

E-book

Build a better Webinar

# Build a Better Webinar
## Running Virtual Events

informatechtarget

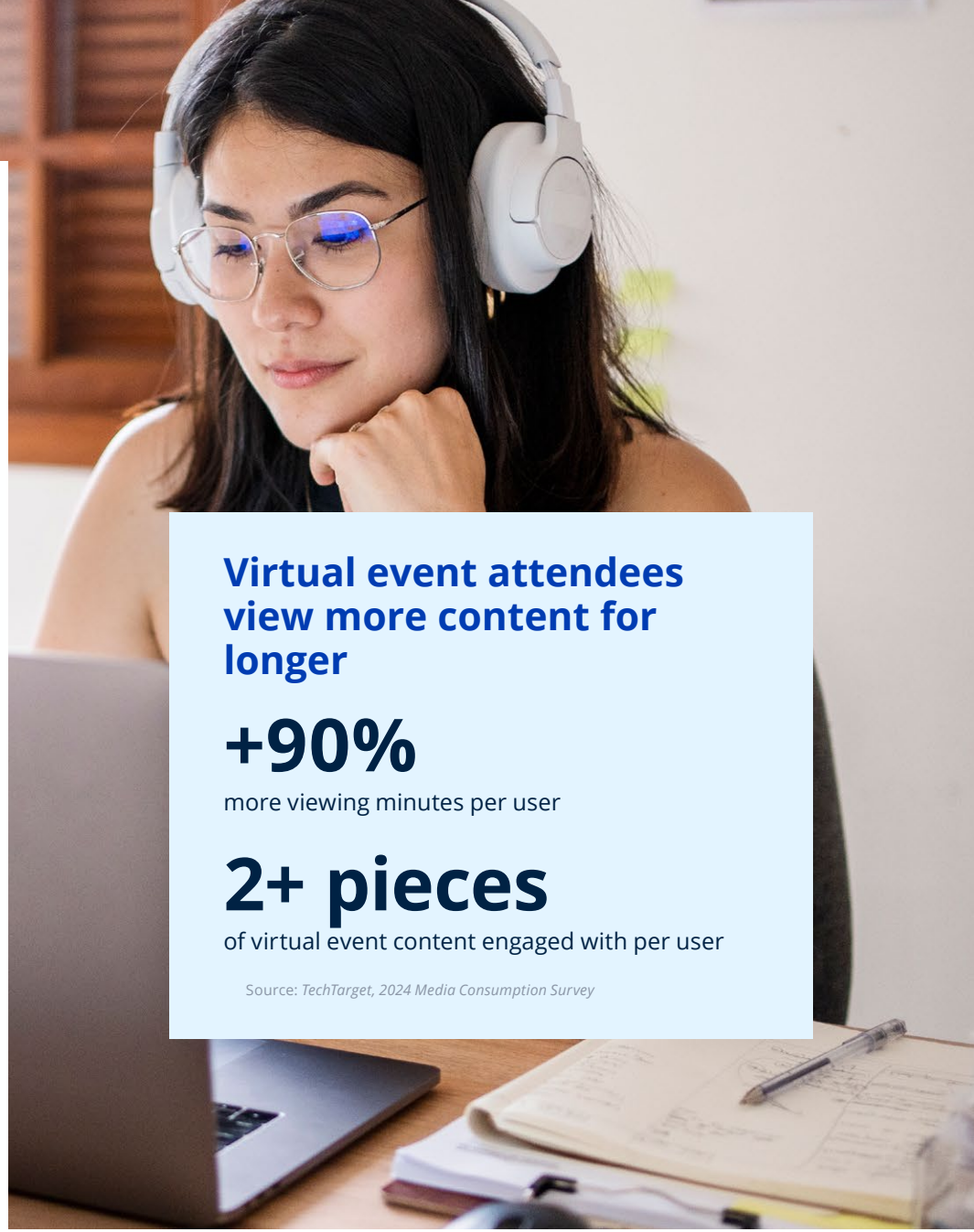
# For many B2B companies, virtual events have become a staple within their demand gen toolbox to better connect with target audiences.

The obvious selling point is that virtual events are quicker and easier to produce than in-person or hybrid events. Because they're hosted on a digital platform, virtual events attract a diverse, global audience and accommodate virtually unlimited attendees. And while the benefits of virtual events overlap with webinars or webinar series, they differ in that virtual events more effectively drive engagement across a large audience in a short period of time.

Buyers have added virtual events as a necessary content format within the research stage of their purchase process, with 44% of B2B professionals relying on multimedia events and webinar platforms when conducting technology research.[1] By investing in virtual events, organizations can meet buyers where they want to learn, thus increasing their chances of building deep and meaningful engagement.

In this e-book, we'll bring together Informa TechTarget's years of expertise executing virtual events for our clients to share foundational virtual event best practices. From determining the theme of your event to evaluating event performance, you'll walk away with a clear roadmap to build and execute a successful virtual event.

Source: [Informa] TechTarget, 2024 Media Consumption Survey



## Virtual event attendees view more content for longer

**+90%**

more viewing minutes per user

**2+ pieces**

of virtual event content engaged with per user

Source: *TechTarget, 2024 Media Consumption Survey*



# Considerations for creating an effective virtual event

While a virtual event requires fewer resources than an in-person event, they can still feel intimidating or even out-of-reach for some teams. At Informa TechTarget, we've found by addressing these key considerations at the start of the planning process, you'll limit the number of speedbumps throughout the planning and execution phases.

- **Goals.** Outline the goals of your virtual event and check that they align and support your overall marketing goals. Getting feedback and buy-in from key stakeholders on goals is also important to ensure alignment and support. This is also the time to establish performance metrics and clarify what success looks like.
- **Budget.** Typically, virtual events are a low-budget content format, but you'll want to consider potential costs and areas you want to invest in. For example, do you want to set aside budget to cover the fee of a high-profile speaker?

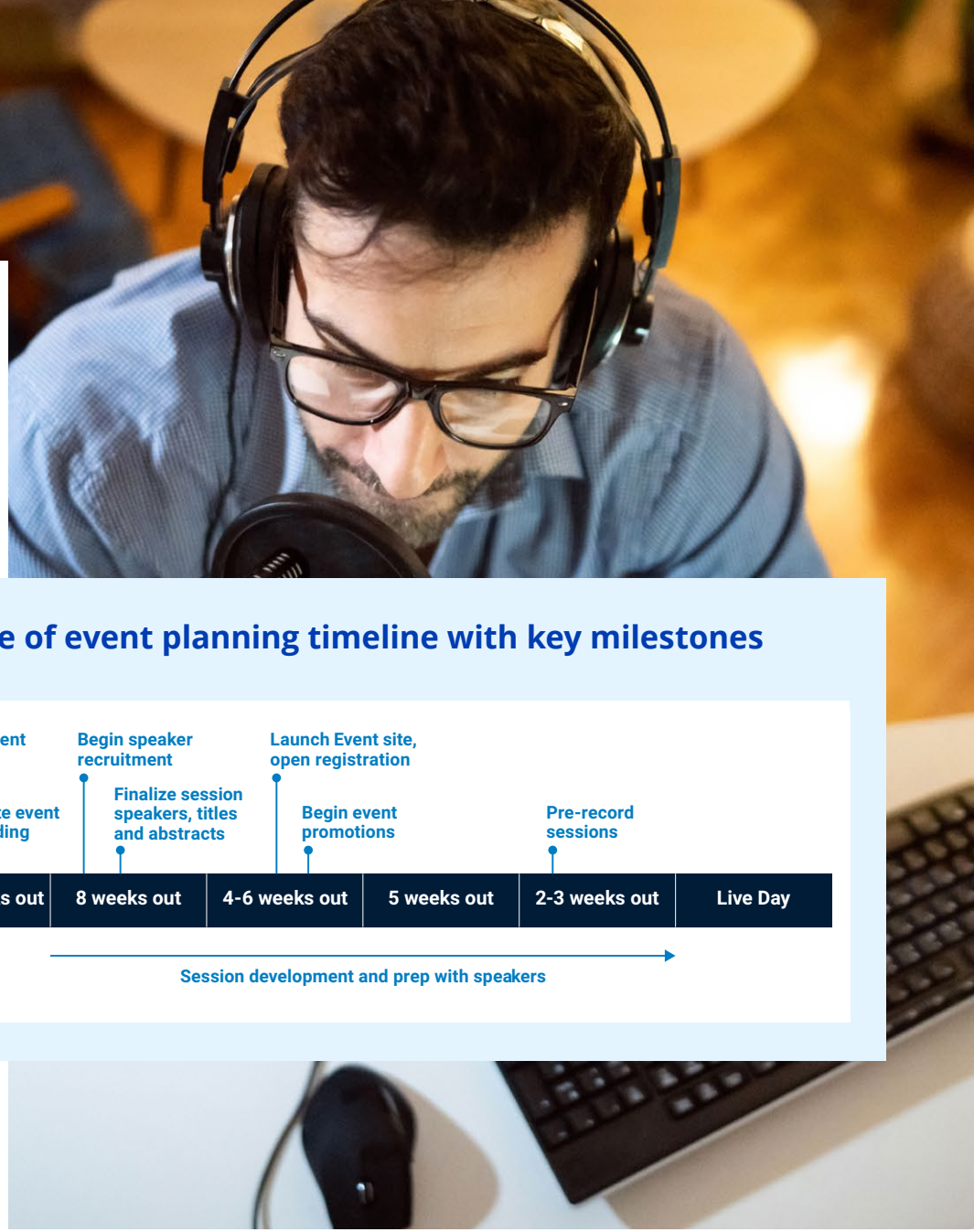


- **Resourcing.** The available resources of the team responsible for a virtual event will impact how many virtual events you can run in a year, as well as the scale of each individual event.
- **Content.** Investing in relevant and high-quality content for your event will keep your audience engaged and more likely to attend multiple sessions. Getting a sense of who within your own organization can help to create content, as well as the external partners and speakers you can tap into will establish your capacity for content development.
- **Event platform.** To execute a successful virtual event, you'll need to have a platform and partner that can support all your needs, and the needs of your audience. Create a list of requirements, noting both must-haves and nice-to-have functionalities, including built-in content hosting and creation features, robust content data capture, marketing automation, CRM system integration and unlimited audience size.
- **Branding.** Consider your design needs (e.g., virtual event brand, marketing materials, etc.) and if you have the in-house resources to handle them. Plan for additional time and coordination if you partner with other brands and need to involve them in the creative process.

## Informa TechTarget Virtual Events drive value at scale while supporting you start-to-finish.

- **Self-service events and campaigns** put your team in the driver's seat to manage your virtual event while leveraging the functionality of the BrightTALK platform and Informa TechTarget's network.
- **Service as-needed for campaigns and events** lets you tap into event managers and live-day support.
- **Full-service production, management and promotion** gives you access to the full breadth of the Informa TechTarget production team for event strategy development and project management support from event planning to completion.

**Learn more about how BrightTALK by Informa TechTarget can help support your virtual event.**



# Bringing a virtual event to life

Another key benefit of virtual events is that they tend to have a flywheel effect once you generate momentum from executing the first event. In the following steps, we'll walk you through the advanced planning and research required to kick off a virtual event.

### Phase 1: Plan

## Establish an event timeline

Creating a set timeline for your virtual event (and sticking to it) is critical. We recommend selecting an event date first, and then working backwards to establish key milestones.

When selecting an event date, consider other industry events you may compete with, public holidays and popular vacation times that may impact attendance. Also, consider seasonal industry trends, sponsorships you're participating in and product launches or updates that may generate synergies.

If you plan to run several virtual events throughout the year, map each out, considering what time your supporting team will need in between for planning.

## Example of event planning timeline with key milestones

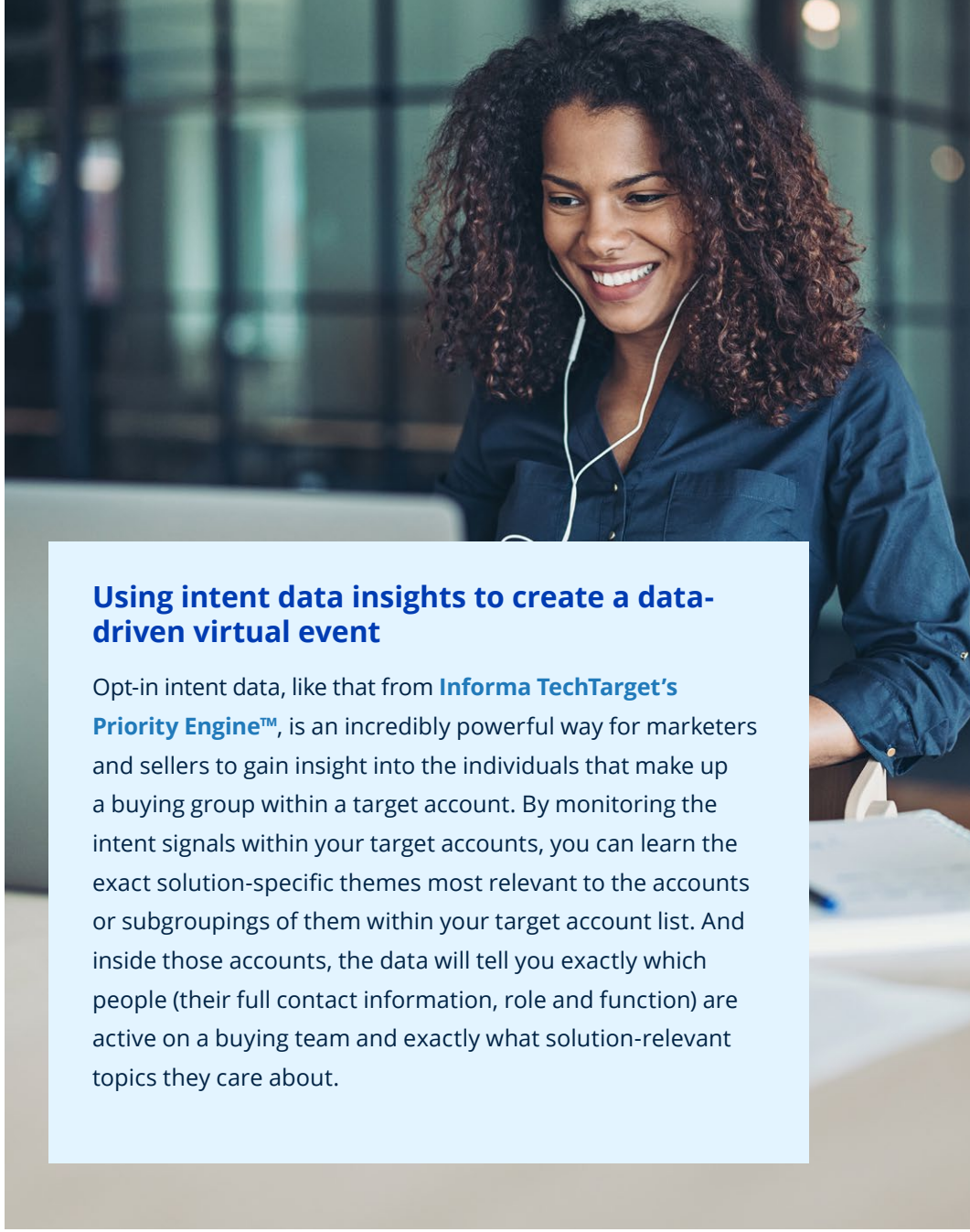
## Build out the event concept

Engagement with your event will depend on the relevance of your content to your audiences' needs. We often talk about the importance of knowing your buying centers from the perspective of sellers, because knowing which individuals make up a buying team is the first step to driving more revenue from an account. Yet when we're thinking about a virtual event, being able to identify the buying centers (and then dig deeper) is foundational to your success. This will help to guide your event's focus and the specific topics the event sessions will cover.

There are a few key areas we recommend taking a close look at to help shape your virtual event:

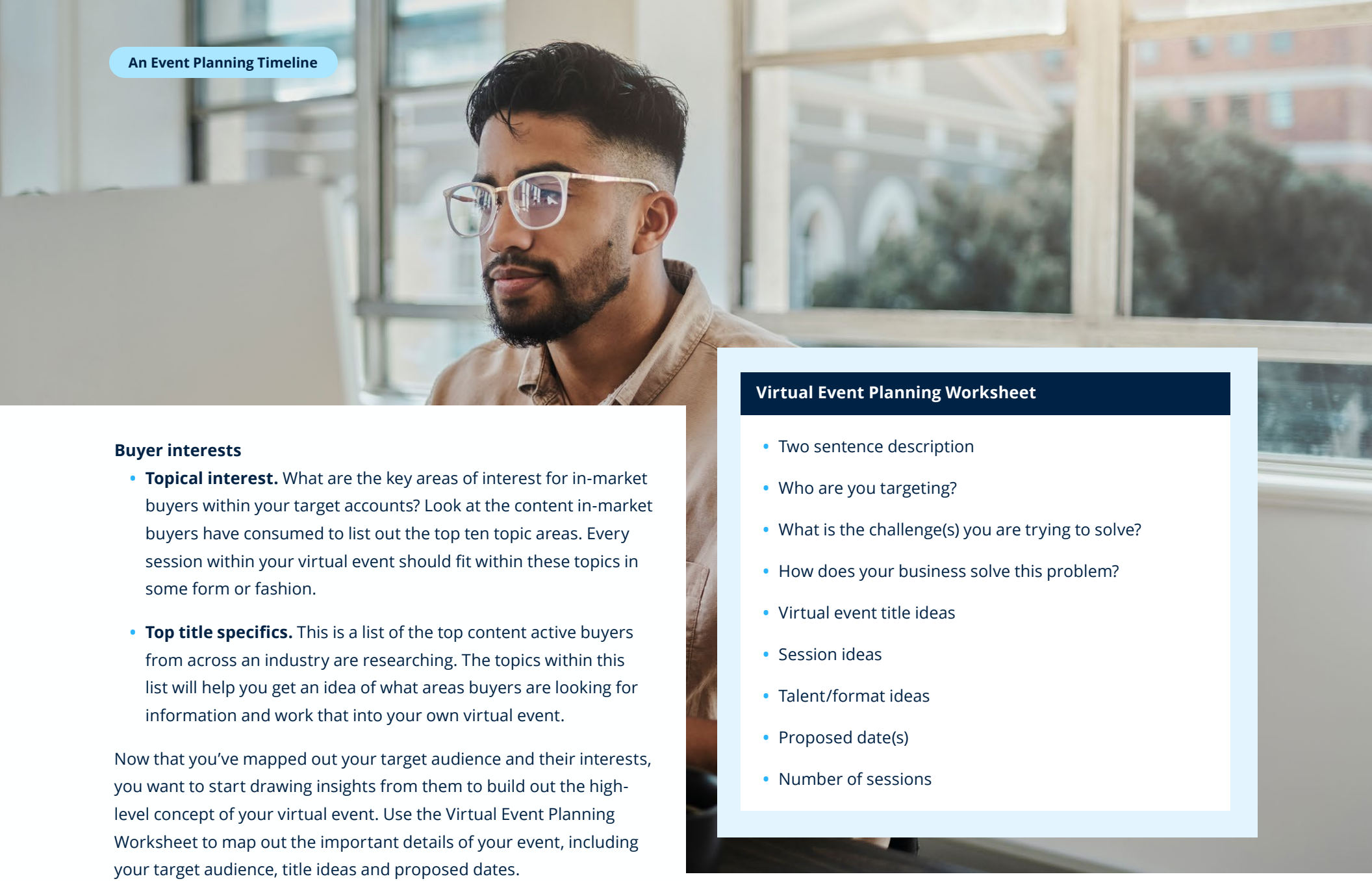
**Buyer profiles**

- **Top industries.** What are the top active industries researching solutions like yours? These will make up the key industries within your target accounts that you'll want to engage with your virtual event.
- **Top job functions.** What are the roles/functions of the individuals actively researching solutions like yours? The content of your virtual event should be of relevance to these individuals.



### Using intent data insights to create a data-driven virtual event

Opt-in intent data, like that from **Informa TechTarget's Priority Engine™**, is an incredibly powerful way for marketers and sellers to gain insight into the individuals that make up a buying group within a target account. By monitoring the intent signals within your target accounts, you can learn the exact solution-specific themes most relevant to the accounts or subgroupings of them within your target account list. And inside those accounts, the data will tell you exactly which people (their full contact information, role and function) are active on a buying team and exactly what solution-relevant topics they care about.



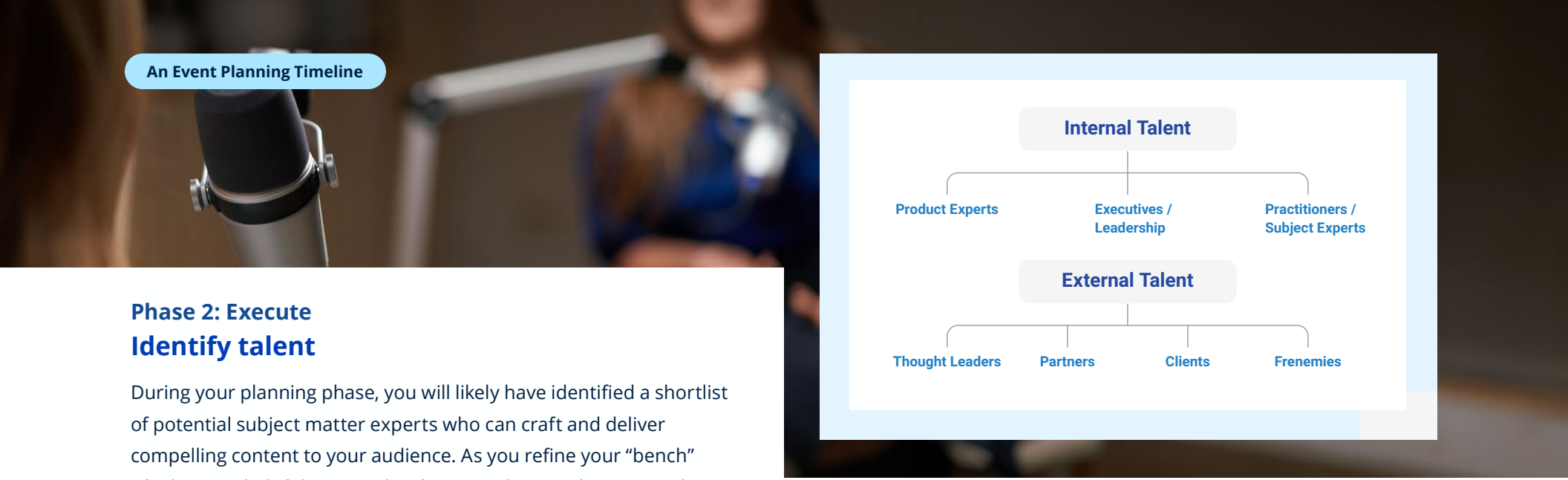
**Buyer interests**

- **Topical interest.** What are the key areas of interest for in-market buyers within your target accounts? Look at the content in-market buyers have consumed to list out the top ten topic areas. Every session within your virtual event should fit within these topics in some form or fashion.
- **Top title specifics.** This is a list of the top content active buyers from across an industry are researching. The topics within this list will help you get an idea of what areas buyers are looking for information and work that into your own virtual event.

Now that you've mapped out your target audience and their interests, you want to start drawing insights from them to build out the high-level concept of your virtual event. Use the Virtual Event Planning Worksheet to map out the important details of your event, including your target audience, title ideas and proposed dates.

**Virtual Event Planning Worksheet**

- Two sentence description
- Who are you targeting?
- What is the challenge(s) you are trying to solve?
- How does your business solve this problem?
- Virtual event title ideas
- Session ideas
- Talent/format ideas
- Proposed date(s)
- Number of sessions






## Phase 2: Execute
# Identify talent

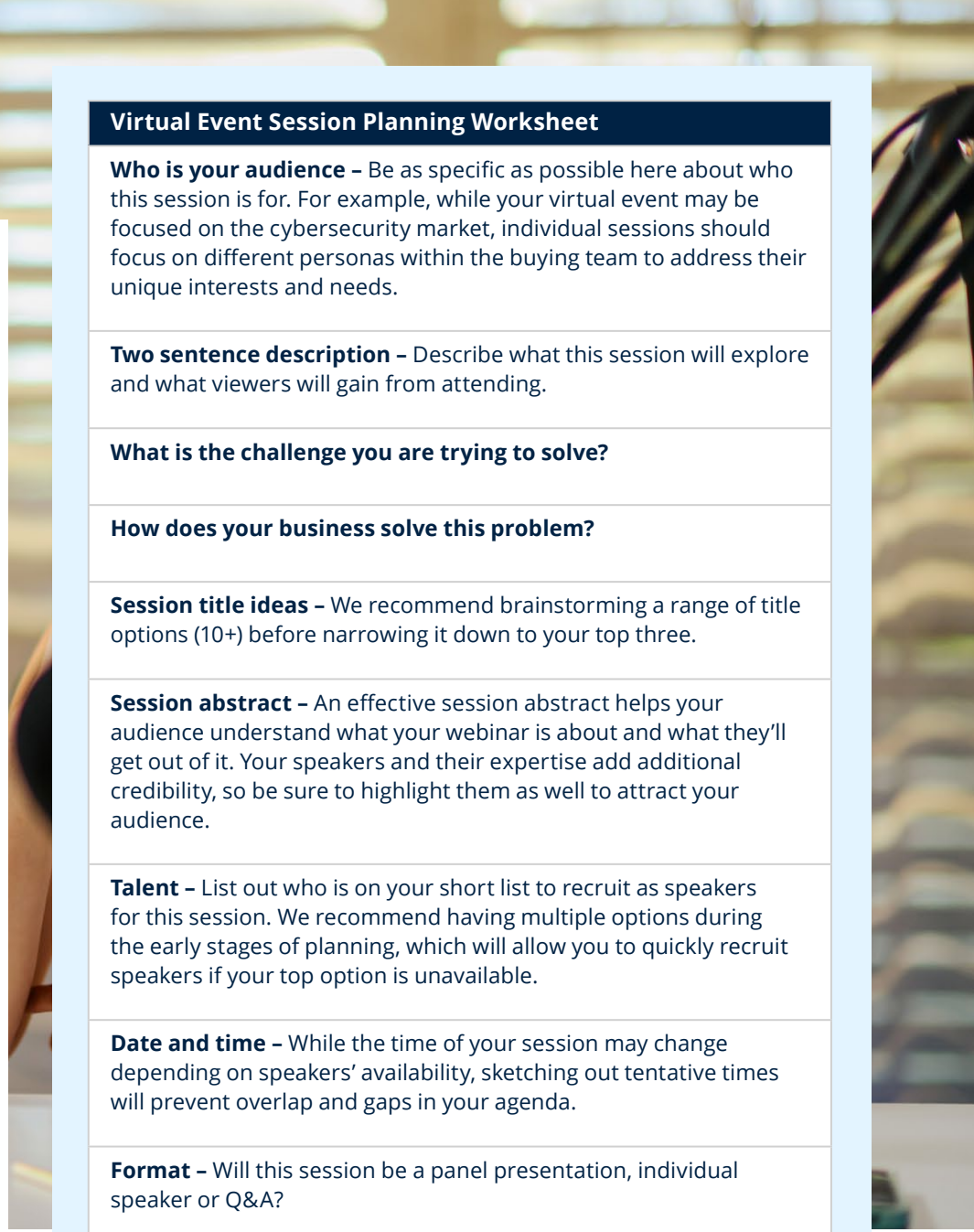
During your planning phase, you will likely have identified a shortlist of potential subject matter experts who can craft and deliver compelling content to your audience. As you refine your "bench" of talent, it's helpful to consider if you need internal or external speakers. In some cases, you may decide that a blend of internal and external speakers is the best way to deliver your message.

**Internal speakers** are experts in your solution, understand customers' pain points and help humanize your brand by connecting with the audience. They can do more than speak to your products and solutions – they're often practitioners in their own right and can share insights from their own careers to build rapport with an audience.

- **Product experts** are excellent at presenting specific solutions.
- **Executives and leadership** can paint an enticing picture of the company's vision or interview strategic customers and partners to show your products in action.
- **Practitioners and/or subject matter experts** can share insights and personal experiences to add insight or color to a topic.

**External speakers** add credibility to your event and allow you to offload some of the content creation workload.

- **Thought leaders** can discuss industry trends and address your audience's challenges.
- **Partners** can demonstrate how solutions work together to solve your audience's problems.
- **Clients** can offer examples of how they've achieved success or tackled a problem, while also shedding a positive light on your company.
- **"Frenemies"** – companies that may compete with your organization for the buyers' budgets but aren't direct competitors – can offer a different perspective on a topic and introduce their audiences to your brand.



## Build the agenda for individual sessions

A successful virtual event brings together different topics, formats and times while appealing to your audiences' preferences.

**Webinar topic.** Quite similarly to completing the Virtual Event Planning Worksheet, you'll want to create a plan for each individual session that brings together all the core elements of your webinar. By mapping out your topics together, you can ensure your event covers a range of subjects to attract your target audience. Don't forget to refer to your Virtual Event Planning Worksheet for those initial ideas!

**Webinar format.** The ideal webinar format depends on the topic, audience and objectives of that specific session. Here are some popular ones for virtual events and webinars:

- **Individual speaker:** These standalone presentations are best supported by visuals (e.g., slides, charts, infographics, etc.) to engage the audience.
- **Panel presentation:** With two or more speakers and a host to guide the conversation, this format offers diverse perspectives on a topic.
- **Q&A:** These fireside chats with subject matter experts are great for audience engagement, especially when you take their questions live.

| Virtual Event Session Planning Worksheet |
| --- |
| **Who is your audience –** Be as specific as possible here about who this session is for. For example, while your virtual event may be focused on the cybersecurity market, individual sessions should focus on different personas within the buying team to address their unique interests and needs. |
| **Two sentence description –** Describe what this session will explore and what viewers will gain from attending. |
| **What is the challenge you are trying to solve?** |
| **How does your business solve this problem?** |
| **Session title ideas –** We recommend brainstorming a range of title options (10+) before narrowing it down to your top three. |
| **Session abstract –** An effective session abstract helps your audience understand what your webinar is about and what they'll get out of it. Your speakers and their expertise add additional credibility, so be sure to highlight them as well to attract your audience. |
| **Talent –** List out who is on your short list to recruit as speakers for this session. We recommend having multiple options during the early stages of planning, which will allow you to quickly recruit speakers if your top option is unavailable. |
| **Date and time –** While the time of your session may change depending on speakers' availability, sketching out tentative times will prevent overlap and gaps in your agenda. |
| **Format –** Will this session be a panel presentation, individual speaker or Q&A? |



**Timing.** As we've already mentioned, one benefit of virtual events is that you can appeal to a global audience, both during the event and post-event through on-demand content. If your virtual event is intended for a global audience, be sure to schedule at least a few of your sessions at times that are accessible across time zones.

## Sample agenda for a one-day virtual summit agenda

| Time | Webinar format | Session focus |
|---|---|---|
| 1pm GT/8am ET | Q&A | EMEA-specific customer case study |
| 2pm GT/9am ET | Panel | Internal speakers |
| 3pm GT/10am ET | Keynote, Individual speaker | Thought leadership on state of the market |
| 4pm GT/11am ET | Q&A | NA-specific customer case study |
| 5pm GT/12pm ET | Panel | 2-3 external thought leaders discussing critical topic for C-suite |
| 6pm GT/1pm ET | Q&A | External and internal speaker (host) discuss hot topic in the market and share insights |
| 7pm GT/2pm ET | Individual speaker | Third-party analyst discussing research |
| 11pm ET/11am ST | Panel | 2-3 APAC customers discussing common challenges |

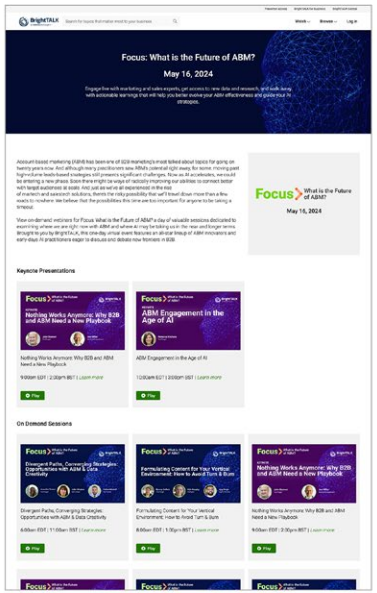


## Develop your brand identity

The visual branding of your virtual event includes all the elements that contribute to the look and feel of your event, from the tone of your title to the featured thumbnail for each webinar episode. You want to create an aesthetic that is simple, memorable and on-brand. We always recommend that you tap into your organization's overarching brand for inspiration and to ensure consistency.

Here's an example of how to create a consistent and memorable virtual event our virtual event capabilities, ***Focus: What is the Future of ABM?***. Looking across the brand package, you'll notice some consistent elements:

- **A color palette** that visually connects each episode together and draws on elements of the BrightTALK brand.
- **Imagery and an event logo** appear in each episode to strengthen the brand. While a logo isn't necessary for your virtual event, it can help establish the brand of your event.
- **Speaker headshot** to help the audience put a face to the name and build excitement around each individual.

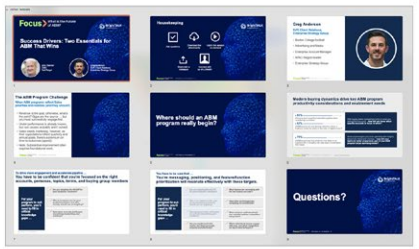



Landing page

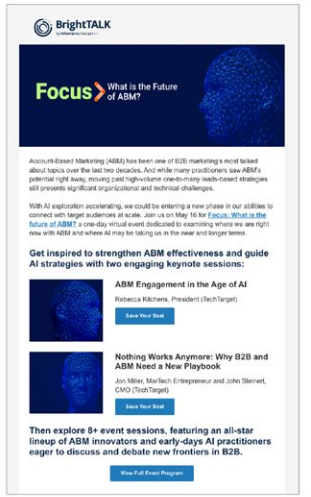



Session thumbnails

Central virtual event brand




Slide deck

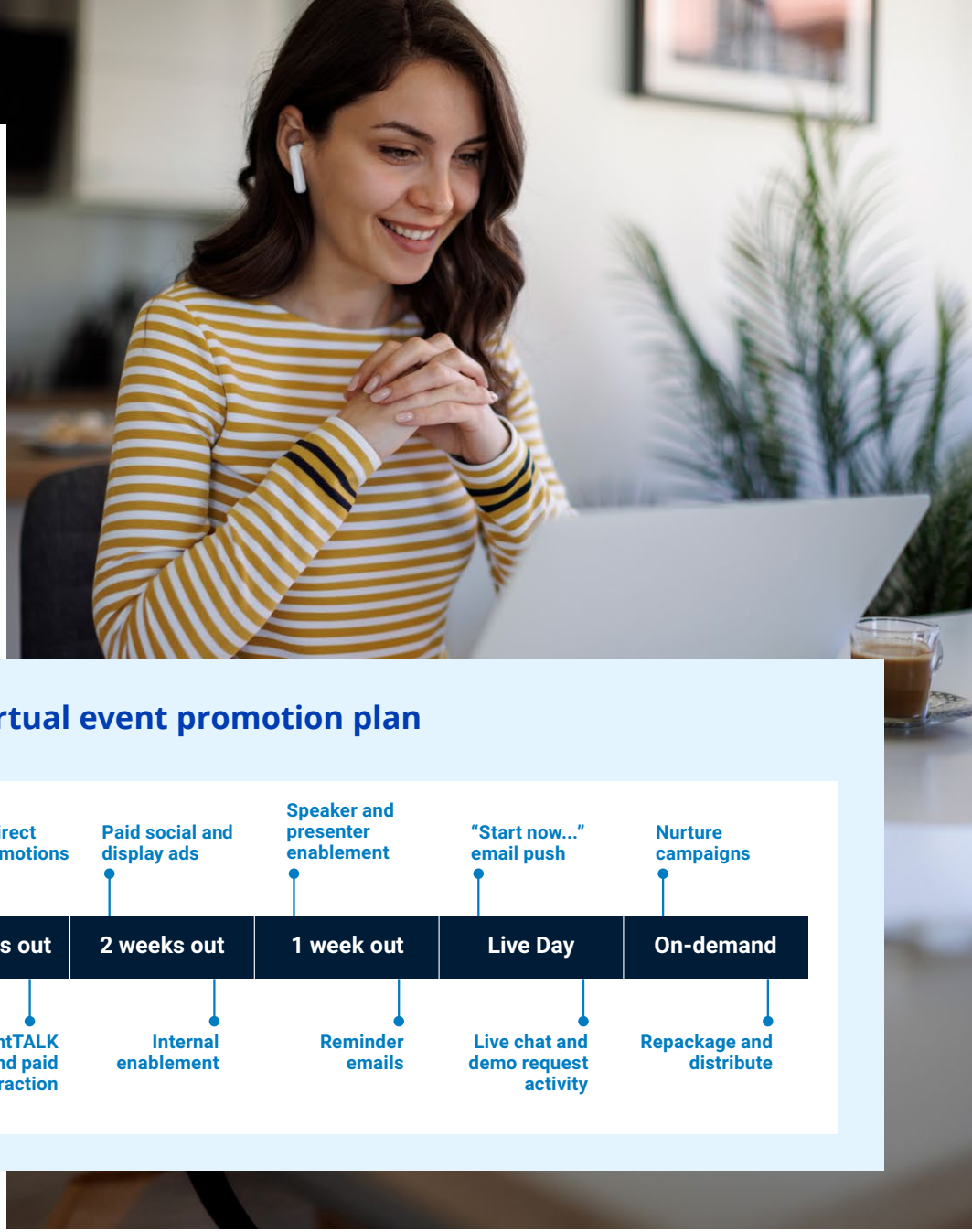



Promotions

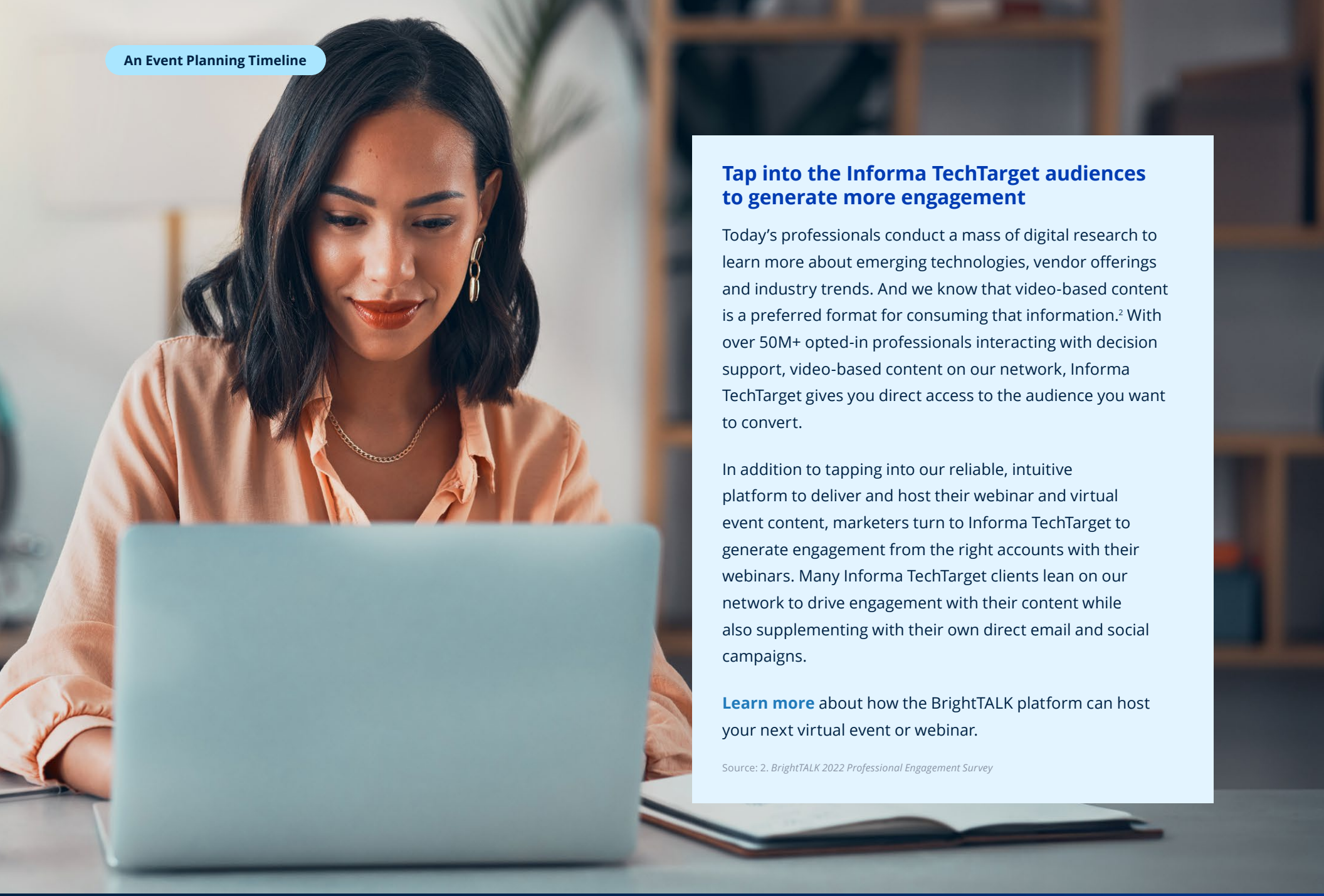
## Promote your event

To generate deep engagement and achieve strong ROI from your virtual event, it's necessary to consider the promotional approach that will get your content in front of the right professionals and accounts. Here are a few channels we find critical to getting the word out, both pre- and post-show.

- **Webinar platform.** The right platform and vendor-partner can go a long way towards facilitating useful pre-event elements and actions such as invitations, event reminders, speaker profiles and thought-provoking advance questions. These functionalities help get your target audience interested and excited about the virtual event.
- **Email.** To promote a virtual event, we recommend you start sending promotional emails four to six weeks before a live event. Test different subject lines to see what resonates with your audience.
- **Social media.** Paid social and display ads can be an added layer to reach more stakeholders within your account list. We recommend beginning these activities four weeks before your virtual event. Don't forget about promoting the event through your own social channels! Tapping into your speakers' social networks is a powerful way to expand your reach as well.



### Ideal virtual event promotion plan



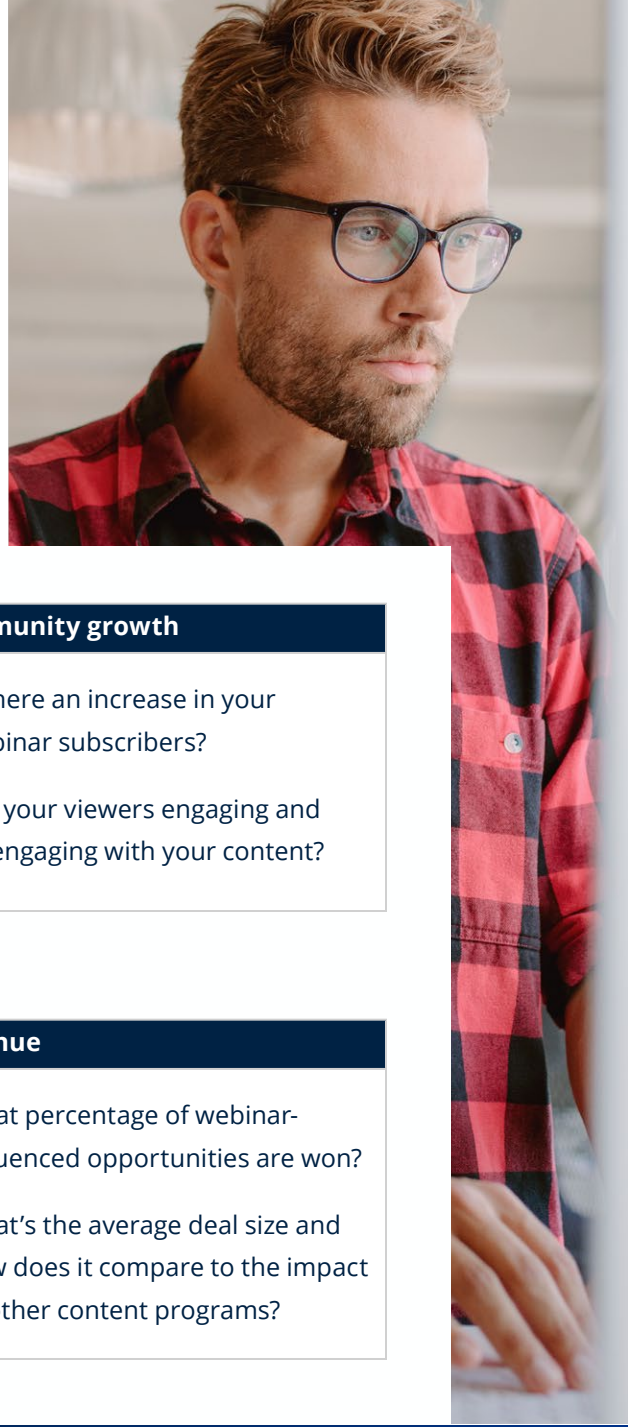
## Tap into the Informa TechTarget audiences to generate more engagement

Today's professionals conduct a mass of digital research to learn more about emerging technologies, vendor offerings and industry trends. And we know that video-based content is a preferred format for consuming that information.[2] With over 50M+ opted-in professionals interacting with decision support, video-based content on our network, Informa TechTarget gives you direct access to the audience you want to convert.

In addition to tapping into our reliable, intuitive platform to deliver and host their webinar and virtual event content, marketers turn to Informa TechTarget to generate engagement from the right accounts with their webinars. Many Informa TechTarget clients lean on our network to drive engagement with their content while also supplementing with their own direct email and social campaigns.

**Learn more** about how the BrightTALK platform can host your next virtual event or webinar.

Source: 2. *BrightTALK 2022 Professional Engagement Survey*



## Phase 3: Measure

To evaluate the performance of your virtual event, you'll want to establish short-term content goals and long-term demand goals to link content to revenue. Short-term objectives may include audience engagement, share of voice and community growth. Meanwhile, near- and long-term demand goals should align with your business's bottom line, linking engagement and revenue by account, role, function and topic.

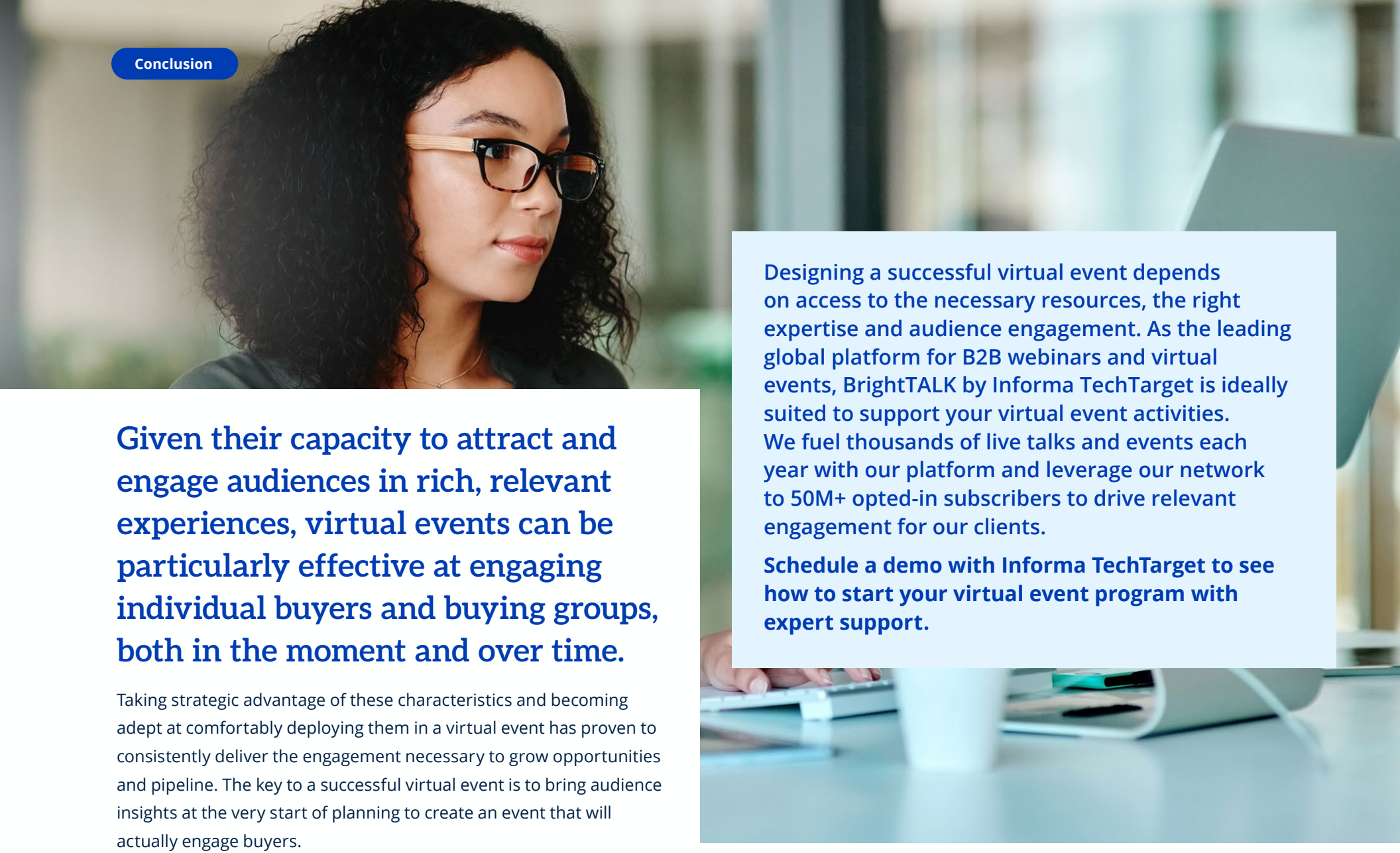
## Key questions to evaluate the success of your virtual event

### Content Goals

| Engagement | Share of audience and voice | Community growth |
|---|---|---|
| • How long are your viewers watching your content?<br>• Are you seeing an increase in social sharing? | • Are you the go-to subject matter expert on a given topic?<br>• What share of your audience engages with your content? | • Is there an increase in your webinar subscribers?<br>• Are your viewers engaging and re-engaging with your content? |

### Demand Goals

| Leads and accounts | Opportunities | Revenue |
|---|---|---|
| • How successfully are you engaging priority accounts with your webinar content?<br>• What percentage of your total lead volume comes from webinars? | • What's the conversion rate to opportunities?<br>• Which of your webinars are having the biggest impact on pipeline? | • What percentage of webinar-influenced opportunities are won?<br>• What's the average deal size and how does it compare to the impact of other content programs? |



Conclusion

## Given their capacity to attract and engage audiences in rich, relevant experiences, virtual events can be particularly effective at engaging individual buyers and buying groups, both in the moment and over time.

Taking strategic advantage of these characteristics and becoming adept at comfortably deploying them in a virtual event has proven to consistently deliver the engagement necessary to grow opportunities and pipeline. The key to a successful virtual event is to bring audience insights at the very start of planning to create an event that will actually engage buyers.

Designing a successful virtual event depends on access to the necessary resources, the right expertise and audience engagement. As the leading global platform for B2B webinars and virtual events, BrightTALK by Informa TechTarget is ideally suited to support your virtual event activities. We fuel thousands of live talks and events each year with our platform and leverage our network to 50M+ opted-in subscribers to drive relevant engagement for our clients.

**Schedule a demo with Informa TechTarget to see how to start your virtual event program with expert support.**

# About Informa TechTarget

Informa TechTarget (Nasdaq: TTGT) informs, influences and connects the world's technology buyers and sellers, to accelerate growth from R&D to ROI.

With an unparalleled reach of over 220 highly targeted technology-specific websites and over 50 million permissioned first-party audience members, Informa TechTarget has a unique understanding of and insight into the technology market.

Underpinned by those audiences and their data, we offer expert-led, data-driven, and digitally enabled services that deliver significant impact and measurable outcomes to our clients.

- Trusted information that shapes the industry and informs investment
- Intelligence and advice that guides and influences strategy
- Advertising that grows reputation and establishes thought leadership
- Custom content that engages and prompts action
- Intent and demand generation that more precisely targets and converts

Informa TechTarget is headquartered in Boston, MA and has offices in 19 global locations. For more information, visit **informatechtarget.com** and follow us on **LinkedIn**.

# About BrightTALK

BrightTALK is a B2B marketing platform for content marketing and demand generation. Marketers use a single platform to engage professional audiences with webinars and virtual events that deliver pipeline and revenue growth. With a global audience of 50M+ subscribers, BrightTALK extends your reach to win more customers.

Industry leaders such as Dell, Cisco, Citrix and BNY Mellon trust BrightTALK to drive marketing and sales performance. BrightTALK is a subsidiary of TechTarget, Inc. d/b/a Informa TechTarget (Nasdaq: TTGT), which informs, influences and connects the world's technology buyers and sellers, to accelerate growth from R&D to ROI.




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