

BigMarker



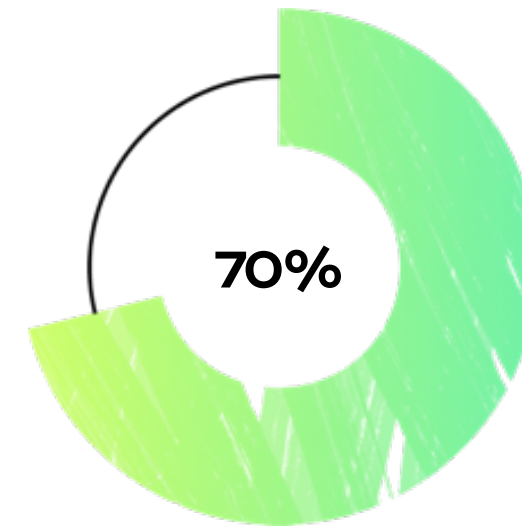
**Create Supercharged
Online Communities
through Virtual Events**

Virtual Events are the Future

In 2020, millions of event hosts turned virtual as a substitute for their suddenly cancelled IRL gatherings. Some struggled to execute comparable experiences to their audiences, but much more were successful despite—and because of—the new setting. **Over 80% of event organizers have been able to reach a wider audience with virtual events.**

Best of all, event experiences have evolved in parallel with the historic increase in demand. Far from one-way lectures, virtual events are now immersive experiences that feature multi-person panels, 3D product demonstrations, matchmaking networking sessions and 1-to-1 video chats... and hosts can leverage audience interest to generate leads more quickly and effectively than ever.

70% of marketers have moved their face-to-face events partially or fully to a virtual platform, and see that as a long-term change. So if you want to maximize your ability to meet your organization's growth goals, then virtual events shouldn't be an emergency backup to the "real thing." They should be an integral part of your event strategy.



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What is a Virtual Event?

A virtual event is any online event that involves people interacting in a virtual environment, rather than meeting in a physical location. That includes a lot of things: multi-day summits, workshops, master classes, webinars and more. But regardless of the industry or format, any successful virtual event will give your your audience, event partners and company the following.

Community

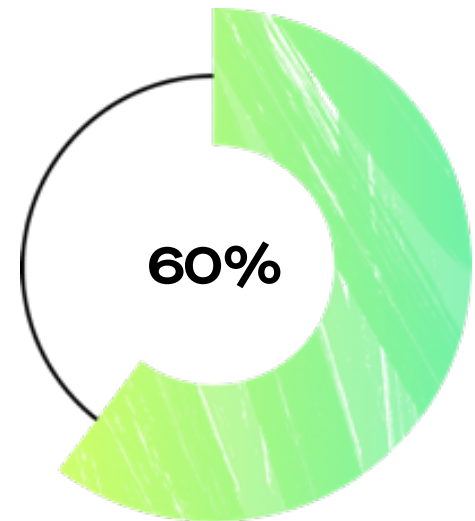
Your event should spark organic, natural interactions, both between speakers and attendees and between attendees themselves, centered on your event's topic. The most successful events see these conversations continue long after the last big day. Enhance value to attendees by streaming in remote presenters who wouldn't otherwise travel to your event's location.

Content

Your event should give guests original content that teaches them something new, resonates emotionally and inspires them to take action. Offer more directed networking opportunities.

Commercial value for all participants

Your event should result in financial value for all involved. For hosts, speakers and sponsors, this means profit, qualified leads, and other markers of ROI. For attendees, that concept is more intangible—receiving the tangible resources and social capital necessary to justify their time and financial investment.



60% of business leaders believe that events are the most critical marketing channel for achieving their business goals.

Why Virtual Events Work

Here are six reasons why virtual events are as—or in some cases, even more—effective than IRL events.

Reduce time to ROI



Virtual events cost less to plan and execute. They don't require spending on travel, hospitality, or venues. As a result, their ROI can be significantly higher than that of in-person events.

Cast a wider net



Because people don't have to travel beyond their living rooms, virtual events offer flexibility for attendees, which widens your potential pool of guests and new leads to a much wider geographic area.

Scale quickly



Unconstrained by venue size, virtual events can be scaled to thousands—or even tens of thousands of people—with the ability to tailor engagement opportunities to both large and small groups.

Generate data



All the action takes place online, giving marketers access to a wealth of attendee engagement data (that is difficult to gather at in-person events!) so you know which content and experiences really resonates.

Tap into the virtual trend



According to a [Pew Research Center survey](#), 71% of people are working remotely—and many of them want to continue doing so even after the pandemic, making virtual events more appealing than ever.

Tailor monetization



Because virtual events give you the ability to sell tickets, sponsorships and exhibitor booths, you can choose how to monetize, empowering you to create the right experience for your audience.

Harness Storytelling to Create Compelling Content

Your event strategy and software could be dialed to 11, but you'll still lose your audience in minutes if you can't get them excited. The best way to overcome the clichés and say something that actually inspires action (beyond logging out)?

The Power of Storytelling

Stories tap into commonly held emotions among your audience, and humanizes big brands into relatable entities. And when your customers see you as human, not another name in their inbox trying to up-sell them, they're more likely to keep listening—and buying.

How can you put it in practice? From Super Bowl ads to investigative journalism, every great story includes these four elements.

To learn more about incorporating storytelling into your virtual event's content strategy, check out our blog post [here](#).

The 4 Elements of Storytelling

1. **A compelling problem and clear solution.** Here, your product/service is the solution.
2. **Empathy.** The best marketers present the problem, then encourage us to care by appealing to our basic emotions: our need for love, feelings of stress, ideas about fairness and equality, shared memories, etc.
3. **Personalization.** Josef Stalin said, "A million deaths is a statistic, but one death is a tragedy." To maximize the impact of a statement, hone in on the effect it'll have on a single member of your audience, rather than generically on a group of people.
4. **Compelling visuals and videos.** The **impact of visuals** on comprehension and even conversion is enormous: **95% of marketers claim that videos help customers understand their products** and **90% of consumers claim that videos help them make purchasing decisions**. Numbers aside, powerful visuals articulate commonly heard lessons in unexpected ways that stick with people.

When Sponsors Succeed, Everyone Succeeds



On average, virtual event sponsors pay **\$8,456 for a sponsorship package**, making them integral to your event budget and experience. But we've seen a large gap between the sponsorship programs that work, and the ones that don't. The most successful sponsorship programs we've seen tend to intentionally activate audiences to engage with sponsor content and drive sponsor value.

Here's how we drive traffic to our sponsor booths:

- **Meetings and Breakouts.** Using your booth to play informational videos/content and set up meeting spaces for 1:1 meetings or small focused discussion groups.
- **Workshops.** By hosting sponsored workshops, your sponsors get face-time and lead generation from attendees while your audience leaves with useful insights—not a hard sell.
- **Gamification.** Earning points through specific actions in the sponsor booths for the chance to win a prize.
- **Product demos.** Just in the last few years, product demos have evolved from a one-way, two-dimensional video to a 3-D, conversational experience in which the prospective customer can explore every aspect of the product on their own. For example, on BigMarker, sponsors can conduct demos using pre-scheduled videos and/or live screen sharing, all while interacting with guests through chat messages, Q&As, poll questions and more. To follow up, they can schedule meetings within the platform, or push their leads' contact information to their chosen CRM/MAS through integrations.

Empower Your Exhibitors

With 3D product demos, live streams and interactive Q&As, virtual event exhibitors can boost your event's budget while exciting your audience. But in order to excite your audience, your exhibitors need to have an audience. Set your exhibitors up for success with some of our tried-and-true tips:



Help Exhibitors Optimize Their Virtual Booth

Set up a centralized virtual exhibitor hall to attract guests, then give your exhibitors tips for maximizing their booth's visual presence—consistent branding, visually appealing logos and color scheme, strong photos—so they can make a good first impression for guests and earn qualified leads.



Feature Videos on Virtual Exhibitor Booths

In between sessions and networking, exhibitors are already fighting an uphill battle for guests' time. High-quality videos, like live streams, product demos and prerecorded Q&As, will hold guests' attention more easily than static content, while also communicating the exhibitor's products and value proposition.



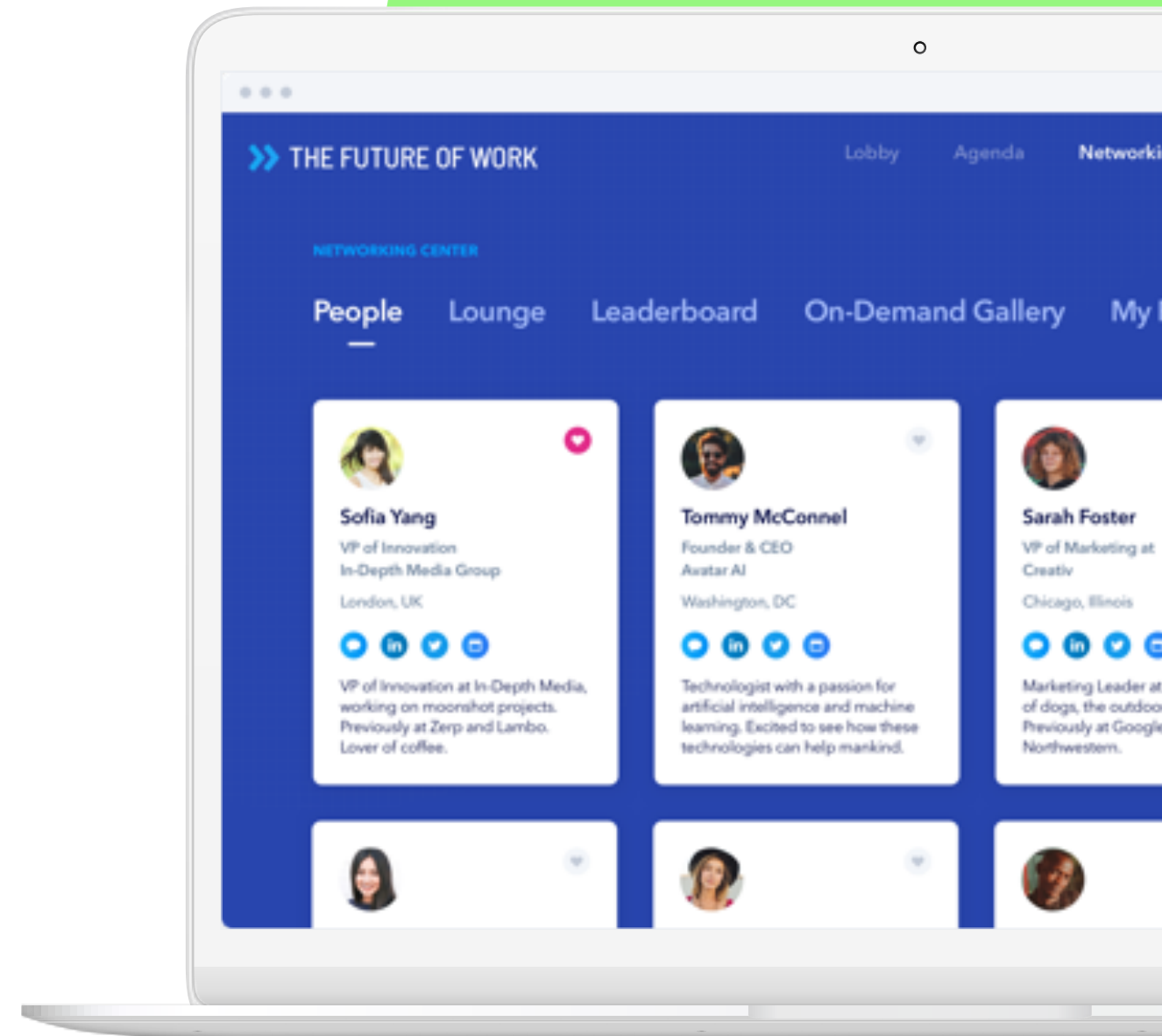
Use Gamification To Promote Exhibitors During The Event

Gamification encourages participants to check out exhibitors by turning it into a fun challenge: offer guests a prize that they can win (a gift card, giveaway, free assessment, etc.). This way, your exhibitors get traffic and your attendees don't get spammed with push notifications for X and Y booth.

Create Community through Virtual Networking

We all know that one of the top benefits of attending events is networking, and we've seen how hard it is to create meaningful networking opportunities at virtual events. But over the past year, we've seen tens of thousands of companies create virtual networking opportunities that attendees truly love. Here's how they've done it:

- **Encourage pre-event interactions.** A week before the big day, allow to guests to “introduce” themselves in the virtual event site and start noting valuable connections.
- **Help guests cement their connections.** Encourage guests to complete Virtual Business Cards, including links to their social profiles, so they can convert their online conversations into offline connections.
- **Create smaller communities.** Create discussion chat rooms to engage group conversations around industry-specific topics.
- **Leverage gamification.** Include a leaderboard and gamification challenges to highlight and reward the most engaged attendees with a virtual/physical prize pack, discounts, etc.



Amplify Underrepresented Audiences

Diversity and inclusion remains at the center of event marketers' minds. And although the issue has gained attention in the last three years, a 2019 study published in the Trade Show News Network found that in-person event panels **are still 69 percent male. Racial diversity and LGBTQ+ representation** continues to lag as well. Equity is a complex topic that can't be fully solved with a five-point checklist. But recruiting a representative speaker base is a great place to start.

Here's where to start:

1. **Start with a diverse team of organizers.** By tapping into a broader range of networks, you can work together to create a panel that reflects the lived experiences of your whole audience.
2. **Don't look for experts by title.** Since only **5 percent of leaders of S&P 500 companies are women**, and black professionals make up 1 percent of the executives of America's top 500 companies, limiting your speaker search to "CEOs" limits your ability to amplify perspectives on leadership from people of other backgrounds and positions.
3. **Crowdsource speaker choices.** Who better tell you what they want than the people you're giving it to? To ensure your virtual event's speakers reflect the diversity of your audience, conduct a panel nomination or social media poll for your audience to select their preferred speakers. Bonus points: Ask your audience for a LinkedIn or email intro to their choices.



Use Virtual Events to Drive Results

So your virtual event attracted thousands of new audience members who might one day become prospects, customers, or partners. Awesome. But for nearly half of marketers, the primary goal of virtual events is not just generating awareness, but also generating demand. After your event, here are some ways that you can get more mileage out of your content:

Benchmark your results

Gather the analytics and engagement metrics for each session, as well as from exhibitor booths. On most event platforms, reports are available to download. Your BigMarker account manager can help you benchmark results against other event hosts in your industry and beyond.

Repurpose the best content

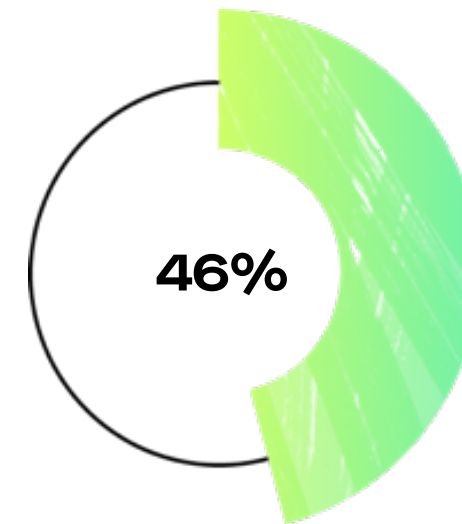
Identify how each session and speaker performed based on key performance indicators such as attendance and engagement rate. Stretch the reach (and ROI!) of your content by adapting keynotes, talks, and panels into other formats, like short form video for LinkedIn.

Leverage your presenters' & sponsors' networks

When promoting on-demand replays or repurposed content, be sure to tag presenters and sponsors (as applicable), encouraging them to re-share your posts, so you can reach their networks. Be sure to like and re-share their posts to return the favor.

Leverage CRM & MAS integrations

Push your event's attendee data (along with engagement patterns throughout the event) to your CRM so your sales team has the insights they need to follow up in a targeted and tailored way.



46% of marketers say the primary goal of virtual events is to generate pipeline.

How to Get Started

Step one is selecting a virtual event platform powerful enough to execute your event and achieve your business goals. Use this checklist to ensure it's got the functionality and features you need to ace your next virtual event.

To learn more about how the world's most innovative companies are using virtual events to drive business results, get in touch with our team at sales@bigmarker.com.

Happy hosting!

Features	BigMarker	Other Platforms
10 years of experience in the Virtual Events space	✓	☐
Browser-based software	✓	☐
Live video for up to 50,000 attendees	✓	☐
100% white-labeled event site	✓	☐
White-labeled event emails	✓	☐
Integrates with top CRM/MAS	✓	☐
Named Event Producer	✓	☐
15+ Event Modules: Lobby, Expo Hall, Networking, Gamification...	✓	☐
Enterprise security & reliability	✓	☐
Advanced features: 360° VR Streaming, Live Translation	✓	☐