

# State of B2B Event Marketing

B2B Event Marketing Survey Report October 2014



# I State of B2B Event Marketing

Event Marketing is a strategic marketing and advertising specialization that has burgeoned in recent years. Unlike other mass marketing methods, it provides customers and prospects with an interactive, immersive experience of a company and its products and services. Event Marketing raises awareness of your company, enhances your organization's reputation, and builds your corporate brand. It takes your customers to where the action is, physically or virtually, leaving a lasting impression of the organization, product, or service being marketed. Event Marketing is a sure-fire way to deeply engage your target audience.

Successful event marketers strategise way ahead of an actual event. They set out with visioning, objectives-setting, and situation analysis pre-event, efficiently deploying their teams' management and organizational skills during the event. Post-event, they conduct thorough assessments of effectiveness and ROI.

But to address whether or not the mid-to long-term follow-through results in conversions and sales, Regalix conducted survey interviews with business leaders, senior marketing executives, and Event Marketing pros from around the world. In the State of B2B Event Marketing 2014 report, we analyze current Event Marketing perspectives, practices, and priorities. The actionable tips and essential recommendations that the State of B2B Event Marketing 2014 presents will equip your company to carve out a unique niche for your products or services in today's highly competitive environment.

# I Key Takeaways

**91%** marketers invest in Event Marketing

 » tweet this «

**84%** marketers identify reaching many prospects in a short amount of time as the key benefit of Event Marketing

 » tweet this «

**80%** marketers identify lead gen as the main objective of their event programs

 » tweet this «

**79%** marketers believe physical events yield better ROI

 » tweet this «

**78%** marketers identify sponsorships as the most common method to monetize events

 » tweet this «

**75%** marketers identified increase in lead generation as the key metric for measuring returns on Event Marketing efforts or initiatives

 » tweet this «

**73%** marketers identify conferences as the most commonly conducted event type

 » tweet this «

**64%** marketers expect that Event Marketing budgets will increase in the next 12 months

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**63%** marketers identify lack of budgets as the key Event Marketing challenge

 » tweet this «

**46%** marketers allocate 10-25 percent of the overall budget to events

 » tweet this «

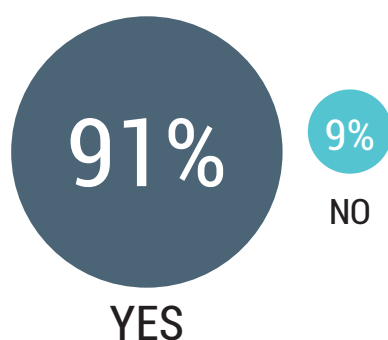
# I High on the Marketer's Activity List

In the field of Marketing and Communications, not only is Event Management a strategic tool,<sup>1</sup> but Event Marketing is one of the most high-growth fields as well.<sup>2</sup> In fact, 91% marketers state that they invest in Event Marketing.

B2B Event Marketing continues to be **viewed as a critical thrust area in a company's overall marketing mix**. Of the executives surveyed, only 4% say events are not significant. As many as 57% marketers find Event Marketing extremely significant in accelerating lead generation and growing the sales pipeline.

**The top four event marketing objectives of companies are lead generation, brand-building and customer engagement. Marketers seem to believe that the route to better marketing, in the long term, goes via a greater emphasis on marketing events.**

## Marketers Investing in Event Marketing



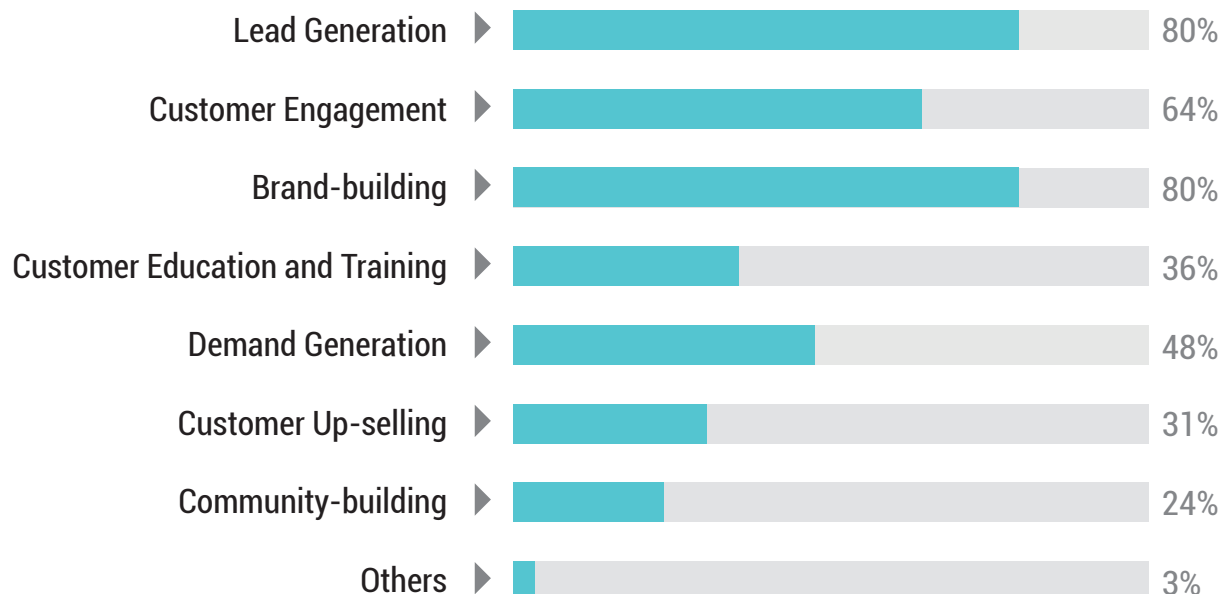
## Significance of Events for Accelerating Lead Gen or Growing the Sales Pipeline



<sup>1</sup>Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/event\\_management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/event_management)

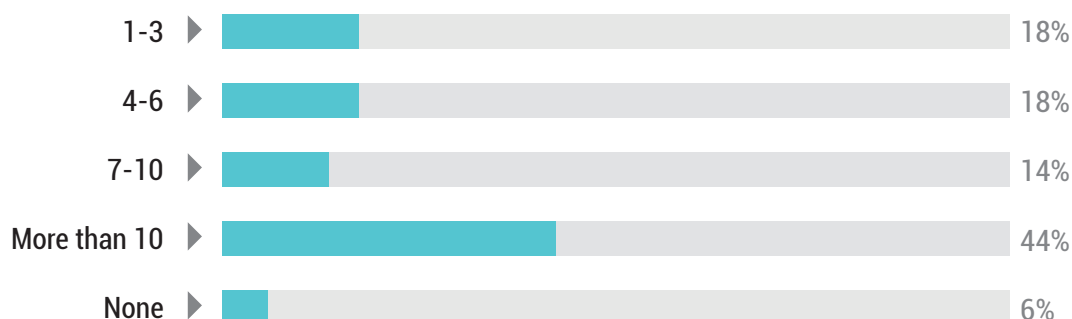
<sup>2</sup>Source: <https://www.kandu-marketing.com/frequent-questions/whats-event-marketing.html>

## Event Objectives for Companies Investing in Event Marketing



**Events are high on marketing teams' activity list.** 76 percent marketers have an annual calendar that features events at least once per quarter. 44 percent conduct over 10 events per year – almost one event every month. Regardless of whether they invest in Event Marketing, marketers attend a variety of events – webinars (83%), conferences and informal get-togethers with professional colleagues (67%, seminars, strategic and operational business meetings (50%), and physical trade shows, hands-on workshops, and online training programmes (33%).

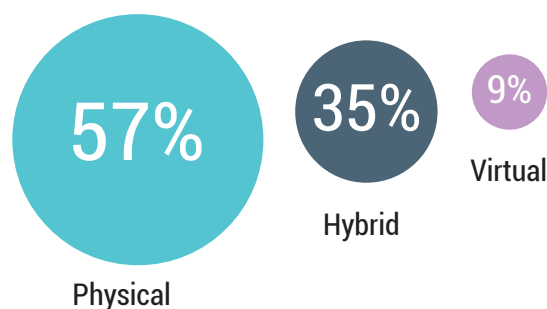
## Number of Events Conducted/Organized During a Calendar Year



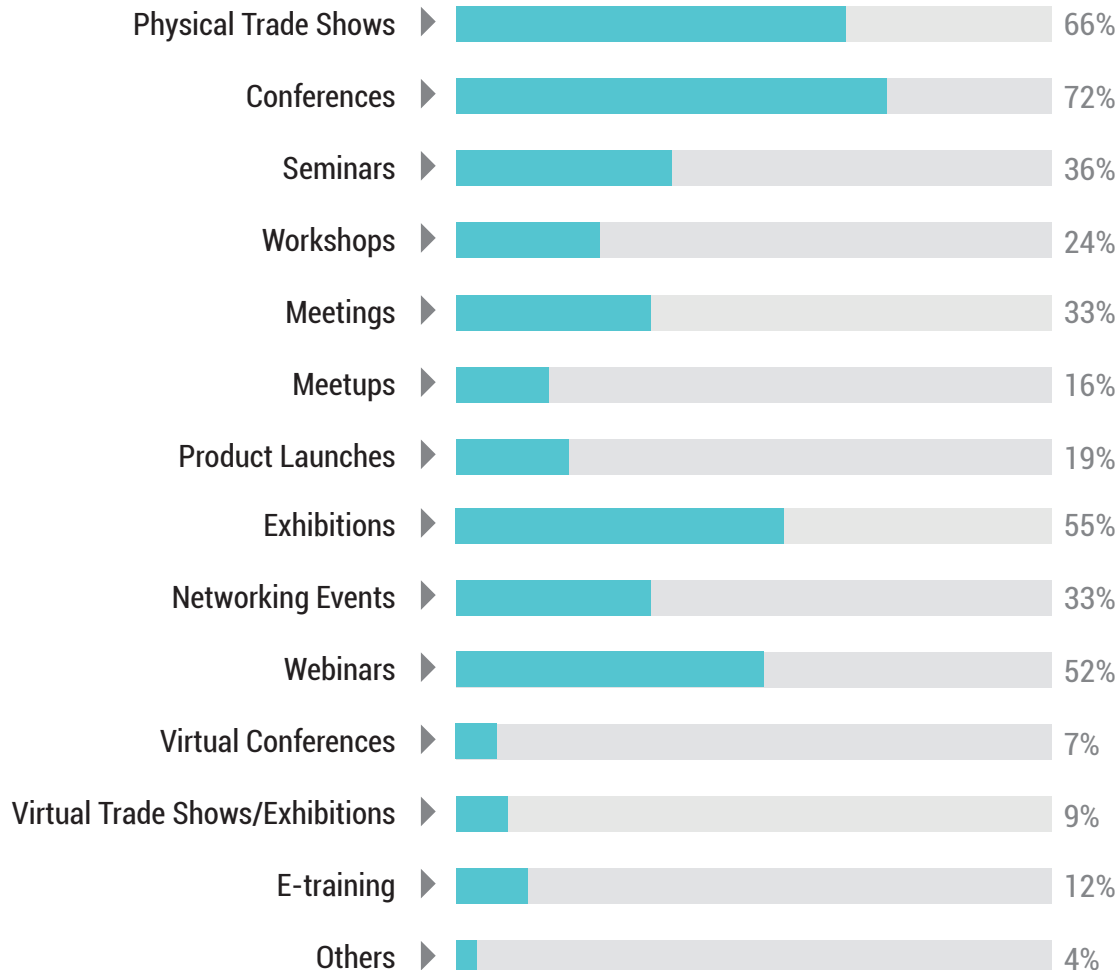
# Physical Events Most Popular

A variety of physical events are popular. Possible reasons include higher ROI, higher immediacy, and the opportunity for non-directive, face-to-face marketer-customer and customer-customer interaction and experience-sharing. 57 percent marketers claim that they organize purely physical events, with another 35% organizing events that blend a virtual component with the physical. Marketers conduct at least 14 types of physical event, chiefly conferences, physical trade shows, and exhibitions.

## Primary Medium Marketers Use for Events



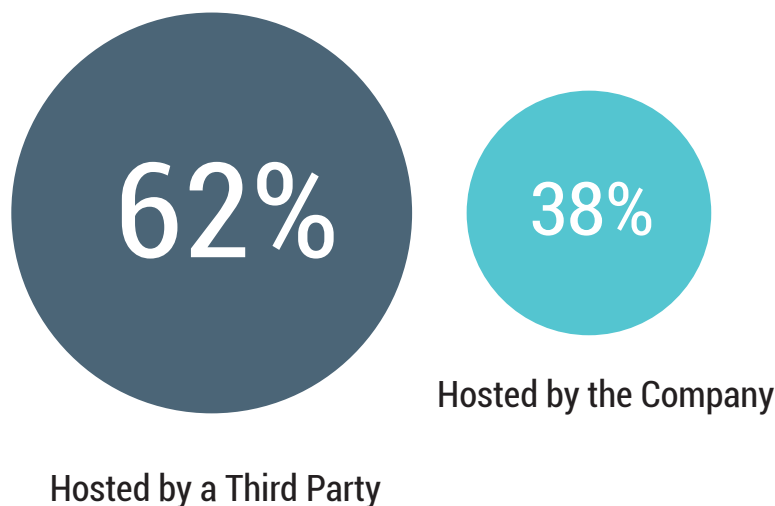
## Types of Events Conducted



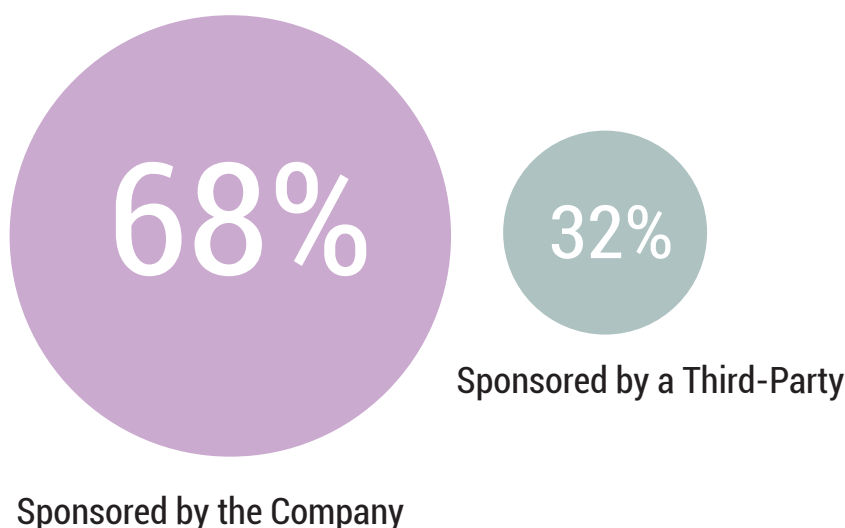
# Hosting, Sponsoring, Monetization, and Attendance

62 percent marketers partner with distributors and other third parties in hosting events. However, 68% marketers opt to sponsor the events, as many as 64% electing to sponsor up to 10 events per year, and 30% going even beyond that number.

## Trends in Event Hosting

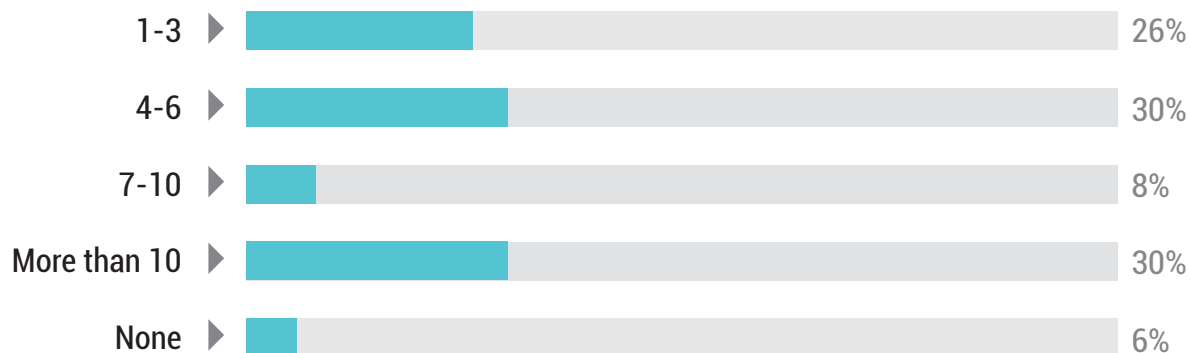


## Trends in Event Sponsoring

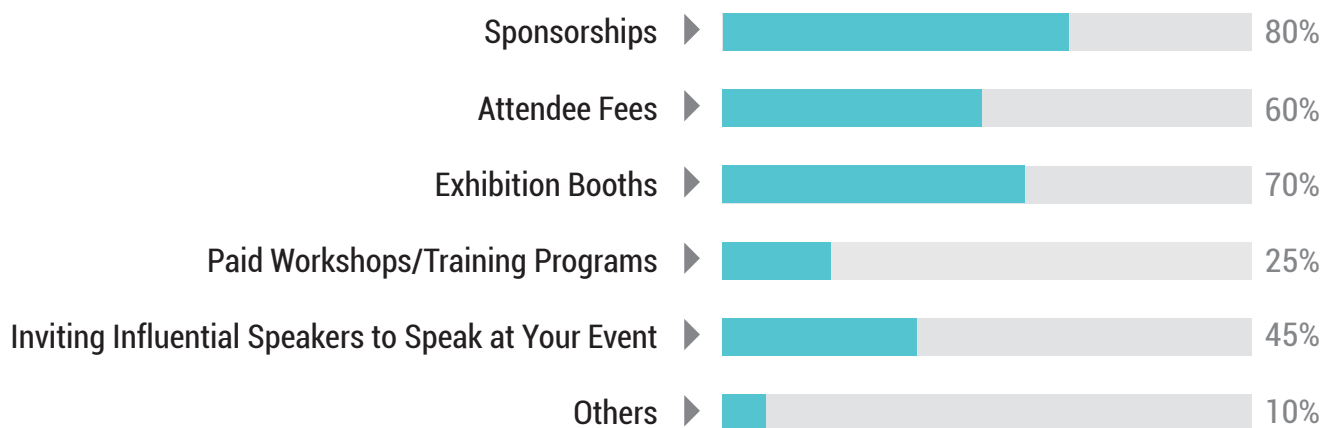


**Co-financing is a common method to monetize events.** 80 percent marketers reach out for sponsorships, while 70% recover costs through exhibition booths and 60% recover, through attendee fees.

## Number of Events Sponsored During a Calendar Year



## Trends in Event Monetization

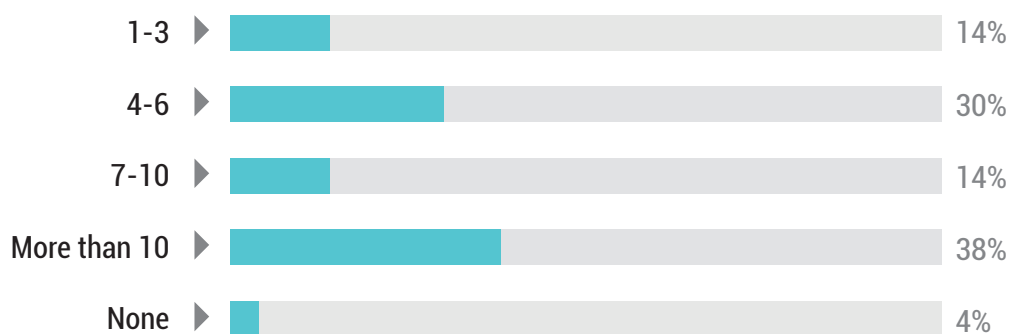




Annually, 58% marketers attend up to 10 events that are conducted by third parties but a sizeable chunk – 38% of respondents – states that they attend more than 10 such events every year.

### Third-Party Events Attended During a Calendar Year

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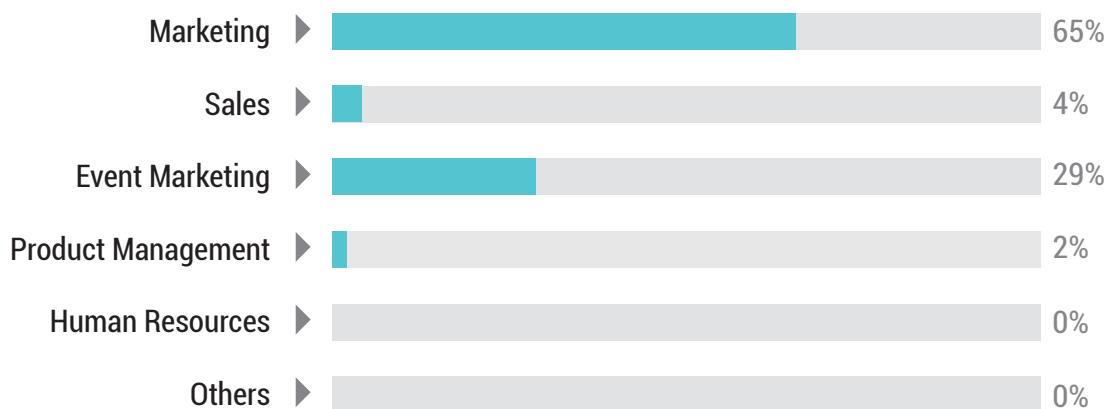


# I Cranking the Event Engine

**Most company managements are yet to put their money where their mouths are and make good on their commitment** to Event Marketing. Event Marketing teams lack autonomy, resources, and sparkle.

According to 65% of the marketers surveyed, the Marketing team in their organization handles the job of managing events. However, **company managements perhaps still see events as a nice but not necessary aspect of marketing because only 29% respondents have a dedicated Event Marketing team** for the job. (This is reflected in the perception of many respondents in this survey that Event Marketing is often a cash-strapped area.) Interestingly, the **Event Management Institute's (EMI's) EventTrack 2013** report found<sup>3</sup> 29% brand marketers saying that their senior management viewed Event Marketing as "critical and essential."

## Team Responsible for Organizing/Executing Events in Organizations



Given this, **companies are understandably somewhat ad hoc in professionalizing their approach** to Event Marketing. Respondents are divided almost down the middle, when asked if they have dedicated teams for organizing and executing events. 53 percent say Yes, while 47% say No.

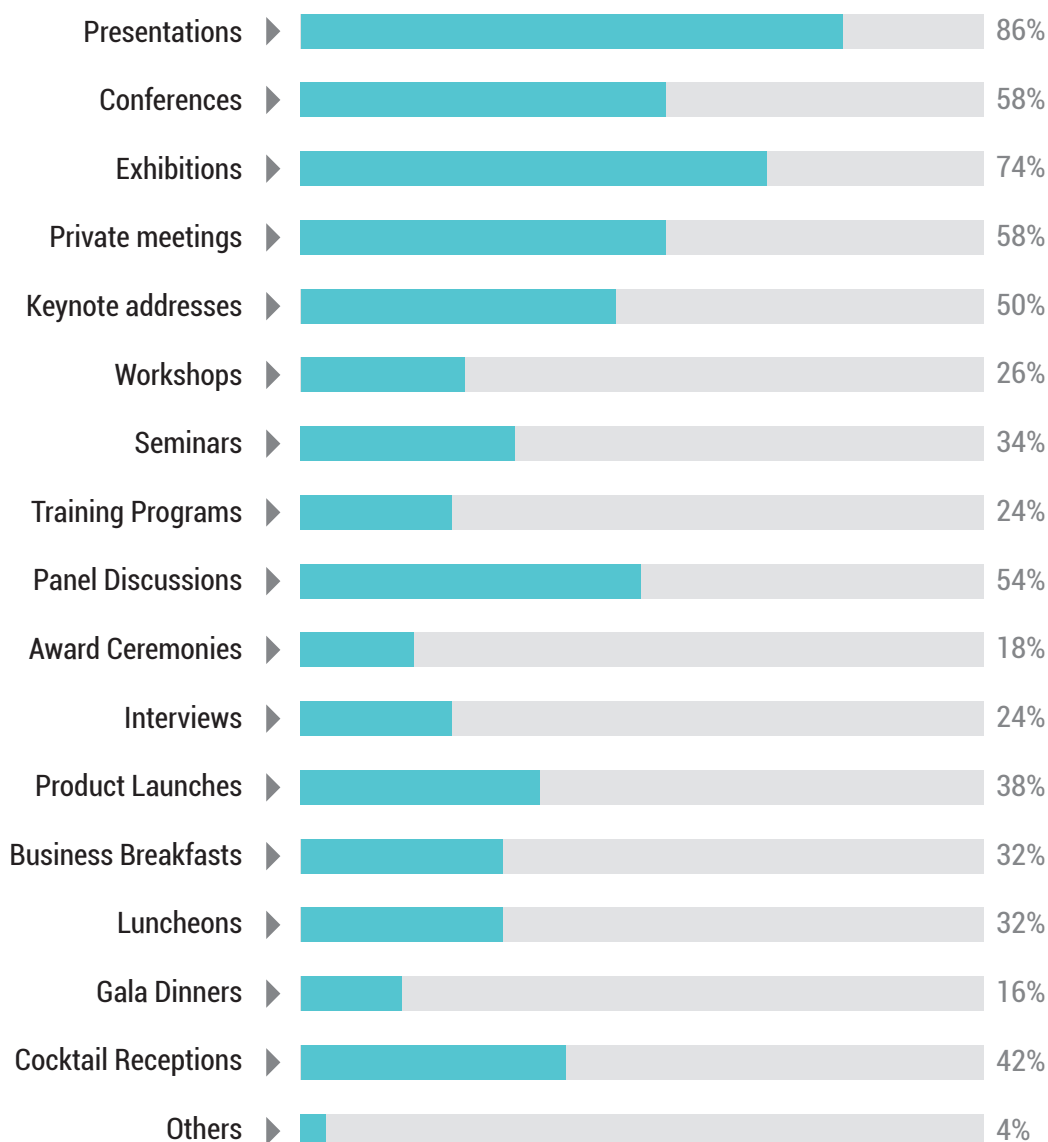
<sup>3</sup>Source: [www.eventmarketing.com/featured-research](http://www.eventmarketing.com/featured-research)

A wide array of activities are put together to create an event, with marketers dipping into a bag with more than 17 types of components. But **innovation and out-of-the-box thinking are largely missing**. The elements continue to be formal – mostly presentations, exhibitions, conferences, and private meetings.

The **planning window for events is astonishingly long**. 48 percent marketers say it takes 3-4 months of planning for each event, while another 38% claim they complete the exercise in 1-2 months.

The use of branded mobile apps for event promotion is surprisingly low (19%). This could be caused by the **lack of a strategic perspective on dovetailing Event Marketing lifecycle technology tools with event objectives**.

### Typical Components of Physical Events

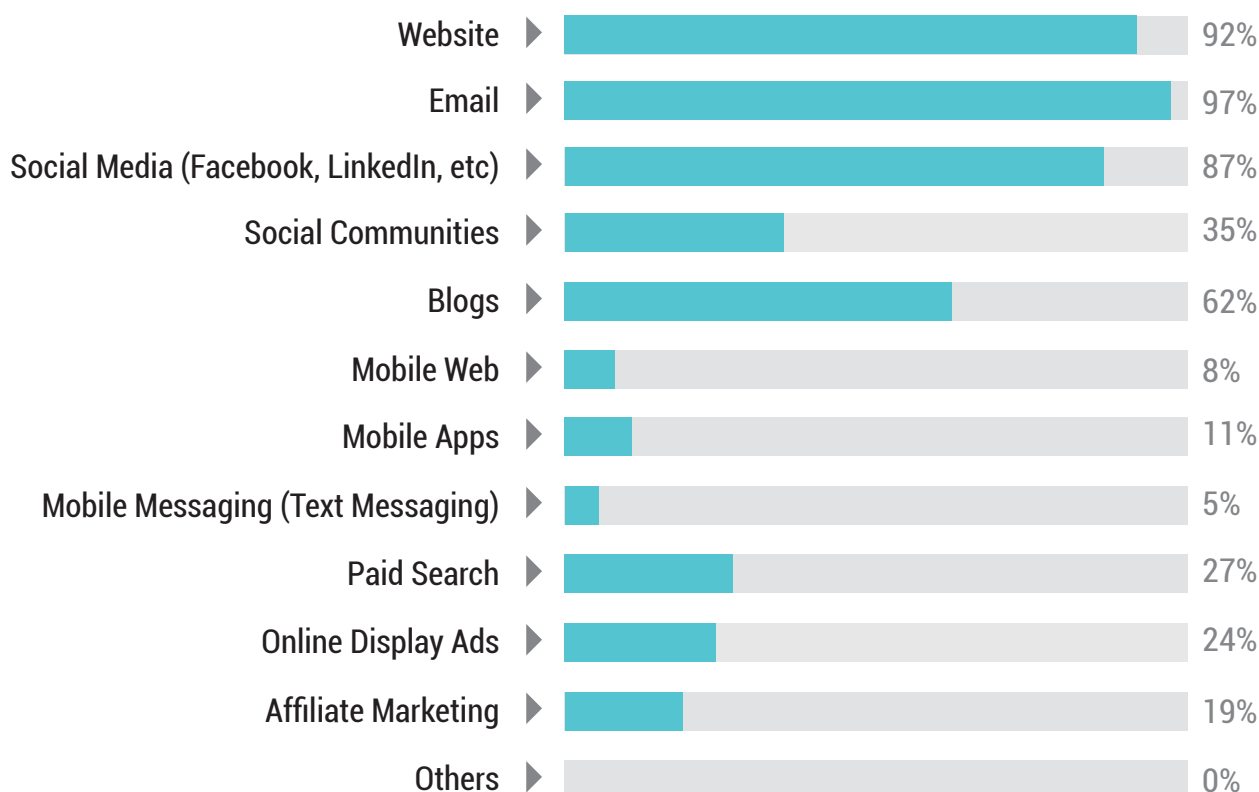


# Attitudes towards Marketing and Promoting Events

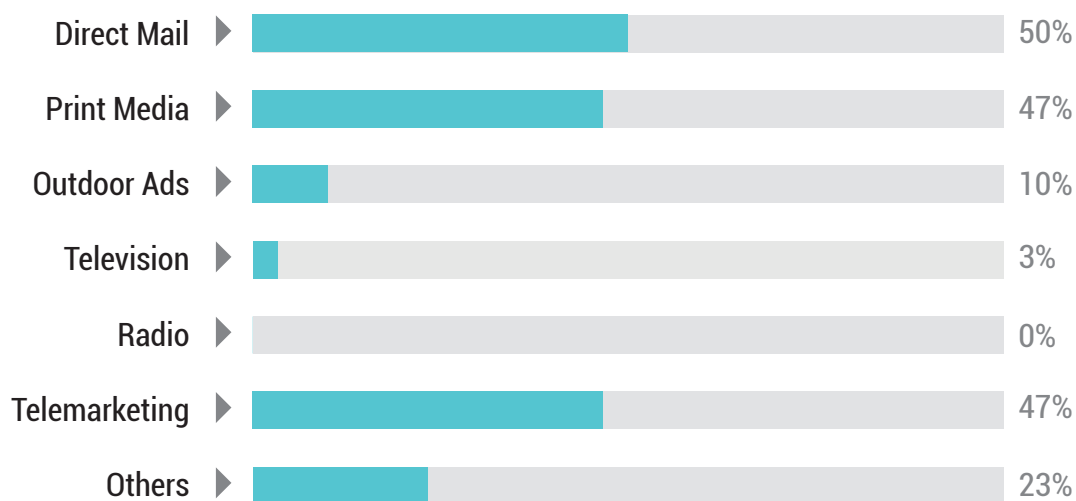
Teams responsible for Event Marketing leverage a wide range of online and offline channels for event promotion. However, **marketers' preferences have a marked online accent**. Today's marketer uses 12 channels for online promotion and 7 channels for offline promotion. The most frequently chosen online channels are email (97%), web (92%), and social (87%), while the corresponding offline channels used are direct mail (50%), and telemarketing and print media (47%). Outdoor ads take a backseat, at 10%.

**The argument seems to be to spend as little – rather than as cost-effectively – as possible.** Marketing – and even more so, Event Marketing – is still treated as a cost head.

## Online Channels Used to Promote Events

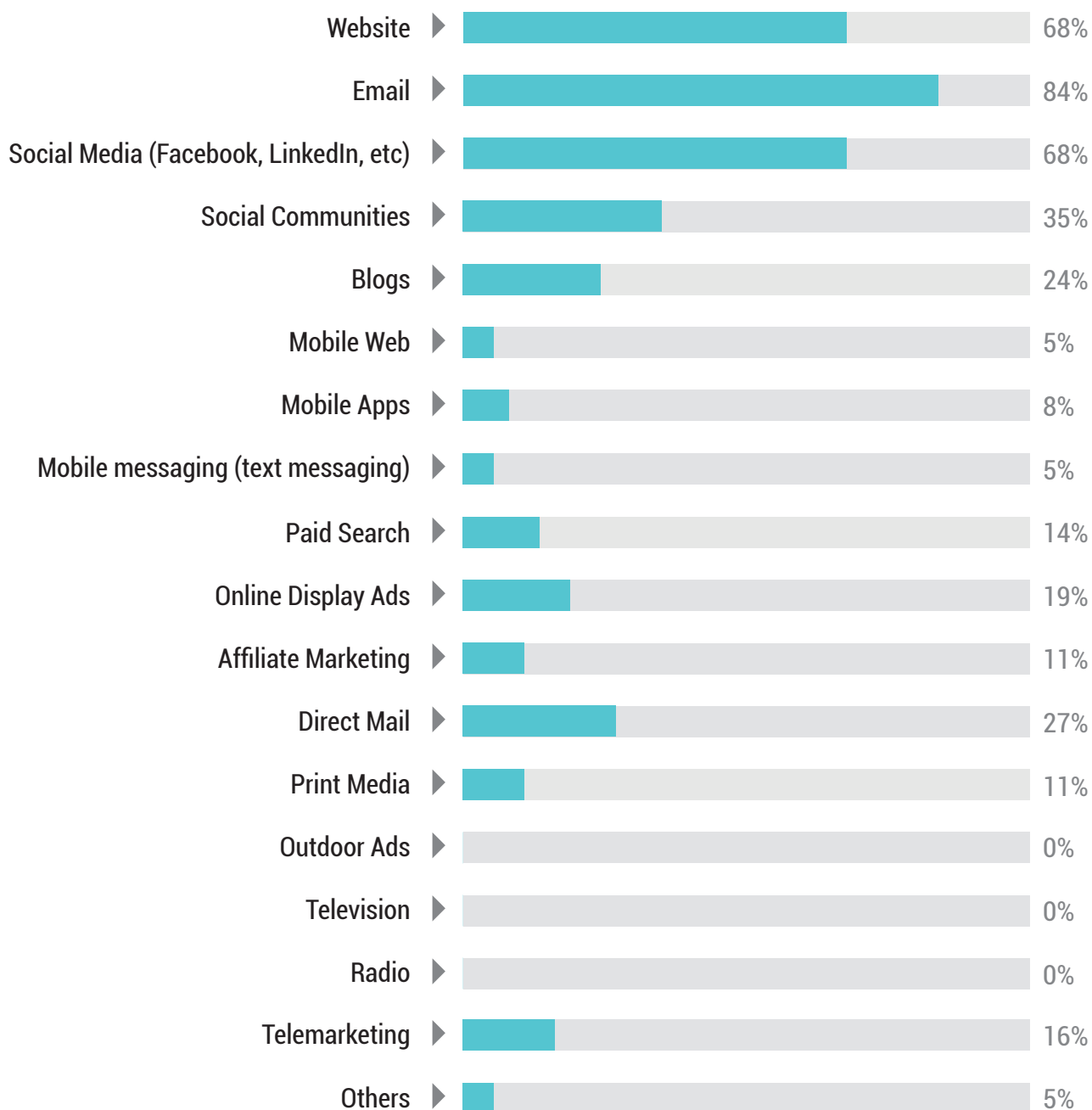


## Offline Channels Used to Promote Events



From the host of channels (online and offline) used for marketing events, marketers identified eMail (84%), web (68%) and social (68%) as the most effective online channels. Similarly, direct mail (27%), telemarketing (16%), and print media (11%) topped the list of effective offline channels.

## Most Effective Online and Offline Channels Used to Market Events



The **marketing-is-an-expense mindset becomes clearer** when one looks at a fine-grained analysis of online and offline channel use during the days immediately preceding or following an event. During this time, marketers' preferences are somewhat different from those observed over a longer time-frame, much like the well-established "hype cycle" phenomenon.<sup>4</sup>

**During the pre-event phase, a mix of online and offline channels tops the list in fuelling attendee expectation, creating anticipation, and driving registrations.** This covers cost-intensive outdoor ads, TV, radio, and cold calling, which are juxtaposed with options that assure results – paid search and online display ads. Low-cost channels follow closely – web, email, and social communities.

**It's as if throwing money at the event to make a splash and feed the hype is the safest bet. During events, marketers use low-cost options.** 91 percent marketers use social media, 82% use mobile apps, 80% use mobile messaging, 70% use live tweeting, and 68% executives use social community content. Company-branded giveaways come fifth, used by 64% marketers.

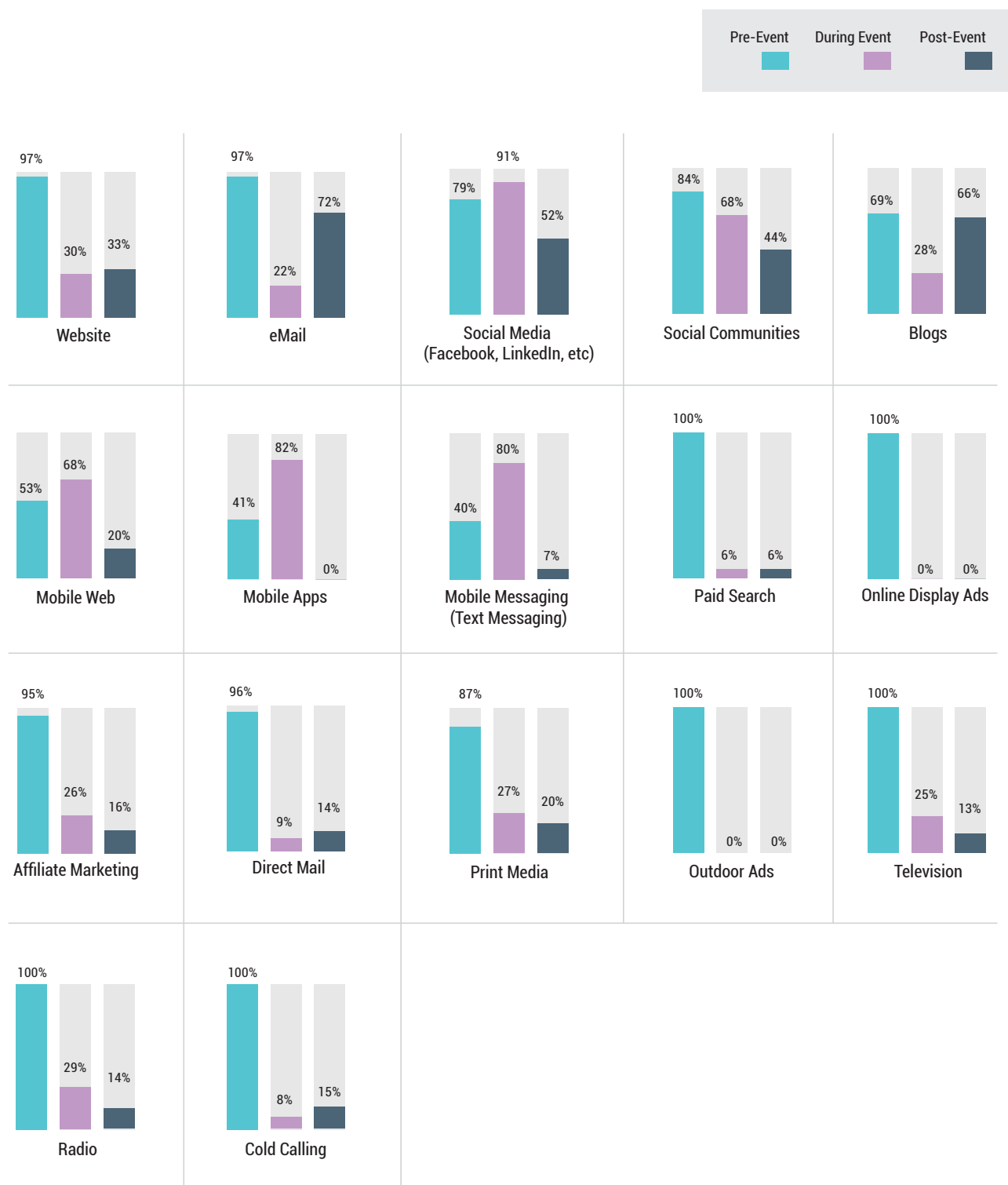
**Post-event, too, marketers continue knocking off on spends** – email, which 72% use, followed by blogs, by 66% executives. 64 percent feed attendees with presentation decks, seminar videos, session podcasts, etc. 60 percent respondents say they add on other useful information, e.g. whitepapers and guides or sustain contact through emails seeking feedback, suggestions for improvement, etc. At a given event, 36% marketers try to rope registrants in for the next event.

**But one-on-one contact with prospects is lacking.** Only 4% respondents say they prefer a personalized option – phoning participants.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/hype\\_cycle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/hype_cycle)

## Online and Offline Channels Used in Pre-, During- and Post-Event Phases



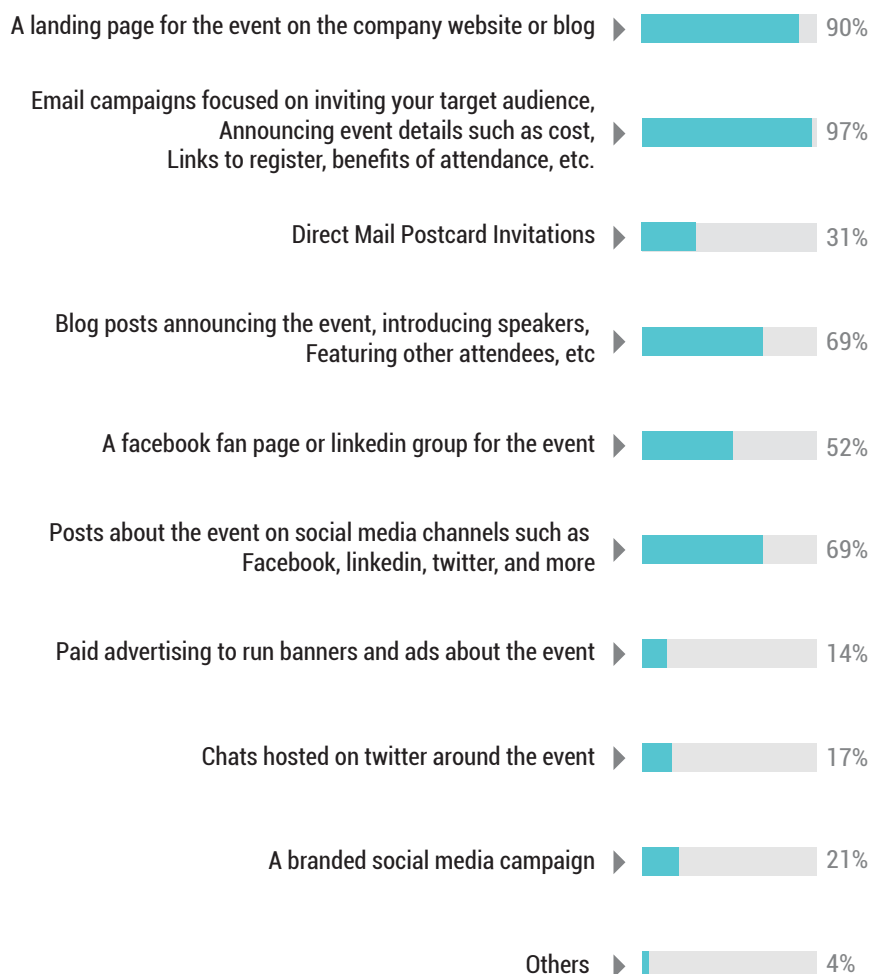


**During the pre-event phase**, a mix of tactics have been tried and have proved to be successful. 97 percent marketers use email campaigns to invite target audience and announce event details, which are believed to be most effective. 90 percent respondents use landing pages on their corporate websites or blog and 69% of executives use social media channels in driving registrations. Paid advertising to run banner and ads have taken a backseat with only 14%.

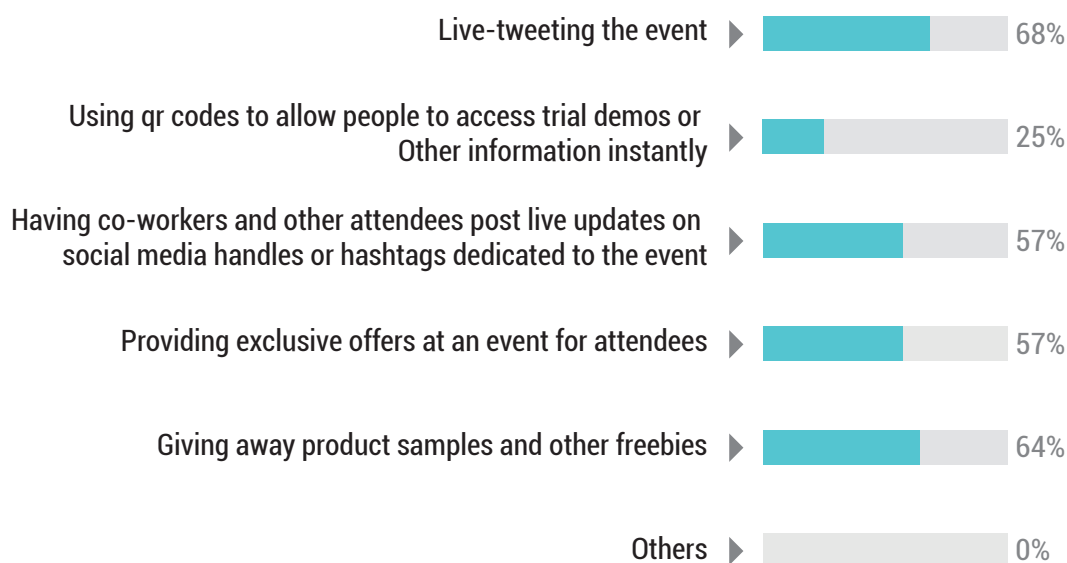
**During the events**, many tactics are used for a memorable attendee engagement. The tactic that has given good results is- live tweeting about the event, which stands first at 68%. Giving away product samples and other freebies has also contributed well in fuelling attendee engagement at 64%. Providing exclusive offers and having attendees post live events have come third, both at 57%.

To ensure good target audience participation, certain **Post-event tactics** proved beneficial. Sending follow-up emails stood first at about 88% with sending presentation slides, videos, etc. of sessions at second place at 64%.

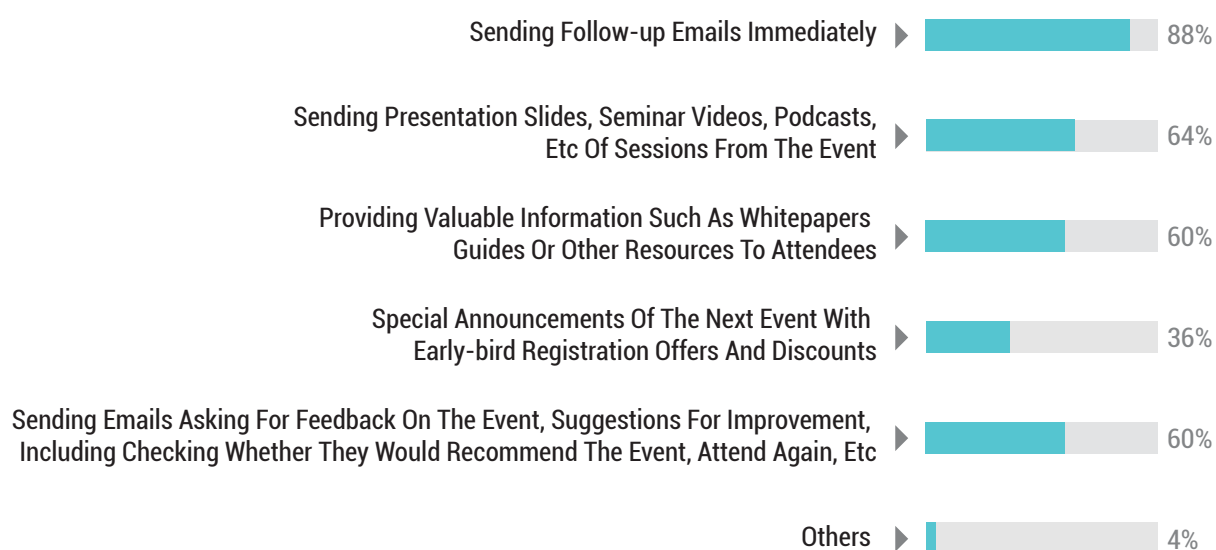
## Pre-Event Tactics to Drive Registrations



## During-Event Tactics Used for Attendee Engagement

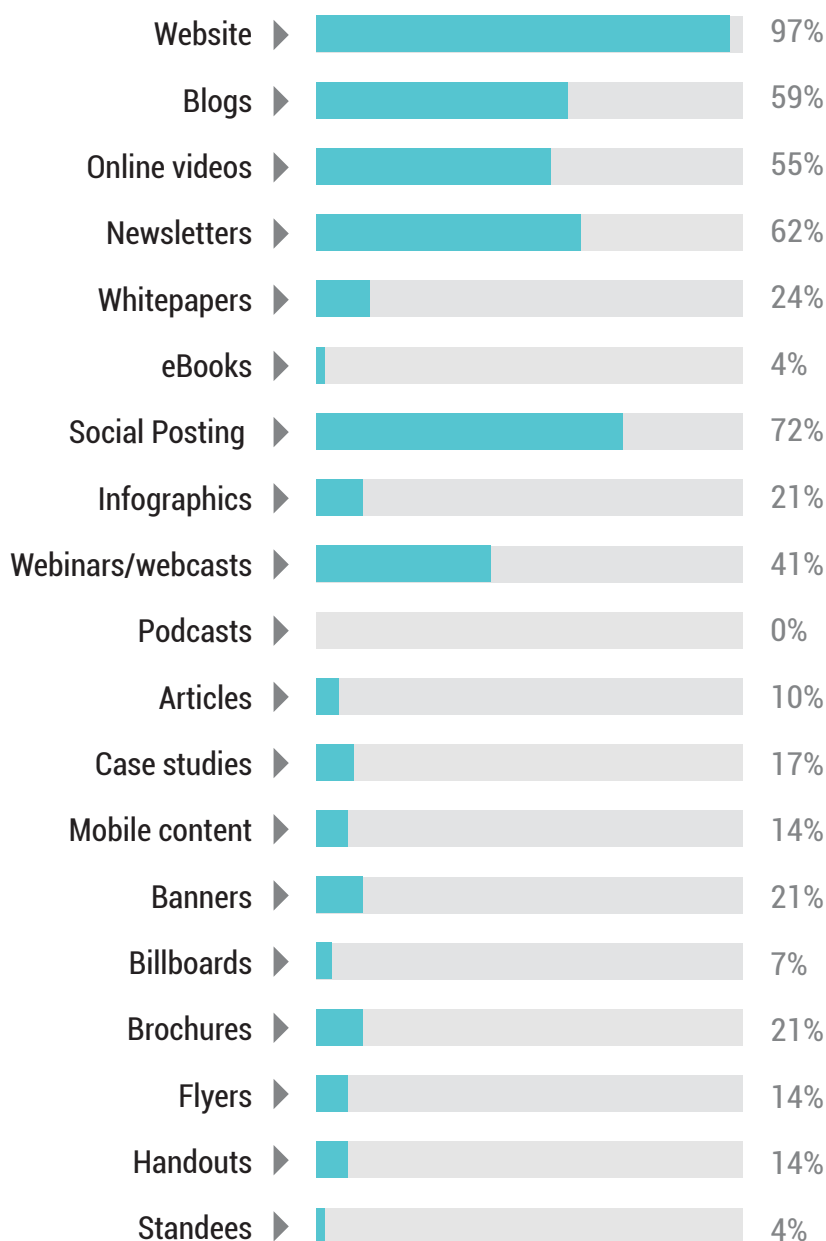


## Post-Event Tactics Used to Ensure Target Audience Participation



The accent on frugality and reach-per-dollar is seen in the use of the content channels that rule the roost – web and social. 97 percent marketers find web content most effective in promoting events, while 72% prefer social posting on Twitter, LinkedIn and other media. 62 percent marketers attribute success in event promotion to newsletters, while 59% say blogs deliver the goods. Interestingly, online video, which is a channel of choice for content marketing,<sup>5</sup> scores somewhat low (55%) in event promotion, possibly owing to high production costs.

### Types of Content that Maximize Event Promotion Effectiveness



<sup>5</sup>Source: [http://www.bytecaster.com/articles/advantages\\_of\\_online\\_video.htm](http://www.bytecaster.com/articles/advantages_of_online_video.htm)

# | Benefits

Across the board, companies see at least 6 top benefits of Event Marketing as being reaching prospects fast, positioning the company as an industry thought leader, generating buzz around products and services, opening doors for future sales calls, introducing and demonstrating new products and services, creating marketing opportunities jointly with key partners, and stimulating a buying atmosphere.

## Key Benefits Identified by Marketers Who Invest in Event Marketing



## Key Benefits Identified by Marketers Who Are Yet to Invest in Event Marketing



# | Challenges

**Organizations that invest in Event Marketing cite 11 key challenges.** 64 percent of the executives surveyed report three major challenge areas as being access to adequate budgets, driving the desired number of registrations, and creating uniquely positioned events. 48 percent marketers state that the lack of resources is a significant challenge, while 40% say that their hurdle is the lack of a strategy for conversions. 32 percent respondents find event monetization an issue to contend with. Other challenges, in decreasing order of importance, are inadequate customer engagement, lack of skilled human resources, lack of management buy-in, lack of event organizing and execution experience, and unsureness regarding how to integrate event marketing with the company's overall marketing mix.

## Event Marketing Teams' Top Event Marketing Challenges



**Marketers in companies yet to invest in Event Marketing point to 6 key blocks** preventing them from investing in events. 67 percent report lacking Event Marketing budgets, while 50% state that they not only lack resources but are also unsure about how to integrate Event Marketing with the company's marketing mix. One-third of respondents are short on adequately skilled human resources. 17 percent feel that their companies not only lack the requisite event organizing and execution experience but also the management buy-in needed to facilitate the transition

## Key Obstacles Preventing Marketers from Investing in Event Marketing



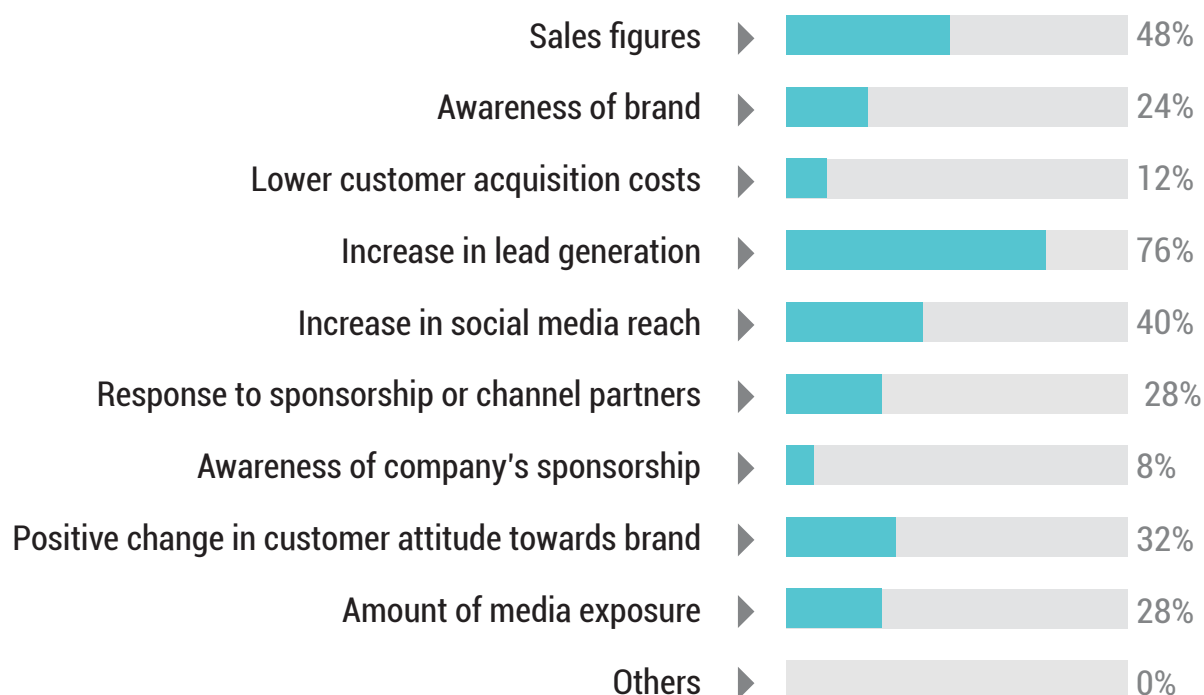
# | ROI and Metrics

According to EMI's EventTrack 2013 report, marketers who measure ROI using event metrics succeed better at persuading their company managements to raise Marketing budgets as much as 250%, compared with organizations that do not track those data.<sup>6</sup>

In our survey, **80% marketers from companies that invest in Event Marketing claim that physical events deliver higher ROI although 60% marketers in organizations that are yet to invest in Event Marketing believe that virtual events promise better returns.**

Marketers measure event success in various ways, depending on organizational priorities.<sup>7</sup> However, the respondents to our survey say that they used 9 different metrics to measure their Event Marketing ROI. 76 percent marketers calculate increase in lead generation, while 48% total up sales figures. 40 percent respondents say they measure changes in social media reach and 32% executives report that they evaluate positive changes in customer attitudes towards the brand.

## Metrics for Event Marketing ROI



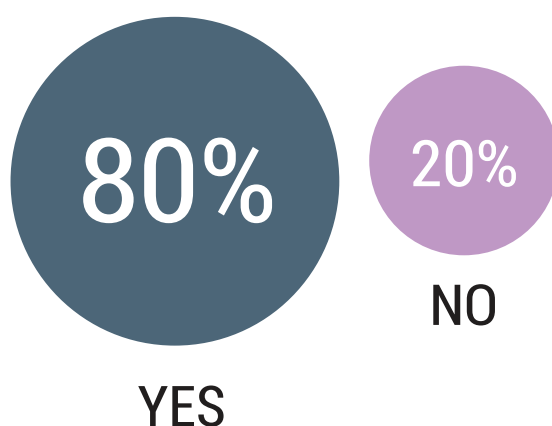
<sup>6</sup>Source: <http://www.eventmarketing.com/featured-research>

<sup>7</sup>Source: [http://www.marketo.com/\\_assets/uploads/The-State-of-B2B-Event-Marketing.pdf](http://www.marketo.com/_assets/uploads/The-State-of-B2B-Event-Marketing.pdf)

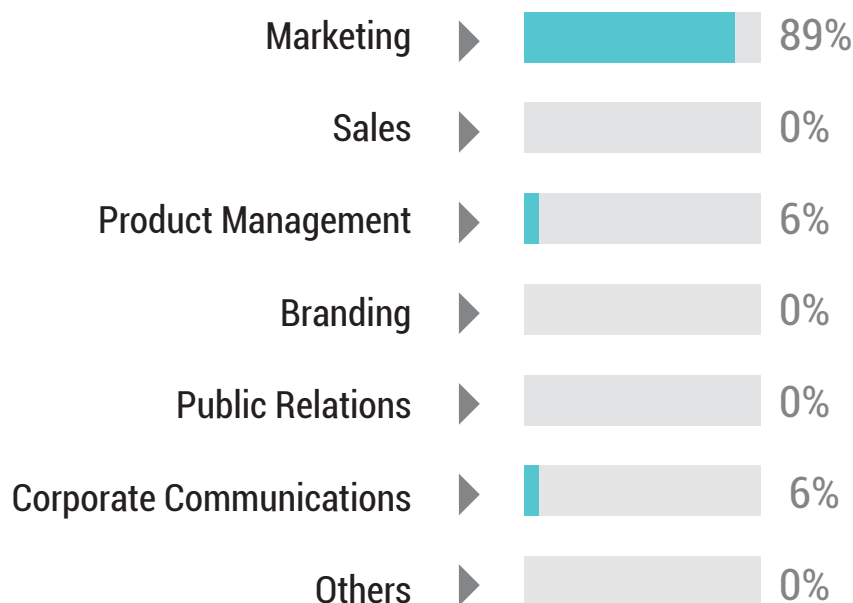
# Budgets

**80 percent marketers have separate budgets earmarked for Event Marketing.** 89 percent of the remaining 20% companies group their Event Marketing budget under the organization's Marketing budget. Product Management and Corporate Communications are the only other departments that apportion part of their budget to Event Marketing, according to 6% of these respondents.

## Marketers with Separate Budget Allocated for Events



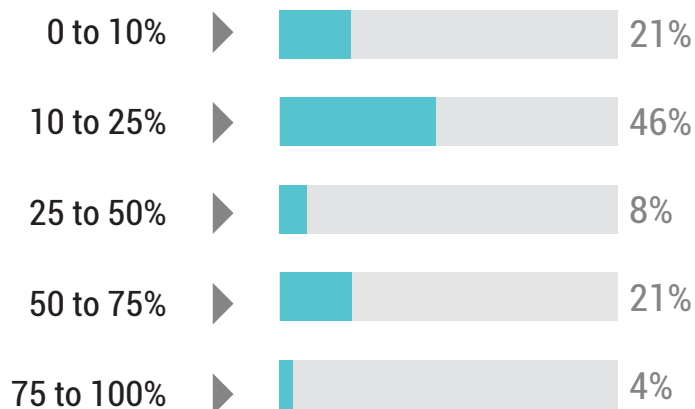
## Departments Which Event Marketing Budgets Are Grouped Under





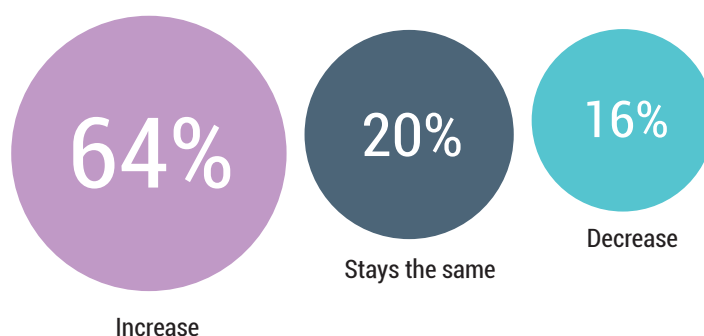
46 percent marketers state that Event Marketing forms 10 to 25% of the company's overall Marketing budget, while according to 21% respondents, this proportion either rises to the 50 - 75% level or drops to 0 -10%.

## Event Marketing vs. Overall Marketing Budgets



Of the 84% executives who say their company's Event Marketing budgets will not witness cuts in the next 12 months, 20% believe that the budgets already allocated will remain untouched.

## The Next 12 Months: Shifts in Organizational Event Marketing Budgets



# | The Future

Overall, all **respondents display high awareness of developments in the international Event Marketing arena.** Brand recall regarding memorable events is high. Asked to name the events they thought had been the best during 2014, marketers came up with as many as 45 unique names. 60 percent of the marketers who have not invested in Event Marketing yet see their companies correcting this in 2015.

Marketers from **companies that have not invested in Event Marketing till date evince higher optimism than their practicing counterparts regarding the value of marketing events.** It's clear to them that Event Marketing's brightest payoffs – lead generation, brand-building, customer engagement, and demand generation – are juicy fruits waiting to be picked.

As more and more companies jump on the Event Marketing bandwagon and competition intensifies, managements will realize that **only sound strategizing and professionally run operations are going to work.** After all, embedded in the notion of ROI is that returns can only be expected on investments made.

# | Recommendations

**Get the essentials into the crosshairs.** Create an empowered Event Marketing team and give them the autonomy to own your company's Event Marketing initiatives. Holding the team accountable to the brief will burnish the company's brand in innovative ways, make Event Marketing operations efficient, and shift focus from cost reduction to cost leverage. Force-multiply Marketing's value.

**Aim for the experience, not the event.** You're probably reading this because you're a Marketing Management pro who trains the eagle eye on projects being managed. So don't get lost in the operational stuff. Think of your customer, your prospect. Emote. Empathize. Put yourself in their shoes and find out what will make them feel great about themselves. Pitch your offering there.

**Go digital, even in physical events.** Let technology help you tighten your belt. Use software tools to strengthen your cost, leverage in planning, promoting, and managing events. eMail and the Web are still on top, so use them creatively as cost-effective channels. Use Social – but pay for it, to experience the awesome registrations that can give you. But don't forget to personalize

**Make it a party and spread the fun.** Weave in delightful surprises for attendees and registrants. Groom your team to play the charming and resourceful host, rather than let them feverishly track business metrics on tablets and smart phones and lose out on essential person-to-person contact. You know you are genuinely interested in growing the business and demonstrating high ROI. So let the selling happen naturally.

**Ease into marketing mode.** Think long-term, not sales. Allow your prospects to buy into you, the brand ambassador – and they will soon buy into your company and its offerings, and do your selling for you. Think of the value you're adding to their lives, not the mere products and services that come with dehumanizing targets. Be truly smart and confident. Think big picture – and bigger.

## About the Analysts

### Nimish Vohra

SVP, Principal Analyst

Nimish, Senior Vice President, works with CMOs and senior marketing professionals. His research focuses on customer experience management, predictive analytics, mobile enablement and other emerging trends that help customers leverage technology as an enabler of marketing and business outcomes.

### Srinivasan Seethapathy

Senior Marketing Manager

Srinivasan's research is focused on optimizing customer experiences across all channels. His research is aimed at all marketers who want to understand how they can spend their budgets more efficiently by improving customer experiences across marketing channels.

# About Regalix Research

Regalix Research is the research unit of Regalix inc., headquartered in Silicon Valley, we help the CMO organization leverage emerging digital practices to take advantage of marketing opportunities, as they bring new products and innovations to market. Regalix Research helps marketers through research-based insights, consulting and peer-to-peer programs that guide marketing strategy development and execution.

We are focused on helping technology companies create real differentiation in the marketplace through best practices. Our analysts are practitioners with a successful track record of delivering real marketing results for both leading Fortune 500 companies as well as venture-backed firms.

Regalix is an award-winning Global Innovation company that leverages technology and marketing to help companies grow. We create successful ventures with our clients through co-innovation and idea-driven frameworks that inspire companies to think different. We bring ideas to life by envisioning new companies, developing brands, engineering products, and designing technology platforms. Founded in 1998, Regalix is based in Palo Alto. Our Silicon Valley setting has enabled us to stay ahead of emerging trends in digital technology and marketing.

For over a decade, we have provided complete marketing services – Social, Mobile, Content, Multi-channel Campaigns, Technology Development, and Analytics – to companies such as CA Technologies, Citi, Apple, eBay, Cisco, VMWare, NetApp, Cypress, LSI, Keynote, and MetricStream.

## For more information

To find out how Regalix can help you, please contact our office, or visit us at [www.regalix.com](http://www.regalix.com)

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