

# JUST KEEP SWIMMING

ADVANCING YOUR EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING  
AUDIENCE THROUGH THE SALES FUNNEL

derse  
EXPERIENCES MATTER





# INTRODUCTION





## THE CONCEPT OF SKIMMERS, SWIMMERS, AND DEEP DIVERS

The cost of not paying attention to your audience's learning and engagement styles is high: attendees who don't find what they're looking for at your exhibit, event, or environment will find it somewhere else. It's not that you don't have the product or service that they need, it's that you may not be presenting it to them in the form they're looking for it.





## SKIMMERS, SWIMMERS, AND DEEP DIVERS

highlight the way each group of your audience likes to take in information.

### SKIMMERS

Some simply want the short and sweet bullet points; they aren't willing to spend more than a few minutes learning about your offering.

### SWIMMERS

Others are looking for more information; they are more willing to devote their time and attention to hear from you.

### DEEP DIVERS

And some are ready to go all-in and learn every last piece of information you have to share.

While this framework is frequently used to inform web design and optimize how research is conveyed, we think it parallels with your face-to-face marketing program, too.

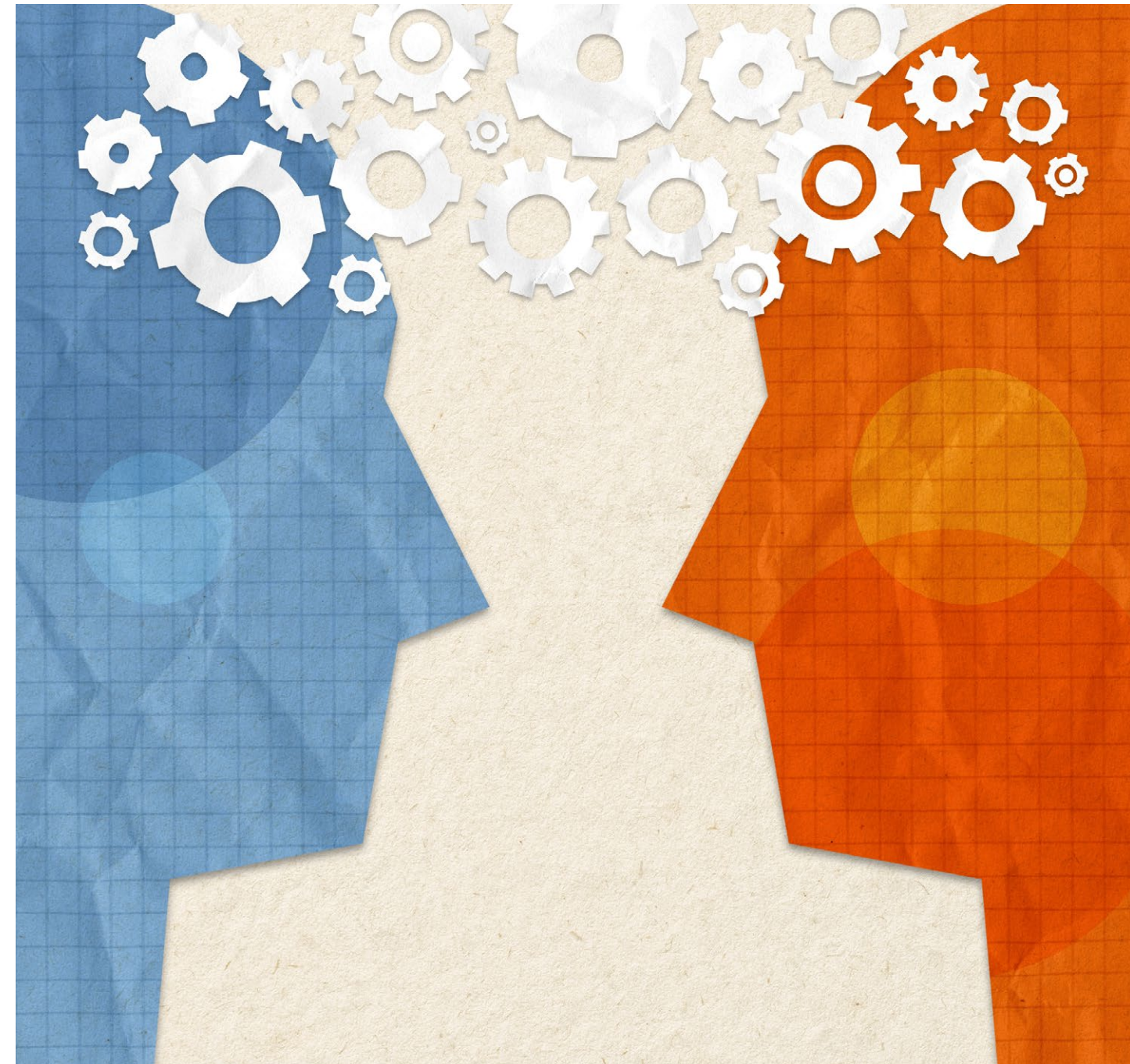


# WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE REFER TO A FACE-TO-FACE MARKETING PROGRAM?

Before we dive in, let's figure out what we mean by “face-to-face marketing.”

Face-to-face marketing is a sector of marketing driven by in-person connections. Comprehensive face-to-face marketing programs include an array of events and opportunities for interaction. Strategic programs often include trade shows, events, and branded environments.

Each of these face-to-face channels offer unique opportunities to connect with your audience. What makes a trade show valuable is different from a branded environment or event, and vice versa, but only investing in one channel might limit your ability to communicate to your entire potential audience.







AN INHERENT DISTINCTION BETWEEN EACH CHANNEL OF A FACE-TO-FACE MARKETING PROGRAM IS TIME.

Each channel involves a **different unit of time** emblematic of the interaction. While at a trade show, your interaction with your audience is typically in terms of minutes, whereas at your event, you might have a couple of hours with them. And in your branded environment, you might have a day or two to connect with your audience.

The different units of time (minutes, hours, and days) and the information available within those timeframes impact the ways in which your audience can learn about your offering.





## INSIGHTS FROM AN EXPERT:

“The question I like to ask is, how can you best serve and reward your audience for their time and attention? And then when you have an idea, you need to ask, how do I design my perfect Skimmer, Swimmer, and Deep Diver experience? Designing the continuum of touchpoints that your audience will experience is the key to elevating your program beyond the ordinary.”

– PETE RIDDELL, EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR

**Wondering how you can apply this knowledge and deliver results for your company?**

Keep reading to learn how to best capture the time and attention of Skimmers at your trade show exhibits, Swimmers at your events, and Deep Divers in your branded environment.



**CAPTURE THE ATTENTION  
OF SKIMMERS AT YOUR  
TRADE SHOW BOOTH**





## WHY TRADE SHOWS?

You've only got a few minutes, and then they are gone. How will you make a splash with the limited time you have with them?

Trade shows provide a unique opportunity to capture the attention of warm audiences that have yet to hear of your company or new product. The challenge of trade shows is not finding your audience (because they are already physically in the same room), but instead, drawing them off the aisle and into a conversation.

Innovative design and cutting-edge technology on the trade show floor might help draw your audience in, but what do you do once they cross the threshold from the aisle and into your exhibit? **Knowing how best to educate and communicate with your audience will help you have impactful conversations despite the limited timespan you may have with them.**



## HOW SKIMMERS LIKE TO LEARN

SKIMMERS THRIVE ON THE TRADE SHOW FLOOR.

Looking for quick-hit, bite-sized information, the ease of bouncing from one exhibit to the next gives them the chance to learn about many different products, services, and companies at a surface level.

Skimmers likely won't invest much time in your booth, but that doesn't make their attention less valuable. Instead, they are consuming information about a vast number of companies and assessing for themselves how they want to proceed with their information gathering process.







## ENGAGING WITH SKIMMERS ON THE TRADE SHOW FLOOR

### **Struggling with a suboptimal trade show booth location on the floor?**

The goal – beyond an eye-catching design – should be to create a pre-show campaign that draws them to your booth. If you can target new attendees and find a way to be on their must-see list, you'll get the opportunity to connect with them face to face.

### **Tempted to reuse the same marketing message on your graphics from years prior?**

Before you even get the chance to have a conversation with a skimmer in your exhibit, you'll want to give consideration to your graphics. What marketing message do your booth graphics convey that's winning over the attention of a Skimmer? If you share the right message, attendees will be able to subconsciously recognize their alignment with your message and take the time to see what your company is all about.

### **Have you given much thought to your elevator pitch before heading to your show?**

Now might be the time. Skimmers want to know what your company is and what it offers, and fumbling through your words to piece together a response won't look good to the Skimmer who tends to only focus on headlines.



Additionally, if a topic comes up that sparks deeper conversation with a Skimmer, be sure to **know which member of your staff** you can connect them with. If you know you're not best suited for the conversation, don't waste their time. The right person on your team will be able to more effectively answer their questions and make the most of their limited attention span.

FINALLY, IT MIGHT BE A GOOD DECISION TO MAKE SURE SKIMMERS CAN TAKE SOMETHING TO-GO FROM YOUR EXHIBIT.

It doesn't have to be swag or printed literature. A QR code to an interactive video that they scan in-booth and watch later could be the perfect continuation of their experience with your brand.







## INSIGHTS FROM AN EXPERT:

“Think about how you can hold the attention of your attendees for as long as possible. Hospitality is a huge deal and a great opportunity to strike up a conversation with them. The more time an attendee spends in line for coffee in your trade show booth, the less time they are spending with someone else. Making people feel comfortable and taken care of will prepare them to have an impactful conversation with you. And the smell of coffee or fresh-baked cookies is sure to drive traffic to your exhibit, no matter how limited someone’s attention span is.”

– TODD SUSSMAN, VICE PRESIDENT OF CREATIVE

**“Now that I’ve captured the attention of the Skimmer, what’s next?”**

Consider inviting them to a business dinner or future client event to spend more time with them and encourage them to learn more about you and your offerings.



**MAKE THE MOST OF  
THE **SWIMMERS'**  
TIME AT YOUR EVENT**

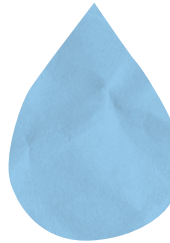




## THE PURPOSE OF EVENTS

Events play a critical role in a face-to-face marketing program. Whether you are hosting a proprietary conference, a client appreciation event, or a product launch, it's essential to consider who your audience is and how to provide them with an excellent experience.

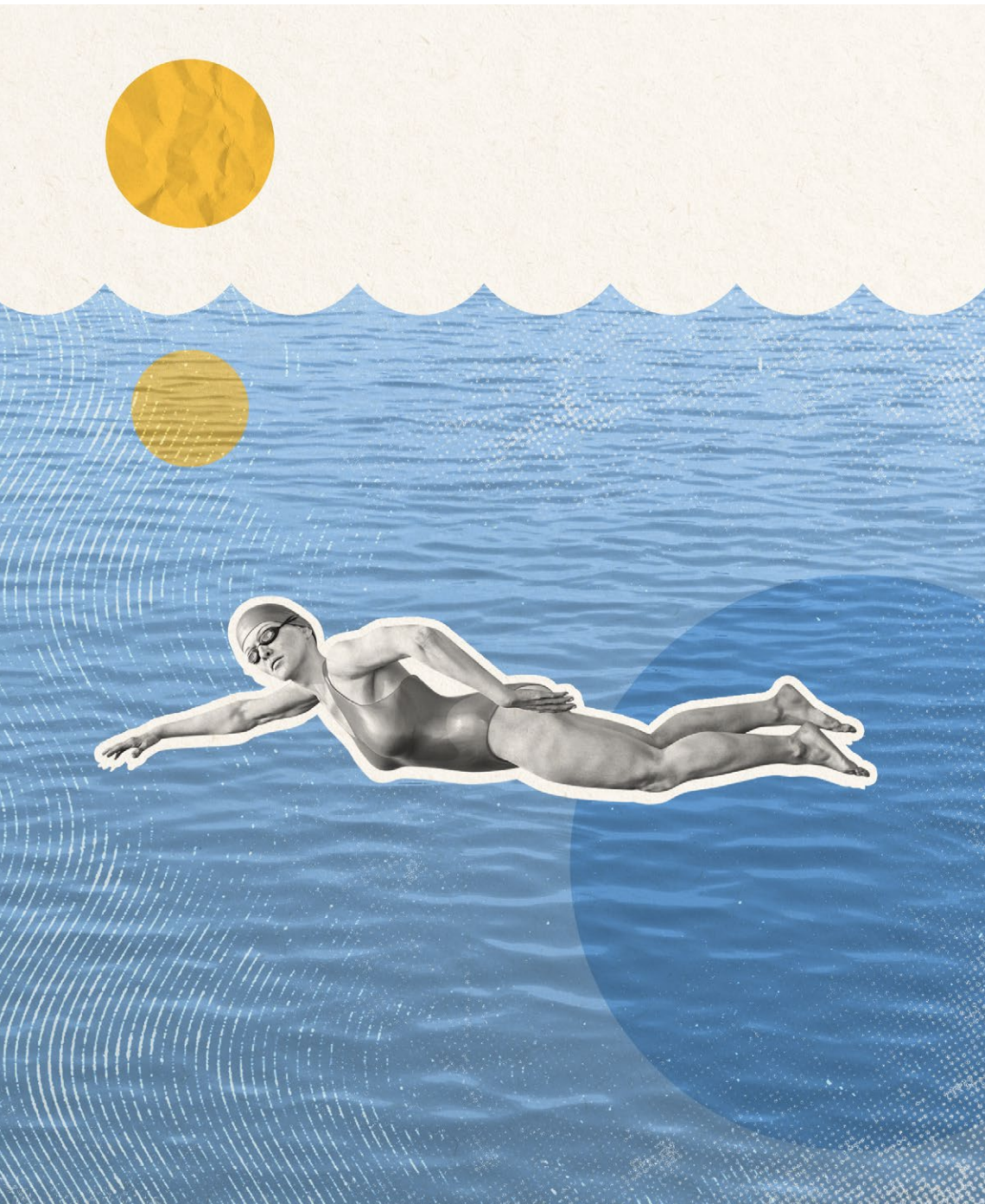
**Because you'll be with your audience for a few hours at your event, it's important to consider how to engage and educate them while making a lasting impression.**



## TYPES OF EVENTS

- Hospitality Events & Receptions
- VIP & Incentives Trips
- Product Launches & Press Conferences
- Team-Building Events
- Client Appreciation Events
- Corporate Events & Meetings
- Proprietary Conferences





## THE ATTENTION SPAN AND INTEREST LEVEL OF SWIMMERS

Willing to give more time and attention than Skimmers, Swimmers are often well-suited for events. They have a better idea of what they are looking for and what more information they need to learn before making a partnership decision.

Swimmers have often narrowed down their list of the most qualified partners, so they aren't simply wondering if you have the capabilities to meet their needs – they likely already know that you do. Instead, they attend events to personally get to know you more and get a better idea of what it would be like to partner with you on a regular basis.

Swimmers want to learn more about your offerings, but don't give them the generic information they can find on your website. Since they probably aren't locked in on you or your product yet, help them feel confident that you could be a future partner by giving a tailored perspective on the value your capabilities can provide them with.





## HOW TO OPTIMIZE YOUR EVENTS FOR SWIMMERS

### KEEP YOUR EVENTS VERSATILE.

Rather than following a strict schedule with limited options for what to do, flexible events offer Swimmers the options they are looking for. If your event is laidback, think about providing an engagement that gives your salespeople the opportunity to strike up a conversation with a prospective client while playing a game or enjoying live music. Planning a formal event? Create a strategic seating chart so that your salespeople can get more quality time with the attendees they are hoping to connect with.

From one moment to the next, Swimmers might be enjoying the entertainment, looking at a product demonstration, or enjoying a conversation with one of your salespeople. Strategically-planned events offer them the opportunity to get more comfortable with your company because they have a variety of ways they can learn about your offerings.

**It's important to make your staff aware of how they can see to a Swimmer's needs. By assigning a staff member to every prospective client at your event, you can tailor the event experience to individual attendees.**





## INSIGHTS FROM AN EXPERT:

“The biggest missed opportunity we see is that salespeople don’t take full advantage of the event by interacting with their guests. If a client comes in and no one from the hosting company approaches them, then the opportunity to make that first impression is lost. It can be as simple as assigning each salesperson to a number of guests that they will be responsible for engaging. Set the expectation that after the event they’ll be asked to provide an update on the progress of that relationship and any upcoming opportunities.”

– KIM KOSTUSAK, DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE PRODUCTION AND EVENTS

## “The Swimmer at our event was fully engaged – what do I do now?”

After spending a few hours with your enthusiastic guest, make an effort to invite them to visit your company headquarters or local facility. The proof is in the pudding. More time, product demonstrations, in-depth conversation, and further education will help move you toward closing the sale.



**USING YOUR BRANDED  
ENVIRONMENT TO ENGAGE  
WITH DEEP DIVERS**





## HOW DO DEEP DIVERS ENGAGE WITH MARKETING ENVIRONMENTS?

**Marketing environments** are places of business that tell your brand story, inspire customer engagement, and infuse branded moments at every touchpoint.

LOBBIES, EXPERIENCE CENTERS, AND SHOW ROOMS CAN ALL BE BRANDED MARKETING ENVIRONMENTS.

Whether you are displaying a product or looking to engage in deeper conversations with your clients, branded environments provide a key opportunity **to offer further education and connection for your audience.**



Unlike a trade show, visitors of your branded environment won't stumble into your space without prior knowledge or awareness of your company. Whether their visit is prescheduled or not, people visiting a marketing environment tend to be looking for more information on your products and services and are ready to engage in further conversation.

**Take full advantage of their eagerness and you'll have the key to establishing a successful marketing environment experience for your visitors.**







## MEETING THE NEEDS OF DEEP DIVERS

### DEEP DIVERS ARE ALL-IN.

Committed to learning more, if you offer the information they are looking for, you'll have no problem convincing them to give you their time and attention.

Unlike Skimmers, Deep Divers aren't looking for quick hits, but that doesn't mean they don't need organizational clarity. They are willing to spend their time learning, not deciphering.

As a part of a face-to-face marketing program, branded environments are an excellent opportunity to encourage Deep Divers to learn more, both in observing your products and materials and in engaging in conversations about their needs and your offerings.

With several hours up to a couple of days set aside visiting your marketing environment, Deep Divers can immerse themselves in your brand and your services to help guide their decision-making process.



## MOVING DEEP DIVERS TOWARDS A SALE

When making initial plans for your environment or looking for ways to update your current facility, be sure to make the distinction between the center and product displays and the content you will create for your visitors.

A BRANDED ENVIRONMENT IS MORE THAN JUST A BUILDING;  
IT'S AN EXPERIENCE.

Within your environment, you have the opportunity to make every touchpoint a learning opportunity for Deep Divers visiting your space.

The goal is not just to bring your brand to life. It's to bring your brand to life in such a way that drives conversations and builds trust. When you begin with the end goal in mind, you can work backwards from the goal to create an effective experience.







## INSIGHTS FROM AN EXPERT:

“With a marketing environment, we have the audience’s attention, now we just need to pay it off. We want to make sure it’s worth the trip they took to get there. In essence, a marketing environment needs to offer your visitors something they can’t just get online or over Zoom. And the most essential element of that is human connection.”

– RUSS FOWLER, VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING ENVIRONMENTS

## Why this matters.

Applying a strategic lens at your face-to-face marketing efforts might require more work, but when they result in getting more time with your audience, it’s worth it.



When you keep Skimmers, Swimmers, and Deep Divers in mind, you gain the opportunity to further your conversations with them and continue to educate on your offerings.

The cost of not paying attention to your audience's learning and engagement styles is high: attendees who don't find what they're looking for at your exhibit, event, or environment will find it somewhere else. It's not that you don't have the product or service that they need, it's that you're not presenting it to them in the form they're looking for it.

As you plan and strategize for your upcoming trade show, event, and branded environment, consider how you can make a change to better engage the kind of attendee you'll be meeting.



**Looking for more strategic support in your experiential marketing program?**

**GET IN TOUCH**



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Exhibits Events Environments

