

The Viral Impact of Events

Extending & Amplifying Event Reach via Social Media

Exclusive Survey of Leading Corporations & Event
Marketers and Strategic Insights Report Developed by

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Introduction

Event and experiential marketers are increasingly focused on making an impact beyond the live event. To assess this trend, FreemanXP and the Event Marketing Institute have developed a unique, groundbreaking study that analyzes how top brands are using social media to extend the reach and visibility of their event and experiential programs.

To access this unique market information, a survey of leading event marketing executives with a focus on large companies in both business and consumer markets was conducted. The response is from large, leading corporations in key sectors including IT, medical and pharmaceutical, financial, automotive, entertainment and media, and consumer products.

This report also provides the following:

- Viral impact estimates and measurement benchmarks
- How social media is used pre-event, during events and post-event
- Most effective social media channels

The findings are provided for all the respondents and in places where there are meaningful differences breakout for companies with over \$500 million in revenue are included.

The definition of viral marketing provided to the survey respondents was: "Viral marketing and communications use social media, online networking and other technology services to produce an increase in brand awareness, promote content sharing, generate word of mouth or other objectives. This study covers how event marketers and exhibitors are developing content and information for social networks and other channels to encourage online sharing by attendees, participants and other applicable industry members, prospects and influencers."

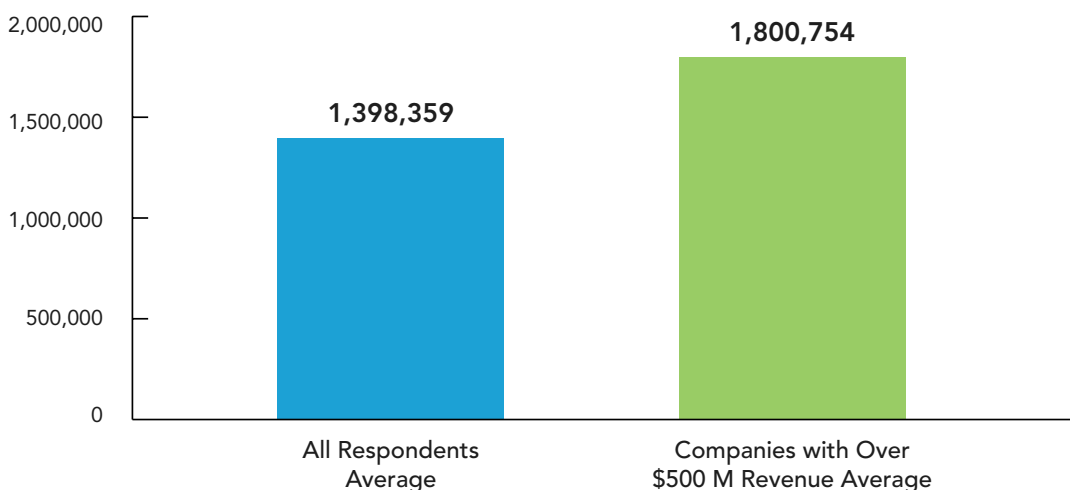
FreemanXP and the Event Marketing Institute thank all of the respondents for their invaluable contribution to the study.



Executive Summary

One of the most important findings from the study is the sheer number of reported event-related touches, communications, connections and impressions. The average for all respondents is nearly 1.4 million touches and impressions, and for companies with over \$500 million in revenue the average is a significant 1.8 million per event. Clearly, the viral impact especially seen by large companies is significant.

Estimated Viral Touches, Communications, Connections, Shares & Impressions per Event



The survey asked brands in a follow-up question to rate the level of confidence they have in their viral impact estimate. The companies with 100% confidence report an even larger, very significant average figure of 7.8 million touches, communications, connections and impressions per event. Nearly all of the companies reporting 100% confidence have over \$500 million in revenue, and most are in technology sectors with their own events.

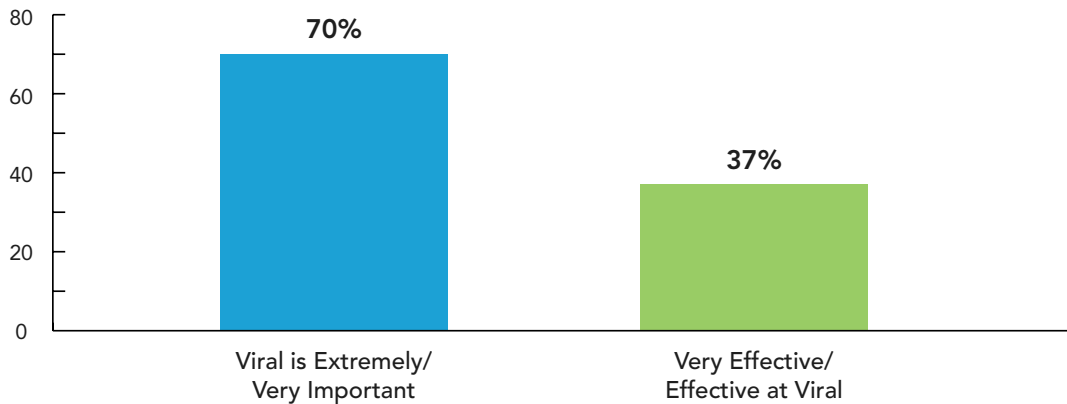
Extending and amplifying event reach via social media is becoming very important to top marketers and exhibitors, and many are still experimenting. While most leading event marketers have a social media strategy that includes efforts to extend and amplify the event investment, many companies feel they can be much more effective with these efforts.

Key Insights

- Viral efforts related to events are very important to top companies and event marketers. But most feel they can be much more effective and are essentially experimenting today.
- 50% of leading event marketers specifically budget for viral efforts, and 97% expect to increase or hold their spend level in the next budget cycle.

A total of 70% of top companies and brands ranked social marketing related to event programs as “extremely” or “very important”. Yet only 16% of the survey respondents say they are “very effective” at generating viral impact from their event and exhibit programs — and only 21% say they are “effective”.

Viral Efforts Related to Events is Important to Top Event Marketers, But Only a Small Percentage Feel They are Being Effective



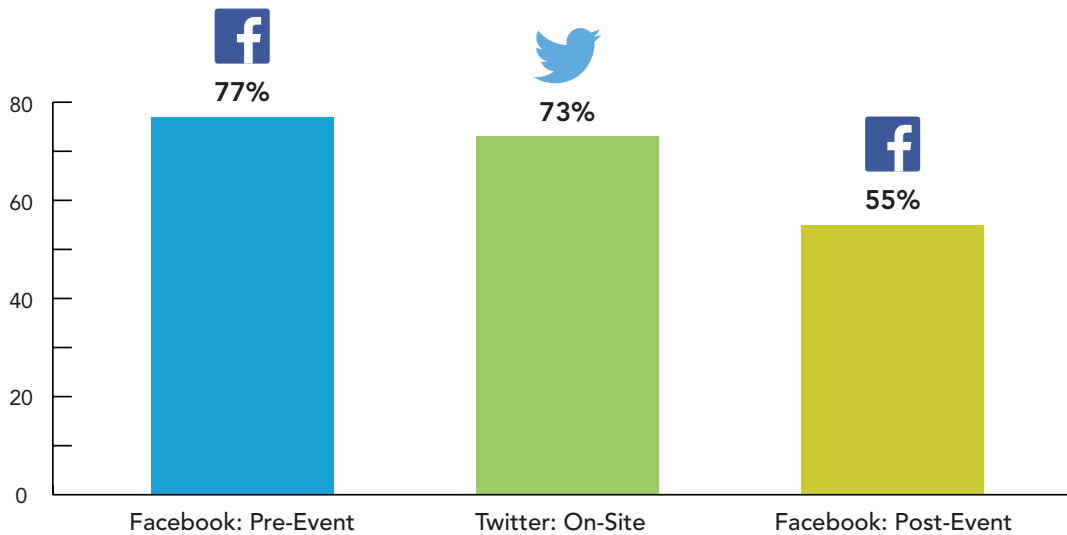
For event marketers and exhibitors, there is significant awareness about the importance of creating memorable moments and content worth capturing and sharing across digital channels. Clearly, over the next few years more consumer and B2B marketers will focus efforts on developing engaging event content strategies to earn increased social engagement from targeted fans.

The findings show the primary social engagement goals are to drive attendance and then reach attendees on-site during events. A secondary, emerging trend which many leading companies are already focused on is to reach applicable industry members, prospects and influencers that may not attend the events.

The importance of marketing social content is also suggested in the finding that 50% of leading event marketers and exhibitors have a specific budget for viral efforts. In addition, 53% of brands and exhibitors are increasing their spending on social efforts, and 44% expect their spend to remain at the current level in the next budget cycle with almost no brands decreasing the spend. Also, 53% of the survey respondents say they measure their event-related viral impact.

Another goal of the study has been to quantify the most effective social channels. Overall, Facebook is considered the most effective channel pre- and post-event, while Twitter is the most effective platform during events, according to the survey respondents.

Most Effective Social Channel for Viral Impact Pre-Event, On-Site & Post-Event *



* Percentage of brands selecting "most effective".

About the Respondents

The survey respondents are mainly large companies in IT, medical and pharmaceutical, financial services, automotive, entertainment and media, and consumer products. Seventy percent have total revenue over \$500 million. Thirty-seven percent have over \$10 billion in annual sales. Thirty-six percent of the companies serve both business and consumer markets and 38% are primarily B2B and the remainder are consumer focused brands.

About FreemanXP

Our team is insights-driven and recognized for exceptional creative thinking and flawless program execution, no matter the scale. We work alongside the teams of the world's most successful brands to develop and deliver successful strategies and programs. As a brand experience agency within the Freeman organization, we are backed by 88 years of face-to-face marketing innovation. We leverage Freeman's experience, relationships and unmatched global resources to bring a whole new level of flexibility and scale to our clients' programs.

www.freemanxp.com

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About the Event Marketing Institute

The mission of the Event Marketing Institute is to help our members enhance their professional performance by providing comprehensive education, research and analysis related to emerging trends and insights into event marketing strategy, as well as creating a growing list of productivity tools and professional networking opportunities to foster information exchange.



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