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# The Ultimate Event Marketing Playbook

# The Internal Events Edition

# Introduction

Some people love it, others loathe it. But in the case of change, we're sorry to break this to you: Your feelings don't matter because change is inevitable.

No one knows this better than event organizers. And, actually, the **ability to adapt no matter what** might as well be the number-one requirement on every job description for events roles, including internal events.

Dropped WiFi. Guest speakers backing out last minute. Technology not doing what it's supposed to do. Event organizers need an ironclad backup plan for every single worst-case scenario.

It's not just that event organizers need to be agile while planning and hosting events. They also need to adapt to whatever the events industry throws at them (which we all know has changed dramatically over the years).

Companies that were addicted to big events found that smaller events actually **support better ROI,** so they pivoted their strategy. In-person events were all the rage until a pandemic forced an overnight pivot to virtual events. And ever since, event organizers have been thinking about how they'll eventually pivot back to in-person and hybrid events.

We're pretty sure the word "pivot" hasn't been used this much since that iconic episode of Friends aired in the late '90s.

Needless to say, event marketing can be complicated — and there's a reason it's consistently named as one of the most stressful jobs. Your internal event programs must deliver business results while giving your attendees meaningful, **engaging experiences**.

That's where this playbook comes in. And it's not your run-of-the-mill event marketing playbook.

You're an event organizer or someone who cares about the success of your company's internal event programs. So you don't need us to tell you how to identify your audience, what SMART goals are, or why you need to reconcile your budget.

Instead, we're talking about common event pitfalls (and how to avoid them). Ways to promote your events that'll get people (the right people) in the door. Secrets from the experts on what makes a great event.

Now, it's time to dig in.

# Internal Events

Companies spend thousands, if not millions, of dollars each year on events to reach their external audiences. But what about their internal audiences? When you find talented employees, you do everything in your power to invest in their happiness and potential.

Hosting internal events — from all-hands meetings to incentive trips to team-building activities — is one way to keep your most important assets (your people) in-the-know and engaged. These events can not only improve communication and collaboration across departments, but they can also help deliver feedback and nurture employee loyalty.

## Pro Tip

Even with the best internal event promotions, it's important that each department understand why an event is a must-attend for them. Get your managers aligned so they are empowered and excited to cascade invites to their individual teams. When the invitation comes directly from their manager, employees will be much more likely to join the event and stay engaged.

## Common Pitfalls with Internal Events

1. **Working in silos:** Even though event marketers know event marketing, department heads know their departments. Internal events are always more successful when marketers can embrace others' willingness to help.

2. **Deprioritizing your people:** Don't overbook yourself with other meetings or work while supporting an internal event. Just like any other audience, they deserve your full attention, and your stakeholders will notice if they don't get it.

3. **Forgetting the feedback:** Actionable feedback is valuable no matter what kind of event. Even though internal events aren't generating leads or sales, you still want to make sure you're giving employees engaging, meaningful experiences.

## Tips to Promote Can't-Miss Internal Events

1. Build a **fully branded event page**. When your employees see your brand in full force, it's a reminder of why they're with you. To build even more excitement, announce a hands-on activity or gamify your event.

2. If you're an email-heavy company, **create an email series** that teases parts of your event plus gives them the details they need. The more informative you are, the fewer questions you'll get ahead of time.

3. If your company prefers Slack or another communication tool, start an **internal events channel** where you can promote the event, answer FAQs, and keep the conversation rolling post-event.

## Secrets to Amazing Internal Events from the Pros

"Ask yourself: How can we initiate informal conversations by way of internal events? Our Leadership Bites series gives a small group of employees the chance to connect with leaders (for example, our Head of People Operations recently led a chocolate-making group). They're open to all employees, but limited to maybe 10 people to keep them intimate. It gives team members who wouldn't ordinarily interact with each other the opportunity to get to know each other."

**NICO SAHI**

GROWTH MARKETING MANAGER

GUMGUM

"All-hands meetings are a great place to share updates, celebrate milestones, connect teams, and drive alignment. But to break up the monotony of the usual announcements, bring in new speakers, like other employees or external guests (even a client). We do a program called IX Shares, where we incorporate casual storytelling into our all-hands meetings. Employees from all offices can submit stories, and we select new people each time to join us on the main stage — either in-person or virtually."

**MARISSA MAGUIRE**
HEAD OF EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING
INDEX EXCHANGE

## Critical KPIs to Measure Internal Events

Since your goals for internal events are to boost employee retention and engagement, there are four KPIs to consider when measuring success.

Get definitions for these KPIs on the next page. →

**Employee Engagement KPIs**

- Net Promoter Score
- Engagement levels
- Turnover rate
- Absenteeism

## Hosting Virtual & Hybrid Internal Events

When all of your employees are joining an event from behind a computer screen, it can be easy for everyone to disengage quickly. Enabling a chat feature, requiring video to be on, and keeping presentations short are easy ways to support engagement.

But there are not-so-obvious ways to maintain engagement too. Host breakout sessions grouped by common interests (or just provide question prompts so smaller groups can chat). Bring in a guest performer to end your event with a bang. Gamify your internal event based on season or current events (like Halloween costume contests or March Madness brackets for an industry happening).
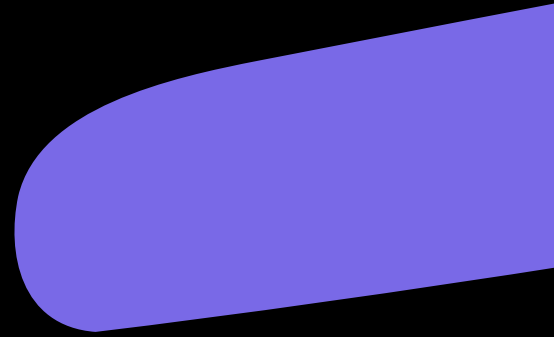
# Definitions of
# Event KPIs

# Definitions of Event KPIs

### Brand Awareness KPIs

**Post-event conversions:** After your event, what actions did your attendees take? You can look at metrics like content form fills, demo requests, and email subscriptions.

**Website traffic:** Did your website traffic spike after your event?

**Search volume data:** After your event, did search volume for your company increase? What about search volume for your company name plus the event topic?

**Social traffic:** Are attendees talking about you on social media after your event? Look at metrics like mentions, engagement, and reach.

### Thought Leadership KPIs

**Website traffic:** Did your website traffic spike after your event?

**Social traffic:** An increase in followers could mean people are starting to trust your company or view your internal experts as influencers.

**Post-event conversions:** After your event, what actions did your attendees take? You can look at metrics like content form fills, demo requests, and email subscriptions.

**External website referrals:** Have you seen an increase in external website referrals, also known as backlinks, post-event? These show that others respect your work enough to link to it on their own site.

**Media mentions:** Like social activity, have you been quoted or referenced in any traditional media publications or partner blogs?

### Demand Generation KPIs

**Net-new leads:** How many brand-new people entered your sales funnel because of your event?

**Qualified leads:** How many of those net-new leads are qualified to continue moving down the funnel?

**Cost per lead:** Based on your total event cost, how much are you spending to obtain each new qualified lead?

**Pipeline generated:** How much opportunity (monetarily speaking) is possible with your newly qualified leads?

### Event Revenue KPIs

**Event ROI:** How much revenue did you make from the event itself (total revenue from ticket sales minus total event cost)?

**Conversions:** How many prospects converted to customer status after your event?

**Recurring revenue:** How much revenue did you generate from those who converted? What was your average deal size?

## Retention & Loyalty KPIs

**Net Promoter Score:** After your event, did customer satisfaction increase, decrease, or remain consistent?

**Renewal rate:** What percentage of your customers in attendance renew their business each year?

**Recurring revenue:** How much additional revenue did you generate from account expansions?

**Engagement level & health scores:** How engaged or healthy are your customers who attend events versus those who don't?

**Referrals:** How many referrals have you received from customers who want to attend your events?

## Recruiting Event KPIs

**Candidate experience:** How likely are your attendees to recommend your recruiting events to a peer?

**Conversions:** How many candidates go on to apply for a position with your company?

**Acceptance rate:** What percentage of candidates who apply directly from attending an event go on to receive an offer and accept it?

**Time to hire:** How long does it take for a candidate who attended your event to become a new hire?

## Employee Engagement KPIs

**Net Promoter Score:** After your event, did employee satisfaction increase, decrease, or remain consistent?

**Engagement levels:** How engaged are your employees who attend events versus those who don't?

**Turnover rate:** How long do your employees stick around?

**Absenteeism:** Aside from allotted PTO, how often are your employees calling in?

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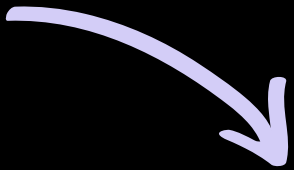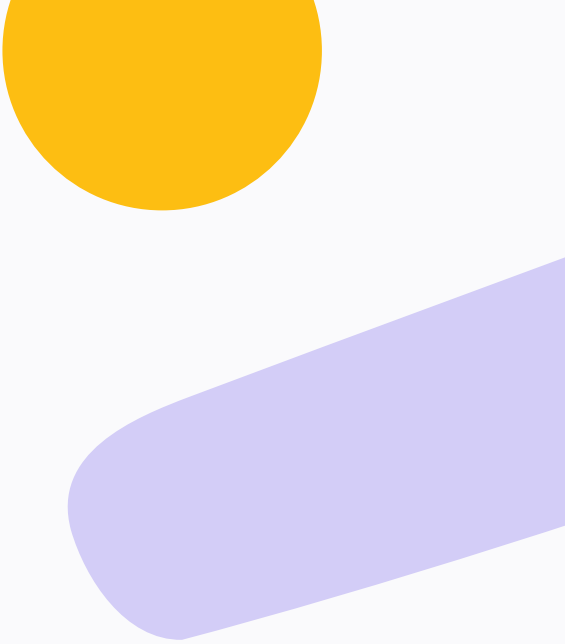
The Event Marketer's

# CHECKLIST

for Today's Agile Events
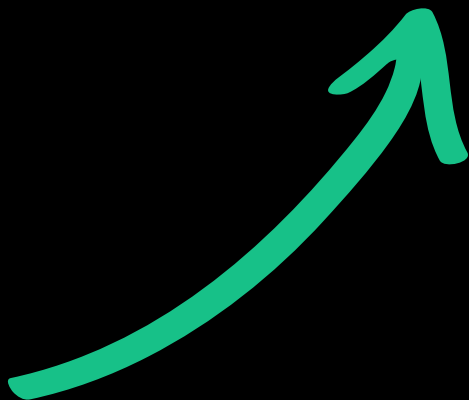
Adaptable. Strategic. Thoughtful. Able to hold a 30,000-foot view of their programs while also rolling with the punches. Event organizers are obviously some of the most agile professionals in the world.

And it's not just about agility. Event marketing can be complicated. There's a reason it's consistently named as one of the most stressful jobs. They need to deliver business results while also giving attendees meaningful, **engaging experiences**.

That's where this event marketing checklist comes in. It's not meant to be a checklist of every single thing you need to do. But it'll keep you on track with all the high-level, strategic pieces of your event programs.

# The Event Lifecycle

To make this checklist easier to use, we've organized it into six core stages of an event's lifecycle. Within each stage, we've also outlined the strategic components needed to support it.

1. Plan

2. Promote

3. Technology Setup

4. Manage

5. Measure

6. Follow Up + Nurture
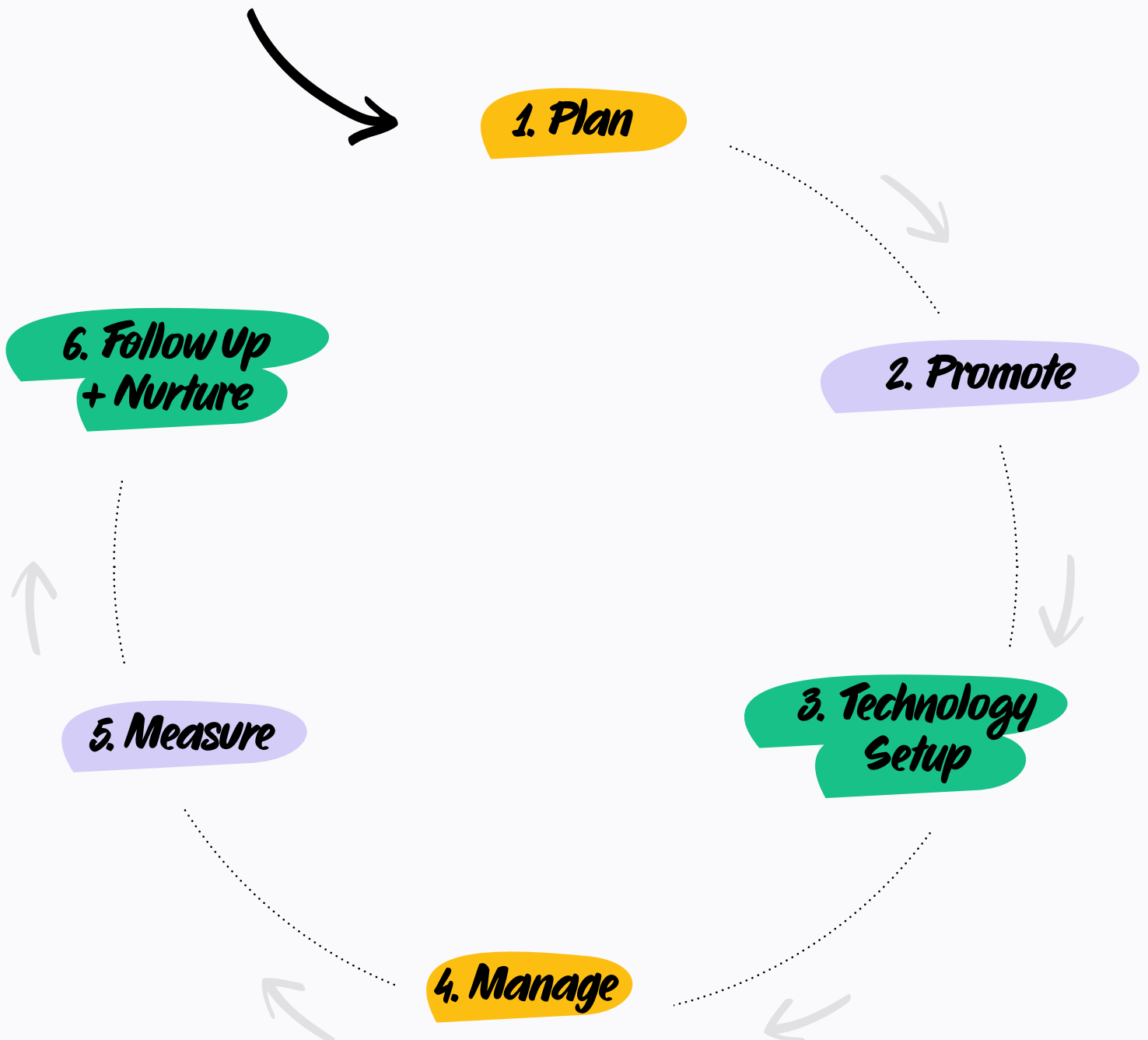
# Planning Your Event

- [ ] Define your event topic and goals

- [ ] Determine your budget

- [ ] Determine ticketing strategy

- [ ] Determine the event setting (virtual, in-person, or hybrid)

- [ ] Determine the event format (networking event, panel discussion, workshop, etc.)

- [ ] Determine your target audience

- [ ] Identify speaker strategy

- [ ] Determine sponsorship strategy

- [ ] Confirm event date and time

- [ ] Assess accessibility requirements

- [ ] Document your emergency preparedness protocol

## Pro Tip

Coordinate your target audience lists between sales, marketing, customer success, and any other relevant departments.

Think about location, companies, industries, and personas or titles.

# Promoting Your Event

☐ Develop pre-event promotions strategy, including:

- ☐ Target audience
- ☐ Event details
- ☐ Key messaging
- ☐ Planned promotion channels
- ☐ Promotion calendar

☐ Design event branding

☐ Build your event page, including your registration form and any back-end integrations

☐ Confirm you're adhering to GDPR and other privacy regulations

☐ Build and test emails, share cards, and other promotional materials

☐ Build and test confirmation emails (include URL or access link if it's a virtual event)

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## Pro Tip

Create promotional copy for your various target segments, based on title, industry, etc. In addition, segment your follow-up emails based on previous email activity (e.g., if they opened your first email but didn't click through to register, try a new angle or offer).

# Setting Up Your Day-of Event Technology

## On-Site Tech Setup

- [ ] Test electronics, A/V, WiFi, etc.

- [ ] Ensure all staff have downloaded the check-in app

- [ ] Test attendee data capture to ensure information syncs across devices and to your CRM system

- [ ] Set up check-in kiosk, if you're using self-service functionality

- [ ] Set up badge printers and test to ensure they auto-print upon check-in

## Virtual Tech Setup

- [ ] Set up virtual event page and any other broadcasting or audience engagement tools

- [ ] Configure day-of logistics, like virtual check-in, waiting rooms, and audience settings

- [ ] Test back-end functionality, including integrations

- [ ] Validate tech for special moments, like music, video, and screenshare

- [ ] Prepare fallback plans if anyone has technical difficulties

- [ ] Ensure all presenters are comfortable with the technology

- [ ] Confirm chat and Q&A managers

# Managing Your Event

## On-Site Management

- [ ] Get a good night's sleep the night before

- [ ] Arrive early to walk through the event space

- [ ] Connect with your speakers and sponsors

- [ ] Test electronics, A/V, WiFi, etc. one more time

- [ ] Lead and facilitate your event

- [ ] Manage any day-of-event problems that arise

- [ ] Gather event images for post-event promotions

## Virtual Management

- [ ] Get a good night's sleep the night before

- [ ] Connect with your speakers and sponsors

- [ ] Test your virtual broadcasting and engagement tools one more time

- [ ] Lead and facilitate your event

- [ ] Manage the chat and Q&A

- [ ] Manage back-end technical support and troubleshooting

- [ ] Gather event screenshots for post-event promotions

# Measuring the Success of Your Event

☐ Pull registrant and attendee lists, and segment those lists for both sales and marketing follow-ups

☐ Sync your lists to your marketing automation and CRM systems, if your event marketing platform doesn't do so automatically

☐ Build and send event survey to your attendees within 24 hours

☐ Pull and analyze internally produced event metrics and KPIs

☐ Compile survey data when available

☐ Conduct post-mortem with all event teams to discuss:

    ☐ Personal event observations

    ☐ Event KPIs and performance

    ☐ Key learnings and takeaways

    ☐ Attendee feedback

## Pro Tip

Ask your attendees to take a quick survey while on-site. Most people will be more inclined to take this survey while they're at your event, rather than after it, plus they'll remember so much more, meaning you'll get the best feedback.

# Following Up & Nurturing After Your Event

☐ Develop post-event nurture strategy for customers, segmenting by attendees and no-shows

    ☐ Offer list

    ☐ Key messaging

    ☐ Planned nurture and/or follow-up channels

    ☐ Dates of nurture and/or follow-up

☐ Develop post-event nurture strategy for prospects, segmenting by attendees and no-shows

    ☐ Offer list

    ☐ Key messaging

    ☐ Planned nurture and/or follow-up channels

    ☐ Dates of nurture and/or follow-up

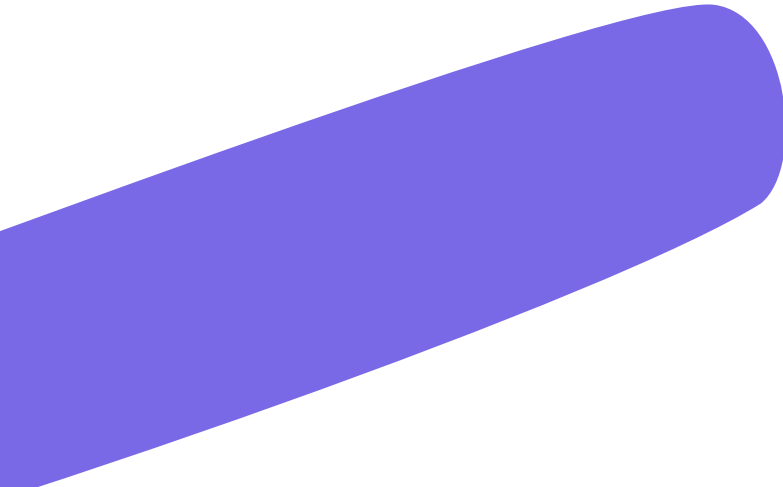☐ Create event recording and make it available on your website

☐ Update your event page to post-event status and update messaging and dates

☐ Upload photos or multimedia to your event page

☐ Build, test, and send attendee and no-show emails

Discover an event marketing platform that scales to support your agile event programs, no matter what they look like.

**Take the Splash product tour today.**

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