The Experience Atlas

A Leader's Roadmap to Experiential Marketing Maturity

AnyRoad

Your World of Experiential Marketing

Creating experiences is like bringing consumers into your world — you're creating a sensory reality that's **all the more powerful** for its impermanence.

But what's a world without its atlas?

As a marketing leader, you're at the wheel, directing teams and strategy to power **efficiency, growth, and long-term consumer loyalty.**

But like any road trip, you need the right map to navigate the highways and byways of experiential marketing.

Welcome to your personal roadmap — **The Experience Atlas.**

The Experiential Marketing Maturity Model

Our model for Experiential Marketing Maturity provides a comprehensive framework that you can use to:

Articulate the value and impact of your experiential programs

Assess current processes and priorities against industry best practices

Identify a path to systematically optimize your strategy

Using your priorities, pain points, and goals, you can put a pin in the right location and see exactly which roads you should use to get to your next destination.

Who is the Experiential Marketing Maturity Model for?

It's for you! Any marketing or brand leader (or aspiring leader) can use this to **elevate your approach** to engaging consumers through in-person events.

When you look at experiences at a higher level, you can **see beyond the day-to-day** details and execution to larger growth, like brand revenue and market share, as a whole.

What do I do with the Experiential Marketing Maturity Model?

You chart your course.

Start by understanding the core components of each maturity phase and identify how your strategy stacks up.

Once you have a better understanding of the different phases and what each means, you can, review the roads you want to take to uplevel your approach to experiential. What are the best actions to take to achieve success?

By driving your strategy forward, you can **see the full journey** and guide your teams accordingly. Eventually, you will have a clear path for optimizing your strategy and increasing the impact of your experiential programs on brand loyalty and revenue.

The Experiential Marketing Maturity Map

Achieving Operational Efficiency & Better Consumer Visibility

Efficiency - Scale - Consumer Visibility - Internal Alignment

Making Data-Driven Improvements to Boost Impact

Brand Awareness & Loyalty - Marketable Database Growth - Boost in Sales

Optimizing for Long-Term Consumer Loyalty & Sustainable Revenue Growth

Long-term Loyalty - Revenue Growth - Greater Customer Lifetime Value - Community of Brand Enthusiasts

First Stop

Achieving Operational Efficiency & Better Consumer Visibility

Welcome to the residential district. Here, you're focusing on operational efficiency and **learning what your success looks like.** You're heading for the main road, ready to change how you think about experiences so your team has a more comfortable drive.

Your priorities are...

Driving Operational Efficiency

When you scrap manual processes and disparate systems, **you invest in efficiency.**

You support your team, allowing them to spend more time on high-impact work, and you can start thinking about how to scale experiential programs—all without having to increase headcount.

Better Visibility Into Consumers

Moving away from manual processes (read: pen and paper booking) comes with new opportunities to capture information about your guests.

This turns experiential programs into **valuable touchpoints** for getting to know your consumers better, opening up a world of new possibilities for future marketing efforts.

Defining & Measuring Experience Success

As you make changes to drive improvements in your strategy, it only makes sense to track your success. But what does success mean? If you haven't already, now's the time to **define the metrics** you'll use to measure the success of your events and experiences.

If you're unsure where to start, **lean on your industry's best practices** and standards for experiential marketing. Armed with a definition of experiential success and the ability to track key indicators, you can educate internal stakeholders about experiential value.

Challenges you're solving for

- **Limited** team bandwidth and resources that block scaling.
- **A disjointed,** clunky, and manual experience for consumers.
- **No visibility** into who's coming to your experiences and what they care about.
- **Visibility blindspots** into metrics that show or help you define success.

Tactics You Can Use

How do you execute your priorities to get closer to your next destination? Here are the different routes you can take.

Automate & Streamline Your Key Workflows

Take a good look at your existing processes and see if there are opportunities to automate **to build efficiency** into your operations. Technology can be deployed to automate:

Digital flows:

- Online booking & ticketing
- Online registration or RSVP
- Consumer data capture
- Capacity management & forecasting
- Reporting

Onsite processes:

- Guest check-in
- Walk-in bookings
- Onsite data capture for events that don't require pre-registration
- Age verification

Manage Experiences in a Centralized View

Efficiency requires more than key process automation. To enable efficiency in a meaningful way, you need to **centralize experience management**. This means:

- Having a **single, unified view** of all planned experiences
- **Managing all aspects** of your experiences in a centralized solution, including everything from scheduling your events to managing the booking or registration processes to assigning staff to each event and managing experience capacity
- **Accessing operational insights,** such as how far in advance attendees tend to book or the most popular booking times, in a single view informs marketing strategies and experience promotion

Regular Reports on Experience Performance & Success

With a definition of success and metrics identified to measure it, you can now **regularly analyze** the performance of your brand experiences and events. These insights can be used not only to quantify your success but also to:

- Create a baseline for measuring against in future events and experiences
- Show the impact of your team's efforts by sharing results across the organization
- Evaluate your performance against industry benchmarks and identify areas to improve

The Destination

What outcomes can you expect by following this road?

More Efficient Operations

Save your team time, freeing them up to focus on high-impact activities, and more reliably predict capacity needs to nail staffing.

Metrics to Measure:

- People hours saved
- Capacity utilization

> Brands that moved to automated online registration and reporting save over **6,000 people hours each month.**

Ability to Scale

By driving more efficient operations, it will become easier to scale your experiential programs without growing headcount

Metrics to Measure:

- Number of new experiences or time slots you're able to add

Better Visibility into Consumers

The more data you collect via experiential programs, the better you'll understand your consumers.

Metrics to Measure:

- Database growth
- Post-event NPS

> Best-in-class brands see NPS scores of **91 and above.**

Increased Internal Alignment

Your team can track and report on the impact of your experiences, giving you the data to justify spending and make informed decisions about your strategy faster.

Metrics to Measure:

- Time spent on reporting
- Time spent to make improvements

Second Stop

Making Data-Driven Improvements to Boost Impact

The second stage in experiential maturity is a traffic-heavy town with more sophistication in how you drive your strategy.

Since you've started capturing valuable insights from your attendees, you have a new level of visibility that can be used to **make more informed decisions**. Your strategy becomes more data-driven, and your team can more confidently decide the types of events and experiences to invest in, which geographies to target, and more.

At this stage, you are using insights generated from experiential programs to drive improvements that **increase your impact** on awareness, loyalty, and sales.

Your priorities are...

Unlock New Insights About Consumers to Guide Strategy

Build on the initial data you've started collecting and develop a strategy around consumer data.

Identify what information is most valuable to your team & business, and **start digging deeper** into the questions you ask to understand your consumers better and deliver more impactful experiences.

Use Consumer Feedback to Improve Brand Experiences

When it comes to data & insights, it's important to gather relevant details about your consumers and **understand their feedback** about your brand and your events.

Collect post-event feedback from consumer attendees to learn what's working and what adjustments your team can make to drive an even greater impact on your goals.

Integrated Approach to Experiential Marketing

Brand experiences and events offer a great way to engage current and potential consumers, amplifying your existing marketing strategy. But, if your experiential programs are siloed, so is the impact they can have. This makes it critical that experiential, events, and field teams **partner closely with their counterparts** in other areas of marketing.

Aligning experiential campaigns **with other running programs** will help you drive a more effective multi-channel strategy and a more consistent consumer journey with your brand.

As part of this integration, you'll also want to ensure that **every aspect of your experiences** is on-brand — from how they appear on your website to the booking flow, the on-site experience you deliver, and the post-event communications.

Grow Marketable Database

As you scale and optimize your experiential programs, there are more opportunities for you to use brand experiences & events to kick off and nurture a more ongoing relationship with your consumers.

They have a positive experience at your event and in providing their information in exchange for things like product samples, swag, and more, you can **collect more high-value input** from them, including marketing opt-ins.

Your experiences can be used to build your database and fuel future marketing efforts.

Make Program Improvements Based on Performance

It's one thing to measure the performance of your experiences, but it's even more important to use those insights to **keep improving your experiential programs.**

Use pinpointed data to build and expand programs for new consumers and deepen relationships with existing customers.

Challenges you're solving for...

- **Poor event** performance that negatively impacts brand perception.

- **Not optimizing** or it takes too long to learn which improvements have the greatest impact.

- **Lack of buy-in** from other teams, and you're competing for marketing budget.

- **Restrictions** on how you capture data and market to consumers.

Tactics You Can Use

How do you continue evolving your strategy and increasing the results of your experiential programs? Here are paths to get you there in record time (and help you avoid highway traffic).

Expand The Information You're Collecting From Consumers

As you improve your events based on your understanding of your consumers and past event performance, you can deliver more tailored experiences aligned with what your audience wants.

This gives you more leverage (greater value exchange) to **ask a little more** about the guests attending.

Beyond capturing basic information from attendees, such as their contact information, demographic data, and NPS, you can also start gathering:

- Consumer preferences
- Insights on purchase history & behavior
- Marketing opt-in consent
- Text-based or custom feedback

## Analyze Your Experience Data and Optimize

Now that you've consistently measured experience performance, you can examine individual event success and identify trends in performance across your strategy. Use those insights to make improvements that **ultimately increase the impact** of your events.

Measure success in real-time with automated reporting and feedback analysis

- **Make changes** on the fly to deliver better experiences

Analyze performance holistically across all experiences to surface trends

- **Double down** on what's working
- **Move away** from events, audiences, geographies, and more that aren't driving an impact
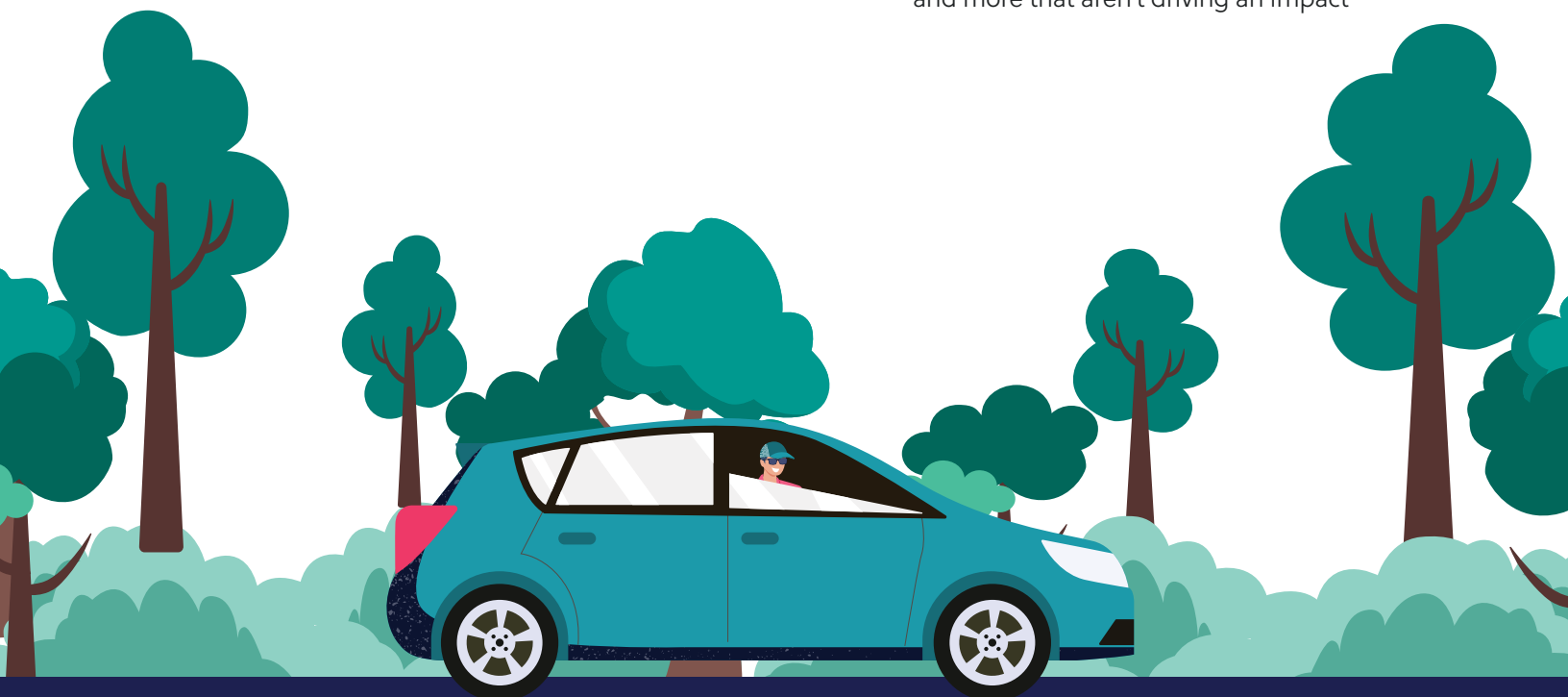
Capture Feedback After Every Event

It's time to move beyond "smiles" to **capturing actual feedback** from your attendees post-event. This should go deeper than a simple NPS question (although that's a great place to start!).

### Ideal feedback capture flow:

- **Automatically follow up** with attendees after the event to gather their feedback

- **Capture NPS**, as well as open-text feedback that allows them to elaborate on their selection

- **Analyze** that text-based feedback to surface trends in what went well & what attendees weren't so crazy about

- **Make changes** to your programs based on those trends

Align and Collaborate Cross-Functionally

Make sure your counterparts across the marketing organization **have visibility** into your experiential plans and that you're working together to amplify the impact.

What you can do to ensure better collaboration & alignment:

- **Integrate** your experiential platform with key solutions such as CRM, Marketing Automation, and Commerce to ensure data & insights aren't siloed

- **Work with** other teams, such as content, brand, & influencer marketing to align your experiential programs to the large campaigns your team has planned

- **Regularly share** updates on the success of your experiential programs and their impact on marketing & brand goals
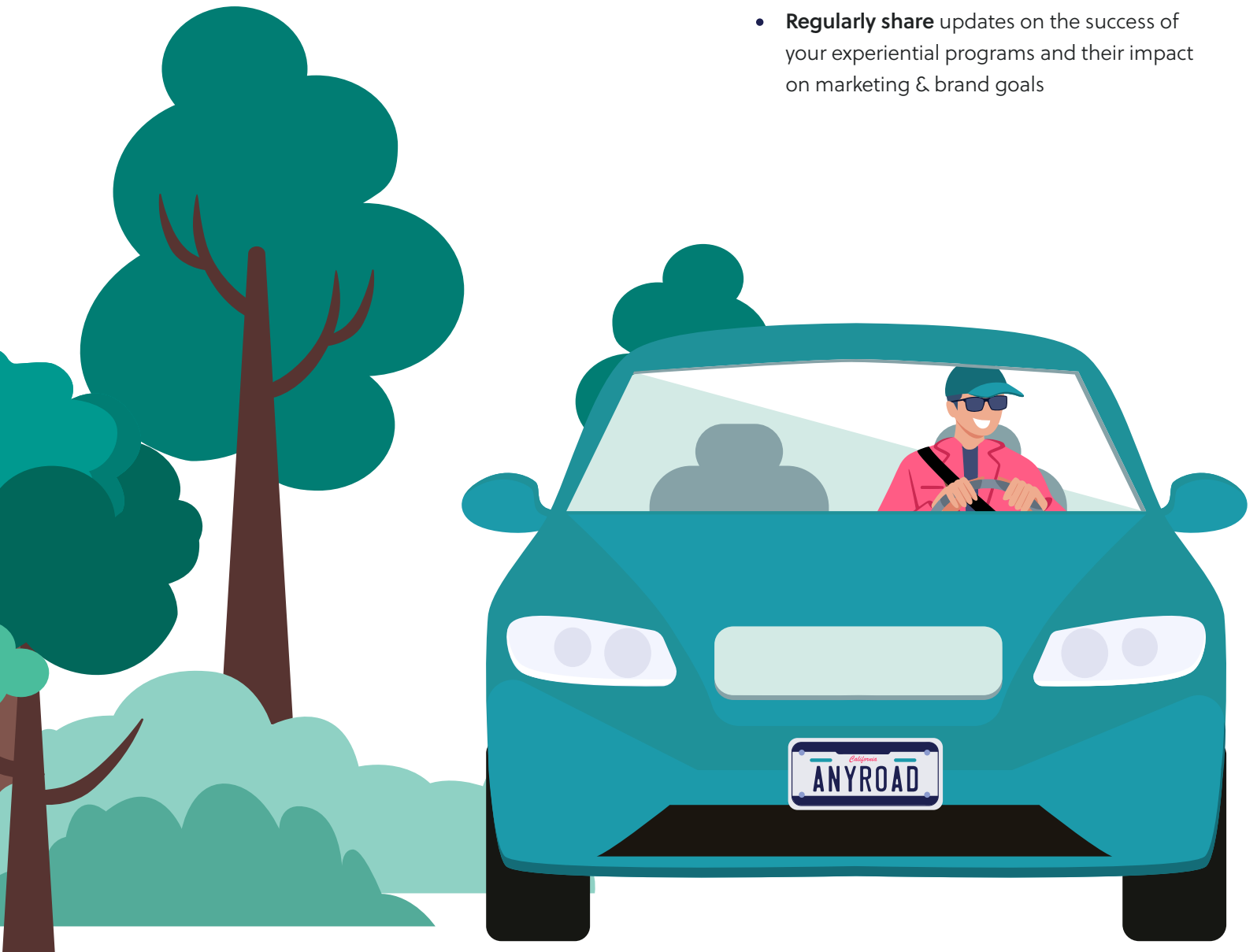
The Destination

What outcomes can you expect by following this road?

Increased Brand Loyalty

Growing brand loyalty is one of the most common goals for experiential teams. By better understanding your target consumers, consistently measuring event success, and **identifying ways to improve** via feedback, you have the winning recipe for delivering events that supercharge brand loyalty.

Metrics to Measure:

- Brand Conversion Rates
- Increase in number of repeat attendees

Leading brands see over **90% positive brand conversion** from their events & experiences.

Increased Brand Awareness

With the ability to scale programs and plan more impactful experiences (thank you, direct feedback!), you'll be able to achieve **greater increases in brand awareness.**

Metrics to Measure:

- Greater social reach for your events (shares, mentions, and follows)
- Increase in attendance

Significant Database Growth

When a consumer opts into your brand's marketing communication (email, SMS, or otherwise), they're signaling an interest in getting to know you. Opening that two-way conversation has plenty of benefits: more purchases, event attendance, and even loyalty improvement.

Metrics to Measure:

Number of marketing opt-ins collected

Increased Sales

As the success of your experiences grows, so will its impact on sales and revenue.

Metrics to Measure:

- Ticket sales
- Purchase Intent
- Post-event product sales

79% of consumers who attend events **will purchase** a brand's product post-event.

Third Stop

Optimizing for Long-Term Consumer Loyalty & Sustainable Revenue Growth

You're finally there: the big city. You've grown from offering a couple of brand experiences to running a full-scale experiential strategy that's **powering significant brand growth**. Your strategy becomes a well-oiled machine that optimizes loyalty and growth.

Your priorities are...

Run Diverse, Full-Scale Experiential Programs

At this stage, you've **developed a deep understanding** of your target consumers and learned what works and what doesn't regarding brand experiences. And your strategy reflects that!

You're running all types of consumer events and brand experiences that meet audiences where they're at – whether they know anything about your brand.

You aim to drive awareness, or encourage regular purchases and product use so you want to reward their loyalty. You may even **expand your programs globally** to new geographies to enter new markets.

Identify New Ways to Foster a Community of Superfans

You've learned a ton about your consumers, including who comes to event after event and who continues to purchase your products most frequently. What else can you do to keep these consumers engaged and **reward their loyalty** to your brand?

At this stage, you're asking this question and focused on **harnessing the potential** of your top consumers. You're building out exclusive, tailored experiences just for your superfans, and they're rewarding you with long-term loyalty.

Treat Experiential Marketing as a Core Pillar of Brand Growth

You've successfully proven experiential marketing's impact on the business; company leadership is bought in. You can **secure the budget** needed to support your strategy and keep growing the impact on brand loyalty and revenue.

Challenges you're solving for

- **Difficulty maintaining mindshare** over competitors; stagnated brand growth.
- **Missed opportunities** to grow revenue and consumer lifetime value.
- **Inability to secure** additional investment in your experiential strategy.

Tactics You Can Use

You can prove your worth and show how your experiences not only succeed in achieving their own goals but **positively impact the larger brand strategy** as a whole.

So, how do you keep your successes going and work with all your cross-functional teams to achieve even higher levels of success?

Here are a few tactics you can use to keep growing and making your experiences an expected and natural part of brand growth.

EXPERIENTIAL GREATNESS →

Run a Range of Different Experiences

You're running a full-scale experiential strategy, which means investing in **many different brand experiences** and consumer events. Your programs include everything from owned events and experiences in your brand home to sponsorships at third-party events and pop-ups in the field.

While these are different types of events, managing your strategy from a centralized view will help you:

- **Ensure consistency** in brand standards across all events
- **Get a holistic view** of the impact of your strategy

You can optimize your approach with performance data by:

- Pulling out trends across all events and experience types
- Comparing results by event types, geographies, and other factors

Deliver Experiences Aligned With Consumer Journey

This is all about mapping out **the right programs to the right audience.** The events and experiences you plan to raise awareness and educate new consumers should differ from those to grow brand loyalty and increase sales.

One set of events:

- Raises awareness
- Educates new consumers

Examples: Sponsorships or activations at third-party events, pop-ups, free community events, brand home tours

Another set of events:

- Drives increased loyalty
- Boosts purchasing from existing customers

Examples: Owned events, VIP events, premium brand home experiences, in-store events

Measure ROI of Your Experiential Strategy

With all your new experiences, growing budgets, and inter-departmental collaboration, it's more important than ever to **measure and transparently share** your results. Now that your experiences affect everyone, you should be clear about the return you're seeing from that investment.

Demonstrating your impact **at the broader brand level** will help you get buy-in for increased budget in the future.

When you share your ROI, other teams will have new ideas about how they can help you (and thereby them) succeed and create a full experiential program that touches different areas of the business.

Defining & sharing ROI through:

- **Clear measurement** of experiential marketing's influence on company-level goals, thinking larger than individual experiential programs
- **Formatting and reporting** on relevant and actionable patterns beyond the immediate campaign and your scope.

The Destination

What outcomes can you expect by following this road?

You've unlocked a new level of growth when it comes to consumer loyalty and brand awareness. You can expect to continue seeing increases in metrics like NPS, brand conversion, and attendees who are opting in. But, in addition, your experiential strategy is reaping meaningful, long-term rewards.

Your Consumer's Lifetime Value Continues to Increase

Your consumer base is growing, and they keep coming back for more. New buyers that turn into reliable repeat customers do more for your revenue than the short-term boosts that come from engaging the masses.

With **more tailored experiences by audience** and dedicated programs to reward your top-tier customers, you see their spending continue to increase over time as their loyalty to your brand deepens.

Metrics to Measure:

- Increased average spend per consume
- Attendance at VIP & premium experiences

> 📢 **51%** of consumers new to brands become **long-term customers** after their experience.
>
> **82%** of repeat attendees **keep purchasing for 5 years** after visiting.

Brand Experiences Become a Revenue Center

While events and experiences are often viewed as a cost center, you've **nailed your strategy** and are reaping the rewards. Your experiences are so popular that they're bringing in higher ticket sales and you're selling out of your products & merch onsite.

Your fans can't wait to snatch up tickets to exclusive, VIP events. At the end of the day, experiential is **contributing to revenue growth** in a meaningful way.

Metrics to Measure:

- Revenue impact of events greater than cost

Experiential Has a Seat at The Table

Experiential isn't just a strategy; when you gain buy-in from the brand as a whole, your work becomes a pillar of growth **that everyone relies on** across all teams. It has become as important as digital marketing, advertising, and even great social media.

Your budget grows year over year, and everyone at your brand is invested in your success since they now understand that your wins are their wins, too.

Metrics to Measure:

- Budget growth year-over-year

Pit Stop:

Cheat Sheet

Time for a pit stop! Even the most seasoned long-distance drivers need a break. So, let's pause and review the full experiential model as a quick reference sheet.

Let's Review...

First Stop

Achieving Operational Efficiency & Better Consumer Visibility

Priorities

- Driving operational efficiency
- Better consumer visibility
- Defining & measuring experience success

Pain Points

- Limited team bandwidth
- Disjointed manual consumer experience
- No attendee visibility
- Success metric blindspots

Your Road

- Automate & streamline key workflows
- Manage experience in a centralized view & system
- Regular reports on experience performance

Your Destination

- Efficiency
- Scale
- Visibility
- Alignment

Second Stop

Making Data-Driven Improvements to Boost Impact

Priorities

- Capture feedback after every event
- Grow marketable database
- Unlock new consumer insights to guide strategy

Pain Points

- Poor event performance
- No (or slow) optimization
- No cross-functional buy-in
- Data capture restrictions

Your Road

- Expand your information practices
- Analyze your experience data and optimize
- Align and collaborate cross-functionality

Your Destination

- Brand loyalty
- Database growth
- Brand awareness
- Sales

Third Stop

Optimizing for Long-Term Consumer Loyalty & Sustainable Revenue Growth

Priorities

- Fund a full-scale experiential program
- Analyze your experience data and optimize
- Identify new ways to foster a community of superfans

Pain Points

- Stagnating brand growth
- Missed growth opportunities
- Inability to secure investment

Your Road

- Run a range of different experiences
- Diversify to deliver experiences aligned with the consumer journey
- Measure the ROI of your experiential strategy

Your Destination

- Increased lifetime value
- Sustainable revenue growth
- Greater investment in experiential

You've arrived!

No matter your destination, this experiential marketing maturity framework can guide you through the most challenging parts of your journey.

By evolving your strategy **through to greater maturity**, your efforts and time will transform your tool for database growth and awareness into a vital part of the brand as a whole.

The investment and understanding you've earned from provable results help you continue improve and expand your experiential marketing.

Growth isn't a short-term goal or a one-time adventure; it's a road trip to new revenue, loyal fans, and respected internal investment.

So, bon voyage, and remember — **always bring a map!**