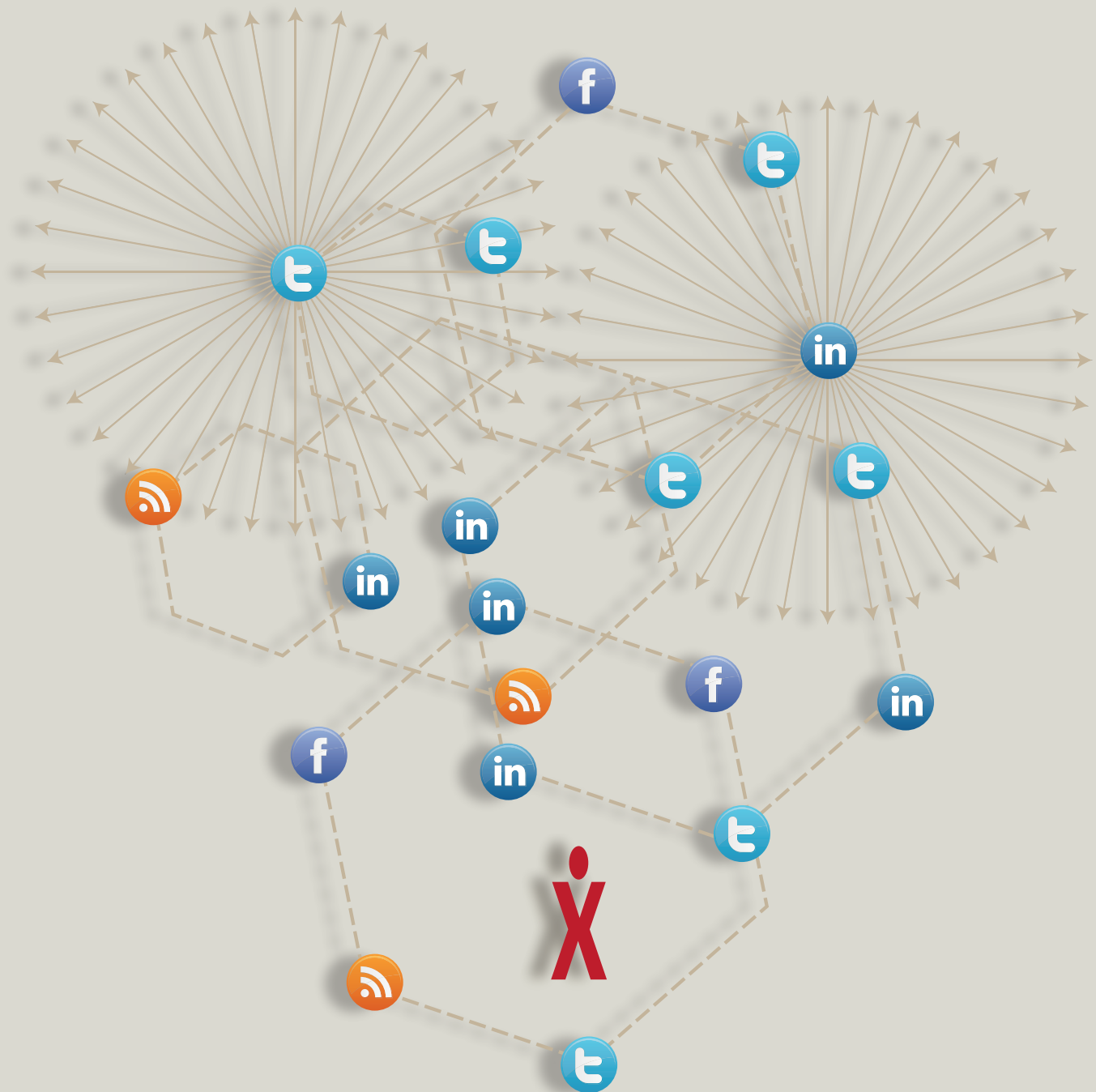




MEASURING THE MODERN EVENT

The history of the event industry can be characterized as an unending search for the next big “WOW”.

Today’s corporate events and conferences are filled with the best ideas and technology from television, entertainment and social media. They are complex and expensive undertakings requiring large internal teams to develop and support the content, a large portion of the sales force to host the audience, and armies of specialized freelancers to execute the logistics.

Often corporate events cost more than a Super Bowl campaign. Which begs the question of why measuring the business impact of an event has never been an integral part of these complex undertakings.

DYNAMICS DRIVING CORPORATE EVENT MEASUREMENT

A sea change in corporate event measurement is underway, driven by two very different forces.

The first is obvious, economics. CMO’s in every industry are under increasing pressure to demonstrate a return from every line item in their budgets.

The second dynamic is that customers are now making enterprise level purchase decisions based on their own independent online research. Traditional marketing departments have lost control of the dialogue, and are no longer the only source of product information. No one knows where it goes from here.

As a result, innovative companies are now conducting market research to determine how events influence brand perception, accelerate the pipeline and foster customer loyalty through education.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE AIR SCORE

One of the things that has become apparent, is that event marketers need new tools to help them to quickly identify the issues that are most likely to garner raves or rebukes in attendee’s online commentary. Working with our client Scott Schenker, Vice President, SAP we developed a technique called the AIR Score, short for Audience Impact Rating.

The genesis of the AIR Score was the realization that the two most commonly used reporting conventions, “Top Box” and “Averaging” are both designed to present data in a way that all but ignores those most likely to be part of an online discussion.

***We developed a technique called the
AIR Score, short for Audience Impact Rating.***

The “Top Box” system adds the percentage of responses in scoring boxes 4 and 5, and reports the total as the result of the question.

This yields sentences like *“80% of the respondents found the xyz aspect of the event to be somewhat or extremely valuable.”*

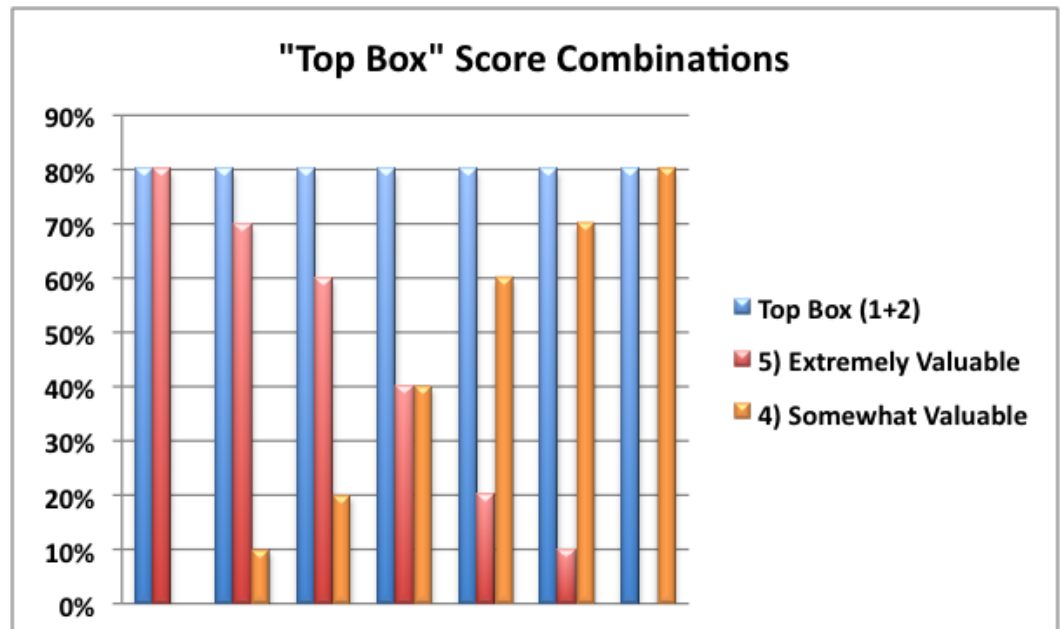
THE PITFALLS OF TOP BOX SCORING

This approach has two shortcomings:

1 *Top Box scoring paints an unduly rosy picture of the results.*

“Top Box” scoring combines the ‘5 ranking’ which indicate that the respondent is “extremely” positive; with the ‘4 ranking’ which indicate that the respondent is politely noncommittal – the “somewhat” 4s.

This example clearly demonstrates the problem. A “Top Box” Score of 80% can be derived in many ways, which in no way can be considered equal.



2 *Top Box scores provide no insight into what is going on in the other three boxes.*

THE PITFALLS OF AVERAGING

As the name implies, averaging focuses attention on the middle, not on what is going on at the fringes...

This example demonstrates that while “Averaging” is more responsive to the audience than the “Top Box”, by design it mutes (damps) the extremes, the respondents that we are the most interested in.

Weighted Average	4.00	3.80	3.75	3.75	3.70	3.65
Top Box	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
AIR	62.5	52.5	50	47.5	45	42.5
5 Extremely Valuable	40%	20%	20%	10%	5%	5%
4 Somewhat Valuable	40%	60%	60%	70%	75%	75%
3 Neutral	5%	5%	0%	5%	5%	0%
2 Not Very Valuable	10%	10%	15%	15%	15%	20%
1 Not At All Valuable	5%	5%	5%	0%	0%	0%

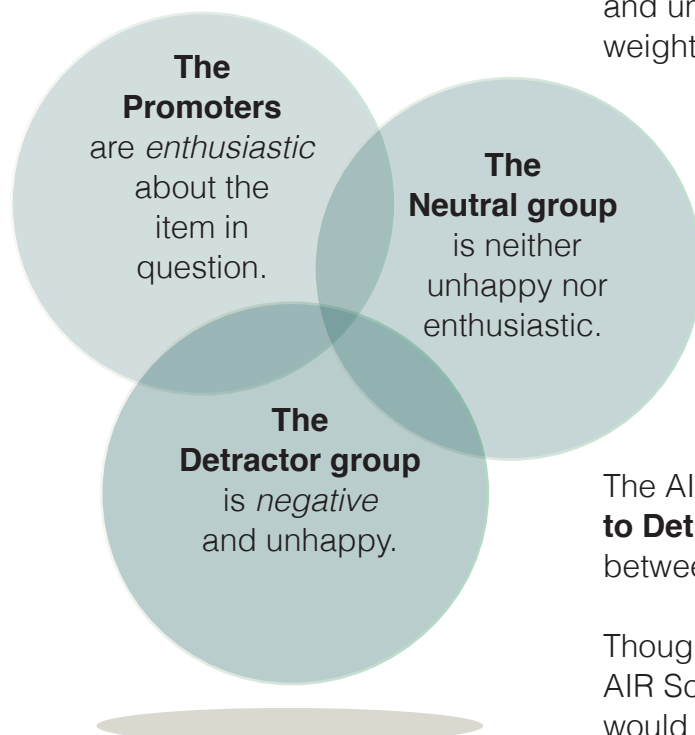
*The **AIR** scores in this example shift 20 points, moving from Good to Poor, clearly signaling an increasing number of Detractors. The Weighted Average has a subtler downward trend, within a range (north of 3.5) that is considered acceptable by many companies. This is an important distinction.*

A veteran executive or manager with the time to read through the data should pick up these distinctions. But they are not readily apparent in the reporting that most people rely on to make decisions.

WHAT AN AIR SCORE DOES

The AIR Score was developed to provide event sponsors and managers with a metric that enables them to quickly identify the issues most likely to influence the larger universe of clients and prospects post-event.

AIR categorizes the survey respondents into three segments.



→ 5	Extremely Valuable	Promoters
→ 4	Somewhat Valuable	Neutral
→ 3	Neutral	Neutral
→ 2	Not Very Valuable	Detractors
→ 1	Not At All Valuable	Detractors

The AIR Score reports the **relationship of Promoters to Detractors** among all scores as a number between 0 and 100, where 100 are all Promoters.

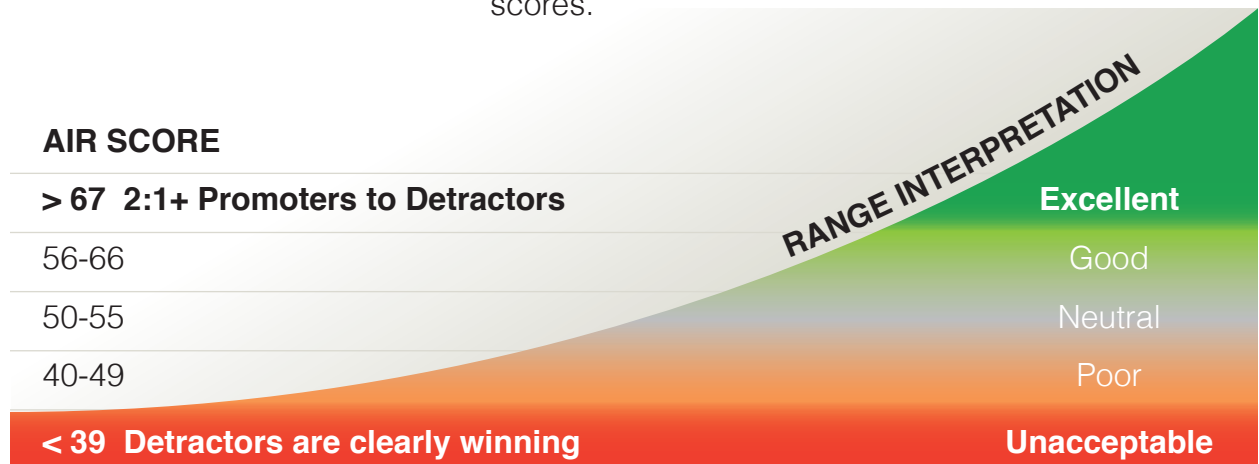
Though they are based on the same data as the AIR Score, neither "Top Box" nor "Average" scoring would reveal that a small but significant percentage of the audience may be unhappy about one or more issues."

Our hypothesis is that the Promoters and Detractors are much more likely to share their opinions online than Neutrals.

APPLYING THE AIR SCORE

The AIR Score The AIR Score takes into account the entire range of scores (all responses) (i.e. it is normalized).

We, and most of our clients deem an event to be successful when significantly more attendees go home as Promoters than Detractors. We developed the following scale to aid in interpretation of the scores.



Christopher Korody and Kevin O'Neill are the Partners at Audience Metrix, a market research firm focusing on conducting research at corporate events.

Because the AIR Score reports the results as a single number, it is a useful tool for comparing scores from different questions, and even different events.

While for now marketers sponsoring virtual events seem happy to count 'clicks', 'likes' and 'tweets'; the AIR Score can be an important bridge between the world of physical and virtual events.

We are happy to share the "math". We invite you to contact us if you have any questions, or would like to have the formula to apply in your own work.

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