



2024

Digital Engagement Benchmarks Report

How webinar, virtual events and content experiences performed in 2023 and what marketers should look out for in 2024.



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Introduction

B2B marketing has often felt like a trade-off between quality or quantity, a decision whether to invest our budgets, time and resources to tailor experiences and orchestrate journeys built for individuals, or to focus on campaigns and content broad enough to reach the masses. While the debate between personalization and scale has gone on for decades, there's an important shift that could settle the argument once and for all: the rapid emergence of AI.

Now, with AI technologies helping us analyze data, generate content, and dynamically adapt campaigns and channels based on audience behavior, it's possible to achieve both personalization and scale. And these innovations have come at just the right time. According to BCG, nearly two-thirds of CMOs are planning to use AI to personalize experiences in 2024.

We analyzed the behavior of more than 30 million professionals engaging with ON24-powered experiences in 2023, including webinars, virtual events, content hubs and landing pages, and found that the biggest differentiator in performance came from personalization. For example, while engagement with demo requests rose by 56% year-over-year, engagement and conversion within personalized experiences grew by nearly 3X.

So, if you're looking at how to exceed your marketing benchmarks in 2024, the answer is clear: deliver personalized experiences to your audience and your results will scale. That's how we can win the engagement — and business — of our prospects and customers this year.



Cheers,
Callan Young
CMO, ON24

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Young'.

Executive summary

Engagement is the key to unlocking buyer intelligence, scaling personalization and gaining competitive advantage.

Here are the key shifts in audience engagement in 2023 and opportunities for marketers to continue to improve performance and drive business impact in 2024:

1 The volume and value of digital interactions are surging. Marketers can leverage first-party signals from digital experiences to personalize experiences, improve conversion rates and strengthen opportunities for pipeline and revenue growth.

2 Personalized experiences are accelerating rapidly. Marketers who focus on their personalization strategy will better satisfy heightened audience expectations and stand out from their competition.

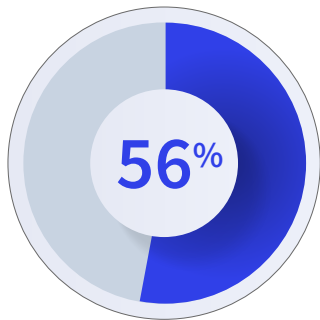
3 Audience engagement is intensifying and continuing well past the live day of the event. Marketers need to shift from a one-and-done event mindset toward a strategy of delivering ongoing content and engagement as a campaign, through a mix of live and on-demand experiences.

4 Empowered audiences engage in a variety of digital formats, including ongoing learning and certifications. Marketers can leverage a mix of digital experiences to support different go-to-market use cases and audience content preferences.

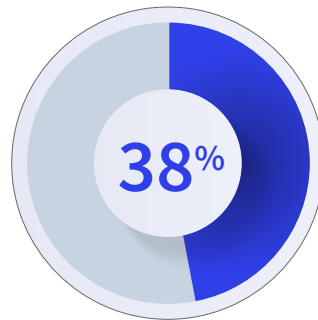
5 Audiences are increasing the amount of content consumed in digital formats. Marketers can use AI to generate content at the rate audiences demand.

2023 Global Benchmarks

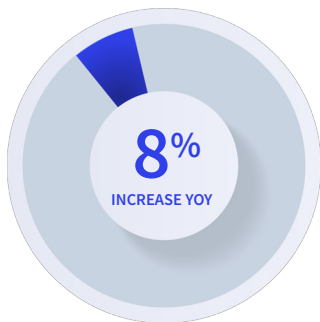
Webinars, virtual events and content experiences



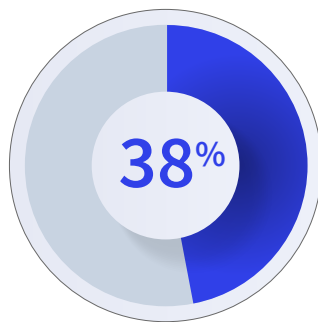
total conversion of webinar registrations-to-attendee



average conversion rate of content hubs



average number of interactions per live webinar attendee



average conversion rate of personalized landing pages

202

average number of webinar attendees

14

average number of questions asked per webinar

47

average number of assets per content hub

53 MINUTES

average duration of webinar engagement

25 MINUTES

average duration of content hub engagement

26 MINUTES

average duration of personalized landing page engagement



The volume and value of digital interactions are surging

Marketers can capture buying signals across experiences to drive action.

+20%

increase in average interactions per webinar attendee since 2022

53 MINUTES

average duration of webinar engagement in 2023

~200

average number of webinar attendees in 2023

Audiences are not only consuming more digital content, but they are also engaging more deeply and actively with it. Overall, across live experiences in 2023, the number of unique interactions per attendee increased by 8% year-over-year, while the total change since 2021 stands at 20%. This growth illustrates that audiences are more eager than ever for two-way participation where they share their opinions, feedback and preferences with their peers.

This rise in interaction provides a growing opportunity to improve future experiences through first-party data and to identify the exact moments that resonate the most, especially when audiences are offered easy and low-friction options.

Growth of buying signals across experiences

4X

increase in requests for a quote on content hubs

56%

increase in request for a demo in webinar channel

38%

increase in engagement reactions per attendee in webinar channel



Another sign of enhanced engagement levels is the 304% annual growth in virtual roundtable discussion participants, which demonstrates that audiences are seeking more social and collaborative experiences online.

Roundtable and peer-to-peer environments allow attendees to network, discuss topics and exchange ideas with each other and with experts. Similarly, there was a 41% increase in the number of attendees joining breakout rooms to network with peers and interact with speakers. Given that sales reps often attend such breakout sessions, it also highlights an opportunity to start commercial conversations.

Self-education creates another commercial opportunity. As professionals engage more and consume more content — even when they have no active purchase intent — they are more confident and move quickly when they want to buy.

Last year, conversion rates increased across the board for high-intent calls-to-action (CTAs), such as demos or free trials. Within webinars, demo requests rose by 56% year-over-year. Meanwhile, within content hubs, requests for a quote rose dramatically, with a 373% increase year-over-year. This shows that buyers are happy to take action not only by visiting a dedicated web page, but also while they are engaging with other content. To capture this opportunity in real-time, marketers need to ensure there are high-intent CTAs available to audiences across experiences.

Across the wider buyer journey, the value of digital experiences isn't confined exclusively to driving demos or meetings with sales. These experiences provide multiple resources for customers and prospects to explore on their own time frame, building the long-term engagement needed to stay front of mind up until purchase. For marketers, the combined need to serve both the increased demand for content

and to maintain interest over time means that the use of ongoing nurtures becomes more important. Having a strategy to continuously sustain engagement will help businesses remain top of mind for their customers and prospects.

In addition, as audiences engage more, marketers can gather first-party data to personalize experiences, leading to a cycle of more personalized content and CTAs that resonate and drive action.

This continuous loop results in accelerated buyer journeys and stronger pipeline. However, marketers who don't improve their digital experiences risk losing market share as buyers become more demanding. Therefore, it is more important than ever to meet and exceed audience expectations through high-quality experiences and engagement opportunities.

4X

increase in virtual roundtable
discussion participants

40%

increase in breakout
room participants

Personalized experiences are accelerating rapidly

Marketers who tailor experiences for unique audience segments will stand out from their competition.

Audiences increasingly expect content to be tailored and relevant to their interests and preferences. Proof that personalized content is now a necessity comes in the size of the widening performance gap between personalized and non-personalized experiences.

The conclusion is clear: the pipeline potential of digital experiences is far higher when they are well-targeted and personalized. When audiences are offered content and experiences that are relevant to them, the likelihood that they will actively show buying intent increases significantly. The conversion rate for meeting bookings was more than twice as high within personalized experiences. Meanwhile, personalized experiences saw a 68% increase in engagement with calls-to-action, compared to 8% across webinars as a whole. Similarly, the year-over-year increase in demo requests was almost four times higher, while growth within non-personalized webinars was a far more modest 56%.

Personalization increases buying signals

68%

increase in CTA engagement within personalized experiences

4X

increase in demo requests within personalized experiences



Because these differences are so large, marketers can feel confident that any efforts made in this area are likely to pay off. The data shows that marketers are already taking positive steps in this direction, as more deploy personalization across digital experiences to further engage and convert these content-hungry audiences.

Adoption of personalization tactics on the ON24 platform grew exponentially through Q4 2023 as marketers used audience segmentation to scale personalized experiences and improve performance. Marketers created more than four times the number of segments as they sought to serve relevant offers based on both buyer characteristics (e.g. firmographics, region, job title or function) and buyer behavior. From these segments, there was then a 10-fold increase in the number of personalized landing pages that were built.

Deploying personalization across the lifecycle of experiences leads to both increased audience engagement and enables marketers to personalize

further based on additional engagement.

The response by marketers is a positive sign that audience needs are being listened to. However, personalization remains far from universal within the wider marketing context. Given the stark contrast in performance between generic and personalized experiences, marketers that fail to embrace personalization risk falling behind.

As the gap widens between those who personalize and those who don't, the latter will likely see a steady decline in market share as their buyers engage elsewhere.

Marketers that are still to take full advantage of personalization should take comfort in one fact: as technology advances, the tried-and-true tactics aimed at many people with one message will now be even better when aimed at many unique segments of people with uniquely different messages.

2X

higher conversion rate to the
“contact us” call-to-action from
personalized experiences vs
general experiences

Audience engagement is continuing well past the live day of the event

Marketers need to shift from a one-and-done event mindset toward an ongoing engagement strategy.

Audience engagement with webinar experiences remains strong. On average, attendees spend 53 minutes viewing and engaging with live webinars, providing a substantial window of time for event organizers and marketers to collect signals and data to further enhance their interactions.

53 MINUTES

average duration
of webinar engagement

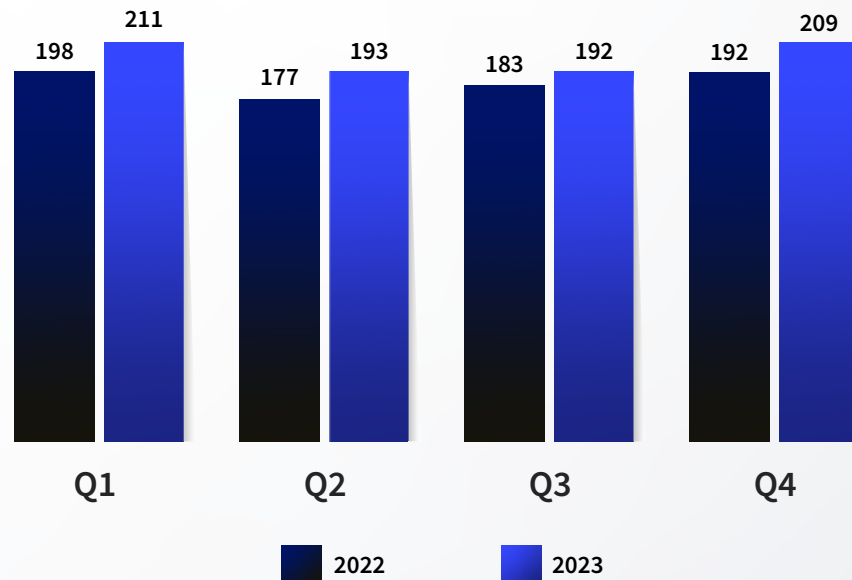


In 2023, the conversion rate from registration to attendance rose by three percentage points compared to 2022 and hit 56%. This is a nod to marketers improving their nurture programs leading up to the event to ensure that more registrants turn into attendees. Meanwhile, the average number of attendees climbed beyond 200 people, representing a total year-over-year growth of 8%.

We expect that this number will increase as marketers are able to personalize webinars for audience segments, enabling them to target multiple types of attendees and serve unique interactions to each cohort within one webinar program.

Average number of attendees

Numbers have risen year-over-year for every quarter



Increases in live attendee figures

56%

average webinar registration-
attendee conversion rate

3% INCREASE YOY ↑

202

average number of
webinar attendees

8% INCREASE YOY ↑

However, while live webinars offer an excellent opportunity to interact with attendees in real-time, not all choose to attend live. In 2023, 44% of the total watched on-demand or after the live date. This continues a trend observed in previous years as on-demand now commands a sizable portion of a webinar's audience, one that cannot be ignored from an overall experience design standpoint and for sales follow-up. Furthermore, 3% of attendees view the same webinar both at the time of broadcast and then rewatch the session later on-demand. This group should be a key target for any marketer who is looking to identify those with the highest levels of engagement, as this is likely to be a strong signal of buying intent.

On-demand performance

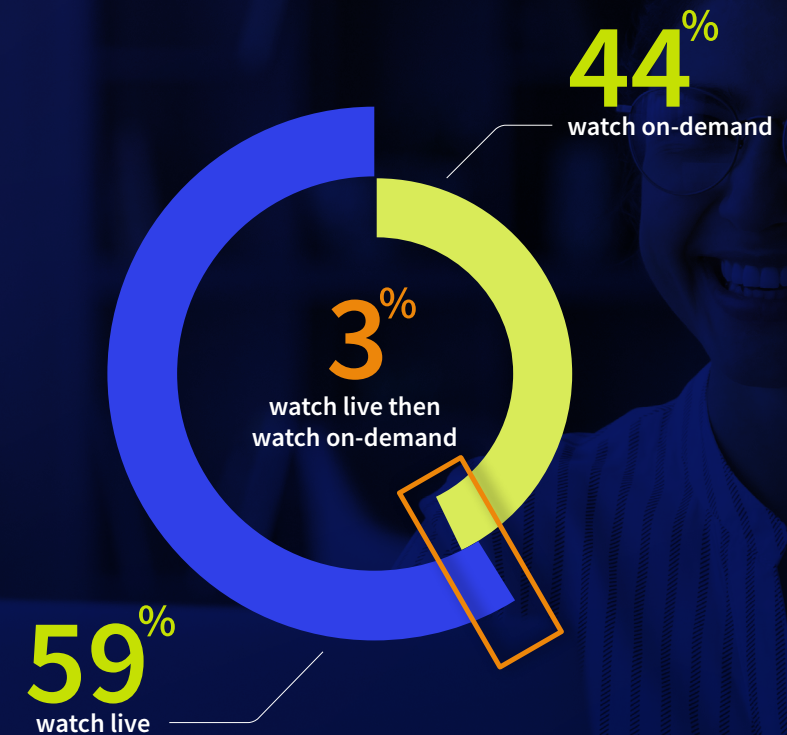
13%

**increase in engagement
in on-demand
webinars**

#1

**on-demand webinars are
the top-performing asset
types in content hubs**

Additionally, engagement in on-demand webinars rose 13% year-over-year. This outpaces growth in engagement for live events. The importance of offering webinars and other content as on-demand resources is further highlighted by how audiences interact with curated and personalized content hubs. Here, on-demand webinars see more engagement than any other resource. For this reason, marketers must offer anytime access to these experiences so that audiences can continuously interact with them and revisit content that they have already consumed to share it with other members of their team. This is especially important as more purchases are decided by buying committees rather than individuals.



In 2023, more than half of webinar registrations occurred more than one week before the event, up from 40% in 2020. A longer period between sign-up and the event offers an excellent opportunity to drive further engagement. Marketers should use this period to nurture registrants with additional content and interactions, providing access to additional on-demand webinars to drive engagement.

	Day of	1-7 days before	8-14 days before	15+ days before
2019	10%	33%	29%	28%
2020	15%	45%	20%	20%
2021	20%	46%	17%	17%
2022	9%	41%	21%	29%
2023	10%	37%	22%	31%

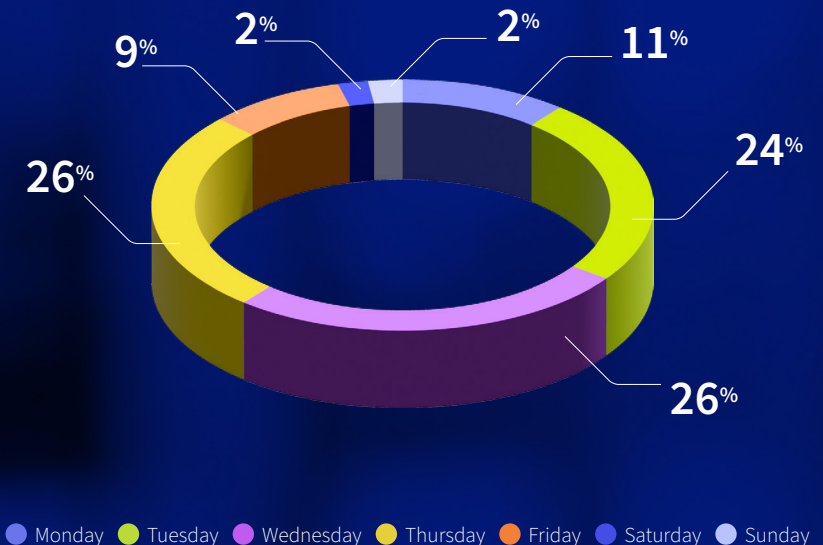
53%
of registrants occur
1+ week before webinar



Revisiting live attendance, audiences continue to see a preference for attending live events around the middle of the week. Globally, most live audiences attend webinars between Tuesday and Thursday, which has been consistent since pre-2020. While this is a general norm, B2B marketers can find performance gains by analyzing the different behavior of their unique audience segments. For example, an executive audience may prefer to attend a live experience on a Friday when there's greater availability in their schedule. Or, professionals seeking out continued learning and certification may prefer a Saturday to avoid distraction from the work week. What's most important is to have the ability to track behavior by audience segment over time.

The difference in attendee behavior provides yet another reason to ensure that audiences can engage at a time that works for them. However, meeting both the growing demand for content and to maximize total engagement will require more than just making events on-demand. Marketers will need to repurpose event content into both new on-demand webinars and different formats such as e-books, blog posts and short-form video. By spinning out events into different content, marketers can deliver ongoing, multitouch campaigns and ongoing nurtures — which can collectively drive better performance than a single live event.

Global audience attendance behavior



Empowered audiences engage in a variety of digital formats, including ongoing learning and certifications

Marketers can leverage a mix of digital experiences to support different go-to-market use cases and audience content preferences.

Audiences are now interacting with a more diverse set of digital experiences than ever before. As marketers advance their digital maturity, they are leveraging digital tactics for a broad range of go-to-market use cases, like professional certification, training, partner enablement, healthcare provider education and member enrollment. These use cases go beyond the most traditional form of lead generation and require an approach that is aligned to a desire to learn, rather than a vendor evaluation or product demonstration. This applies both to audiences that have a training requirement to maintain professional status, and to those who seek out education for reasons of their own.

As a result, 2023 showed significant growth in educational engagement, with a 21% growth in digital certifications year-over-year.

This trend is important for marketers to watch for several reasons. First, it demonstrates that audiences are seeking out digital learning opportunities, a trend that will only continue as digital-native professionals advance their careers. Second, audiences want proof of learning, and are keen to share credentials provided by trusted sources. Finally, this shows that the competition for professional mindshare and the number of digital learning options are growing. Providing a frictionless, automated and easy way for professionals to receive certifications will be critical to capturing their time and attention, and for marketers' own ability to scale.

Engagement increases across formats

21%

increase in certifications per attendee

2X

increase in the number of hybrid events

4X

increase in attendance at multisession live-stream events



Just as education options have shifted from the classroom to the computer, physical events are also becoming increasingly digital. The number of hybrid events has more than doubled, rising by 103% since 2022. This shows that in-person events are becoming increasingly digital and hybrid in nature, allowing for marketers to better capture data and engage audiences. As many in-person events returned in 2022, marketers realized they needed to amplify digital components of these events so they weren't losing out on the critical event data that they became accustomed to from their digital events strategies.

Furthermore, event organizers have been innovating to bring valuable elements from physical events into the digital experience. Many digital and hybrid events now offer and enhance the options present at physical conferences, such as main stages, exhibit halls and opportunities for networking. Audiences have shown their appreciation for these kinds of digital experiences, as attendance at multisession live-stream events increased by 361%.

In particular, event organizers have been creating opportunities to build a sense of community and meet the human need for social contact. It should be no surprise that attendees have been highly receptive to this — for many people, digital channels are their primary means of keeping in touch with others.



Within digital experiences, some of the highest growth in engagement has come in the use of social formats. At a basic level, text-based group chat usage has risen by 14% per attendee year-over-year.

But growth has been more pronounced with options that encourage natural and spontaneous conversation. One example is in the use of breakout rooms, which offer the chance for attendees to step away from the main digital stage of a virtual event and to speak with their peers and event speakers. Event organizers have been keen to take advantage of this, as the number of breakout sessions climbed by 63% year-over-year. This has certainly met a need, as attendance rates also grew by 41%. Even more significant is that the number of people attending online forums, such as roundtable discussions, advisory boards or small executive briefings, increased by a remarkable 304%.

This data shows that audiences are seeking out options that offer more than just a presentation. To maintain their interest — particularly given the numerous digital distractions that are always just a click away — marketers and event organizers must innovate to deliver digital experiences that are richer and more valuable than those elsewhere.

Attendee interactions during experiences

14%

increase in group chat
engagement per attendee

63%

increase in the number
of breakout rooms

7%

increase in poll
responses per attendee

41%

increase in the number of
breakout room attendees



Audiences are increasing the amount of content consumed in digital formats

Marketers can use AI to generate content at the rate audiences demand.

Digital content consumption and engagement continues to rise. With this increased consumption, the challenge for marketers is not just to create more content, but to make sure it's highly personalized and resonates with audiences. Given that marketing budgets are unlikely to increase proportionally with this need, generative AI will be an essential tool to make it a reality.

The most significant rises in engagement have been where the content and overall experience is relevant and personalized. Curation and recommendation is

one method that has proved fruitful, as downloads of resources such as e-books and white papers grew by 10% year-over-year. Even more, they are highly effective in attracting audiences to participate in webinars, as attendance rates on sessions promoted through content hubs have more than doubled. Here, AI-powered analytics can be especially valuable in recommending assets that are the most likely to drive conversions — in the final quarter of 2023, the number of key moments identified within events more than doubled. With the ability to automatically pinpoint the most compelling

moments during a virtual event presentation, marketers gain a turnkey way to repurpose event content as snackable video clips and deliver a highlight reel to audiences.

Today's innovations within artificial intelligence offer a promising way for marketers to serve the need for personalized content. By making full use of these tools, marketers can scale the production and delivery of more relevant and personalized content in an efficient and effective manner.

Growth of personalized content experiences

A large blue '2X' is displayed inside a light blue rounded rectangle. To the right of the '2X' is the text 'increase in content hub visitors' in a smaller, dark blue font.

increase in content
hub visitors

A large blue '2X' is displayed inside a light blue rounded rectangle. To the right of the '2X' is the text 'increase in nurture pages' in a smaller, dark blue font.

increase in
nurture pages

Conclusion

Driving digital engagement can no longer be optional. Today's audiences are looking for more than just ways to self-serve information – they want experiences that are relevant, valuable, interactive and personalized. For marketers who want to succeed in an increasingly competitive market, they must make sure that their events and experiences are the ones that audiences choose over others.

However, relying on yesterday's methods to meet these expectations is not realistic. For this reason, an effective response to the opportunities and challenges of these changes will rely on AI. When combined with first-party data, marketers will be able to create and deliver

personalized and relevant experiences at scale. At the same time, those producing digital experiences should remember the value in building genuine connections between people, which can be facilitated by creating opportunities for conversations within any virtual event.

By building your digital experiences with engagement and audience needs in mind — and by adopting the tools to do so at scale — you will be well-placed for success in 2024 and beyond.