

Freeman⁷

Exhibit measurement for today's events

3 steps to evolve data collection
for your trade show booth



Exhibiting at trade shows has evolved... have you?

Ongoing event shifts and shuffles over the last two years have created enormous opportunities to reset exhibit data strategies and create new standards to measure your success.

Pre-2020, our industry had already been shifting, albeit slowly, toward digital approaches that create more personalized experiences (and provide access outside of conference room walls).

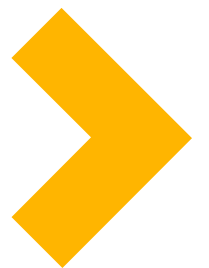
Then things accelerated from a slow shift to a sprint in a matter of weeks! Obviously, that sprint — and the changes it brings — continues.



Guess what hasn't changed?

The power of exhibiting to connect with your target audience (stay tuned for more proof on page 5!). On that note, let's look at measuring attendee reach and how you can refresh your data approach.

So, where should you start?



A framework for measurement

Years of research tell us that attendees come to events and trade shows for learning, networking, commerce, and to have fun. We call this the **XLNC** (“excellence”) model:

X – Experience

This framework helps define and measure event objectives based on attendee goals. Essentially, it’s a useful way to think about what your customer needs and how to measure against those objectives in your booth.

L – Learn

It’s important to develop a measurement plan for each show and each medium, such as your exhibit at a trade show or your involvement in a hybrid or virtual experience. Using XLNC outcomes and priorities can help you define a measurement plan that will deliver against expectations.

N – Network

C – Commerce

With this framework in mind, take these steps to ensure your data plan is moving in the right direction and will work not only today, but also into the future.



01

**Start with an
attendee-centric
mindset**

Why is gathering audience data important?

Attendees expect the companies they do business with to understand their needs and objectives, as well as keep up with their evolving preferences. This means you and your organization must do your homework — and keep doing it on a regular basis, since we're now in a state of ongoing change.

Truly understanding what keeps your customers and prospects up at night will dictate your approach and tailored solutions and help you develop a more specific measurement process to ensure you're on track. And it keeps you in tune with your audience as a whole, which helps you stay in touch and address those needs and concerns before, during, and after making connections in your booth.

Here are some pre-2020 benchmarks* on the power of exhibiting to reach customers, aggregated over decades. The new benchmarks are still developing (see our latest research on page 6), but it's helpful to have a frame of reference and remind us why we do what we do.

Pre-2020 benchmarks*

48%

of trade show attendees plan to buy.

Translation: Every other person you see intends to purchase.

81%

of trade show attendees have a buying influence for one or more of the types of products exhibited.

Translation: The majority of people visiting your booth have buying power.

84%

want to see new products and developments.

Translation: 4 out of 5 people are eagerly looking for what's new.

50%

of attendees are looking for solutions to a problem they don't have the answer to.

Translation: Every other person (!) in your booth is seeking answers. And the solution they need could be the one you're offering.

66%

of attendees are looking for specific products.

Translation: You could have the very product more than half the audience is looking for. Help them find it!

64%

of attendees come to trade shows to evaluate and compare products.

Translation: Your offerings are being seriously considered and shopped in a prime venue. Make sure you have the right [exhibit engagement strategy](#) to rise above the competition (and get noticed!).

Bottom line? Trade show attendees are in the market to buy, compare, and learn. Exhibiting at a trade show gives you direct access to your target market when they're actively shopping.

*Source: Freeman Event Research, formerly known as Exhibit Surveys Incorporated (ESI).

Looking ahead, here's what we DO know from our current research — exhibitors and attendees are excited for the return to live events.

94%

of attendees and exhibitors expect to be attending in-person events by spring 2022

Translation: Your customers are ready for in-person connections and conducting business with your brand.

87%

consider events irreplaceable.

Translation: Virtual events are valuable, but nothing can replicate the power of face-to-face business events.

*Source: Freeman Event Research 2021.





02

Define core metrics

If you are exhibiting across multiple shows, it's important to have a solid and consistent measurement strategy — even if your goals change along the way.

This approach helps you establish benchmarks across your entire portfolio and provides guidance about which events worked and which ones can be tossed out.

Measuring both in-person and virtual metrics creates a holistic and integrated picture. Data collection should be focused on the signals unique to each medium that level up into the larger goal of measuring success based on the XLNC framework.

For example, when looking at measuring *learning*, there will be evaluations, polling technologies, and interactive activations unique to the different in-person and virtual environments. The XLNC framework helps you focus on outcomes that help you understand if you're delivering the right experience to attendees.

Here's a breakdown of XLNC exhibit measurement ideas and examples:



– Experience

- **In-person:** Visits to exhibitor booth and comparison to neighboring booth traffic
- **Virtual:** Time spent on a landing page



– Learn

- **In-person:** Attendees engaging in sponsored content sessions
- **Virtual:** Content downloads, videos watched, and length of time watched



– Network

- **In-person:** Number of meetings held and/or connections made
- **Virtual:** Chat engagement



– Commerce

- **In-person:** Leads generated at show and how it drove sales pipeline
- **Virtual:** Leads generated online and how it drove sales pipeline



03



**Debrief, review,
improve**

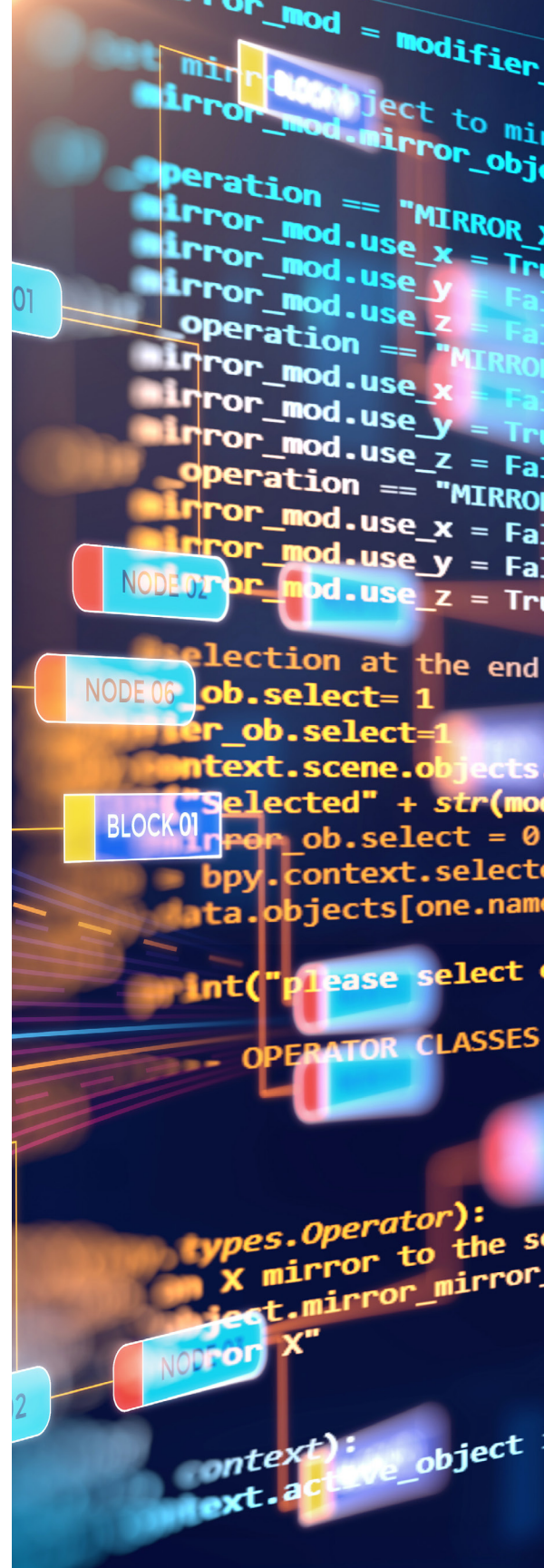
Once the event doors close, it's time to dissect the data.

Schedule your debrief as soon as you've got a full data picture so your team can review the findings. The metrics will reveal what worked, what didn't, and what can be adjusted or improved.

Reviewing the survey data is key for your team, but you'll also need to incorporate feedback from your sales team from their experience on the front lines.

Industry evolution or not, it's always a good practice to step back and re-evaluate. Taking a close look at your measurement strategies in particular helps ensure you're delivering the best experiences at the best value — for your organization and your audiences.

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Ready to develop a fresh measurement approach for your exhibit?

Contact our data experts