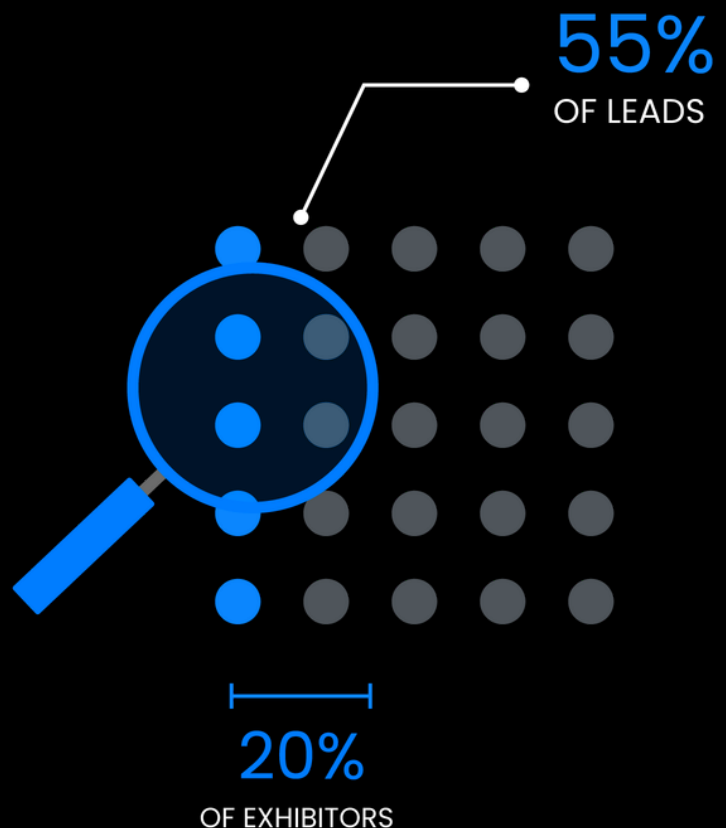


Half of an Event's Leads Go to a Fifth of Its Exhibitors

How lead capture is distributed across the exhibition floor

236 events | 9,982 exhibitors | 357,681 leads | 2024–2026



Executive Summary



This report examines how lead capture is distributed across the exhibitors at an event. It is based on exhibitor-level lead records from 236 live events hosted between 2024 and 2026, covering 9,982 exhibitors with lead retrieval enabled and 357,681 captured leads.

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- The top 20% of exhibitors with lead retrieval capture a median 55% of an event's total leads. The top 10% capture 36%, and the top half capture 87%.
- This is substantially more concentrated than attendee attention. Event Data Lab Report #08 applied the same calculation to session attendance and found the top 20% of sessions drawing 38%. Attention spreads across a program; lead capture does not spread across a floor.
- Concentration does not soften at larger events. The top-20% share is 51% at events under 500 attendees and 61% at events above 2,000, while leads per active exhibitor roughly doubles across the same range.
- Access is not the limiting factor. Among exhibitors with lead retrieval enabled, a median 85% capture at least one lead. Outcomes diverge through intensity of use, not adoption.
- Events with more evenly distributed capture record higher total lead volume per attendee. The relationship persists after removing zero-capture exhibitors from the calculation, though it remains correlational.



WHO THIS REPORT IS FOR

Event organizers and exhibition directors setting exhibitor expectations, building post-event reporting, or diagnosing floor performance. Exhibitor success and sponsorship teams benchmarking individual exhibitor outcomes. Exhibitors evaluating their own lead capture against comparable events.

WHAT DECISIONS IT SUPPORTS

- How to report exhibitor performance back to the floor, and which statistic to report.

- Where to focus exhibitor enablement effort across the performance distribution.

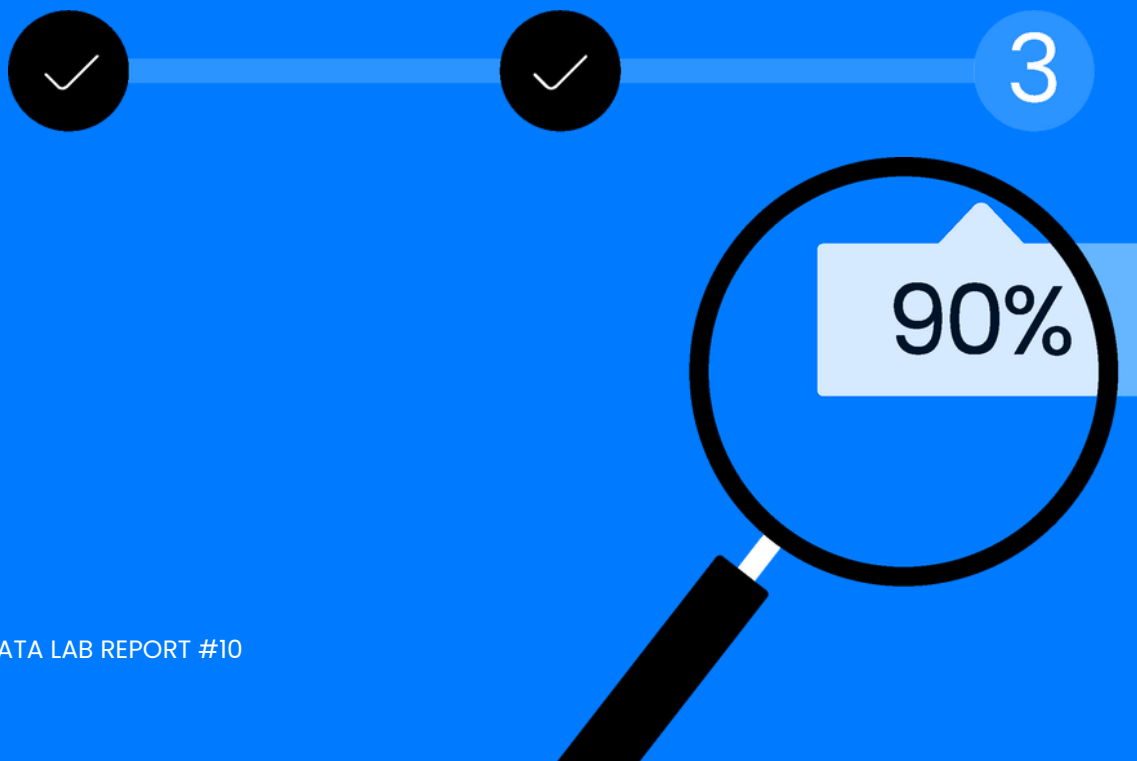
- How to set realistic lead volume expectations during the exhibitor sales cycle.

- Whether a given event's exhibitor concentration is typical or an outlier.



About the Event Data Lab

The **Event Data Lab** is an ongoing research initiative focused on analyzing real-world event performance using aggregated and anonymized data. Reports published under the Event Data Lab surface empirical benchmarks and operational insights across registration, onsite operations, engagement, and ROI.



Dataset Overview



Scope

- 236 live events hosted between 2024 and 2026 (80 in 2024, 99 in 2025, 57 in 2026)
- 9,982 exhibitors with lead retrieval enabled
- 357,681 leads captured
- Median event size 954 registered attendees; 10th percentile 365, 90th percentile 2,226
- Median exhibitor floor 34 exhibitors with lead retrieval; interquartile range 21 to 54

The entitlement denominator

Lead retrieval is not enabled for every approved exhibitor. Across the exhibitor records in this dataset, approximately half had lead retrieval access. Whether an exhibitor has access is determined by the organizer's packaging and the exhibitor's purchase, not by exhibitor behaviour.

Every participation and concentration figure in this report therefore uses exhibitors with lead retrieval as the denominator. This distinction is material: measuring participation against all approved exhibitors yields a median of 55%, while measuring against exhibitors who actually have the tool yields 85%. The first figure describes a commercial packaging decision. The second describes exhibitor behaviour, which is what this report is about.

Methodological note

Benchmarks that divide exhibitor activity by all approved exhibitors will systematically understate participation. Any comparison to figures published elsewhere should confirm which denominator was used.

Exclusions

To ensure the dataset reflects exhibitor lead capture rather than other activity, the following were excluded:

- Events where the majority of leads were attendee self-submissions rather than exhibitor capture. Self-submission is a distinct behaviour and does not belong in an exhibitor capture denominator.
- Events with a recorded duration longer than 14 days, which reflect configuration artifacts rather than exhibition events.
- Events with fewer than 10 exhibitors with lead retrieval, where per-event distribution statistics are unstable.
- Events with no recorded lead capture activity.

Anonymization

All data was aggregated and anonymized prior to analysis. Exhibitor and event records are identified by non-reversible codes. No individual event, organization, exhibitor, or attendee can be identified from this report.

Metric definitions

Lead capture concentration

For each event, exhibitors with lead retrieval are ranked by lead count from highest to lowest. Concentration at a given percentile is the cumulative share of the event's total leads held by that top share of exhibitors. Per-event values are then summarized across events using the median and interquartile range, so that large events do not dominate the result.

Exhibitor participation rate

The share of exhibitors with lead retrieval enabled who captured at least one lead, calculated per event and then summarized across events.

Leads per active exhibitor

Total event leads divided by the number of exhibitors capturing at least one lead.

Lead scans per registered attendee

Total event leads divided by the number of attendees on the event's attendee list. This is a scan-to-registrant ratio and can exceed 1.0, since a single attendee may be scanned by many exhibitors. The denominator is registrations rather than verified attendance.

Benchmark Results



Full distribution of lead capture

Exhibitors ranked by lead count, median event, with the interquartile range across events.

Top share of exhibitors	Cumulative share of leads (median)	25th percentile	75th percentile
Top 10%	36.1%	29.6%	43.9%
Top 20%	55.0%	46.6%	63.3%
Top 30%	67.8%	60.2%	77.8%
Top 40%	79.2%	70.5%	86.8%
Top 50%	86.9%	79.8%	93.1%
Top 60%	93.5%	87.9%	98.2%
Top 70%	97.8%	94.0%	100.0%
Top 80%	99.9%	97.9%	100.0%
Top 90%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

n = 236 events. Values reach 100% before the full exhibitor list because a median 15% of exhibitors with lead retrieval capture no leads.

Segmentation by event size

Concentration by registered attendee count, alongside the volume available to each participating exhibitor.

Concentration holds as events get bigger

Top 20% share of leads, by registered attendee count



Event Data Lab Report #10 | n = 236 events. Volume per exhibitor doubles across these bands; concentration does not fall.

Registered attendees	Events	Top 20% share	Participation	Leads per active exhibitor
Under 500	49	50.8%	83.3%	24.3
500 to 999	75	53.0%	84.2%	32.6
1,000 to 1,999	82	54.5%	86.9%	40.2
2,000 and above	30	61.1%	83.5%	49.7

Leads per active exhibitor roughly doubles across these bands while concentration rises slightly. Spearman correlation between top-20% share and attendee count = 0.22.

Segmentation by exhibitor floor size

Exhibitors with lead retrieval	Events	Top 20% share	Top 50% share	Participation
10 to 20	58	51.7%	85.7%	85.7%
21 to 40	89	55.1%	88.0%	84.8%
41 to 80	65	51.3%	86.6%	86.2%
More than 80	24	57.2%	91.5%	78.6%

Every headline figure moves by less than three percentage points across three years.

Stability over time

Year	Events	Top 20% share	Top 50% share	Participation	Leads per active exhibitor
1024	80	53.8%	86.8%	83.3%	34.6
1025	99	54.5%	85.8%	85.7%	34.5
1026	57	55.8%	88.9%	85.7%	34.8

Every headline figure moves by less than three percentage points across three years.

Sponsoring and non-sponsoring exhibitors

Sponsorship status materially changes exhibitor lead outcomes and should not be pooled into floor-wide benchmarks.

Exhibitor type	Records	Lead retrieval enabled	Participation	Median leads	Mean leads
Non-sponsor	6,687	43.6%	74.8%	17	31.2
Sponsor	3,295	69.8%	83.2%	25	45.3

Lead retrieval enabled is calculated across all exhibitor records; remaining columns cover exhibitors with lead retrieval only.

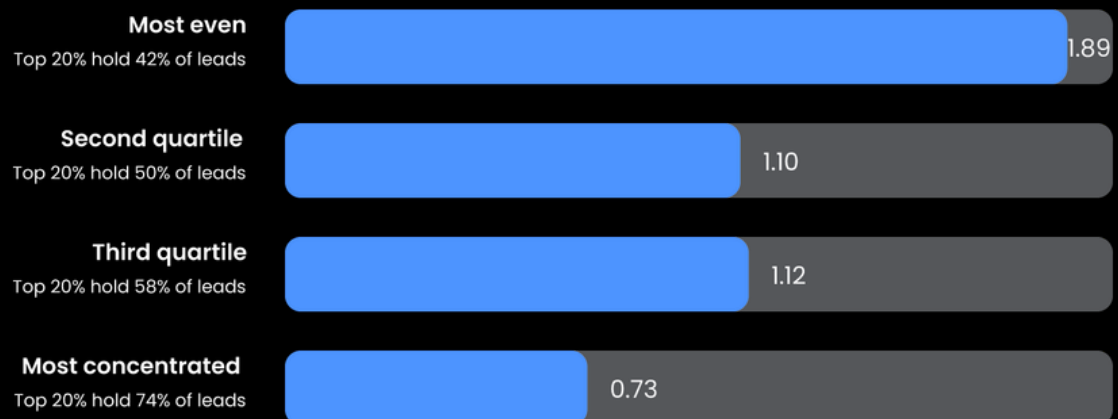
Comparative Analysis: Concentration and Total Capture



Sorting events into quartiles by how concentrated their lead capture is reveals an inverse relationship with total lead volume

Evenly distributed floors capture more in total

Lead scans per registered attendee, by how concentrated the event's capture is



Event Data Lab Report #10 | n = 236 events. Observed association, not a demonstrated cause.

Concentration quartile	Events	Top 20% share	Participation	Lead scans per registered attendee
Most even	59	41.8%	95.3%	1.89
Second	59	50.2%	89.5%	1.10
Third	59	58.0%	79.3%	1.12
Most concentrated	59	74.4%	63.3%	0.73

Testing whether the relationship is arithmetic

Part of this relationship is mechanical. An event where many exhibitors capture nothing will show both high concentration and low total volume by construction. Concentration correlates with the share of exhibitors capturing zero leads at Spearman +0.75, which is substantial.

To test whether anything survives, concentration was recalculated using only exhibitors who captured at least one lead, removing the zero-capture group from both sides of the comparison.

Concentration quartile (active exhibitors only)	Events	Top 20% share	Lead scans per registered attendee
Most even	59	38.8%	1.53
Second	59	44.9%	1.25
Third	59	50.7%	0.94
Most concentrated	59	58.2%	0.80

Spearman correlation: -0.30. The spread narrows from 2.6x to 1.9x but does not disappear.

Interpretation limit

Event Data Lab Report #09 established that relationships visible across a portfolio of events frequently dissolve once the event is held constant. That test cannot be run here: concentration is a property of an event rather than of an exhibitor within one, so no within-event version of this comparison exists. The relationship should be treated as unresolved rather than established. A well-attended event with strong floor traffic and an engaged audience could plausibly produce both even distribution and high total capture, with neither causing the other. This finding should not be read as evidence that redistributing exhibitor performance would increase total capture.

Floor Concentration Worksheet



Use this to place your own event against the benchmarks in this report. It requires only a per-exhibitor lead count export.

Step 1: Build the ranked list

Export lead counts for every exhibitor who had lead retrieval enabled, including those with zero leads. Exclude exhibitors who did not have access. Sort from highest to lowest.

Step 2: Calculate your concentration

Count your exhibitors and take the top 20% of that list, rounding up. Sum their leads and divide by the event's total leads.

Step 3: Compare

Your top 20% share	Reading	Suggested action
Below 47%	More evenly distributed than 75% of events	Document what is working. Depth across the floor is unusual.
47% to 63%	Within the typical interquartile range	Focus on the middle of the distribution, not the top.
Above 63%	More concentrated than 75% of events	Examine the 30th to 70th percentile band for common barriers.

Step 4: Check participation separately

Divide the number of exhibitors capturing at least one lead by the number with lead retrieval enabled. A result meaningfully below 74% suggests an access, onboarding, or attendance problem rather than a performance one, and should be diagnosed before concentration is addressed.

Step 5: Report the right statistic

When reporting back to the floor, publish the median and the quartile boundaries rather than the mean. In this dataset the mean exceeds the median by roughly 80% among non-sponsor exhibitors, so an average-based benchmark is one that most of the floor is structurally positioned to miss.

Key Takeaways



- Lead capture on an exhibition floor is concentrated. A median 55% of leads go to the top fifth of exhibitors, and this holds across event sizes, floor sizes, and years.
- Participation is high where access exists. A median 85% of exhibitors with lead retrieval capture at least one lead, so differences in outcome reflect intensity of use rather than adoption.
- Larger events raise volume for everyone without equalizing it. Leads per active exhibitor roughly doubles from the smallest to the largest band while concentration rises slightly.
- Averages misrepresent the floor. The mean is pulled upward by the top decile and sits well above the experience of the typical exhibitor.
- Sponsors are a distinct population on access, participation, and volume, and should be segmented rather than pooled.
- Evenly distributed floors record higher total capture, though the direction of that relationship is not established by this data.



How to Use These Benchmarks

These benchmarks are most useful as diagnostic reference points, as context for identifying abnormal floor performance, and as inputs into exhibitor expectation setting and post-event reporting. They should not be interpreted as performance targets or guarantees. Individual event performance will vary based on audience, vertical, floor design, exhibitor mix, and the commercial structure of the exhibition



Limitations

- Lead capture is not exhibitor ROI. This dataset contains no booth cost, booth location, booth size, or sponsorship tier data, and no post-event conversion or revenue outcomes. Lead volume is one input to exhibitor return, not a measure of it.
- A median 15% of exhibitors with lead retrieval captured no leads, and the platform does not distinguish an approved exhibitor who attended from one who did not. This figure combines genuine non-use with exhibitor no-shows.
- Lead retrieval access reflects exhibitor access as currently recorded rather than a verified point-in-time record. A small number of records show lead activity without a corresponding access flag, so entitlement figures should be read as approximate. Sensitivity testing indicates that even a substantial error rate in this field would move the participation figure by less than three percentage points.
- Lead scans per registered attendee uses the attendee list as its denominator, not verified attendance. Because a share of registrants never arrive, the true rate per person present is higher than reported here.
- The dataset contains no attendee identifiers. It cannot address how many exhibitors a given attendee engages with, whether repeat visits occur, or whether high-capturing exhibitors receive more traffic or convert traffic more effectively.

- Events are treated as independent observations. The dataset contains no organizer identifier, so recurring annual events may appear more than once.
- Findings reflect observed behaviour within this dataset and should be interpreted as directional benchmarks.

Closing



Exhibition floors are routinely evaluated through averages that describe almost no one on them. The distribution underneath those averages is stable enough across event sizes and years to be used as a planning reference, and specific enough to point at the part of the floor where improvement is available.

A forthcoming Event Data Lab report will examine booth visit behaviour, including how many exhibitors a typical attendee engages with and whether repeat visits occur. That analysis is the natural counterpart to this one: it addresses whether the exhibitors capturing the most leads receive more attendee traffic, or convert the same traffic more effectively.

Appendix



Metric formulas

- **Lead capture concentration at percentile p** = (sum of leads from the top p% of exhibitors, ranked by lead count) / (total event leads)
- **Exhibitor participation rate** = (exhibitors with lead retrieval capturing at least 1 lead) / (exhibitors with lead retrieval)
- **Leads per active exhibitor** = (total event leads) / (exhibitors capturing at least 1 lead)
- **Lead scans per registered attendee** = (total event leads) / (attendees on the event attendee list)

Definitions

- **Exhibitor with lead retrieval.** An approved exhibitor whose record shows lead retrieval access enabled. Access is determined by organizer packaging and exhibitor purchase.
- **Active exhibitor.** An exhibitor with lead retrieval who captured at least one lead at the event.
- **Sponsor.** An exhibitor record flagged as holding sponsorship at the event, in addition to or instead of a standard exhibitor position.
- **Self-submitted lead.** A lead record created by an attendee submitting their own details rather than by exhibitor capture. Events predominantly composed of these were excluded.

Metric formulas



- Events where self-submitted leads formed the majority of total leads
- Events with a recorded duration longer than 14 days
- Events with fewer than 10 exhibitors with lead retrieval enabled
- Events with no recorded attendee list count
- Events with no recorded lead capture activity

Event Data Lab research is informed by data captured across live events supported by modern event infrastructure and operational tooling