The Ultimate Guide to Content Engagement

How to improve life science events, engage audiences, and collect actionable data.

Array®

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| Introduction

Today's audiences demand better experiences for engagement.

An engaged audience is critical to event success. Consistently delivering exceptional events is challenging for any enterprise or organizer, especially when boredom or distractions hold back organizational goals.

Organizations that understand the importance of engagement and feedback are able to interact with audiences and gather important information. Organizations that don't often see their events fall short.

Audiences continue to evolve, as does the technology to support effective and interactive events. To make the most of crucial events, you need to understand audience behaviors, preferences, and feedback. This understanding, paired with the right technology and ability to reimagine event success, can help organizations increase event engagement and productivity.

The future of events is moving toward hybrid and virtual. Now, event software drives new levels of reach and dialog. Industry leaders rely on event technology to boost and track engagement.

This guide will provide clarity about your audience and spark ideas for organizations and event planners to consistently deliver exceptional events.

What is Content Engagement?

Content engagement is any action attendees take to interact with your presenters and their content that provides you with data. In short, content engagement allows you to more effectively communicate with your audience and allows them to communicate with you.

Overview: Content is the Foundation of your Event

To optimize for higher engagement, event planners need the right event content and tools to effectively build valuable participation.

For many event organizers, audience engagement is the biggest goal. That's because, without engagement, events and meetings aren't memorable, don't effectively transfer knowledge, and might even pose compliance risks.

But many struggle to know what meaningful engagement looks like. Is it how many people spoke up, or how many questions were asked? They also struggle to boost participation, with devices, distractions, and frankly boring presentations. What structure, activities, and tools can organizers use to maximize engagement?

By using content engagement strategies and leveraging engagement data, you can hold more effective events and drive more active and engaged participants.

"Content is king...Focus on content that is relevant to your audience. You need to have content that captivates the attention...Then on top of that, you need to create something that is engaging and creates dialogue."

— Leon Winkler, Director of International Events, Ubisoft

Why Content Engagement Matters

Content engagement helps audiences:

Learn something new:
Planning the right event content and interactions creates better attendee experiences.

Share important insights:
Content engagement creates opportunities that facilitate better conversations and information exchange.

Content engagement is critical because:

Knowledge transfer and retention are key

Engaging attendees is the foundation of learning and remembering. An engaged audience learns and retains information better.

In life science events, getting information back from your audience is just as important as sharing information with them. An engaging event creates opportunities for peer-to-peer, peer-to-presenter, and attendee-to-organization exchanges.

Smooth engagement impresses audiences

Content engagement leaves a unique impression and helps your organization stand out. A smooth, interactive content experience provides attendees with useful materials and interactions.

Improving attendee satisfaction encourages important relationships and referrals rather than leaving them disappointed.

Virtual audiences need better engagement

According to our 2021 Virtual Events Survey, 47% of event planners experience significantly less engagement in virtual event settings compared to in-person life sciences events.

But as more event planners go virtual to reach larger audiences, it's critical that event organizers include smooth, interactive content experiences so that leaders, presenters, and audiences get the most out of these events.

Data helps improve future events

To create more effective meetings and events, event professionals must identify what works and what doesn't, as well as common audience praise and complaints.

Data-driven content engagement solutions give you event analytics and gather real-time and post-session feedback. This helps you understand attendees better and improve event engagement and outcomes.

> *Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I may remember. Involve me and I learn."*
>
> **— Benjamin Franklin**

Ideas for Content Engagement

With these actionable tips, you can plan for higher participation during in-person, remote, and hybrid events.

Understand what you want to achieve

Defining engagement can be tricky, which is why you need to set goals, measure engagement data, and gather audience feedback. Determine important event success KPIs, like live polling response rates, event surveys, and ROI.

When setting event goals, it's helpful to remember:

Desired event outcomes:
What do you want attendees to do, learn, or think?

Event budget:
Practically, can you achieve specific goals within your budget?

Event format:
For example, a virtual conference may have different KPIs from an in-person conference.

Presentation and moderation make or break event success

Here are a few proven ways to increase content engagement in your event:

| Multimedia (like video and animation) | Q&A | Gamification | Polls and surveys | Content accessibility |

Good presentation and facilitation play important roles in events and meetings. Even the most audience-centric events require the right structure to keep participants engaged and on track, rather than silent and distracted.

To set the stage for the best presenters and moderators:

Do your topic research and know your audience

Understand differences in knowledge and experience

Set times for focused responses

Involve quiet participants with engagement strategies

Incorporate event tech

Conferences, meetings, and other events benefit from seamless event tech.

Now more than ever, event organizers are incorporating software and devices to provide flawless digital experiences that encourage participation and collaboration.

How to Increase & Measure Audience Engagement

As an event planner, you put a lot of effort into planning an event, putting it together, and managing it to make sure everything runs smoothly.

But how much do you put into capturing engagement data, and measuring the impact that your events have, and improving them over time?

Overview: Defining Meaningful Engagement

Engagement can seem like a buzzword, but it's critical to proving your event strategy worked. If you are only capturing attendance data, you are missing out on tons of valuable information that can help you demonstrate value and show ROI. If you don't measure engagement data, you're letting improvements that need to be made for more effective events slip through the cracks.

For effective and valuable events and meetings that please both attendees and stakeholders, event organizers need a clear way to understand and build audience engagement.

Content plays an important role in increasing and measuring audience engagement. By incorporating content engagement strategies for your audience, you can create more meaningful experiences with measurable actions.

Read on to discover proven methods to increase event engagement and measure it.

Challenges

It's often tricky for event organizers to define meaningful engagement for their events. The problem is that many don't set and track clear engagement goals, or they use metrics that don't show real engagement.

But just like other event metrics, audience engagement is only meaningful when you have a way to capture it. Whether it's duration of attendance, participation in conversations, or questions asked or answered, you need tools to accurately record data to find actionable insights.

> "Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort."
>
> **– Paul J. Meyer**

How to Measure Audience Engagement

What does success look like? How do you measure engagement at your event and prove value to sponsors?

Here are the key metrics and takeaways to help you define and measure engagement for your event:

- **Engagement with presenters/sponsors:** Response rates for live polls, Q&As, and surveys gather opinions and show contributions to discussion.
- **Engagement with each other:** Activity in conversations demonstrates networking and knowledge sharing.
- **Content engagement:** Views, notes, and downloads of important resources indicate content usefulness and attendee interest.
- **Event evaluations:** Post-event feedback and post-tests assess attendance satisfaction and learning outcomes respectively.
- **Aggregate data:** Track overall engagement to measure event success.
- **Individual data:** Individual data, like engagement rate and questions answered incorrectly, can enable highly specific follow-up, which is essential for trainings and compliance.

With event metrics, you can see exactly where engagement drops, to avoid those pitfalls in future events.

How to Increase Audience Engagement

Engagement never happens by accident. Audience engagement strategies play an important role in maximizing participation for effective events and meetings.

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically changed the way leading life sciences organizations design and structure events. Now, top event organizers combine the best of virtual and in-person methods to increase audience participation and advance business goals. Advanced content engagement techniques are designed to increase event engagement and provide you with more data.

Here are 7 powerful tips and best practices to engage event attendees:

1. Plan your engagement metrics

Before you start planning your event and structuring engagement activities, it's important to lay out exactly what's important for your event.

Set clear event KPIs that align with your desired event outcomes. Why are you having this event, and what are the key things attendees and other stakeholders should walk away with?

Know what engagement means at your event, and make sure your goals are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-Based.

2. Gather audience responses

Life science events and meetings depend on knowledge transfer and sharing critical insights between key opinion leaders. That's why it's important to create and measure collaboration and engagements with sponsors.

Pre-event surveys let you engage your audience from the moment they sit down, before the event begins. Survey responses can be a springboard as you start your event; responses inform speakers on the audience's topic knowledge and interest and gather useful data for business decisions.

During the event, interactive engagement strategies like digitally managed Q&As, polls, and surveys encourage attendees to participate while also helping you collect opinions and address inquiries. The more engaged your audience is, the more likely they are to retain information from the presentation.

You can track engagement rates to determine which attendees were most active, what attendees liked, and what they didn't. This can be useful to plan event improvements and equip Sales or Communications for follow-ups.

3. Leverage gamification

Are you struggling to spark engagement in your events? You're not the only one. Boredom and silence are the common enemies of many event organizers.

Adding game-like elements motivates and engages attendees. According to Scientific American, motivation comes from 3 critical elements: autonomy, value, and competence. Gamification features like leaderboards and polls for the fastest responders give attendees a sense of control, reward, and competitive validation. Giving out gift cards or prizes to winners can also drive value.

Through gamification, event participants feel more engaged, connected with colleagues, and leave with a strong learning retention of key takeaways. That's why educational organizations use gamification to achieve more meaningful educational outcomes.

4. Track slide and content interactions

During the event, content is the main form of interaction for attendees. In fact, for virtual guests, the content becomes the event venue itself.

Content engagement tech allows your guests to attend and engage with your event from anywhere. It serves as the hub for your event, hosting everything from slides and videos, to event agendas, to downloadable resources. Using a dynamic platform, and having speakers encourage audiences to access resources can boost virtual engagement.

Measuring slide and content interactions helps you increase audience engagement by gauging the effectiveness of certain materials. For example, a slide that audience members saved, rated, or took notes on is probably far more useful than one that had no engagement. On the other hand, a linked ebook that receives only a few downloads may not be very useful for attendees.

5. Use push notifications

When push notifications pop on your users' screens, they remind your attendees to take an action. These messages can be sent to attendees at the same time, notifying them of important updates, like schedule changes. Push notifications can also promote important content and information, like reminders to save a very important slide.

Push notifications cut through distractions and nudge your audience, making them a great way to get higher engagement. You can also track interactions with push notifications to evaluate interest and effectiveness.

6. Check conversations

Here's a common situation we see: a few voices dominate verbal discussions. What happens? Stunted conversations that don't gather or reflect your attendee's true diversity of insights and ideas.

Encourage quiet participants to submit questions digitally, so they can have their questions answered or opinions voiced without needing to verbally speak up. You can track discussion participation to see how responsive each attendee is.

By checking discussions, moderators and presenters can pull from audience questions and comments to provide answers and explore relevant topics.

☑ ☑ ◼ 7. Take post-event surveys

Understanding your attendee experience is crucial to measure attendee satisfaction and guide event improvements.

You may have often heard the question: From 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend this to friends or colleagues? The goal is to score 9s and 10s. With event technology, it's easy to collect in the form of surveys.

You can calculate your Net Promoter Score by taking the percentage of positive responses (9s and 10s) and subtracting the percentage of negative responses (1-6s). Consider 7s and 8s neutral scores.

Consider both quantitative and qualitative feedback questions, such as:

- How did you hear about this event?

- How satisfied were you with the speakers and sessions?

- What did you enjoy most about today?

- How likely are you to participate in our events in the future?

Improving Engagement at Life Sciences Events

Use the most effective engagement strategies for important industry events.

> " *"Nothing in science has any value to society if it is not communicated."*
>
> **— Anne Roe**

Overview: The future of life sciences depends on communication

Today's successful events drive tomorrow's innovation

Life sciences events rely on knowledge exchange. It's no surprise that leaders in the health and pharmaceutical industry are rethinking events as a key brand differentiator in a competitive space.
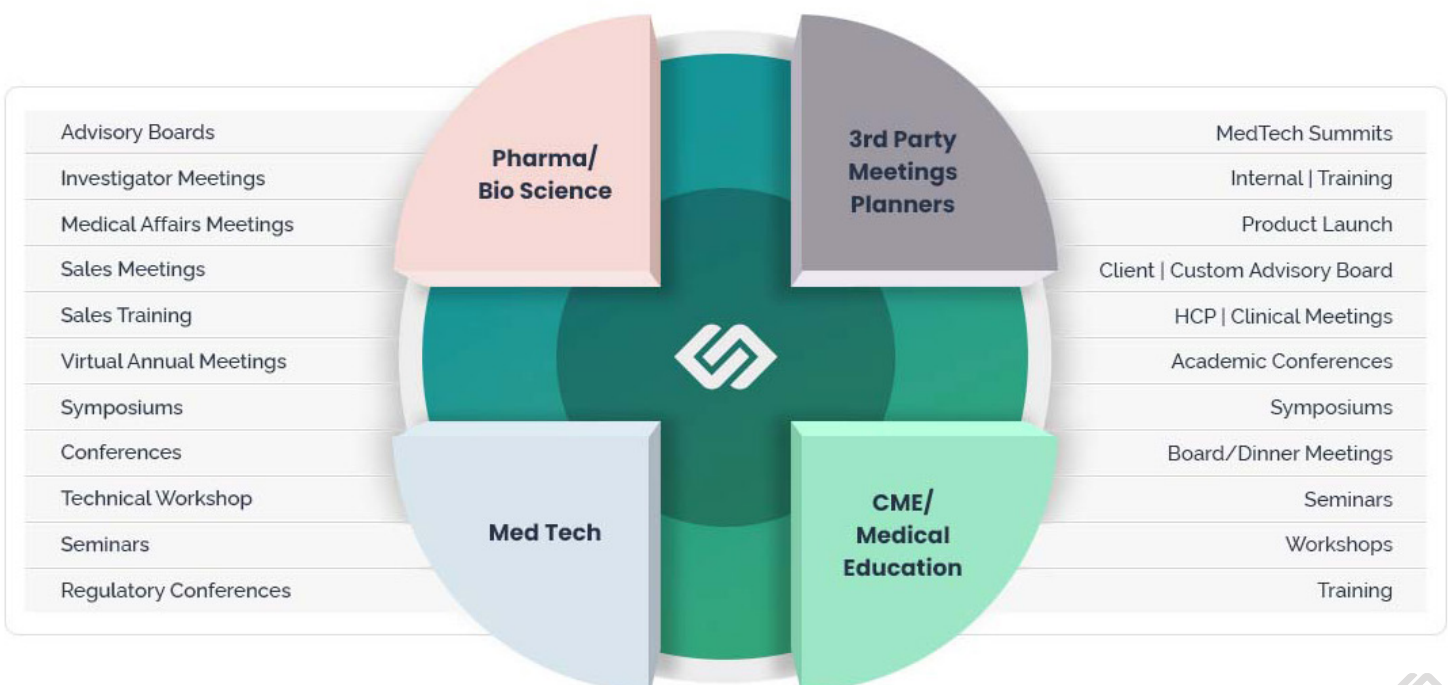
In life sciences meetings, content engagement matters because it creates relevant learning opportunities, and addresses communication requirements to meet your organization's goals.

Organizations are listening, measuring their audience engagement and making data-driven moves to improve experience and productivity. Constantly improving event content and tweaking processes for better engagement will drive ROI and lead these organizations to success. On the other hand, organizations that ignore event engagement will fail to optimize events and miss important insights and opportunities.

Pharma/ Bio Science	3rd Party Meetings Planners
Advisory Boards	MedTech Summits
Investigator Meetings	Internal | Training
Medical Affairs Meetings	Product Launch
Sales Meetings	Client | Custom Advisory Board
Sales Training	HCP | Clinical Meetings
Virtual Annual Meetings	Academic Conferences
Symposiums	Symposiums
Conferences	Board/Dinner Meetings
Technical Workshop	Seminars
Seminars	Workshops
Regulatory Conferences	Training

Med Tech

CME/ Medical Education

Medical Advisory Boards

This section will explore effective advisory board engagement strategies to improve advisor participation and gain strategic insights.

Pharmaceutical and medical device organizations frequently engage medical advisory boards to gather valuable feedback.

Unlike traditional market research, a well-executed medical advisory board can be a quick and very valuable tool to:

- Discover quick insights
- Hold interactive discussions to explore insights
- Exchange information to understand the obstacles and support needs, such as unmet knowledge gaps and medical educational opportunities
- Gain guidance and suggestions about how to address these unmet needs

Collaboration is key to a meaningful advisory board meeting, so you can come away with actionable insights and recommendations, as well as a complete report of the event.

The Seven Ways to Maximize Advisor Insights

1. Set your goals upfront and plan ahead

Start with clear objectives. What are you hoping to gain from the event? A walkthrough of the patient journey? Advice on clinical trial protocol? Surveys? A deeper understanding of coverage issues? Be clear on how the output of your advisory board will inform your business.

Then, circulate the plan to stakeholders. Hold a planning meeting with everyone on the team who's going to be at the meeting to make sure you're aligned. To maintain engagement and focus, refine your ad board agenda. Narrow it down to the most important information you want to share and feedback you want to take away. Be sure to weigh your business needs with the needs of advisors.

Then, double-check compliance with your internal policies and any applicable local regulatory guidelines.

Lastly, ensure that event content, resource materials, discussion guides, and advisor questions are developed and approved in time. You don't want last-minute changes to derail your event. Plus, having a concrete plan will make writing reports easier.

Before the meeting:

- Brief the chairs and speakers before the meeting.
- Then, schedule a call to go over the plan.
- Lastly, hold a dry run or rehearsal to make sure everything goes smoothly.
- Chairs and speakers can check practical execution to detect problems and offer great ideas.

2. Choose the right advisors

Select the right advisors to gather the valuable insights you need. Seek out informed, appropriately experienced advisors that understand your goals and will commit to actively contributing to your discussion. Recruit them based on their expertise and ability to answer questions that serve your business needs. Ideally, start the screening, invitation and contracting process at least 8-12 weeks in advance in order to finalize contracts and secure the appropriate advisors.

To keep advisors actively engaged, resist the urge to include too many advisors.

3. Focus your schedule

To maintain engagement and focus, refine your ad board agenda. Narrow it down to the most important information you want to share and feedback you want to take away. Be sure to weigh your business needs with the needs of advisors.

Prioritize your attendee experience to create meaningful, engaging events.

4. Decide on the right format and platform

For a successful advisory board that increases engagement, you should pick a format and platform that is secure and best suits your needs. For example, virtual advisory board meetings can be held at shorter notice, and are easier on travel and budgets.

More and more, healthcare and pharmaceutical organizations are holding hybrid and virtual events, and need the tools to host them effectively. Consider the technology and platform support you need whether your meeting is in-person or virtual.

Your platform is key to your meeting success.

You should choose an event technology and partner who:

Has experience in advisory board meetings

Can provide technical support before and during your event

Supports interactive activities, like Q&As, polls, and surveys

Allows presenters to share slides, answer private and public questions, and collect and display responses, polls, and survey results

Provides a smooth and polished user experience, access to essential resources, and capabilities to follow-up

Facilitates synchronous interactions to promote the best attendee experience

5. Keep discussion topics focused

Consider the length of your meeting to keep advisors active and alert. Consider the length of your meeting to keep advisors active and alert. Schedule breaks as needed to disconnect and come back refreshed.

6. Provide content engagement opportunities

Advisory board meetings are held to gather feedback with key opinion leaders. Plan a variety of activities, like general discussion, and breakouts if possible.

To engage advisors, try using these content engagement strategies:

Complete short polls or surveys at the beginning of the meeting in and post-presentation surveys

Vote in polls and answer real-time open-ended surveys to gather opinions and insights

Invite advisors to send questions to the moderator

View content like slides and relevant materials

7. Follow up with advisors after the meeting

Advisors are interested to know the output of the event. When possible, after the meeting is over, reach out to advisors to share a short summary. Our pharmaceutical clients know: it goes a long way when you make advisors feel informed, important, and valued.

Investigator Meetings

This section will explore impactful investigator meeting strategies for solid communication, learning retention, and follow-up support to ensure effective study operations. Conducting an effective clinical trial is more challenging than ever. Investigator Meetings serve an important role in ensuring clinical trial sites are involved in discussions on implementation of complex protocols and provide a forum for training.

The six ways to train investigators:

1. Identify key content for a focused event and set clear objectives

Many investigator meetings suffer from being over ambitious in the amount of content to be covered.

Before the meeting, outline your critical goals and be selective with event content. Consult with internal study team colleagues, field teams and representatives of study sites to align objectives.

2. Choose the right event technology partner

While most pharma companies still prefer a face-to-face investigator meeting, today more are being conducted in virtual or hybrid formats. Rising costs, busy schedules and tight timelines make it important to maximize convenience.

Due to travel restrictions, principal investigators and site staff expect virtual options. Virtual investigator meetings are cost-effective, highly convenient, and accessible.

Look for an event technology that supports hybrid and virtual events. The right platform paired with an intentionally designed presentation makes it easy to empower presenters, boost content engagement, and measure the impact of your training.

3. Engage intentionally for learning retention

For some sites, it may be 3-6 months after the Investigator Meeting before they are recruiting or managing patients within a study protocol.

To maximize learning retention, investigator meetings should leverage active, engaged learning that centers on participation and discussion and aligns with endpoints of the study.

Engagement strategies can include:

- **Polls/Surveys:** To gauge opinions and understanding

- **Q&As:** To facilitate discussion with experts /study leadership

- **Gamification:** To encourage competition

- **Saved slides/resources:** To save important information and study resources

Incorrect responses to polling questions may indicate a need for follow-up with study site teams at site initiation or early monitoring visits.

4. Provide opportunities to practice key decision-making

Your clinical trial sites need to be able to select the appropriate patients. Familiarity with and understanding of inclusion and exclusion criteria is critical to optimize recruitment.

Rather than simply listing these criteria in a Death-by-Powerpoint presentation, consider a   more active approach to provide opportunities for study teams to simulate patient selection/screening etc. in a risk-free learning environment.

Present a patient case and have them identify whether they're a good candidate for the study. Providing feedback and the opportunity to review the case together will reinforce the training.

5. Invite feedback to identify and overcome challenges

Study site teams are great resources for information about what works and doesn't work on the front lines. They can identify challenges in implementing the protocol locally, including patient availability, recruitment and retention, and new technologies

The investigator meeting provides an opportunity for seeking input on such challenges. Ask experienced teams what has worked well in similar studies: What tools and processes helped solve issues like low recruitment, administrative burden, and more?

Then open up a dialogue for site personnel to engage and collaborate. Be sure to build in pauses in presentations to allow space for responses. Share these takeaways in your post-event communications and clinical trial hub.

6. Leverage event data to extend support and resources

The key to successful clinical trials is extending support to boost adherence to study protocols.

Event tech like Array can capture individual engagement data. Here are a few ways clinical trial leaders can use event data from an investigator meeting.

Open-ended questions: Gather insights to find solutions to challenges and make crucial decisions on enrollment criteria before it's finalized.

Pre- and post-test results: See demonstration of learning and identify continued knowledge gaps

Post-event evaluations: Capture feedback on certain roles and responsibilities, what areas they need more support resources, and attendee satisfaction.

Saved content and notes: Track content engagement to identify most commonly saved content personalized learning inventories.

 Make investigator meeting recordings, materials and tools, available on your clinical study hub. Provide useful resources for study site teams, as well as access for those unable to attend in person.

CME Live Events

This section will explore important live event strategies to engage healthcare professionals.

Many factors go into planning and delivering an effective CME/CE event. Identifying current needs for your audience, collaborating with expert faculty/speakers, and marketing your event for maximum attendance are of course very important. But there are other considerations if you want to to maximize the opportunity for a live CME symposium event.

Without efforts to refine content engagement, and measure and increase interactivity, continuing education events can fall into the boring, age-old structure, with disappointing results. Demonstrating impact and building a dependable brand practitioners flock to for their educational needs rely on constant event improvement based on actionable metrics and insights.

When planning your CME event, you should also consider:

How you present content: Is your content presented in a compelling, attention-grabbing way?

Gathering engagement data: How will you collect information about your learners' experience to demonstrate learning and gain insights to improve future events?

Your end goals: Is your event designed to align with your objectives?

Engagement strategies: How will you boost engagement to increase meaningful interactions and improve learning retention?

The five ways to engage learners:

1. Set your goals upfront and plan ahead

What does a successful CME event look like to your organization? Your answer may depend on what you're trying to accomplish and who your attendees are.

CME events should:

- Be relevant to the learners and their practice

- Positively impact learners, care teams, and ultimately patient care

- Support learners in developing the knowledge and skills they can apply and share with   to team members

Before your event, consider the data you would hope to have to demonstrate impact.

2. Turn participants into active learners

Even today, too often presentations fail to inform and engage because they are planned as sit-down events presenting data from the podium with the audience listening passively.

Here's a common problems, seen in a 2016 CME study:

"The instructor would go there, without attracting attention…He didn't care about the audience, just showing his slides. Maybe in around 80% of sessions we attended, we were just listeners."

Attendee Feedback, "Improving continuing medical education by enhancing interactivity," 2016

Sounds familiar?

Involve your learners in an interactive, learner-focused experience. Learners retain more information when they actively engage.

Easy strategies to engage the learner include:

> **Polls/Surveys:** Gauge opinions on current standards of care, assess how medical professionals would manage patient case scenarios, and test knowledge or competence
>
> **Q&As:** Provide an opportunity to engage with the expert faculty
>
> **Gamification:** Encourage competition, injects energy and increase active participation
>
> **Resources:** Provide slides and other resources so learner can save important information for reference after the event

3. Support improved content quality with event tech

Whether you're delivering in-person, virtual, or hybrid CME events, you need the right tools to ensure seamless presentation and optimal learner engagement

Choose the right event technology with the capabilities to complement your instructional design and support your goals for data collection at the event.

4. Track how learners participated and actively engaged

Unlike traditional live events, where you can only measure attendance, event platforms like Array can capture multiple engagement metrics, like participation in discussion and submission of questions, participation in polls, performance in test questions. That means you have the data to demonstrate your learners' engagement throughout your entire symposium.

5. Power a tailored approach

For a successful CME event, follow-up is key. One of the biggest challenges for CME is the different learner needs across different professions and specialties. Often, it's hard to provide the exact support each practitioner needs.

At Array, we provide the tools for you to address this problem by capturing individual engagement data, so you can provide personalized follow-up.

Pre- and post-test results: Identify continued knowledge gaps for personalized follow-up.

Saved content and notes: By automatically curating a personalized learning inventory of actions during the event, your learner has a reference which supports their needs after the event.

Choosing the Right Event Platform for Engagement

Build the necessary foundation for smoother presentations, more engaged audiences, and satisfied stakeholders.

To maximize audience engagement, ensure the best experience, and prevent technical issues, it's essential to pick the right software and have reliable support at the ready.
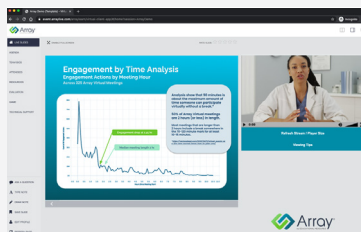
The right event technology drives more content engagement and captures important attendee data.
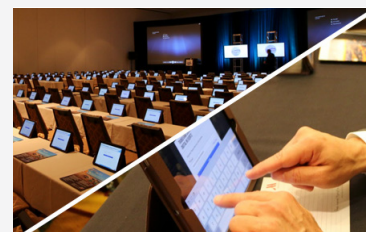
Your Event Type

In an increasingly digital landscape, event organizers need a flexible platform for a smooth experience across all types of meetings.

IN-PERSON

VIRTUAL

HYBRID

Engagement features

Audience engagement doesn't happen out of nowhere. It's the result of intentional planning, structure, and encouragement.

Important engagement features include survey features, gamification, conversations, slide interactions, and accessible resources.

Built-in data reporting

Measuring event success shouldn't be difficult. With built-in data reporting, the right event platform gives you a deep understanding of your event's effectiveness.

Collect data from your audience with detailed reporting on which members engaged, which slides were compelling, cross-meeting trends, and more.

About Array

Array provides content engagement technology and services designed specifically for life sciences events. Our unique interactive features can increase audience engagement to over 90%.

We power in-person, hybrid, and virtual events with content engagement software, client success services, and managed iPads®.

With Array's content engagement platform, you have all the tools to build meaningful audience engagement, and measure engagement data for key insights. Our content engagement software, and built-in engagement analytics and reporting make it simple to define, boost, and track audience engagement.

Learn More

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Ready to improve engagement at your next life sciences event?

Get in touch for event recommendations and a software demo.

Schedule A Consultation