

Vendelux Research Report

Events Are in the **Hot Seat**

120+ event and marketing leaders told us the same thing: events matter, but proving ROI is harder than ever.

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Events work. Proving it is where teams get stuck.

80% of organizations are maintaining or growing their event sponsorships in 2026.

We surveyed 120+ **B2B marketing and events leaders** across companies from startups to enterprises with 10K+ employees about how they plan, run, and measure events.

What we heard was consistent: events build pipeline, close deals, and open doors that emails and ads can't. But most teams are struggling to prove it.

Costs are rising, and leadership wants hard numbers. The tools that most teams rely on weren't built to deliver them, leaving a lot of manual work, guessing, and a growing gap between what events do and what teams can show.

98% of teams struggle to justify event spend to leadership.

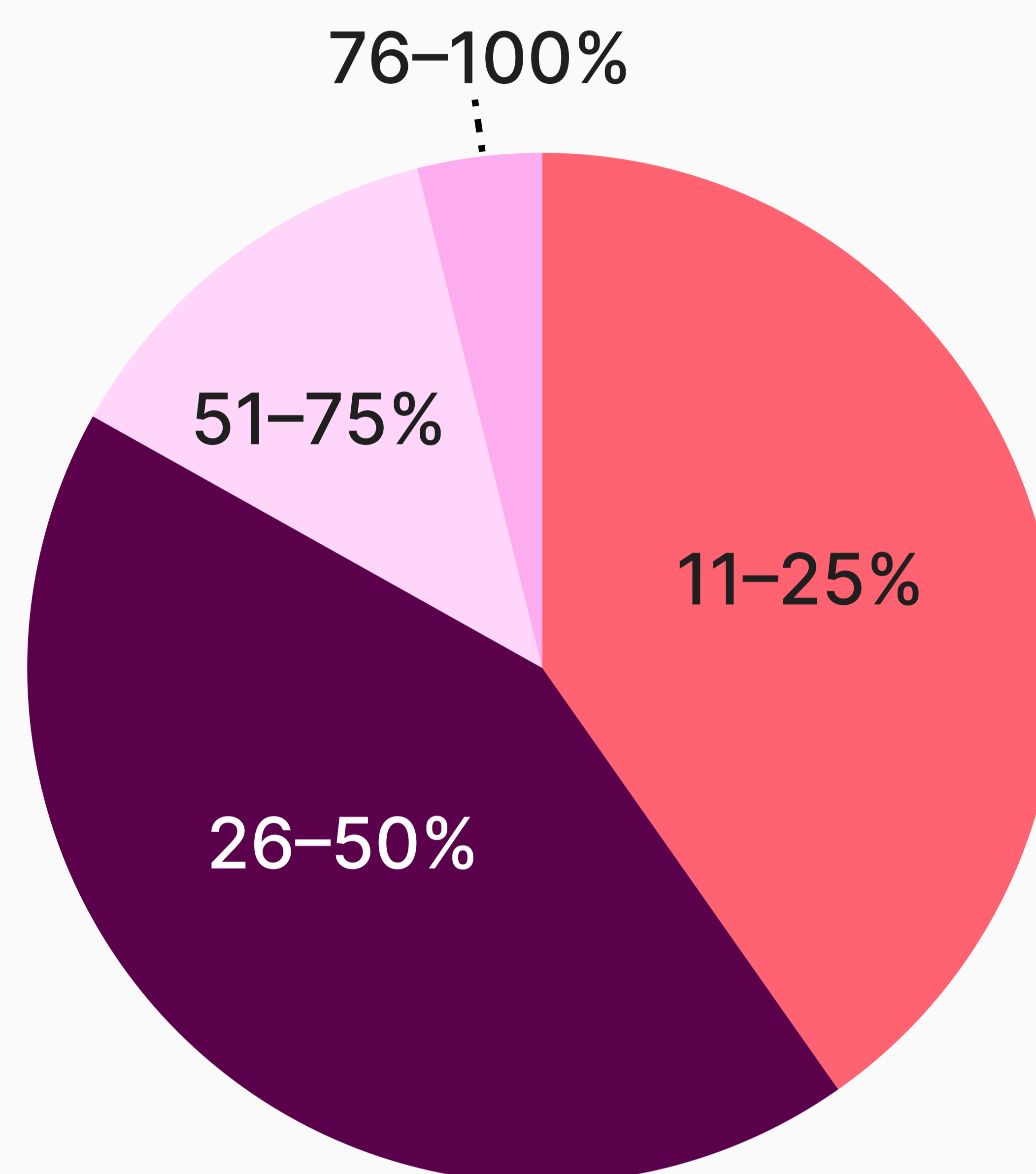
86% can't accurately attribute ROI back to events.

90% say events don't get credit in their CRM.

Events are a major line item, and leadership knows it.

% of marketing budget going to events

51% work with marketing budgets of \$1M+



Teams are spending substantial amounts on events, especially as event-related costs rise, but nearly every respondent shared it's difficult to justify this spend.

Leadership's request is always the same: *"Show me the tangible value."* Almost all teams surveyed indicated that leadership wants to see either estimated event ROI in advance or direct results thereafter. However, the majority of event professionals are struggling to connect deals and revenue back to events, leading to tense conversations.

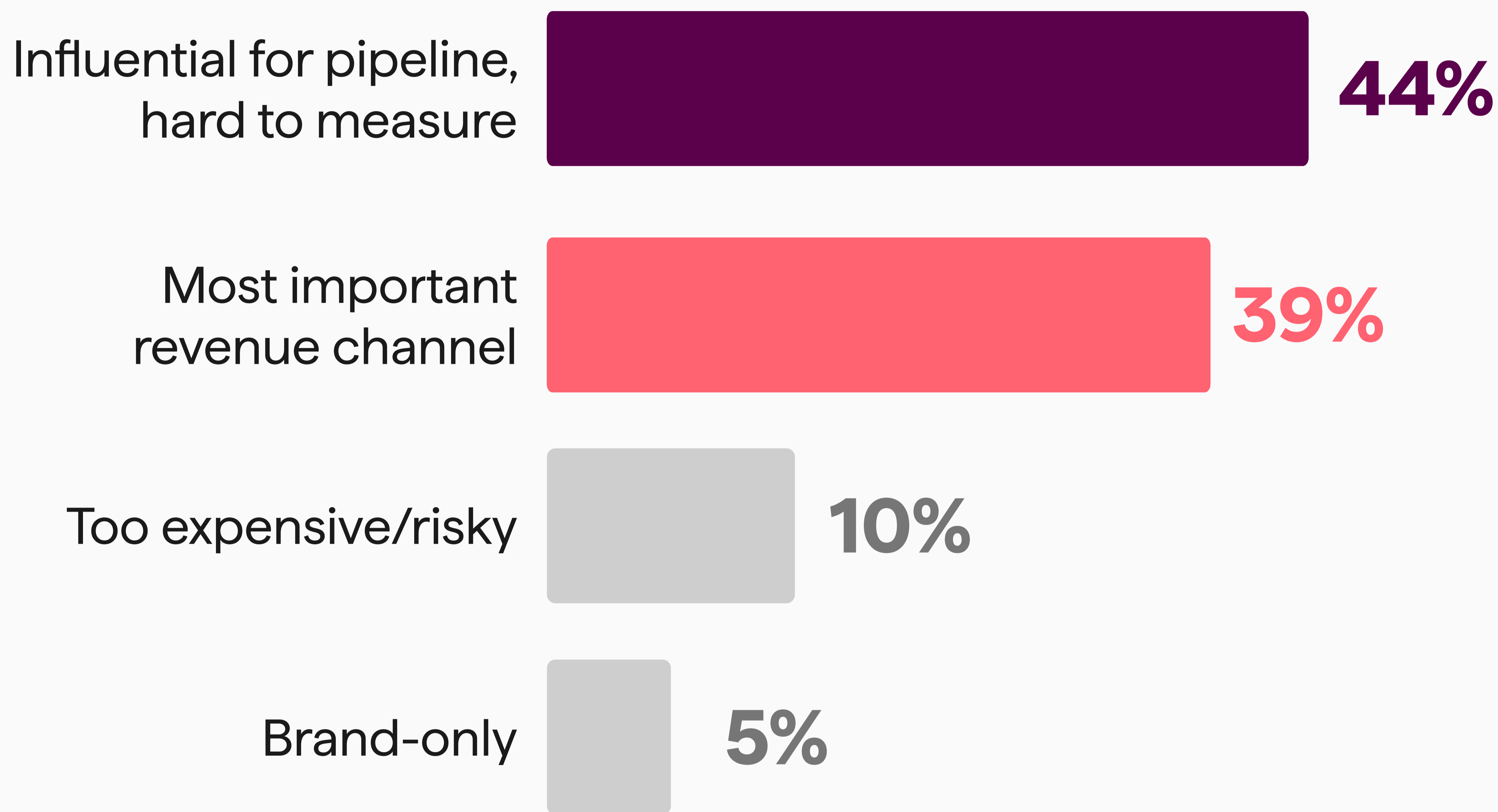
"They [leadership] want to see a clear connection between our attendance at an event and an ROI. Did we secure a customer, do we have follow-up meetings that will lead to real revenue-generating opportunities?"

-Chief of Staff, AI Startup

Leadership still sees events as a major revenue channel.

How leadership views events

80%+ see events as impactful to pipeline and revenue



Leadership isn't skeptical about whether events work. They're skeptical about whether the reporting they get reflects what's happening.

Less than a quarter of respondents were confident that they could clearly attribute results back to their events, and these reporting issues grow more concerning as event costs continue to rise, forcing leadership to scrutinize event budgets further.

The Visibility Gap

22%

of respondents said event impact is fully visible to revenue leaders.

Without data, teams struggle to choose the right events.

Teams want to choose events analytically. Most aren't there yet, due to issues accessing the right data. Only **13% of those surveyed** rated their event selection process as fully data-driven. The implication of this is that teams default to what organizers advertise, including audience claims and past testimonials, rather than verified data.

The top factors driving selection all require data that most teams can't readily access without an event intelligence platform.

What types of proof carry the most weight in securing event investment?



“Picking the right events is like putting together a 3D puzzle. They have to have the right audience mix, focus on the right end-market, and be at the right time. It's hard to find events that check all 3 of those boxes.”

–Director of Marketing, Agency (250 employees)

Most teams don't know who's attending beforehand.

Teams sign event contracts without a clear picture of who will actually be there. Without verified visibility into attendees, selection becomes reactive, and teams are left to rely on information that's a harder sell to leadership, like an organizer's reputation or their stated claims.

Events teams need *“stronger signals around audience profiles to ensure we're heading to the places where our ICP buyers are,”* wrote a growth marketing director at a company with 500+ employees who indicated that events are a core revenue driver. *“And better forecasting around [the] meetings and demos we can expect if we sponsor/attend.”*

Average Visibility Into Attendee Data Pre-Event

2.75/5

Teams are still evaluating events without knowing who will be there.

What teams say they need

- Target list of who will attend
- Influencer vs buyer identification
- Attendee data for pre/post-event outreach
- Verified ICP match vs. organizer claims
- Confirmation the right decision-makers will be there

What full attendee visibility changes

Teams with access to pre-event attendee data make different, smarter decisions at every stage.

- Which events to buy tickets for, based on ICP match, not organizer claims
- Which accounts to prioritize in outreach
- What ROI to forecast before committing budget

With the right data beforehand, teams are able to make strategic decisions to ensure they're attending the right events and engaging the right prospects.

Attribution is still the biggest gap.

86%

of teams struggle to accurately attribute ROI back to events.

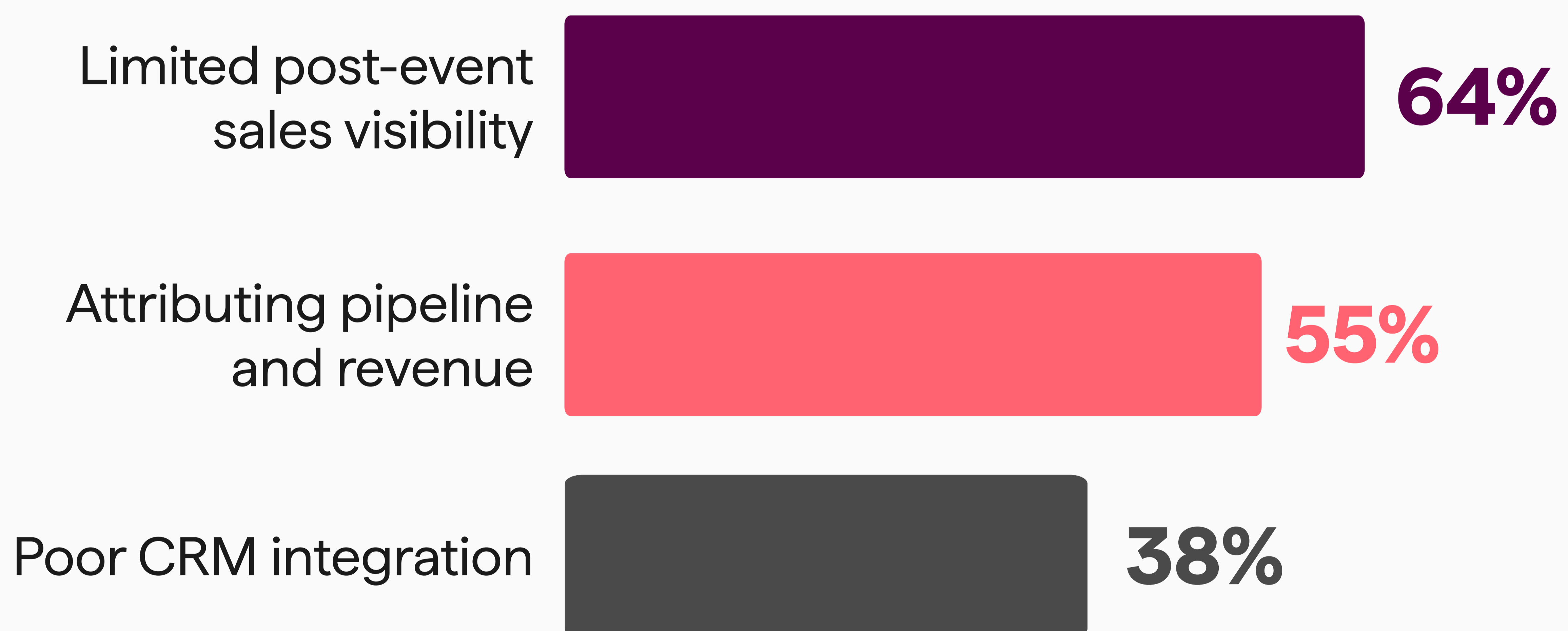
Events influence revenue, but they frequently don't get credit for it in CRMs. What's easily measurable rarely tells the whole story.

Teams are unable to attribute ROI back to events.

Most tools on the market are built for logistics, including registration, agendas, and execution, rather than for pipeline generation. As a result, many teams rely on fragmented tools and manual workflows to fill the gaps in tracking event ROI, which leads to attribution issues.

Without proper tooling, sales visibility breaks after the event ends, attribution flows can't trace activity back to pipeline, and CRM data doesn't carry the event context. This lack of clean attribution leaves leadership short on confidence on the success of events.

Biggest obstacles to ROI measurement



Events influence deals, but don't get credit in the CRM.

Only **3 respondents** out of 120+ said events always get proper credit for the deals they influence. Everyone else is watching pipeline move and knowing events helped, without a clean way to prove it in their reporting.

Even when event interactions drive meaningful progress, conversions often appear to originate from other channels. As a result, events are undervalued and difficult to defend in conversations with leadership.

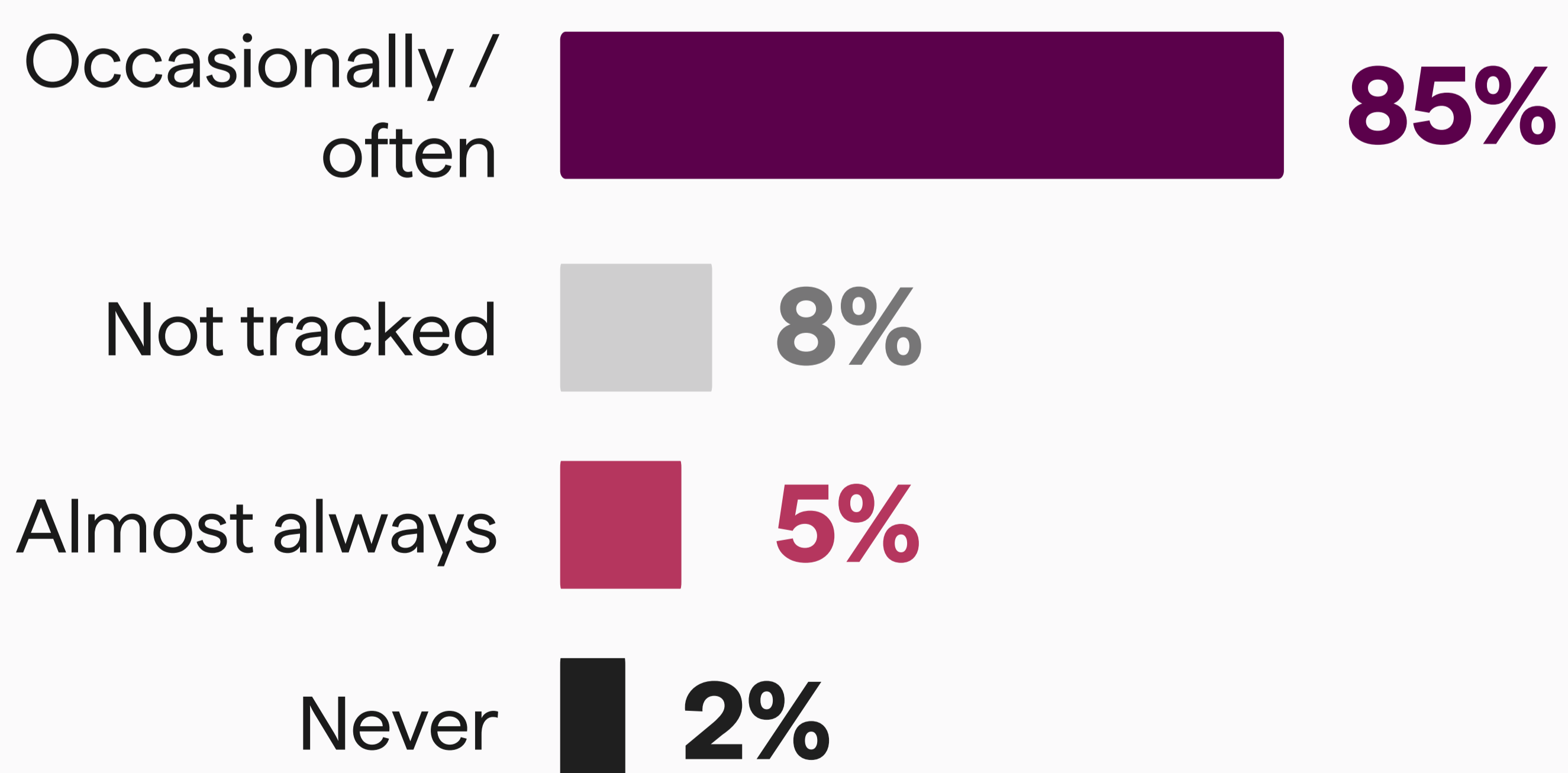
“[Our CRM has] no standard way of capturing and attributing. Lead sources get muddied and opps need to be discussed 1:1. Everyone complains about time from event, to first email because every company has a different process with a few manual steps in order to fix attribution. It's a mess.”

–Event Marketing Manager, Enterprise (5K+ employees)

90%

say events influence deals that never get credit in their CRM.

How often events influence deals that never get credit



Meetings drive the real value of events.

70%

cite lack of visibility into attendee lists as their top barrier to booking meetings before events.

“Most meeting opportunities are lost because we don't know who is attending until it's too late to coordinate executive calendars or launch personalized outreach.”

–Field Marketing Manager, Enterprise (10K+ employees)

Event success often comes down to meetings booked.

“Getting pre-show connections going PRIOR to the show is my biggest wish. Shows are too big and too busy, so it's essential to establish connections prior to the conference.”

–Enterprise Sales Director, B2B Tech (~500 employees)

Meetings booked pre-event are the clearest, most defensible measurement that teams have when trying to prove the impact of events to leadership. However, they're difficult to book when teams start their outreach in the few weeks leading up to an event.

While teams consistently said that starting earlier would increase the number of qualified meetings at events, the issue is the lack of insight into who's attending the event beforehand.

Without this attendee data, teams rely on cold outreach or in-person networking on the floor, which lowers meeting quality and makes pipeline outcomes less predictable.

55%

shared their outreach efforts began less than 4 weeks before an event.

What earlier outreach unlocks

When teams have attendee data 8+ weeks out:

- ICP accounts identified before the contract is signed
- Personalized sequences running weeks ahead
- Sales looped in before calendars fill
- Meetings confirmed before anyone boards a flight

Events are part of the plan, but not yet built into it.

Teams say that events are important, but they aren't fully integrated into most B2B go-to-market strategies.

Events are still predominantly owned by marketing, while sales and revenue leaders say they want better visibility. Without shared visibility across teams into pipeline impact, events remain loosely connected to revenue outcomes rather than an essential channel for driving pipeline and revenue.



Why it matters: When events sit outside the revenue plan, teams are unable to fully collaborate in order to both drive and prove the success of events. The work of connecting them to pipeline, accounts, and quotas keeps falling back on the event team instead of flowing through the GTM operating model.

What the top teams do that the rest don't.

The teams seeing the best results aren't necessarily bigger or running more events. What separates them is a connected motion across every phase of the event cycle: deciding which events are worth attending, knowing who will be in the room, running outreach before the show starts, and closing the loop on attribution after it ends.

01 They pick events with confidence, not instinct.

Instead of relying on organizer claims or past experience, they validate audience fit before committing budget. Verified attendee data, target audience matching, and historical attendance inform the decision, so the conversation with leadership about “why this event” starts from a position of evidence.

02 They know who's in the room before they land.

Showing up without visibility into who's attending means reacting on the floor instead of executing a plan. Teams that close this gap arrive with a prioritized account list, role-level insight into decision-makers, and a clear picture of which target accounts will be there.

03 They run outreach well before the doors open.

Getting into prospects calendars early and filling sponsored sessions or activations in advance is what separates teams that generate pipeline from teams that generate conversations. By the time most teams are launching their first sequence, the best teams are already confirming.

04 They track every interaction back to revenue.

Events influence deals, but the question is whether that influence shows up in the CRM. Teams that close this loop tag event interactions, connect them to open or new opportunities, and follow activity from first conversation through close. This allows leadership to see the full picture, not just what happened to land in the right source field.

The field is more competitive than ever.

80%

of organizations are maintaining or growing event sponsorships in 2026.

Most teams are maintaining or expanding their investments in events from last year. In-person is on the rise as B2B buyers want face time to meet with prospects and get deals over the line. When convinced, executives are approving events, and event calendars are fuller than they've been in years.

However, that means the stakes are higher, as more teams are competing for the same rooms, prospects, and calendar slots. The difference between teams that generate pipeline from events and teams that don't is no longer just effort or budget, but now the infrastructure behind the motion.

Teams still relying on manual tracking, late outreach, and organizer-provided audience data will show up to the same events as their competitors and won't be as ready. Their prospects will already have meetings on the books with competitors who invested in pre-event intelligence, and opportunities will be harder to attribute. This makes those conversations with leadership much harder to win.

The teams closing this gap are doing it with event intelligence. They know which events their ICP actually attends, reach out to the right people before the event starts, and connect every interaction back to pipeline. That's how events move from the hardest channel to defend to the most reliable one.



Find the right events. Know who's attending. Prove every dollar.

Vendelux connects attendee data, pre-event outreach, and CRM attribution so event teams can finally prove what everyone already knows: events drive revenue.

See how it works for your team

Request a Demo

vendelux.com/demo