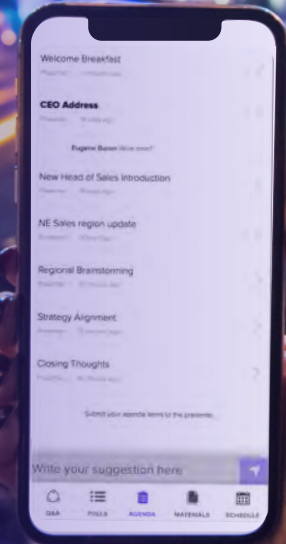




POWERFUL WAYS TO ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE AT EVENTS



For presenters, there are few things worse than putting hours of work into a presentation only to see audience members thumbing through their phones or daydreaming. To prevent this from happening, engage your audience within the first few moments of your presentation.

Audience engagement reflects the extent to which attendees are participating. Are they paying attention and contributing verbally and/or physically? Are they taking pictures of your slides as you speak? Do they seem to enjoy the experience overall?

An engaged audience is not only more likely to participate in your presentation, but also more likely to learn, too. And they are more likely to attend future events, and recommend them to others.

Audience engagement strategies are powerful tools for focusing your audience's attention on your presentation (or your series of presentations). Here are seven great strategies for reaching out and grabbing your audience.

Creative Ways to Engage your Audience

Since audience engagement is essential to your success, it's important to spend time thinking about how to help your audience stay engaged throughout the session or event.

Engagement techniques vary slightly, depending on whether you are working with a small group or a large group. But the basics of crafting a personalized experience, to engage from start to finish, is the same. Here are seven techniques to use moving forward.

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1. Empower Women to Speak

A study published in the American Political Science Review found that women speak 25% less than men, on average, in meetings or similar settings where both men and women are present. Another revealed that gender bias is real — women’s perceived competency (when compared to men) drops by 35%, and they’re viewed as “assertive” and “forceful” when they speak up.

Given these statistics, it’s easy to understand why fewer women engage in public speaking. Make no mistake: this includes participating in your presentation or event. If you want to boost engagement, account for this and take steps to empower women to speak.

Providing a **psychologically safe environment** for your audience can improve engagement, especially for those who are less inclined to participate. Leaders can create the right environment by displaying respect for all ideas contributed and all participants. And digital tools can help tremendously, too.

Chat functions allow people to communicate directly and submit ideas without drawing attention to themselves. Taken one step further, they can allow anonymous participation, which may encourage more people to participate. MeetingPulse allows audience members to participate with full anonymity. Attendees do not have to share their names or log into the system, though their input will be recorded. Attendees also can give a name, or a made-up name, to participate digitally, or may use an email address that will be visible only to the presenter in final reporting.

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2. Scaling

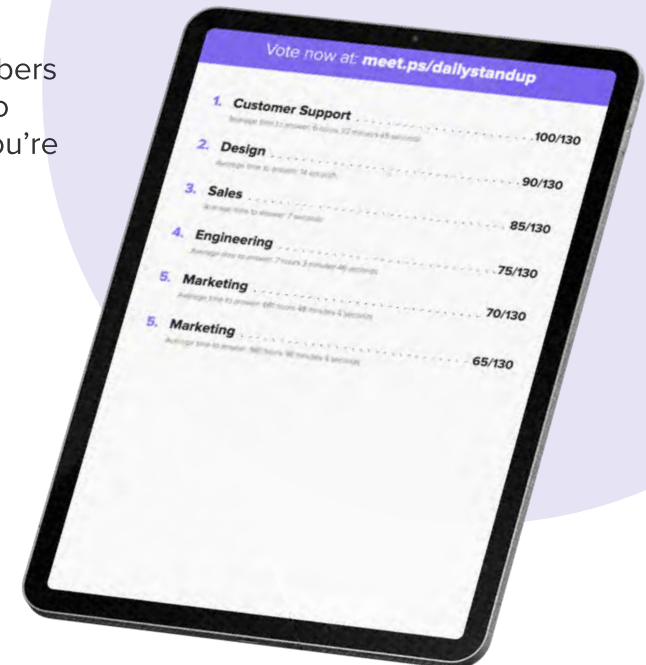
When choosing a meeting software platform, look for a service that can scale the presentation features to the size of your target audience — whether you're presenting to small businesses or large, corporate meetings.

MeetingPulse can handle gatherings ranging from 10 to 10,000 people. These may be events like all-hands meetings, hybrid conferences and events, board meeting voting and governance, broadcasts and livestreams, and town halls. The platform is easily accessible for audience members via smartphone, tablet, and computer.

3. Gamification

You can do much more than pose questions and ask audience members for a raised hand in response. Think about including activities that go beyond the norm, like fun polls or quizzes that reflect the material you're covering.

Live polling can be used to ask your audience how they're feeling, whether they're understanding the material so far, and if there's anything specific they'd like to know. You can use these tools to make on-the-fly changes. Quizzes can be used at the onset of your presentation to get an idea of how much your audience already knows about the topic at hand. And you can encourage your audience to participate by raffling off prizes for the top answers, based on either individual or group participation.



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4. Learning Modules

Learning doesn't have to be boring. When you're planning learning modules, spice them up a bit. An easy way to do so is by including visual aids — like photos and infographics — or even a short video to help them visualize what you're saying. Even adding a bit of color with logos or icons can help draw eyes to the module and keep people engaged.

Give your audience members previews to what they're about to learn and quick summaries afterward. It lets them know what they're in for and why it matters, and then reinforces the point at the end. Guiding audience members throughout with words and phrases like “In the first place ...” or “The reason for this is ...” will let them know what's important to remember. Also, implementing strong transitions between ideas or segments can create a flow that's easy to follow.

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5. Q&A Versatility

Always give your audience time to ask questions. One common way is to schedule a Q&A session at the end of your presentation, but you can get creative.

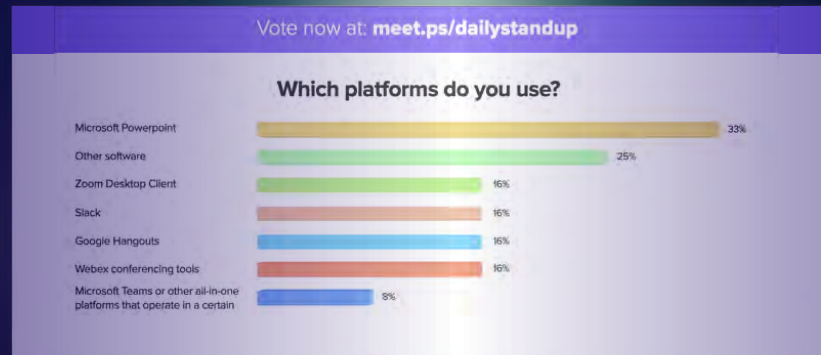
Consider stopping for quick Q&A sessions throughout your presentation. It's likely that people will have questions throughout the event. Giving them the chance to ask sooner rather than later can help drive engagement.

With the right digital tools, you can use different Q&A approaches to keep things interesting. Choose from surveys, quizzes, live polls, voting and other forms. MeetingPulse also offers sentiment analysis, so you can ask audience members how they're feeling at any given time.

You can use this to identify areas you need to revisit if responses show they're feeling confused. You also can get a sense of how engaged your audience is by how many responses you receive. If you notice a decrease in engagement, you know it's time to win your audience's attention back.



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6. Instant, Visually Engaging Feedback

We mentioned how useful visual aids can be during your learning modules. The same goes for presenting feedback to the audience. Let them know that you care what they say and use visual presentations to capture the audience's attention.

How nice would it be to instantly transform all of your audience's ideas and contributions from Q&As, brainstorming sessions, and surveys into an aesthetically-pleasing format? MeetingPulse can gather responses, organize them, and present them as charts, graphs, word clouds, and more. These visualizations can help you and your audience get a better understanding of what the collective group is thinking or feeling, and allow them to engage more thoughtfully.

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7. Better Planning

Take the time before your talk or event to thoughtfully curate questions and audience engagement for your presentation. It takes some time to figure out how to make the best use of various techniques to pump up your presentation.

One method is to ask ahead of time what your audience members want to learn. You can use email to ask for ideas or allow people to contribute thoughts directly on the MeetingPulse platform. Either way, if you know what your audience wants, you can get them engaged more quickly.

To get the best answers, you need to pose the best questions. Being strategic about the questions you use for polls or quizzes is also a good way to encourage audience participation and increase the quality of the responses you receive.

Think in advance about what your participants are trying to learn and achieve. Opt for open-ended questions that will get your audience members saying more than “yes” or “no.” Then, react to any answers in real-time and ask specific follow-up questions when possible.

When it comes to running those live polls, think about launching them individually at specific points in your presentation to get related feedback. These are good opportunities to refresh engagement. Or, as an alternative, you could enable all the polls at once, and watch the results flow in, presenting those responses in visually-enticing formats.

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Encourage Engagement at Every Touchpoint

Plan ahead to drive engagement at your session or event, and reinforce engagement by reacting in the moment, continuing the conversation. With [MeetingPulse](#), you can use features like word clouds, polls, quizzes, sentiment analysis and more to engage audiences and keep them focused on the presentation or event.

Curious about how we can help you further encourage engagement?

Schedule a Demo

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