

GETTING THE RIGHT GUESTS TO YOUR BUSINESS EVENT

e-guide InviteDesk



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Attract more relevant guests to your business events

We have a mission.

We want your business event to attract more, and above all, more relevant guests. Because filling up an event requires more than just sending out some invitations. Hoping for a good turnout afterwards.

Successful events need the right guests. Guests who contribute to your objectives. To help you with this, we wrote this e-guide. Here's a little sneak-peak of what you'll learn:

1. **Why you should think twice about your guestlist**, and what happens if you don't.
2. **The role of data** when building a thought-out guestlist.
3. Exactly what **metrics** you should look at when making a rock-solid guestlist.
4. How a **total communication plan** will attract more guests to your event.

So, what are you waiting for?
Grab a cup of coffee, sit down and start reading!

Best of luck.

Jan Heiremans, Mark Van der kinderen, and Matthias Goossens.
Co-founders InviteDesk

Why you should think twice about who you invite to your business event

How do you determine the success of your event? Most starting marketers are happy with a packed room. Turnout equals a job well done. But are they right to think so?

This philosophy makes sense for most B2C events: turnout is a huge factor to quantify your event's success. But with business events, it's a tad different...

The goal of your event

When we talk about business events, atmosphere and turnout isn't a goal by itself. Your guest's experience is but a means to an end. There is a wide range of objectives your business event can aim to fulfil. Some examples are:

- ⇒ Revenue
- ⇒ Loyalty
- ⇒ Thought leadership
- ⇒ Lead generation
- ⇒ Brand awareness
- ⇒ Transfer of knowledge
- ⇒ Employer branding
- ⇒ ...

Whichever of these goals you aim to achieve, the number of guests alone won't determine the success of your event. **The decisive factor will be the quality of your guests.** In this respect, you should first think about your event goal.



You can start building your guest list when you get a clear picture of what you want to achieve. **Who will you invite to reach your goals?** You'll fill your event's seats with qualitative guests who add to your predefined goals when you follow this approach.

The impact of the wrong guests on your event

Let's look at what will happen when there's a poor quality of guests at your event. You'll most likely notice a negative impact on:

The image of your company:

Imagine there are too many non-qualitative guests present at your event. For example a group of friends from your sales rep who needed to fill some empty seats last minute. What will qualitative guests - like the CEO of that one company you wanted to talk to for quite some time now - think of the event?

Sadly, guests of poor quality have a huge impact on your relationship with top-notch guests. Why would they return? In their eyes, there were too few like-minded guests. There weren't any good network opportunities during the event.

No-shows and empty seats:

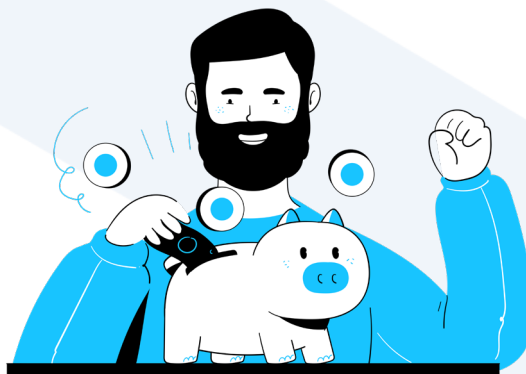
Avoid a mismatch between your guests and your event at all costs. If you target an audience that doesn't fit the content of your event? The odds to fill your event are not in your favour.

Or even worse: guests who register and don't show up. These no-shows are an organiser's worst nightmare. Next to the fact that it's a waste of money, it also makes a bad impression on guests who did showed up.

Budget:

When guests don't contribute to your goals, it puts pressure on your event strategy. Senior management will lose confidence in your strategy. It will be harder to convince them to invest in future events.

It all comes down to the wrong guests creating a negative spiral to your event. So it's best to think twice about who you'll invite. You see, the quality of your guests is of vital importance to the success of your event.



Who benefits from top-notch guests?

When your guests are in line with your set of goals, you'll discover it positively impacts different parts of your company. Let's go through them:

Sales

When there are qualitative guests in your event, sales will feel like a kid in a candy shop. During the event, sales reps will network and connect with different interesting people. **The format of your event will open up opportunities for sales.**

Are you demonstrating a product? Then sales can make some deals. Are you hosting a more casual event, like the business seats during a football game? Then sales get to know your guests a little better, and this will smoothen the way to possible deals at a later stage.

Marketing

Events are a tool in the whole marketing flywheel. It is often also a showpiece since it requires large investments. With a couple of smaller but successful events, the internal belief in the approach will grow. **You'll create proof to convince management to make extra investments for future events.**

Management

A successful business event pleases C-level executives. First and foremost, you'll meet KPI's: **proof that business is going well.** Next to that, management feels proud when they see a lot of qualitative guests at their event: "Look how great my company is. It's amazing that I can bring all these people together."

Guests

Using a strategic approach towards your guest list allows for participants to be both interested in your business, as well as other guests. Therefore they're in a place where **they can network and make meaningful connections.** This results in:

- ⇒ A positive image of your company
- ⇒ An openness towards sales opportunities
- ⇒ Word-of-mouth advertising towards third parties

Conclusion on determining your guest list

Your guests have the biggest impact on whether you'll achieve your goals, or not. **So put enough time and thought into drawing up your guest list.**

We understand this is not a simple task. That's why InviteDesk created a tool in which you can visualise all of your guests: what are their interests? To what events did they attend before? Did they always show up?

This information you can use to create a rock-solid guestlist.



Everyone benefits from relevant guests. But, who are they?

In the first chapter of this e-guide, you read why getting the right guest to your event is so important.

But, who is the right guest precisely? And how will you identify him? Data plays an immense role here.

Globally, there are thousands of successful companies that monitor their guests precisely. That's why, in the next chapter, we'll go through the added value of data for business events.

Monitor your business event's guests?
Ask for a free InviteDesk demo:

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Data is vital for your event's guestlist, and here's why

Guest quality is the foundation for successful events: put it on a T-shirt. It's one of the most important takeaways when it comes down to business events. Because when you can't fill your event with qualitative guests? It'll be impossible to reach your goals and targets.

Preaching about qualitative guests is one. But how do you know who's good enough to invite and who's not? A small hint; it's not luck.

Looking at historical data

Historical data plays a vital role in predicting whether a guest will contribute to your targets. When we talk about historical data, there are three types to keep in mind.

1. Behavioural data during events

The first type of data looks at a guest's behaviour in relation to your previous events. Some examples are:

- ⇒ What events did this guest attend before?
- ⇒ For how many different events did this person already get invited to?
- ⇒ How often was this person a no-show?
- ⇒ ...

Does your data show that your guest always registers but never shows up? Then don't invite him again in the future.

2. Business-related data

The second type of data gives an insight into the professional side of guests. Here we'll talk about information that relates to someone's professional information. Some examples of questions are:

- ⇒ In which industry is this person active?
- ⇒ What products does this guest buy from our organisation?
- ⇒ Is this person's turnover increasing or decreasing?
- ⇒ ...

With this information, sales could invite leads that just had the first contact to a casual event, like a dinner in the business seats of a football game. There you'll have a more relaxed atmosphere; the perfect scenario to learn a bit more about each other.



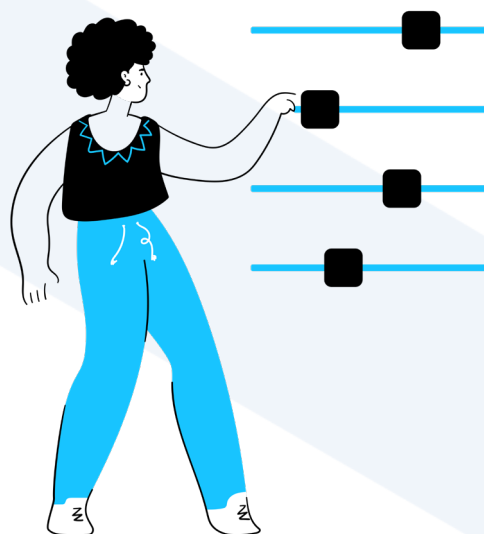
3. Personal data

The last type of data is more practical. Here you'll find who the guest is as a person. But be aware: there's a lot of data you're not allowed to store due to GDPR (like religion, sexual preference, etc.) Some examples of data you *can* store:

- ⇒ What function does this person have?
- ⇒ What language does he or she speak?
- ⇒ What is this person interested in? For example football, opera, marketing, ...

Don't invite someone to your next cycling VIP event when you know someone is not interested in cycling.

With these three types of data, you can form an event profile for every possible guest. Use that info to build your guest list. You'll be able to identify qualitative guests. When you succeed to do so, you'll enjoy a whole lot of advantages...



Historical data creates bottomline impact

You'll create a better match between event and guest if you look at historical data when creating your guestlist. At the end of the ride you'll notice a bunch of advantages. We'll go through the five biggest:

A better registration rate

The event and the invitees match. Therefore, more invitees will register for your event. Your event room will be sold out sooner than you're used to. On top of that you're saving yourself a bunch of time and effort to follow up on the whole invitation process.

Better targeting means a higher ROI

Because you know your audience, you'll be able to attract more qualitative guests to your event. You realise that filled seats don't necessarily mean you'll achieve your goals; it's who's sitting in that seat that counts. The right, qualitative guest, will assure you of reaching your goals.

Higher satisfaction with guests

With a clear target audience, the event room will be filled with like-minded guests. Therefore, the event will offer some exciting network opportunities. Next, their interests will come close to the content of your event. The right people and the right content: the recipe to a successful event.

Happier senior management

It goes without saying that management is happy when you reach predetermined goals. As a result, you'll have to put in less effort to justify an extra financial injection towards your event strategy. They believe in the approach: now it's time to upscale.

Fewer no-shows

Historical data lets you predict your guests' behaviour. Someone who has often registered but doesn't show up during the event; will you invite him/her to the next event? If you don't, you'll have less waste, and fewer missed opportunities.

An overview of your historical data

Looking at historical data sounds easier said than done. A lot of companies have the correct data; it's just that it's scattered around. They have to look through emails, Excel spreadsheets, CRM systems, and so on. And on top of that, they're not always sure what data to collect during events.

Many companies are asking for a centralised system to store historical event data. InviteDesk is a tool that fully automates this process. On top of that, you can organise the entire invitation process with InviteDesk.

Find out how InviteDesk brings your events to the next level:
ask for your free demo!

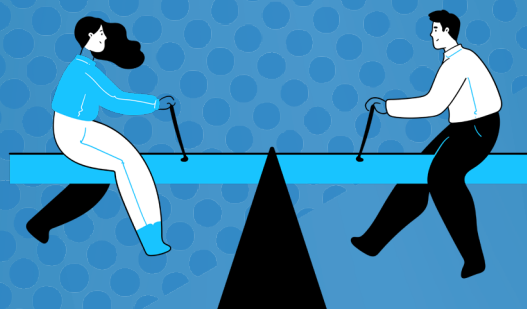
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Noted. Data is crucial for events

If you made it this far in the e-guide, you know data plays a huge role for events. It impacts who you invite and how likely you are to achieve your goals. And that last part, don't we all want that.

All is well and good, but so far, it's still conceptual. Let's go a step deeper.

We'll zoom in on what metrics it's best to keep track of when organising events.



Knowledge is power! What type of data is crucial for business events?

Data runs the world, more than ever. When you capture enough data, you'll discover insights you'd otherwise not have found. Especially while organising an event, data plays a huge role. That's why in this chapter, we'll go through what type of data you should collect to have a positive impact on your event.



Why collect data to organise events?

You collect data to enhance the chance of success for your business event. Based on your data, you can prepare yourself better, avoid mistakes, and work more efficiently. In general, data impacts two things: your upcoming event and events in the future.

Your upcoming event

To make sure your event runs smoothly, you'll collect data from registered guests. Here you can **ask for practical information to prepare for their arrival**: What menu did they choose?; Do they have allergies?; What workshop do they want to follow?; etc. It's best to think about what you need to know upfront to prevent you from asking for extra information from guests.

Future events

Next to practical data, you should collect behavioural data before, during and after your event. This type of data you'll use to:

- ⇒ Evaluate previous events, and draw lessons for the future.
- ⇒ Understand individual behaviour of individual guests to optimise your guestlist.

In conclusion: data is crucial for your event's success. Without it, you'll have poorer guestlist quality, and you'll learn less from mistakes. But, what data should you monitor exactly? Let's deep-dive, and give you some practical takeaways.

The most important metrics for business events

Every event has its objectives. Therefore it's logical that you look at different metrics for each event. However, there are some overarching things to increase the chance of success. The only requirement is that you have a decent knowledge of your audience. Because when you know your audience, you can carefully build up your guestlist with qualitative guests that contribute to your objectives.

To identify a quality audience for your event, look at behavioral data from previous events. This offers a goldmine of insights. Let's go over the metrics from which you'll draw the strongest conclusions:

Invitation conversion

Historically: how many people did you need to invite in order to have a full event. This data helps you estimate how many invitations you'll need to send out. This allows you to put tactical quotas on the different sales departments. For example, The Brussels department must invite at least 50 people, so that 20 come to the event. . And the Amsterdam office needs to invite 30, to generate 10 guests.

Subscription patterns from guests

How often did a specific guest decline your events? Is it still worth it to send an invitation to a future event? Or is there a pattern in their reactions? Do they always accept product launches but never webinars... If this is the case, send out your invitations adequately.

No-shows

No-shows are guests who've accepted your invitation but eventually never show up. No-shows can sometimes give you immense learning. So try to always follow up on reasons why someone decided not to show up. Maybe it's due to your communication? Sometimes people forget about the event because they've never received follow-up emails.

Guest interests

Have you ever sent out an email to guests where you question them on their interests? If you did: take them into account. It can happen that someone loves product launches, but actually hates webinars. If that's the case, only send him the invitation to your product launches.

Registrations per sales department

Map out the guests from your different sales departments. If it turns out that sales reps from one region get more people to your event, but sales from another region close more deals afterwards... Look for the reason behind this, and handle it! Or, you can use these insights to distribute your invitations between the departments tactically.

The biggest challenge: keeping data organized and consult it easily

The biggest problem with using data isn't necessarily the amount of available data. Most companies have more data than they realise. The biggest difficulty is keeping this gigantic pile of data organised.

InviteDesk created a nifty tool that centralises and automates event data. So you don't have to go through endless Excel lists. And you'll never need to manually update your data after an event. On top of all this, InviteDesk has a connector to get this data back to your CRM or marketing automation tool.

Do you want automated and organised event data?
Try an InviteDesk demo

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THE DEMO**

Knowing who your ideal guest is, is one thing. Getting them to your event is the next.

You know exactly who your ideal guests are when you use event data to create guestlists. And identifying who those guests are is a crucial first step. But only knowing who you want to invite doesn't mean this person will come to your event.

That's why in the next chapter, we'll look at communication around your event. How will this ensure that more invited guests will show up?



Getting rid of empty seats and irrelevant guests? Start with a complete communication plan

Have you identified your ideal target audience? Perfect. Because the right guests will make sure you'll effortlessly achieve your objectives. But it doesn't stop there! Because identifying the ideal guest, doesn't mean he'll show up...

Do you want more people to show up at your event? Start with a complete communication plan. In this chapter, you'll discover how to bring your event communication to the next level so that more guests will show up.

The next level for event communication

Imagine you're organising an event to the fullest: no effort spared. But, **because you were so focused on how the event itself will look, you forgot to optimise your communication flow**: guests got the same email twice, received wrong information, etc. Your event can be organised perfectly, the total experience for guests is affected.

So, invest enough time into the communication you'll send out to your guests. We'll share four of the largest takeaways with you:

Contact moments

Someone subscribes to your event and then... radio silence. You can rest assured that you'll have a lot of no-shows to your event. It's better to use communication strategically to generate maximum attendance. Here are **four moments where you should contact guests for a big impact**.



1. Confirmation after registration

Let your guest know when he successfully registered for your event. This is how you remove all his doubts. As icing on the cake, you can add a calendar link so your guest can automatically add the event to their schedule. Now there are no more excuses to miss the event.

2. During the run-up to the event

Send over the more practical event info: where should guests park their car? What time are they welcome? When will the event actually start? Will there be catering? ... This type of email will eliminate doubts and questions guests may still have. But, on top of that, you can also use this contact to get people excited for your event!

3. Follow-up mail after the event

Prolong a guest's event experience by contacting them when the event is over. Here you can thank guests for coming, and you'll follow up on what you promised. Like sending over a presentation, some pictures of the event. Or, who knows, a beautiful aftermovie.

4. Asking for feedback

Send out a small survey after an event has taken place, and ask guests their opinion. As an organiser, you will not only learn from these insights. You'll also give people the feeling you care about their opinion (and rightfully so). This will have a positive effect on how they look back at your event and brand.

Do you contact your guests at these different times? Then you'll have a bigger chance of your guests turning up to your event. In addition, you have a nice communication flow after your event. This will enthruse people to revisit your future events. To wrap it up: these efforts generate a positive long term effect on your turnout rate.

Branding

The feeling guests have when they think of your event starts with the very first email. It's a good idea to use your event branding throughout every form of communication. When everything is in the same style, guests will have a positive, consistent image of your event.

On top of that, every moment of communication is a chance to create awareness. InviteDesk puts all your invitations and emails in one style within the snap of a finger. Now you have branded content during every contact: from confirmation to the last follow-up email.

Targeting

Reach the right clients & prospects, and approach them with content that is in line with their interests. **A match between your target audience and your offer will result in a bigger audience.** On top of that, good targeting will attract the type of guests that contribute to your objectives.

Like said in the first paragraph, personalisation is a best practice. **When you approach your target audience personally, the rest of the message will resonate even better.** This isn't always that easy from a marketing perspective. That's why your sales department also plays a huge role...

Sales involvement

The sales department knows your clients and prospects best. They can tell you precisely who will enjoy your next event. That's why you should involve sales with your business events as early on as possible.

Because if sales feel involved and understand well what the event's content, objectives, and target audience are? Then it'll be a piece of cake for them to identify the right guests and invite them as personally as possible.

Stay on top of all your communication

Keeping track of who you send what when isn't always a walk in the park. When you invite a lot of different people, it can happen that:

- ⇒ You send an invitation to someone twice.
- ⇒ Guests get reminders when they've only been invited recently.
- ⇒ You forget about someone you invited.

This comes across as very amateurish and can lead to fewer people showing up.

A tool that automates and monitors all of your communication can help tremendously. It's vital to have a transparent overview of all outgoing communication. This way, you can:

- ⇒ Track in real-time who received what, when.
- ⇒ Stay in control of your invitation process
- ⇒ Act quickly when problems arise. For example, when not enough people registered.

InviteDesk's tool is a fully automated platform. It allows you to create your event communication in your brand's style and send it out fully automated. It also offers live insights into all your contacts, so you'll be able to intervene when necessary.

Will you boost your next business event?

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