# The Automation Evolution

ARE MANUAL PROCESSES HOLDING YOU BACK FROM BECOMING A MODERN EVENT PROFESSIONAL?

PLAN

# INTRODUCTION

From large annual conferences to recurring roadshows, events are one of the best ways to engage with customers, drive new leads, and gain exposure to target audiences. Yet they are one of the last functions of modern marketing to experience the benefits of automation.

As any event professional can tell you, time spent on manual processes quickly adds up during the event lifecycle. That's why modern meeting and event planners are automating and centralizing their disparate systems, spreadsheets, sticky notes, and tedious processes. Technology innovations have allowed event professionals to scale their event programs, elevate attendee experiences, and precisely track the impact of their events. In fact, planners who leverage event management solutions not only increase productivity by 27%, but also boost event attendance by 20%.

This eBook will take you on an automation journey through the various stages of the event lifecycle. Each of the eight chapters will uncover the common challenges event professionals face, then provide examples of how these challenges can be overcome with the help of technology. You'll also find tangible stories from industry professionals who have changed the way they achieve event success, with the help of automation.

Join us on the automation evolution!
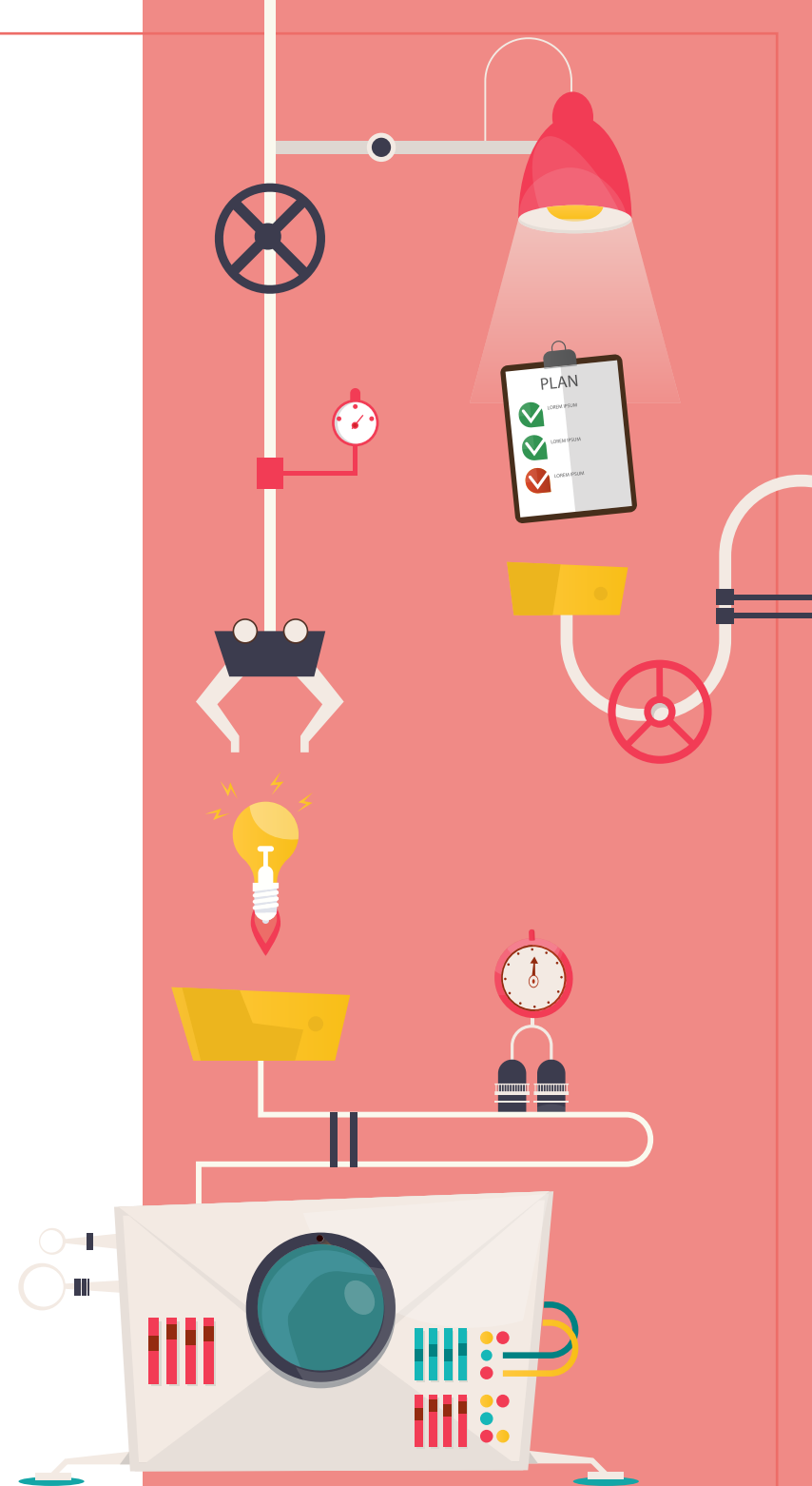
FINDING A VENUE

ATTENDEE ENGAGEMENT

SPEND MANAGEMENT &
BUDGET RECONCILIATION

ONSITE CHECK–IN, BADGING,
& ATTENDANCE TRACKING

DATA INTEGRATION
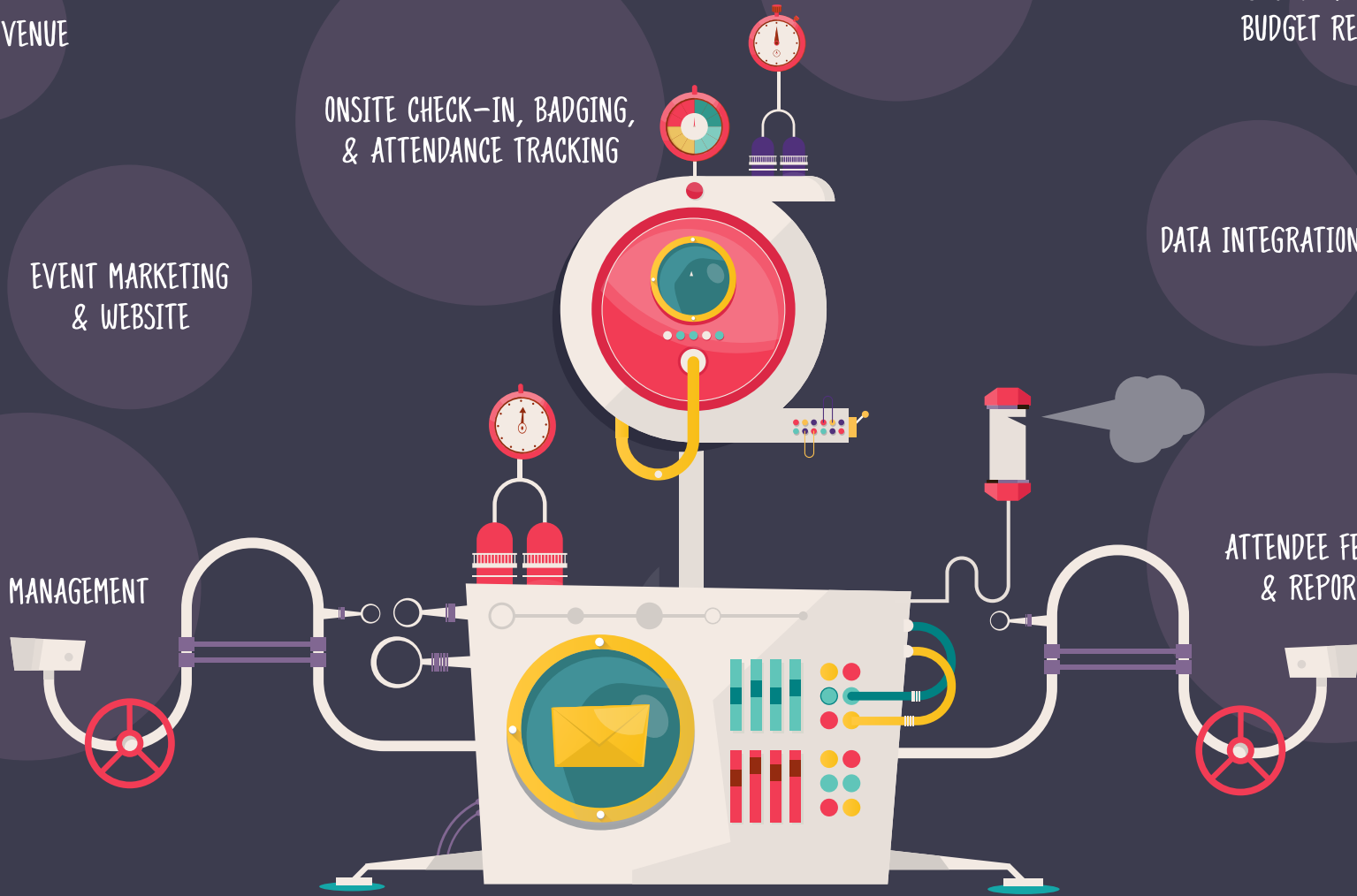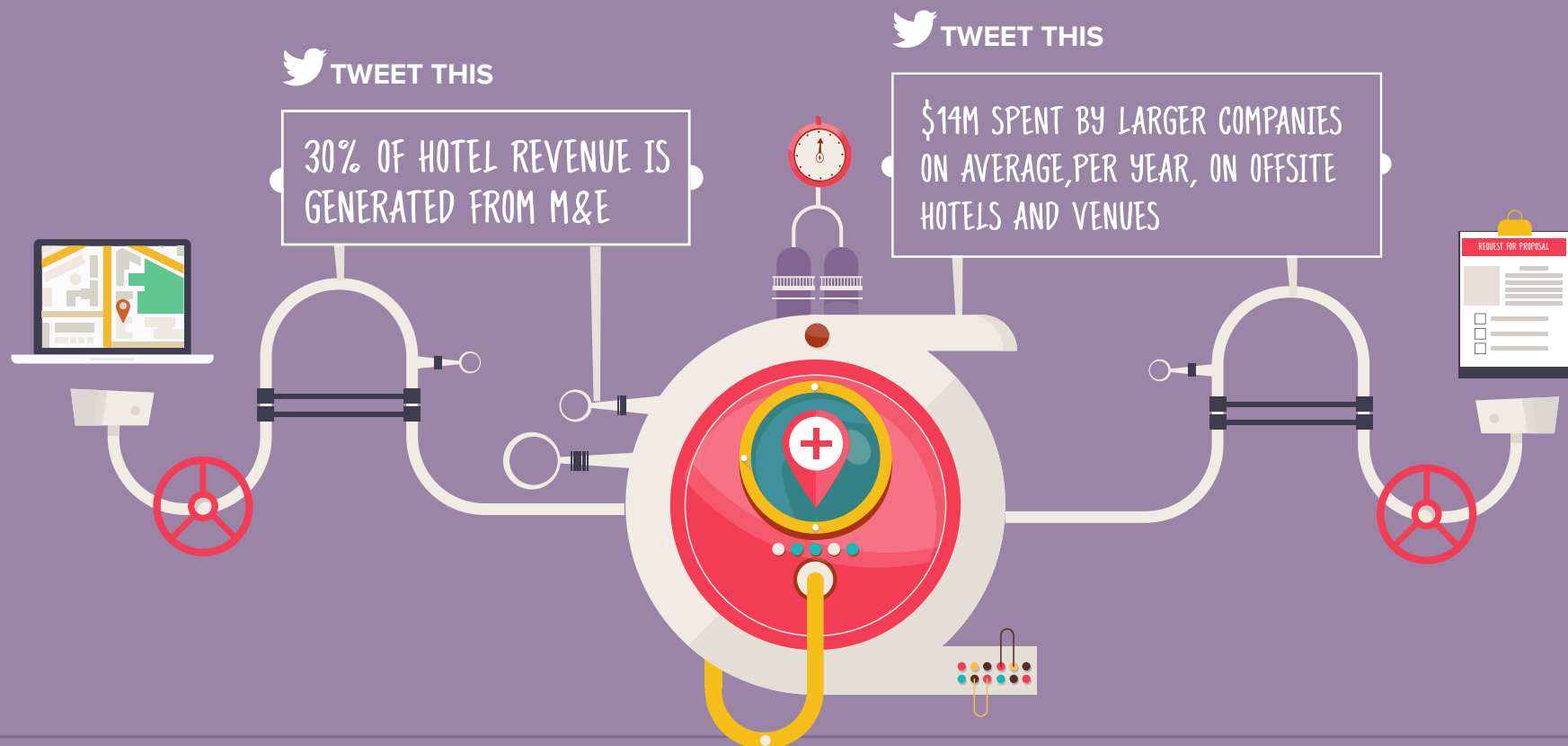
EVENT MARKETING
& WEBSITE

ATTENDEE MANAGEMENT

ATTENDEE FEEDBACK
& REPORTING

AUTOMATION EVOLUTION

# FINDING A VENUE

Over the years, the venue sourcing landscape has changed a great deal. Gone are the days of researching venues, calling each one, and receiving return bids via fax or email. Planners now have the power to manage their sourcing process through a number of online resources to find, book, and compare event venues in a single location.

TWEET THIS

30% OF HOTEL REVENUE IS GENERATED FROM M&E

TWEET THIS

$14M SPENT BY LARGER COMPANIES ON AVERAGE, PER YEAR, ON OFFSITE HOTELS AND VENUES

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

# THE STRUGGLE

Venue sourcing can be frustrating. Since each request for proposal (RFP) differs depending on the hotel and event type, so does the format of each returning bid. It can be difficult to compare prices, offers, and additional comments without proper organization. You end up wasting time and money, while possibly missing out on the best venues for your events.

# THE SHIFT

By sending an electronic request for proposal (eRFP) to multiple venues, you save a tremendous amount of time. Since you are creating one master eRFP, all returning bids are in the same format and compiled in one place. Automating and standardizing this process across all of your events allows you to build and distribute RFPs, receive bids, and share bid information with key decision makers. You'll save time on logistics, speed up decision-making, and ultimatley consolidate venue sourcing activity across your event program. Best of all, you'll stay organized so nothing falls through the cracks.
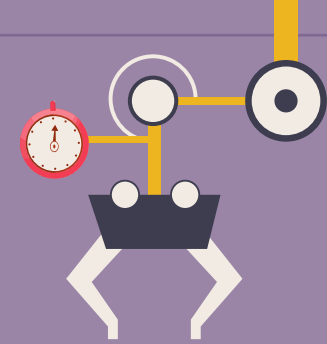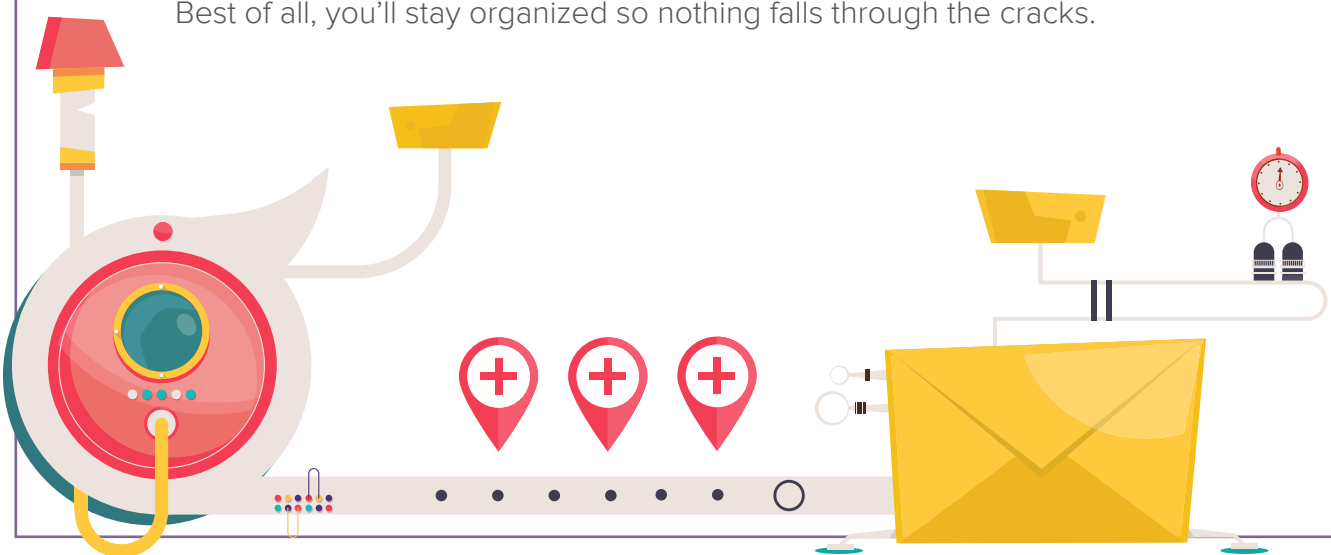
"I'M CURRENTLY SOURCING 1,300 ROOM NIGHTS AND OVER 200,000 SQ. FT. OF SPACE FOR OUR 2018 NATIONAL SALES MEETING. IF I DIDN'T HAVE CVENT AND HAD TO DO THAT MANUALLY BY LOOKING UP HOTEL AFTER HOTEL ON GOOGLE, I WOULD PROBABLY NEED TEN PEOPLE."

**Kelly Pettis**
Associate Purchasing Manager of Meetings, Olympus

**Read the full Customer Success Story here:**

LEARN  MORE

# EVENT MARKETING & WEBSITE

Event marketing has evolved over the years from press releases, mailed invites, and print ads to more well-rounded and strategic approaches. Email marketing and event websites have become a foundational element of any successful event marketing strategy, while social media has shifted the way people gather information and learn about events.
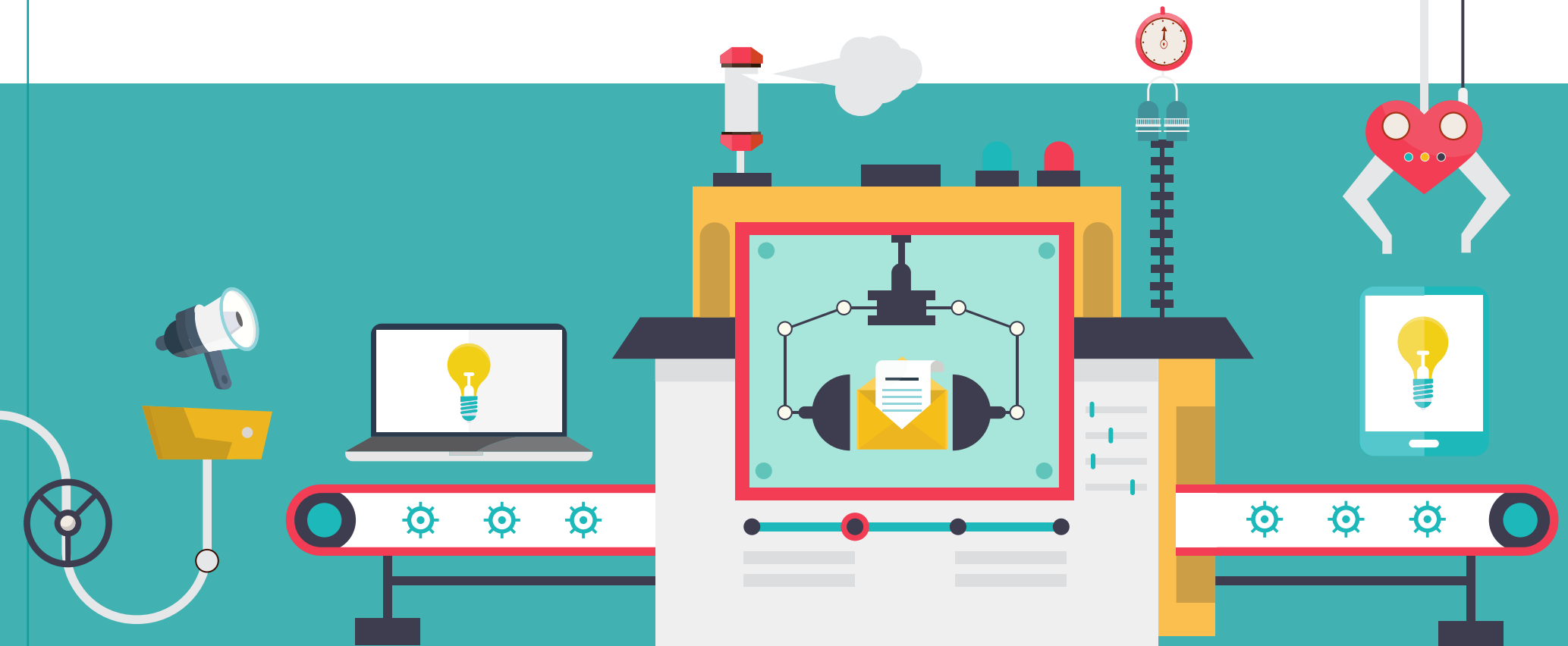
# THE STRUGGLE

Marketing can be your event's biggest attendance driver or deterrent. Since your event marketing is usually the first touch point you have with your audience, it's important to make a positive first impression. Ensure your marketing strategies are measurable so you can prove the impact they have on driving registrations, exhibitors, sponsorships, revenue, and more.

# THE SHIFT

Marketing your event doesn't have to drain your budget to be effective. For example, organic social media doesn't cost you a penny and can influence and engage attendees through every stage of the event. Your event marketing should be held to the same measurable tactics as any other component of your planning lifecycle. This includes thoughtfully segmenting your audience and tailoring your message appropriately, tracking social media engagement, and encouraging word-of-mouth promotion.

This is where an event marketing tool will step in and help, since the most successful events have a robust event marketing strategy. By incorporating an event marketing platform, you'll save costs, keep your messaging on brand, maintain consistency, secure a greater response rate by sending targeted emails, and ultimately keep your audience engaged.
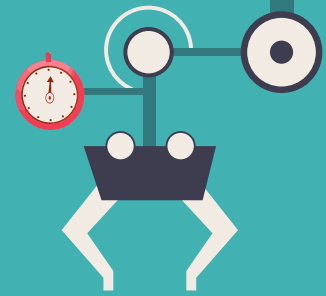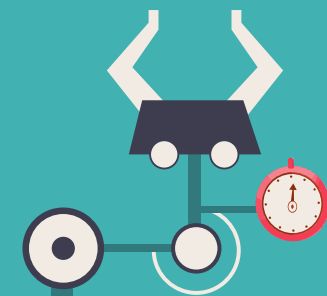
## TWEET THIS

"MEETINGS & EVENTS ARE THE #1 ROI ON YOUR MARKETING DOLLARS AFTER YOUR COMPANY WEBSITE."

**Check out the Five Strategies for Increasing the ROI of Your Marketing Events:**

**DOWNLOAD**

# ATTENDEE MANAGEMENT

Your time as a meeting and event professional is extremely valuable, so automating and simplifying even the smallest tasks can open up precious time to focus on more impactful event activities. Put an end to manually tracking event registrations and use that time to focus on executing a great event!
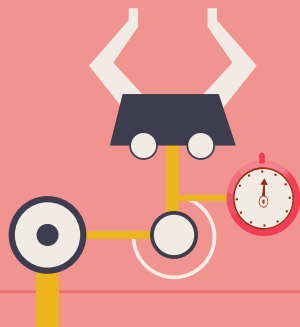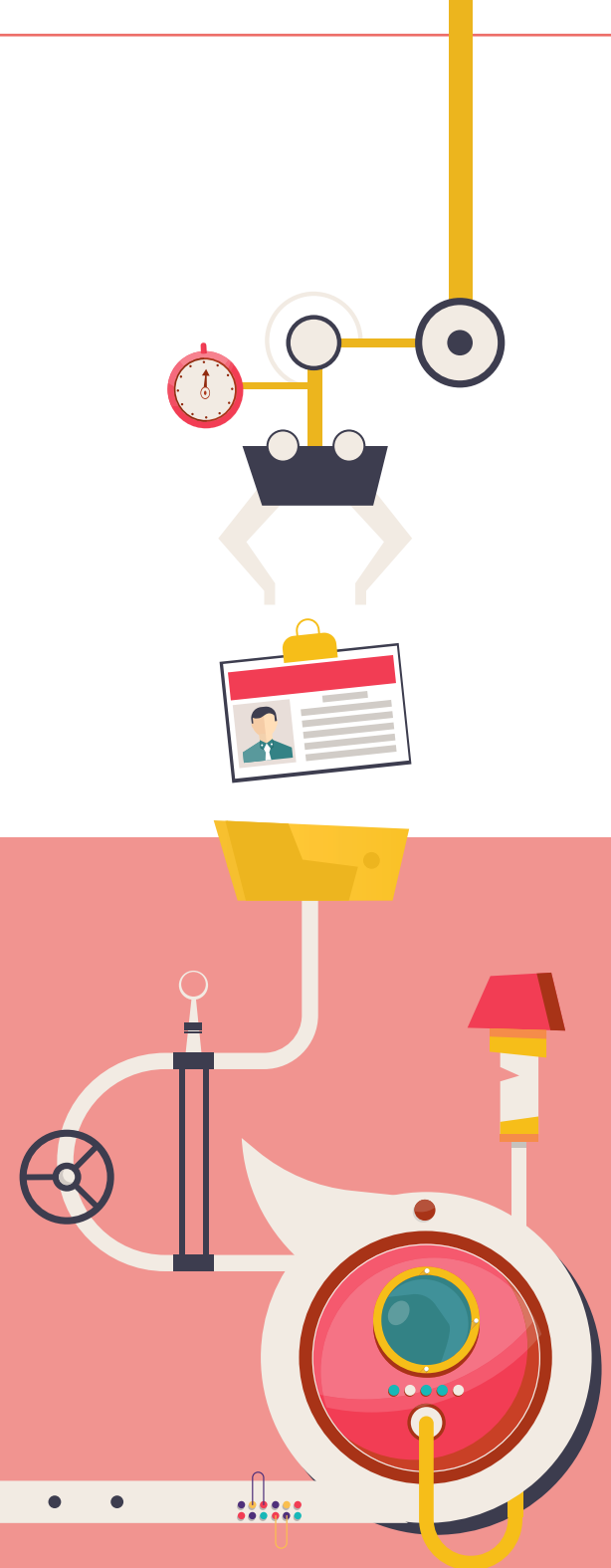
"CVENT ALLOWS US TO CREATE A PLATFORM TO ORGANIZE A SUCCESSFUL EVENT."

**Mishi Schueller**
Senior Associate Digital Communications, Milken Institute

See how Milken Institute's event team drives efficiency and delivers amazing attendee experiences:

**WATCH VIDEO**

## THE STRUGGLE

Understanding your attendees' behavior before, during, and after your event provides a wealth of valuable information, but the process can be nearly impossible if not automated. If you're not managing your attendees digitally, you'll most likely be drowning in paperwork and spending countless hours trying to connect data across disparate systems.

## THE SHIFT

Event technology allows you to personalize the entire event planning process. You can create a branded event registration website that's designed to identify who is visiting your website. This lets you modify the registration process based on attendee type. With more sophisticated software, you can even create dynamic registration paths and pricing based on preset criteria.

By integrating booking travel and accommodation directly into the registration process, you make registration quicker, easier, and more logical for your attendees. It also jumpstarts working partnerships with those in the travel industry.

# ONSITE CHECK-IN, BADGING, & ATTENDANCE TRACKING

The "planning" is done and now the real work begins. Instead of welcoming attendees with long lines and bottlenecks just to get into your events, provide a fast, digital check-in process to efficiently and effectively get attendees on their way.

Once attendees have checked-in, don't let them become ghosts. Collect valuable information about how they are consuming content and engaging with your events through their digital footprint. Automating this process will take some of the stress out of your events and provide marketers with actionable data to improve post-event communications.

Deliver a modern, connected, and measurable onsite experience – no matter the size or complexity of your event:

**LEARN MORE**
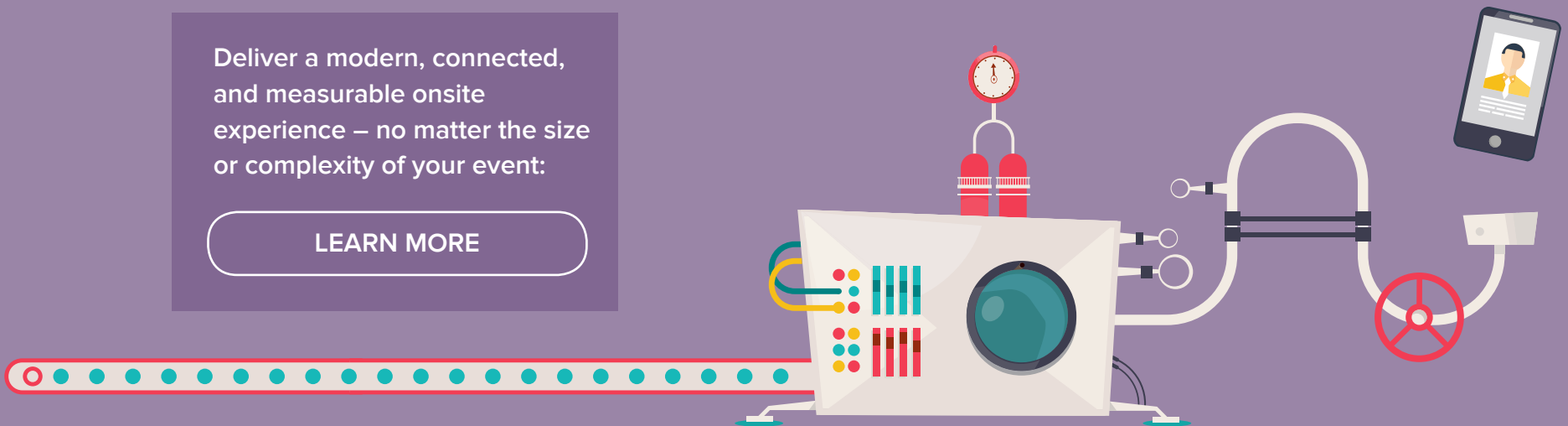
## THE STRUGGLE

For attendees, check-in is not part of the event. It's a speed bump to getting the content they invested time and money to access. For planners, the check-in and registration desk can be a nightmare. There are always last minute onsite changes, new registrations, errors on name badges, and setting up lines by alphabet groups isn't exactly the best way to impress your guests.

## THE SHIFT

By incorporating self-service stations, you immediately streamline the transition from check-in to rest of the event.  Onsite self-registration kiosks empower and impress your registrants by allowing them to check-in, make a payment, edit and print their badges all at once. That means no more pre-printing and stuffing name badges before your event and less staff needed at the registration desk.

Discovering sales opportunities and improving ROI starts with understanding what your attendees are doing at your event after they have checked in. Track the sessions they attend, topics or products they interact with, and booths they visit in order to build a complete attendee profile. Access real-time reports to make changes on the fly and automatically pass this information to your CRM and/or Marketing Automation Tool to execute automated, personalized follow up.
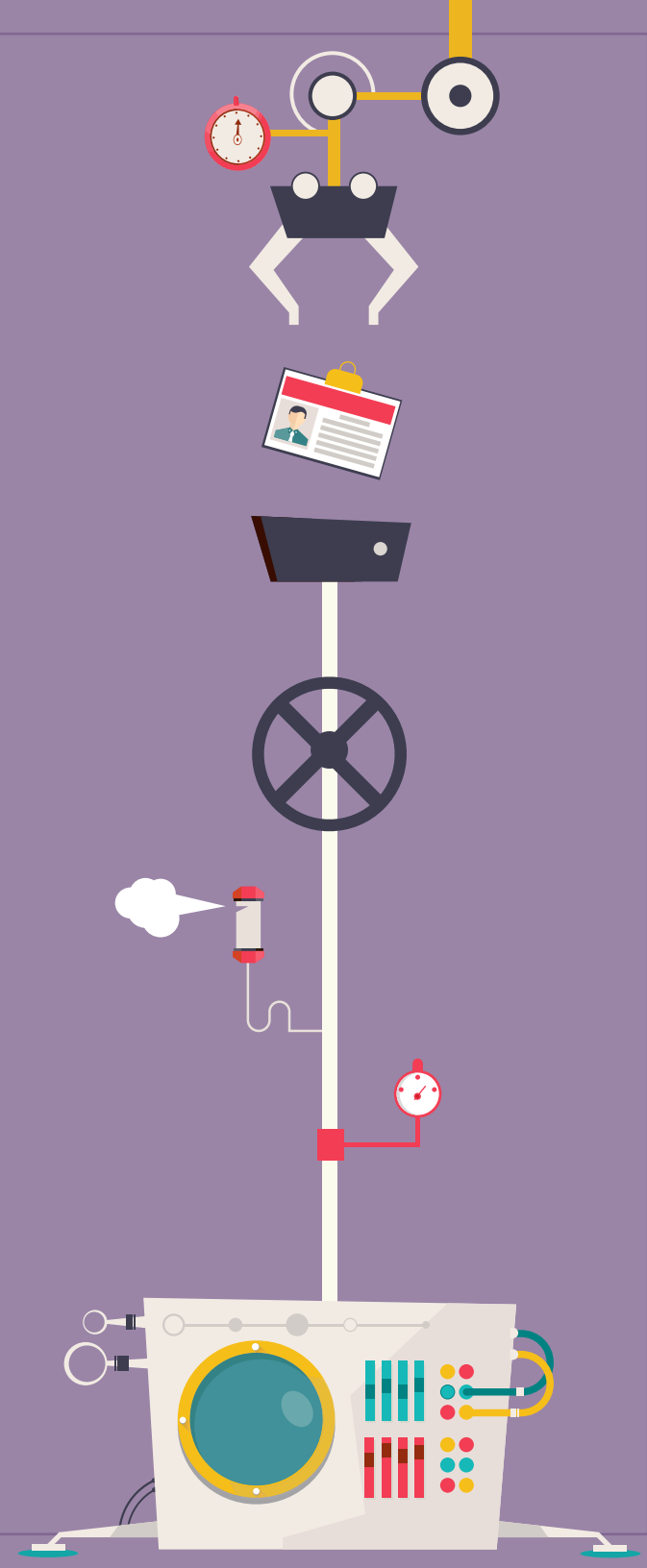
# ATTENDEE ENGAGEMENT

Once your event begins, your most critical job is to keep attendees, sponsors, and exhibitors engaged. Your guests want to feel that their investment of time and money is worthwhile. This means providing a platform throughout the entire event that allows attendees to network, communicate, and access important event information.
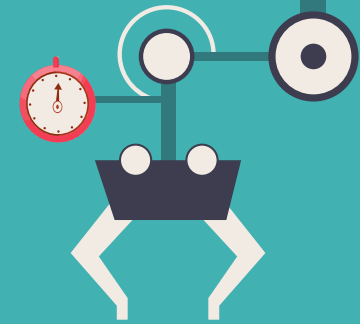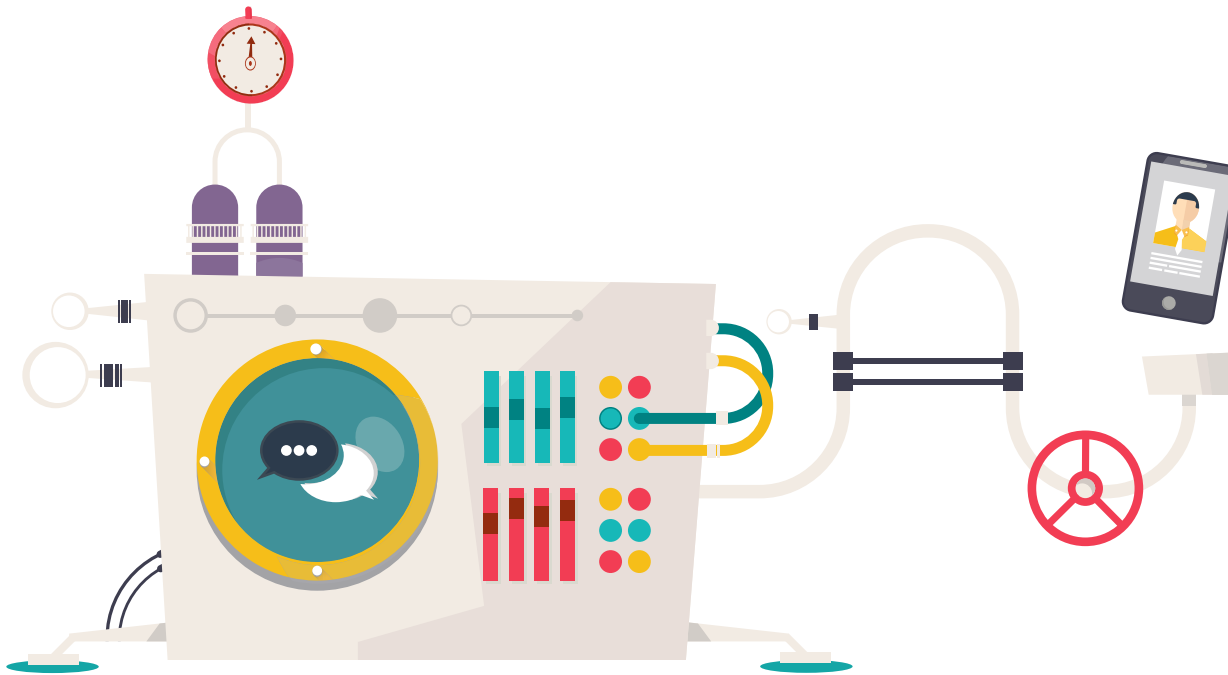
"COST SAVINGS, TIME SAVINGS, TREE SAVINGS! OUR ATTENDEES LOVE IT, AND IT GETS BETTER AND BETTER AND BIGGER AND BIGGER EVERY YEAR. IT MAKES FOR A MUCH CLEANER EVENT FOR THE PLANNER AND FOR THE ATTENDEE."

**Read the rest of Beachbody's Success Story:**

**LEARN MORE**

## THE STRUGGLE

It's nearly impossible to gauge attendee engagement at your event without the right tools. Attendees show up, register, leave, and that's the extent of their involvement. With all the work that goes into executing a successful event, you owe it to yourself and your attendees to deliver an engaging event experience - with the data to prove it!

## THE SHIFT

Connect and engage your attendees by using the piece of technology they don't leave home without: their mobile device. With the help of a mobile event app, your attendees can have a customized experience while boosting their engagement levels (and having the ability to track it!). Attendees will have access to their event schedule, speaker details, interactive maps, messaging, and the most up-to-date event information. Using mobile technology, you have the ability to edit your event's information without needing to reprint any documents. This cuts down your costs and allows attendees to easily access event information at their fingertips, including social media. **SocialWall** lets guests broadcast their social media feeds to the rest of the participants, a feature that's always well received.

"ENGAGEMENT IS AN ORGANIZATION—WIDE GOAL, AND EVERYONE HAS BOUGHT INTO IT AND WANTS TO ACHIEVE IT."

See how Checkers & Rally's was able to increase event engagement by leveraging a mobile event app:

**READ THE STORY**
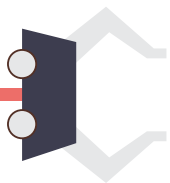
# ATTENDEE FEEDBACK AND REPORTING

Without proper event reporting, event professionals are destined to spend hours compiling reports in a desperate attempt to track event success. Attendee feedback often gets lost among the clutter, and that valuable data is never utilized.
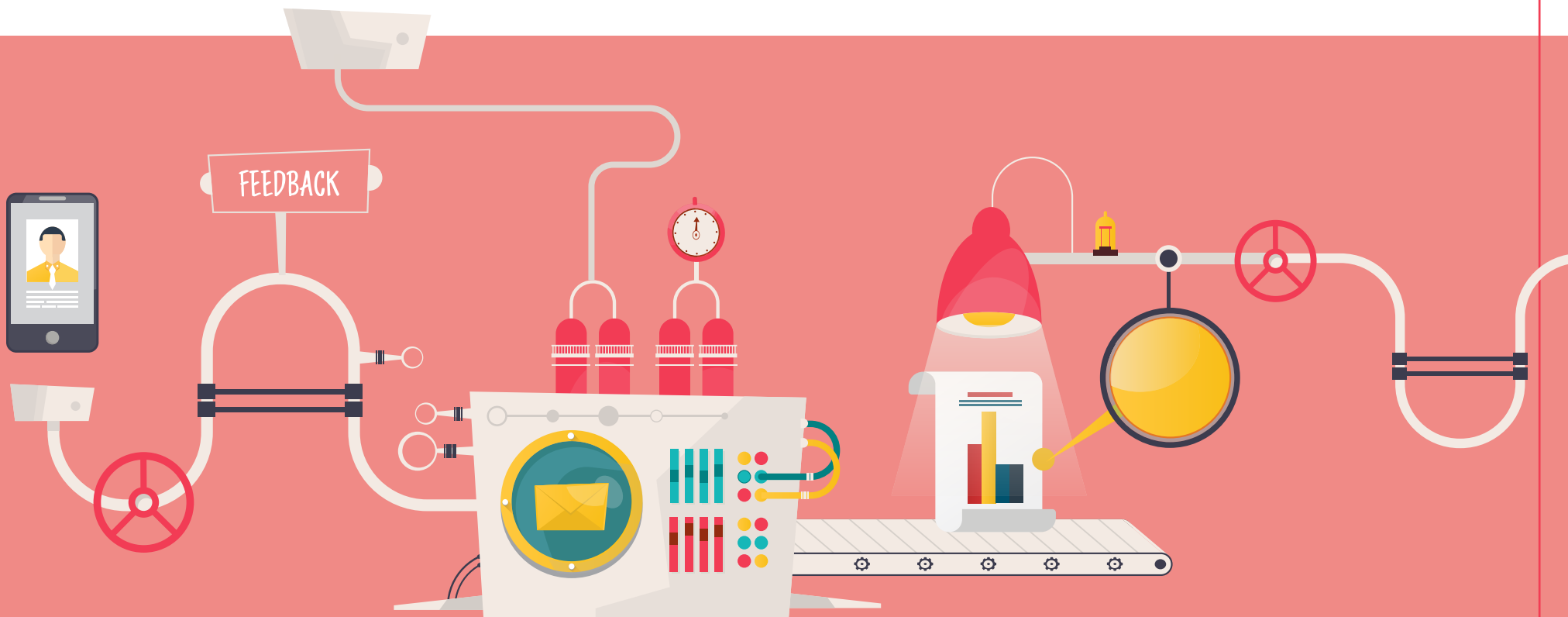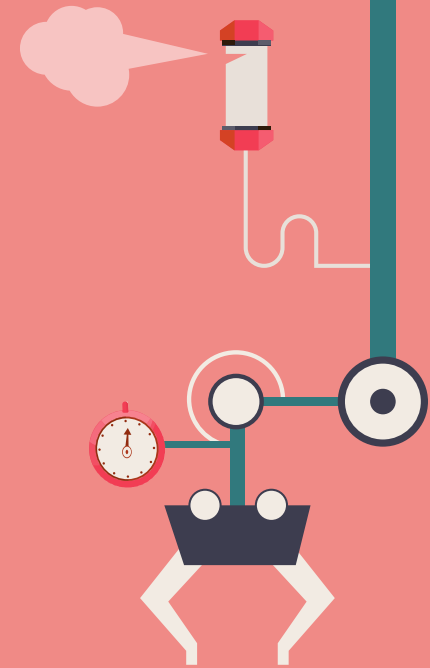
FEEDBACK

# THE STRUGGLE

You know your attendees are enjoying your events, but the only proof you have are a few paper surveys and scattered feedback. This presents a problem when you're trying to defend your event to key decision makers. You know the value of your events, but you lack the right tools to prove it.

# THE SHIFT

Automate your event feedback and reporting processes to gain greater insight and collect actionable data to make decisions about your meetings and events. A simple way to do this is by providing feedback surveys during your event and encouraging attendees to participate with push notifications.

Collecting real-time feedback during your event is a game changer. Track which sessions are most popular and which exhibitor booths are driving the most traffic. Based on this feedback, you'll have the ability to make changes onsite that will drive engagement and improve the attendee experience.

**Check out our video to see how real-time reporting and feedback can have a major impact on your next event:**

**WATCH NOW**
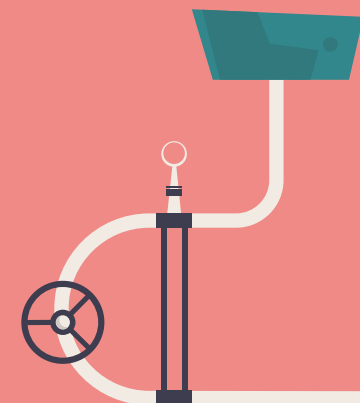
# DATA INTEGRATION

Your events produce a wealth of actionable and valuable data that can be used across the organization. By integrating this data into Marketing Automation Tools (MATs) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, planners increase visibility into how events contribute to revenue.
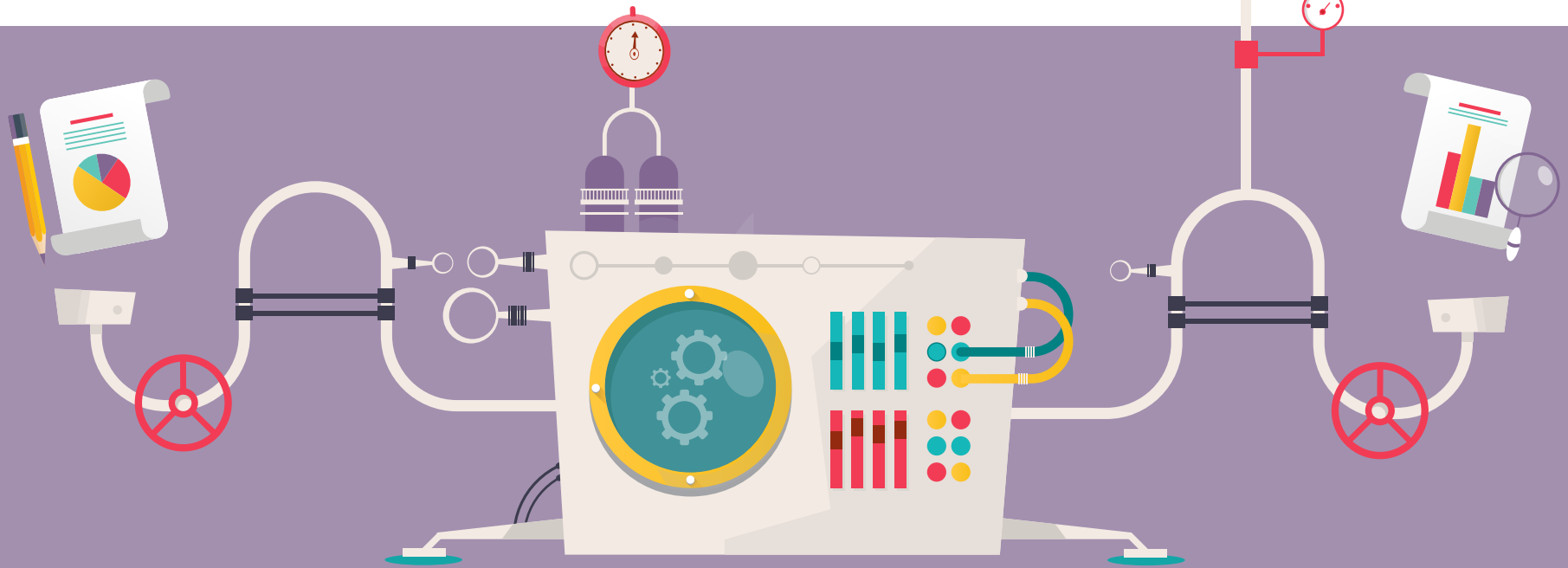
## THE STRUGGLE

Events are the second most effective tactic in a marketer's arsenal, right after the company website. But can you prove it? Without visibility into how events impact the marketing and sales cycle, having a complete picture of ROI can be daunting (and even impossible). Messy data, disparate systems, and inconsistent reporting are major time commitments you can't afford to make.

## THE SHIFT

Integrating the data captured during the lifecycle of your event into Marketing Automation Tools and CRM systems opens a world of possibility for both event planners and marketers. Through strategic integrations, you can develop a 360-degree profile of attendees, enabling more relevant and personalized event experiences that accelerate the buying cycle. You'll be able to incorporate rich event data into your existing systems, which helps you determine the impact of events on key behaviors. Use this insight to tie event investments to the revenue cycle and make data-driven comparisons to your other active marketing channels.
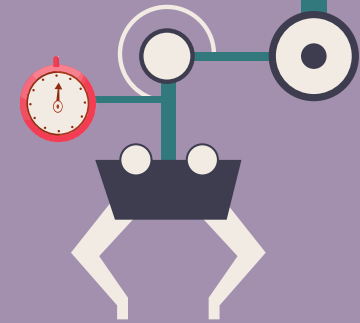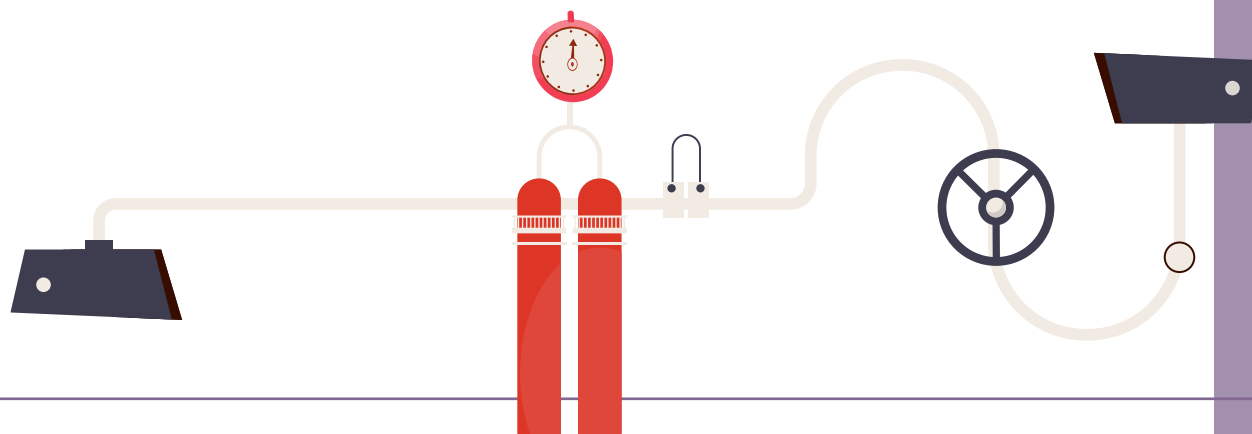
"UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE DELIVERED FROM LEADS IS ONE GOOD STRATEGY TO GET AT ROI — AND ROI IS PLAYING A BIG ROLE IN OUR GO/NO-GO DECISIONS FOR EVENTS."

**Marianne Steckert**
Sr. Director of Americas Events & Outreach, Moody's Analytics

**Read the rest of Moody's Success Story:**

LEARN MORE

# SPEND MANAGEMENT & BUDGET RECONCILIATION

It's no secret that budgeting and spend tracking has been a major challenge among planners and procurement professionals. Even today, most companies have no idea how much they are spending on their events, or where their budget is being spent. Centralizing meetings management on a single platform provides visibility and streamlines the entire process. You'll benefit from increased compliance, total spend tracking, and the opportunity to identify potential areas of savings.
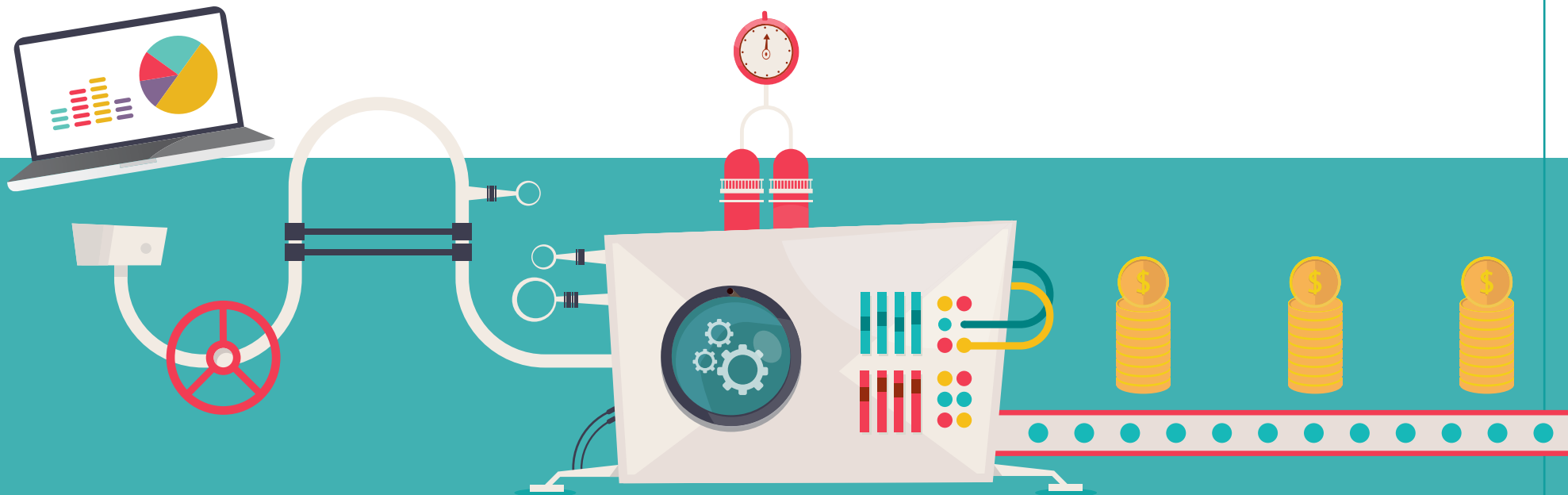
## THE STRUGGLE

Event budget, spend, and ROI are often the main concerns of most decision makers. But these aspects can get lost when you're managing each component of your event in different silos. Then when your meeting is over, you're moving on to planning the next one. This leaves little time to reconcile event budgets and compile reports on meeting spend.

## THE SHIFT

A structured strategic meetings management program (SMMP) lays the foundation for data consistency across your organization. With technology, organizations can centralize the meeting and event approval processes, ensuring budgetary approval before the event even happens. Taken a step further, meetings management technology can integrate with expense management and payment card systems to automate the expense reporting process and eliminate manual time and energy spend reconciling event budgets. This provides the time and ability to calculate meeting spend consistently across your organization, resulting in actionable reporting and proven meeting ROI.
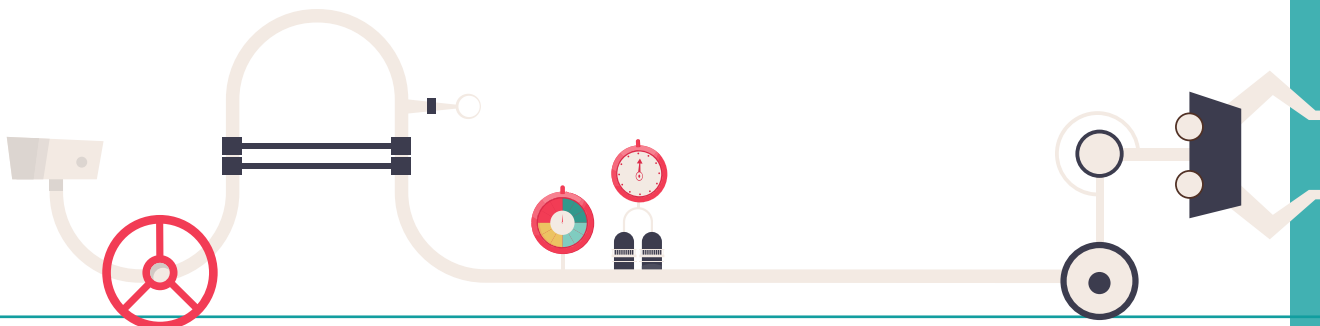
Check out our video to see the full Medtronic Success Story.

**WATCH NOW**

Don't know where to start? Check out our **SMM Starter Kit** for the documentation, key data points, and supporting materials needed to gain executive buy-in for a SMM Program:

**DOWNLOAD NOW**

# CONCLUSION

By now, you should be ready to advance your event management tools and join the automation evolution! By adding automation to every stage of the event lifecycle, you'll spend less time on manual processes and reinvest your energy into strategies that elevate the attendee experience and boost event ROI. Event management technology tools provide immediate impact on your top and bottom line, by tracking revenue and then monitoring company savings. An automated technology tool gives you the ability to track strategic value on both sides of the business equation. By measuring the entire attendee journey, you'll become a master at proving your worth using valuable and actionable data. These insights will power your future events and fuel your transformation into a modern event professional.
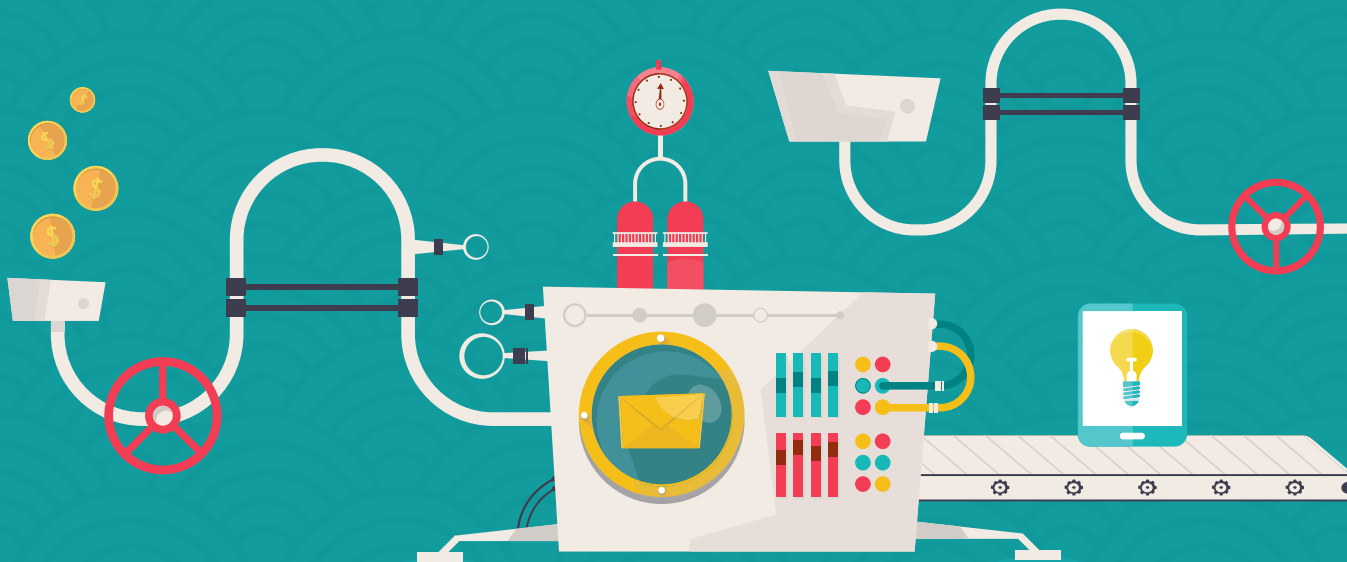
**For more information on the Power of Event Insight:**

DOWNLOAD OUR TOOLKIT

Interested in exploring any of the event technology solutions discussed in this ebook?

GET IN TOUCH TODAY!

SHARE THIS EBOOK:

cvent