

Authenticity: The Role of Influencers and Trusted Voices

Why people trust strangers more
than event marketers.

Attendee Acquisition Roundtable July 30, 2026





Show of Hands

Let's start with a question

Is attendee acquisition harder today than it was 5 years ago?



More Competition



Higher Costs



Less Attention



Budget Pressure



More Events



Shorter Decision Cycles

The Problem Isn't Marketing

More Tools

We've never had more marketing tools at our disposal.

More Channels

We've never had more channels to reach our audience.

More Content

We've never produced more content than we do today.

So why is acquisition harder?

The Problem Is Believability

People don't ask if they've seen your message.

They ask if they **believe** it.



Three Ways Events Build Trust

Every attendee acquisition strategy that builds trust falls into one of these categories.



Trusted Voices

Industry experts who carry credibility and authority in your field.



Peer Voices

People like me — attendees who reflect the audience's own identity and challenges.



Community Voices

Real experiences shared authentically from within the event community.



The Empty Chair

Your most powerful marketer isn't on your payroll. They're not at your agency. They're not on your marketing team.

They're one of your attendees.

i Most organizers ignore this chair. It's the emotional anchor of every great event marketing strategy.

What Do These Have in Common?



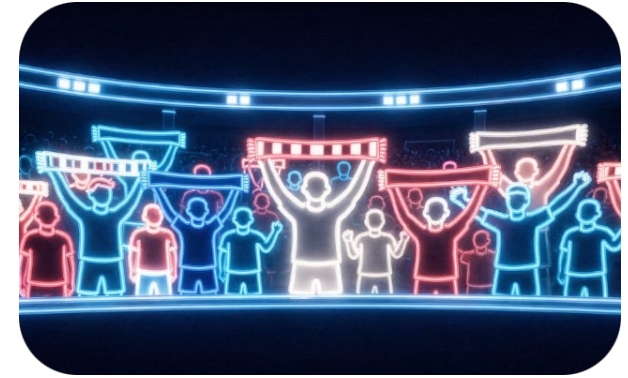
Taylor Swift

A global phenomenon built on fierce fan identity and belonging.



Comic-Con

A cultural institution powered by community, ritual, and social proof.



Arsenal

A loyal tribe united by shared identity and collective experience.

Identity

Community

Belonging

Social Proof

Events Are No Different

What We *Think* Drives Attendance

- Ad impressions and reach
- Email open rates
- Brand awareness campaigns
- Promotional discounts
- Feature-heavy messaging

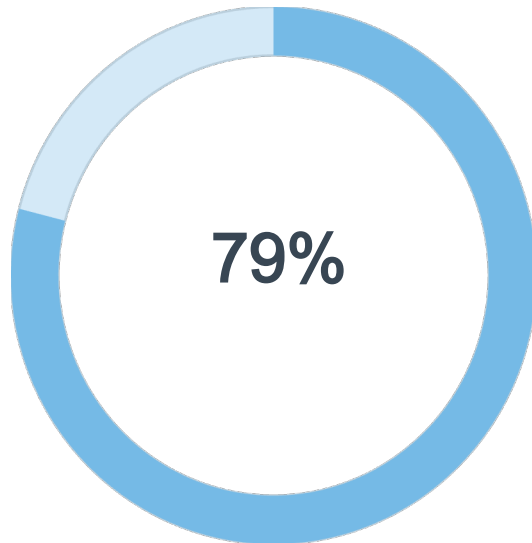
What Actually *Influences* Attendance

- Peer recommendations
- Speaker credibility
- Community belonging
- Confidence in the outcome
- Trusted voices saying "go"

People trust people. People buy confidence. Confidence drives registrations.

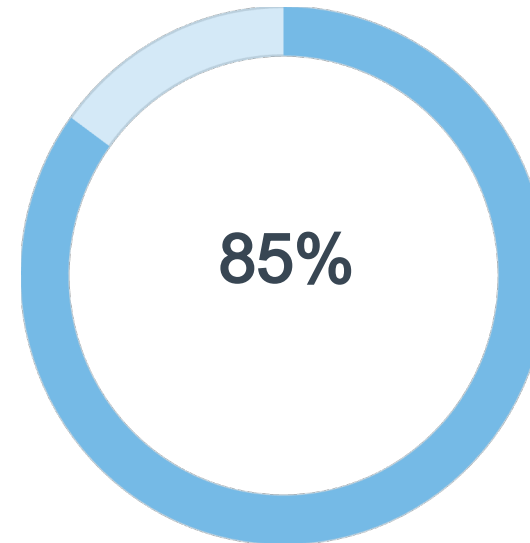
The Trust Shift

This isn't a video trend. It's a trust trend. The data is unambiguous about where credibility now lives.



UGC Influence

People say user-generated content influences their purchasing and attendance decisions. ¹



Peer Trust

People trust peer-created content more than brand-created content. ²

When a stranger who attended your event says it changed their career — that is worth more than any headline you write about yourself.

¹ - <https://www.nosto.com/blog/what-is-user-generated-content/>

² - <https://crowdriff.com/resources/ugc-stats/>

Your Most Powerful Marketing Team Already Exists



The challenge isn't finding advocates. **The challenge is activating them.**

The Event Growth Flywheel

A continuous cycle that turns real experiences into future demand — before, during, and after your event.





Let's Build One Together

Starting with Speaker Promotion Videos

Built-In Credibility

Speakers already carry authority and trust with your target audience.

Ready-Made Audiences

Speakers have their own followers, subscribers, and communities ready to listen.

Authentic Content

Speakers have real, compelling things to say — content that resonates naturally.

The Speaker Promotion Blueprint

Identify Your Top 10 Speakers

Not based on fame. Based on **audience fit**.

Attendees trust relevance more than celebrity. Choose speakers whose topics mirror your audience's real challenges.

- ❑ Most organizers chase celebrities. The most effective speaker advocates are the ones your audience already follows — not the ones on magazine covers.

Step 2: Ask ONE Question

"What is the one thing attendees will learn from your session that they can apply **immediately**?"

Keep It Simple

One question. One answer. One clear value proposition.

Don't Over-Produce

Don't ask for multiple takes. Don't demand perfection. Authenticity beats polish.

Don't Script

Let speakers speak naturally. Real words build real trust.

Step 3: Publish Everywhere

Speaker videos aren't just social content. **They are trust assets.** Deploy them across every touchpoint in your acquisition funnel.



Website

Feature prominently on your event homepage and speaker pages.



Registration Pages

Place at the moment of decision — right where trust matters most.



Email

Embed in nurture sequences and promotional campaigns.



LinkedIn & Social

Distribute natively where your audience already spends time.



Sales Conversations

Equip your sales team with credibility-building video assets.



Step 4: Make Speakers Your Distribution Team

Most organizers stop after collecting content. That's the big mistake.

Ask your speakers to actively participate in distribution:

→ **Post the Video**

Have speakers share the video directly to their own social channels and profiles.

→ **Email Their Audience**

Encourage speakers to send a personal note to their newsletter or subscriber list.

→ **Share the Registration Link**

Give speakers a trackable link so their community can register directly.

Step 5: Measure

Start simple. You're looking for signal — not perfection.

1

Video Views

Track how many people are watching and engaging with each speaker's video.

2

Registrations

Monitor registration volume correlated with video publication dates and speaker posts.

3

Referral Traffic

Use UTM parameters to trace which speakers and channels are driving the most clicks.

✓ Even basic tracking will reveal which trusted voices resonate most with your audience — and where to double down.

Why This Works

The speaker promotion tactic isn't just a content play. It hits all three trust drivers simultaneously.



Trusted Voice ✓

Speakers carry established credibility and authority in your industry.



Peer Influence ✓

Speakers reflect the professional identity and aspirations of your target attendee.



Community Signal ✓

Speaker participation signals that the right people are already committed to attending.



One tactic. Three trust drivers. That's leverage.

Written Exercise

Take 3 minutes with an index card

Where would **trusted voices** outperform your current marketing?



Don't ask:

What content should I create?



Ask instead:

Whose voice am I missing?

Think about your next event. Identify one specific moment in your acquisition funnel where a trusted voice — a speaker, an attendee, an exhibitor — could replace a brand message and perform better.

Final Thought

"This chair represents someone your prospects already trust."

"The challenge isn't creating stories. **It's activating them.**"

Your next attendee acquisition breakthrough probably won't come from another marketing tactic. It will come from a voice your audience already trusts — sitting in that empty chair.

Find the Voice

Activate the Story

Fill the Room



Thank You

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