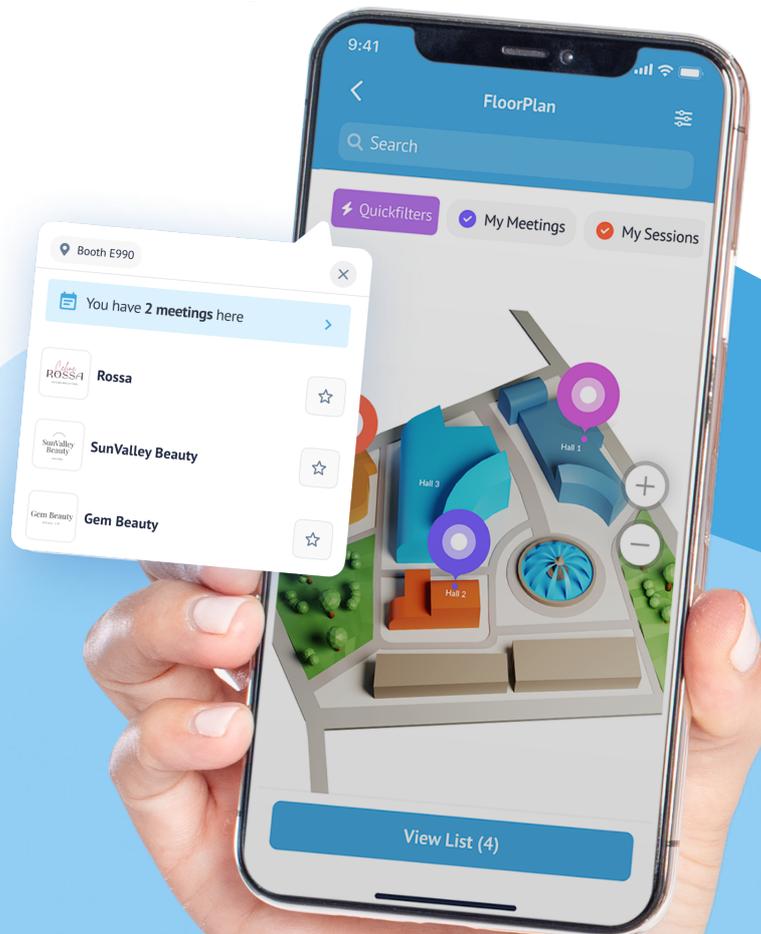


Event Tech Returns to Live

A spotlight on the event industry's
in-person comeback



Introduction

This year has seen the return of in-person events back in full force. While the virtual bubble may have burst, it's clear the use of digital technology to power events has accelerated following the pandemic.

The Event Tech Returns to Live survey highlights how the needs of eventprofs have changed in 2022 and how new tools are supporting their in-person comeback.

We've gathered expert insights from industry leaders to shed light on these findings, reveal the truth behind event tech headlines and help you succeed in this new landscape.

Here are some of the headline figures:

- Exhibitor ROI is the most important challenge for our industry - with a weighted rating of 9.2/10
- Case studies and industry news are the most useful forms of content for eventprofs - chosen by 72% and 62% of respondents respectively
- On-demand content post-event and lead retrieval are the most crucial event tech tools for supporting the return to live - with ratings of 8.2/10 and 7.8/10 respectively
- Almost 40% of respondents believe between 10% and 29% of revenue will come from digital channels outside of their in-person offerings

We hope this resource provides some valuable insights. Thank you for reading.

Thank you to all our contributors:



Paul Miller
CEO of Questex



Timothy Skennion
MD of Derabo Advisory Group



Claire Washington-Smith
CEO of Rego



Robyn Duda
CEO of RDC



Stephan Forseilles
Head of technology at Easyfairs



Carina Bauer
CEO of IMEX

Table of Contents

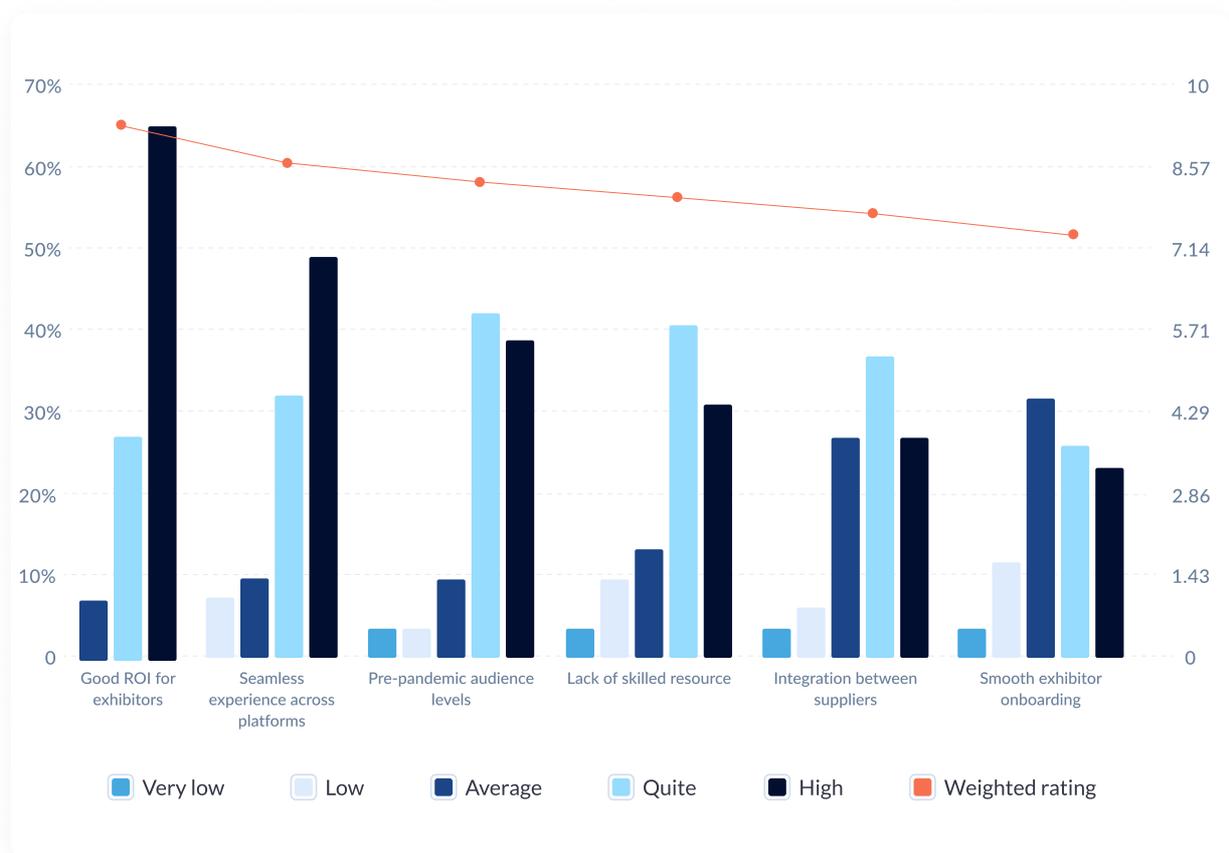
I. Most important challenges	4
II. Annual digital revenue expectations	7
III. Importance of tech features	9
IV. Most useful types of content	12
V. Final thoughts	15



Most important challenges

The most important challenge cited by our respondents was achieving good exhibitor ROI, with 66% ranking it as their top priority. It got a weighted rating of 9.2/10.

Coming up second was a seamless experience across platforms, with half of respondents putting it in the highest tier. It received a weighted score of 8.5/10.



Stephan Forseilles
Head of technology at Easyfairs



The hybridation features and platforms we have introduced have somewhat complicated the life of our customers by creating a disjointed experience across platforms. We need to smooth that out.



Timothy Skennion, managing director of Derabo Advisory Group, advised that marketers will now be under more pressure to show the value they are producing, but claimed technology can open many doors.

Event investments will continue to face increased scrutiny from senior management - and marketers need to be armed with data and analytics to support their event investment decisions.

Marketers will need to clearly quantify how live event investments will outperform relatively low-risk digital events. This creates both challenges and opportunities for event producers to create value for their exhibitors that extends well beyond simply lead generation.

Full breakdown of weighted scores:

- Good ROI for exhibitors - 9.18
- Seamless experience across platforms - 8.54
- Pre-pandemic audience levels - 8.26
- Lack of skilled resource - 7.72
- Integration between suppliers - 7.54
- Smooth exhibitor onboarding - 7.06

Carina Bauer
CEO of IMEX



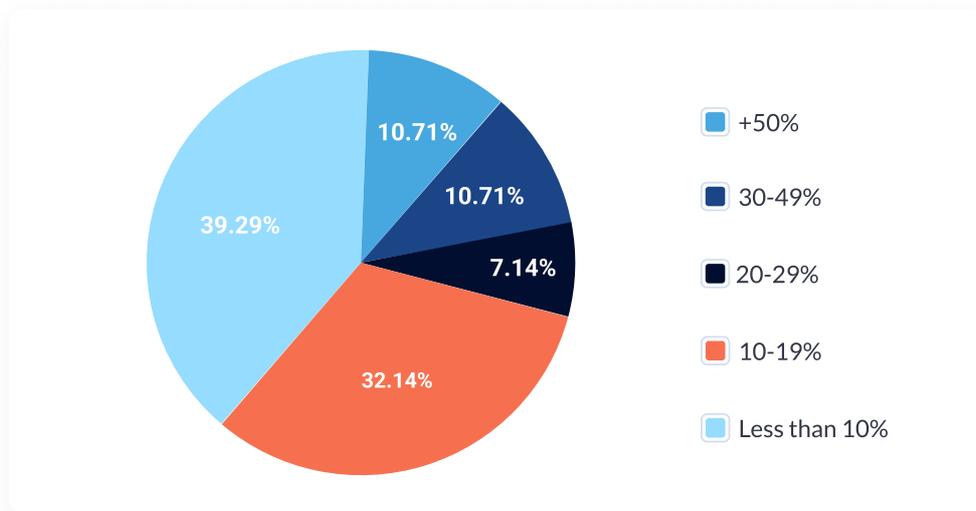
There are all manner of ways exhibitors measure ROI. Lead-times and the sales pipeline for big events in particular can be very long in our industry – often several years for the big association events.

As an organiser it's our rebooking rate that tells the biggest story. Exhibitors are mindful, particularly when budgets are tight - they don't tend to participate in shows that don't offer a proven return on time and investment.

Annual digital revenue expectations

Almost 40% of respondents said less than 10% of revenue would come from digital channels this year, rather than in-person. Meanwhile, a further 39% told how they thought between 10% and 29% would come through that channel.

A tenth of those who took part put that figure as high as 50% or more. We've heard before how digital components are growing in importance for organisers, but these findings reveal the different stages planners are currently at.



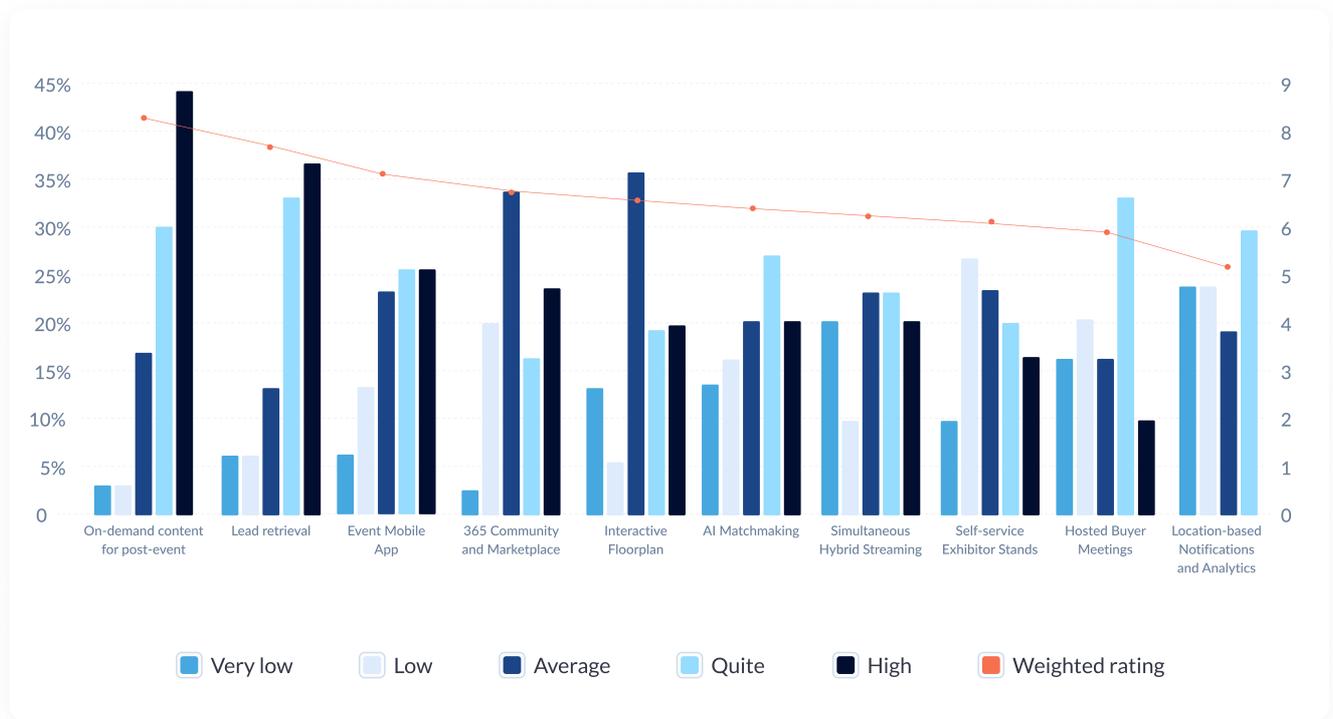
These results feel somewhat respondent-biased. Event people don't understand or have digital offerings so they underestimate its importance. It also depends on the market – technology driven markets will lean into digital whereas markets that rely on the senses will still skew tradeshow - for now.

Paul Miller
CEO of Questex



Importance of tech features

On-demand content which is available after the show was rated the most important technology feature by our respondents, with a weighted rating of 8.2/10. This was followed by lead retrieval which scored 7.8/10.



Timothy Skennion
MD of Derabo Advisory Group



The ability to retrieve - and ideally score - leads in an efficient and measurable manner provides the exhibitor with the clearest path towards defending their investment.



Robyn Duda, CEO of RDC, was fascinated by the results for a 365 Community and Marketplace - features which offer year-round engagement with your audiences.

This came out fourth in our survey, with a weighted average of 6.8/10 and 34% saying it was of average importance.

Robyn Duda
CEO of RDC



I think the industry has and is approaching the community-building piece all wrong, which is why it's not working. It's not an event challenge, it's a brand challenge.

There should be a greater emphasis here from a high level to foster the feeling of a community for the community's benefit - not for an organiser or sponsor's benefit.

Full breakdown of weighted ratings:

- On-demand content for post-event - 8.2
- Lead retrieval - 7.8
- Event mobile app - 7.1
- 365 Community and Marketplace - 6.76
- Interactive floorplan - 6.66
- AI Matchmaking - 6.48
- Simultaneous hybrid streaming - 6.28
- Self-service exhibitor stands - 6.14
- Hosted Buyer meetings - 6
- Location-based notifications and analysis 5.18

Most useful types of content



People don't trust salespeople: they want feedback from their peers and that's why case studies are sought after so much.



Stephan Forseilles

Head of technology at Easyfairs

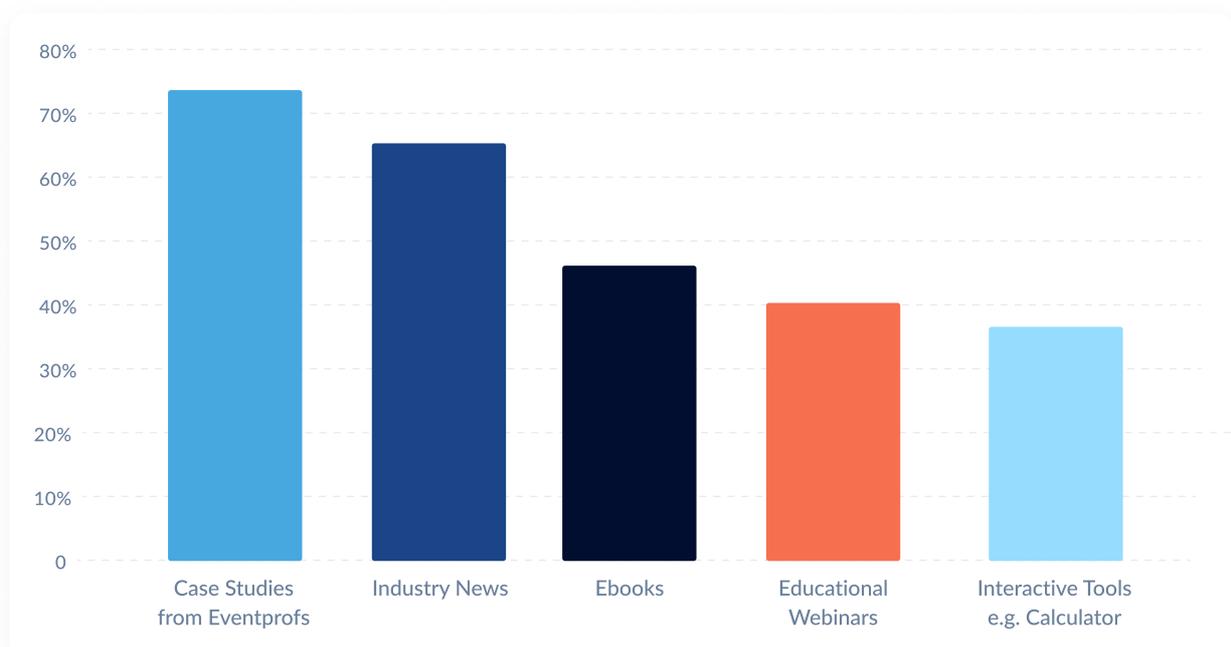


Those words from Stephan get a huge backing from our survey results - with 72% of respondents saying case studies were a useful type of content for them.

The second highest rated category was industry news, with eventprofs wanting to keep on top of everything that's going on in their sphere.

Full breakdown:

- Case studies from eventprofs - 72%
- Industry news - 62%
- Ebooks - 45%
- Educational webinars - 41%
- Interactive tools e.g. calculator - 34%



“

Case studies always have been, and probably always will be, a firm favourite for eventprofs and they definitely came into their own during the pandemic. However, our own experience shows that unless a case study is really candid, not shying away from failures or missteps, then it has little practical value.

A good case study lifts the lid on the end-to-end event or experience design process - and its KPIs - and doesn't shy away from the truth.

Carina Bauer
CEO of IMEX



Final thoughts



Paul Miller
CEO of Questex

Exhibitors and sponsors are looking for more valuable ROI – the comments on lead retrieval and exhibitor ROI being most important. These are symptoms of marketers getting better insights into webinar, virtual event and digital marketing campaigns and now they have experienced that they want more from live events.

Robyn Duda
CEO of RDC



There is a connection between many of the most pressing challenges which to me are all under the umbrella of a larger issue: knowing your audience and designing for them.

Exhibitor ROI being the biggest challenge coupled with the need for case studies and creating a seamless experience tells me there is a clear need for resources around design and designing an experience journey for audiences that is meaningful and impactful.

Robyn offers a four-step solution for getting back to basics:

- Know your audience and the problem you are solving for them.
- Design a product they need, it doesn't need to be fancy.
- Prepare exhibitors on how they can create an unforgettable experience in their exhibit space for the audience - they are the content here.
- 3-2-1: Take 3% of the 2023 budget and put it toward two new ideas and one way you can inspire the team who has to make it come to life.

**Stephan Forseilles**

Head of technology at Easyfairs

The return of face-to-face is also a back to the roots movement: attendees want content and exhibitors want leads. The rest is topping on the cake. We see it not only in the priority of challenges responses, but also in the importance of tech features.

These things are inextricably intertwined and those that continue to look at the market from an inside-out events vs digital perspective are, at the very least, leaving money on the table and, at worst, not listening to their customers - which is not a future looking strategy.

Claire Washington-Smith

CEO of Rego

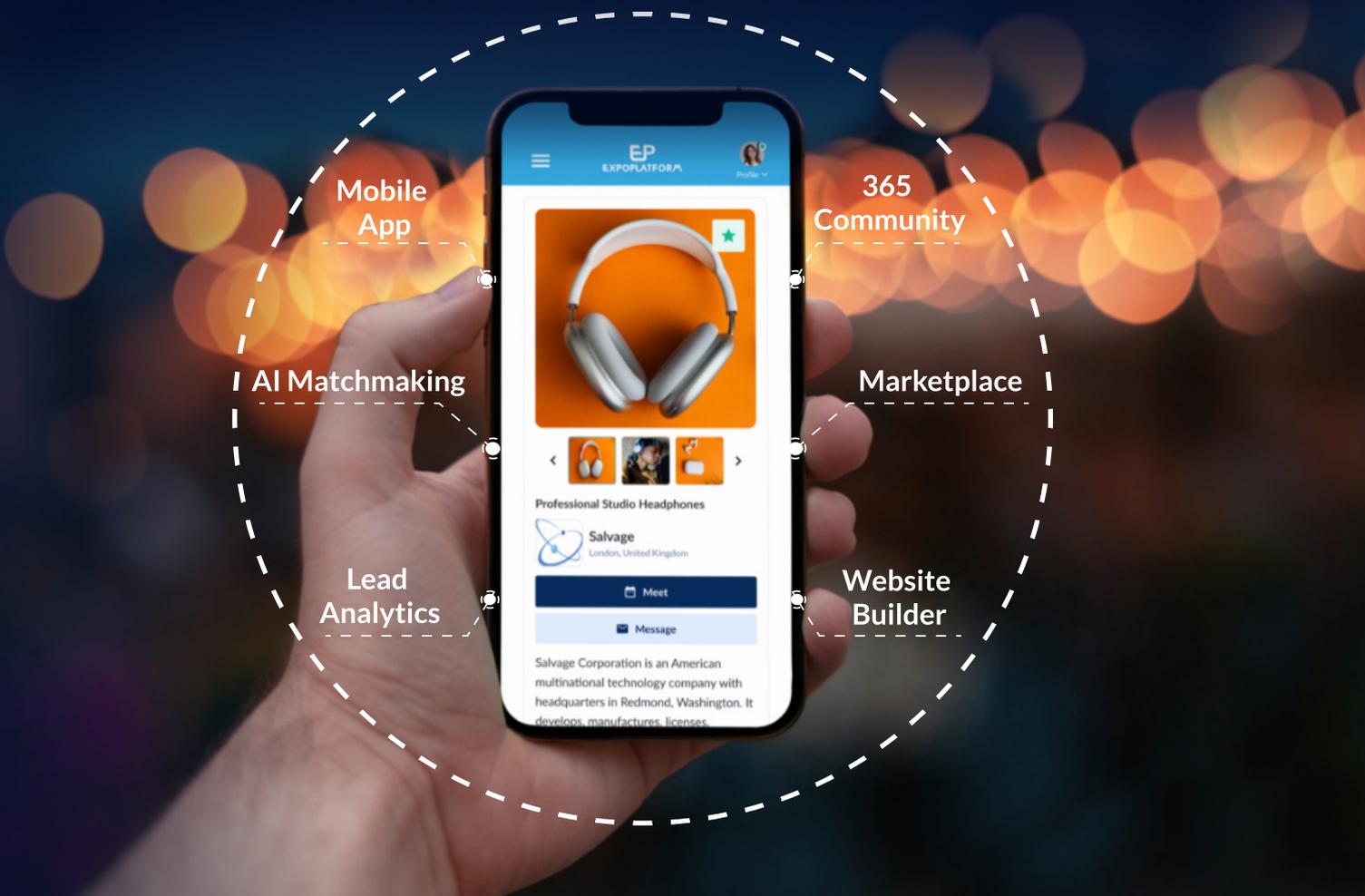


Talk to your suppliers more who have to use the technology before, during and post-event. The companies selling the solutions are not always operating it or the decision-makers are not on the shop floor.

Training is number one. Listen to feedback, ensure it is not a quick fix but has longevity that exhibitors and agencies will buy into with confidence and continue to use it. At the moment everyone seems to have different solutions - or their own solution - so a one-stop shop would be ideal.

Improve Lead Retrieval and Exhibitor ROI at your Live Events

expoplatform.com



Supporting the world's leading event organisers

