a new solution are radically different from the needs of the users as they evaluate the product.

Education and Connections by Attendee Type and Stage				
Attendee Type	**Stage**	**Research**	**Engagement**	**Customer / Partner**
Vice President or Director	Education	Business Value, Differentiation	Objections Addressed, Pricing	Product Roadmap
	Connections	Sales Leaders, Influencers	Sales Leaders, Customer Executives	Vendor & Customer Executives
User	Education	Product Features	Product Usage	Product Training
	Connections	Product Management, Influencers	Product Experts, Customer Users	Product Trainers, Customer Users
Partners	Education	Business Value, Differentiation	Partnership Options	Product Roadmap, Product Training
	Connections	Partner Sales & Marketing, Influencers	Partner Sales & Marketing	Leads
Influencers	Education	Marketing Overview, Differentiation, Roadmap		
	Connections	Executives, Product Experts, Customers		

Well-defined goals and well-designed events —for both the organization and the attendees—are the first step to a successful ending. The next step is to bring together the right ingredients to deliver the desired value.

Bring on the Essentials

Here are just a few essentials you'll need to accelerate revenue with events:

☑ Create the Right Content Mix

Design your events to offer specific content and networking opportunities for each attendee type, covering each stage of the sales cycle.
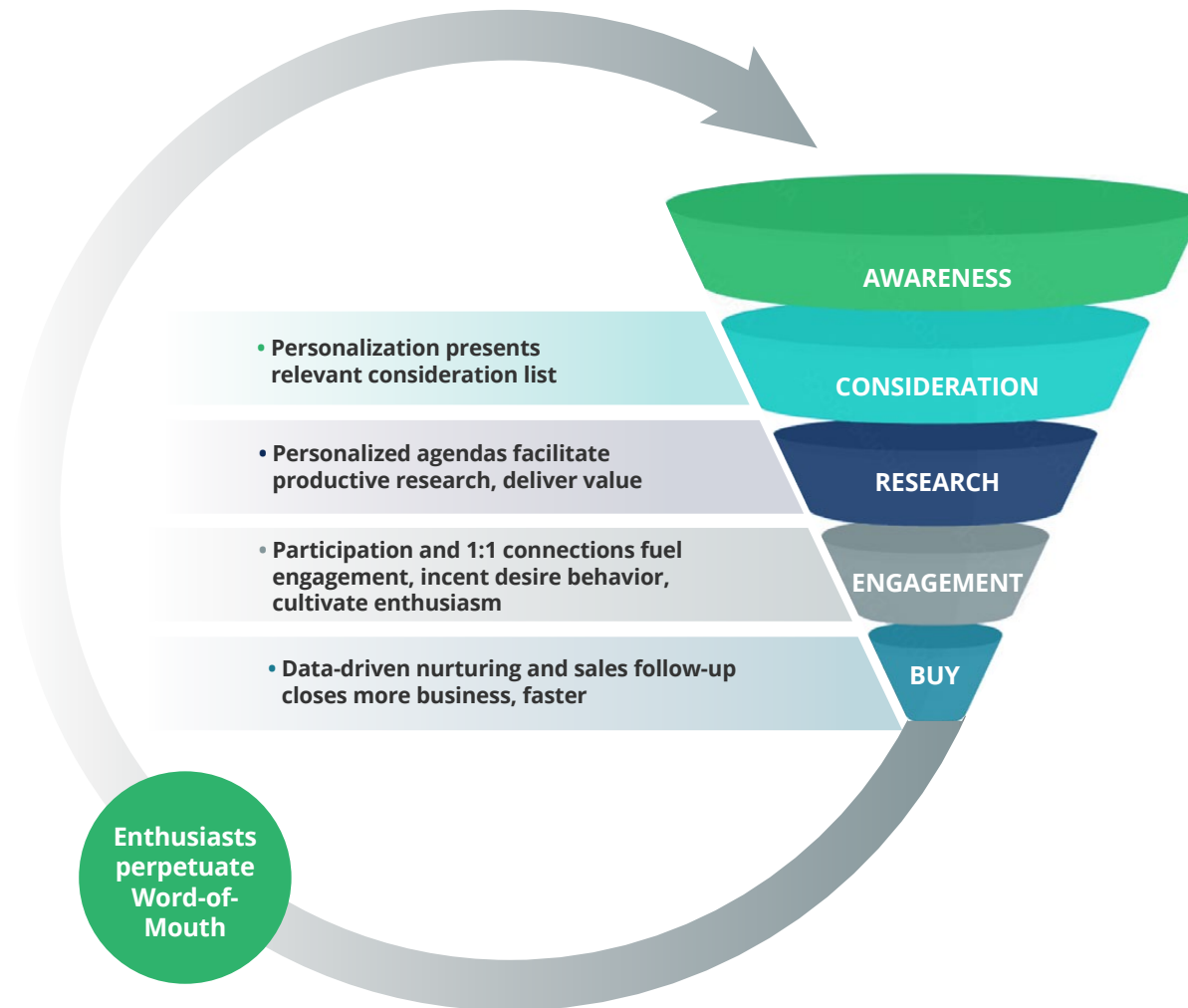
For example, if your goal is to move prospects from the research phase into the buying stage, you'll need to orchestrate deep product and thought leadership content. You'll also need to connect prospects to leading influencers and introduce them to their sales representative

Face-to-face connections established at events lead the way to powerful relationships through the final sales stages.

☑ Personalize the Event Experience

Today's empowered customers want to have a greater say in how they experience events. They want their experiences to meet their individual needs and learning styles. And they endeavor to consume event content in ways that are more meaningful to them.

Capture attendee intelligence by gathering interests and preferences during the registration process. This in-depth intelligence will deliver a wealth of insight to help you pinpoint where attendees are in their buying cycles and what you'll need to do to win their business. Based on defined interests and preferences, help attendees select and schedule meaningful sessions, exhibits, and connections to improve the event experience.

- **Personalization presents relevant consideration list**
- **Personalized agendas facilitate productive research, deliver value**
- **Participation and 1:1 connections fuel engagement, incent desire behavior, cultivate enthusiasm**
- **Data-driven nurturing and sales follow-up closes more business, faster**

AWARENESS

CONSIDERATION

RESEARCH

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Enthusiasts perpetuate Word-of-Mouth

☑ Design for Participation

Adults learn best by talking and participating. During the event, mobile devices provide a natural vehicle for participating and connecting with others. Event-specific mobile apps let attendees interact in sessions and connect on social networks. They offer personalized access to late breaking event news, relevant content, and the attendee's agenda.

New gamification apps reward attendees for desired behavior. Well beyond stamps on paper passports, these apps encourage community participation and content creation that adds value to your event and connects them with other attendees. The more attendees participate, the more they learn and engage with your product, brand, and staff. And the more you learn in return.

☑ Orchestrate 1:1 Meetings

The days of attendees arriving at events with mere hopes that fate will somehow bring them face-to-face with valuable connections are numbered. Help your attendees achieve their goals through more meaningful 1:1 connections by bringing **intelligent self-selected appointment matching and pre-scheduled meetings** into the mix.

☑ Integrate with MA and CRM

Accelerating your sales cycle is about taking prospects through a set of activities that ultimately lead them to buy from you. Those activities cross channels and can span a few weeks to many months. It's important that prospects experience a consistent flow of information and connections across their preferred channels and devices.

The ability to capture and tie **rich attendee profiles** directly into a **closed-loop marketing automation cycle** enhances the role of events in generating leads and sales. Event management technology integrated with marketing automation (MA) and CRM systems use rich profiles to better score leads from events, put participants in the correct nurturing campaigns, and enhance sales follow-up. The bottom line is increased pipeline velocity.

Powered by an Event Management Platform

With event management technology, organizations can have access to all of the essentials to maximize events as part of their revenue cycle. Technology can automate processes and reduce costs of event planning, venue sourcing, qualification, registration, personalization, appointment matching, reporting, and more. Events managed through a comprehensive event technology platform

can deliver rich behavioral data to better understand your customers. Technology also allows you to deliver a personalized and consistent experience across channels—providing valuable information and connections at the right time and place to align with the customer's buying cycle.

Complete with design tools for consistent branding and delivery across desktop and mobile devices, event technology empowers marketing leaders to get closer to customers, reinforce their brand, and increase revenue. Finally, today's leading edge solutions integrate with major marketing automation and CRM platforms to amplify the efforts by closing the loop to revenue and measure results.

> **Adults Remember**
>
> Hearing – 20%
> Saying – 70%
> Saying & Doing – 90%
>
> – Edgar Dale, Cone of Learning

Making Every Event Moment Count

The intrinsic value of events is their ability to bring people and brands closer together. For customers, events offer an opportunity to discover new ideas, products, and services. They allow individuals to uncover answers to their problems, obtain first-hand peer reviews, interact with meaningful content, and make new business connections. For companies, events provide a path to get closer to their customers, foster brand advocates, transform the buying process, and accelerate revenue.

All of this happens in a setting that simply cannot be replicated by other marketing programs – online or offline.

Today's **event management technology** is closely twined with marketing automation and CRM systems to provide greater customer intelligence for use across all touchpoints—marketing and sales—to **close the revenue loop** and **deliver ROI** to organizations.

Arm yourself with meaningful information for more effective decision making to see the true impact events have on the revenue cycle and you'll **light up your dashboard** with clear evidence of how events deliver measurable ROI and accelerate business.

Learn more!

Request a live demo of Certain's enterprise event management platform.

REQUEST A DEMO

About Certain

Certain provides a complete enterprise event management platform that powers personalized event experiences and enables meaningful connections to accelerate business. Used by the largest corporations, meeting management companies and event producers worldwide, the Certain platform enables event branding and white-labeling, personalization, social and mobile participation, virtual and in-person meetings that engage audiences and maximize event value for all participants. With Certain's proven SaaS-based technology, cross-functional event teams collaborate, streamline processes, and reduce costs to execute flawless events with operational excellence. To maximize the business impact, the Certain platform integrates easily with marketing automation and enterprise systems to deliver rich customer insights as well as event intelligence.

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info@certain.com | www.certain.com | 1.888.237.8246