

CWT Meetings & Events

## Emotions, the next event KPI?

Experience mapping through  
emotional data to measure impact  
and increase engagement at events





## Context

For the modern meeting organizer, the new key measure of success is attendee engagement. However, with an increasing amount of data points ready to track everything and anything throughout an event, how can we be sure of which ones to rely on to effectively measure ROI?

CWT Digital Campus is an innovation forum last held in 2018 by CWT Meetings & Events France gathering 130 clients. We decided to partner with a specialized company to push our experience mapping & tracking to new heights. With the help of our partner, Datakalab, we measured the attention and emotional commitment of the audience by filming attendees throughout the day. By using a method based on neuroscientific tools called Facial Coding\*, we were then able to translate these videos into measurable **emotional data**. And more importantly, novel insights.

During which session were attendees the most attentive? At which point of the session were they the most committed emotionally? Combining answers to such questions with other data points collected in and around the event, we were able to get a clearer picture of our forum's impact.



\*Facial Coding measures the physical signs associated with our emotions and translates them to the corresponding feelings. Joy, fear, disgust, anger, sadness or surprise can now become measurable.

## Methodology

We formulated a classic three-step approach to measure and evaluate the impact of our event, focusing on two types of data: **emotional data** and **survey data** from participants.

### 1. Pre-Event

We collected participants' expectations towards the event and the different sessions through an event app. We also fostered engagement between participants, inviting them to exchange and debate ahead of the meeting.

### 2. During The Event

During each of the presentations, two cameras facing the audience were capturing all reactions to obtain two key metrics:

- **Attention:** percentage of attendees actually following the conference (usually varies between 70 to 90%)
- **Emotional engagement:** percentage of attendees who expressed an emotion vs. neutral expressions (usually averages between 10 to 13%)

Short questionnaires were pushed to participants through the app after each session.

### 3. Post-Event

Post-event questionnaires were sent out to clients, suppliers, and internal participants. Datakalab was in charge of analyzing the video data. We combined the various survey results and cross-analyzed them with the emotional data.



## Findings

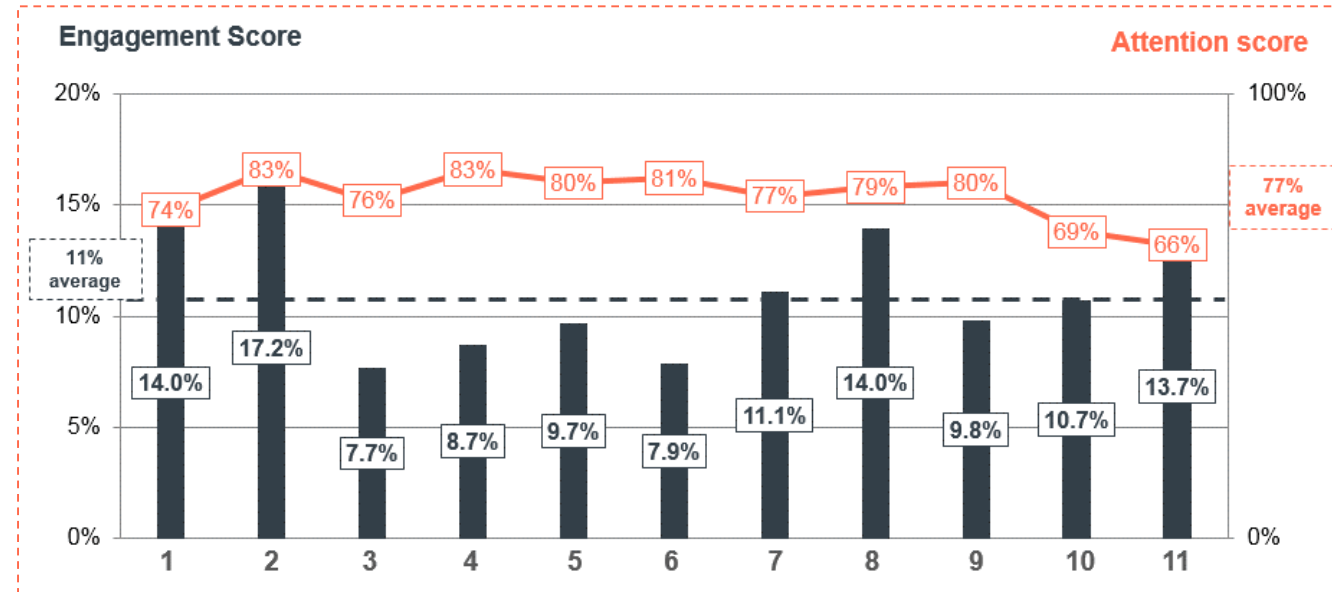
The use of emotional data allowed us to deep dive like rarely before. The graph on the right shows average measurements of the different sessions (of varying lengths and formats).

### Attention Score

The average attention score tells us that on average 77 attendees out of 100 were following the presentations. Session 2 was a keynote from a particularly charismatic speaker who used humor and insights to keep the audience focused. Session 4 addressed a hot industry topic and scored highly. The lowest attention scores are observed at the end of the day, which was to be expected.

### Engagement Score

The average engagement score tells us that on average 11 attendees out of 100 were conveying an emotion at any given time (positive or negative, versus a neutral state). Session 2's charismatic speaker leads the way again. Session 8 was a short unannounced video call from abroad, which surprised attendees. Finally, Session 11 was a motivational speaker who helped engaged those who were still attentive, and closed the day on an uplifting note.



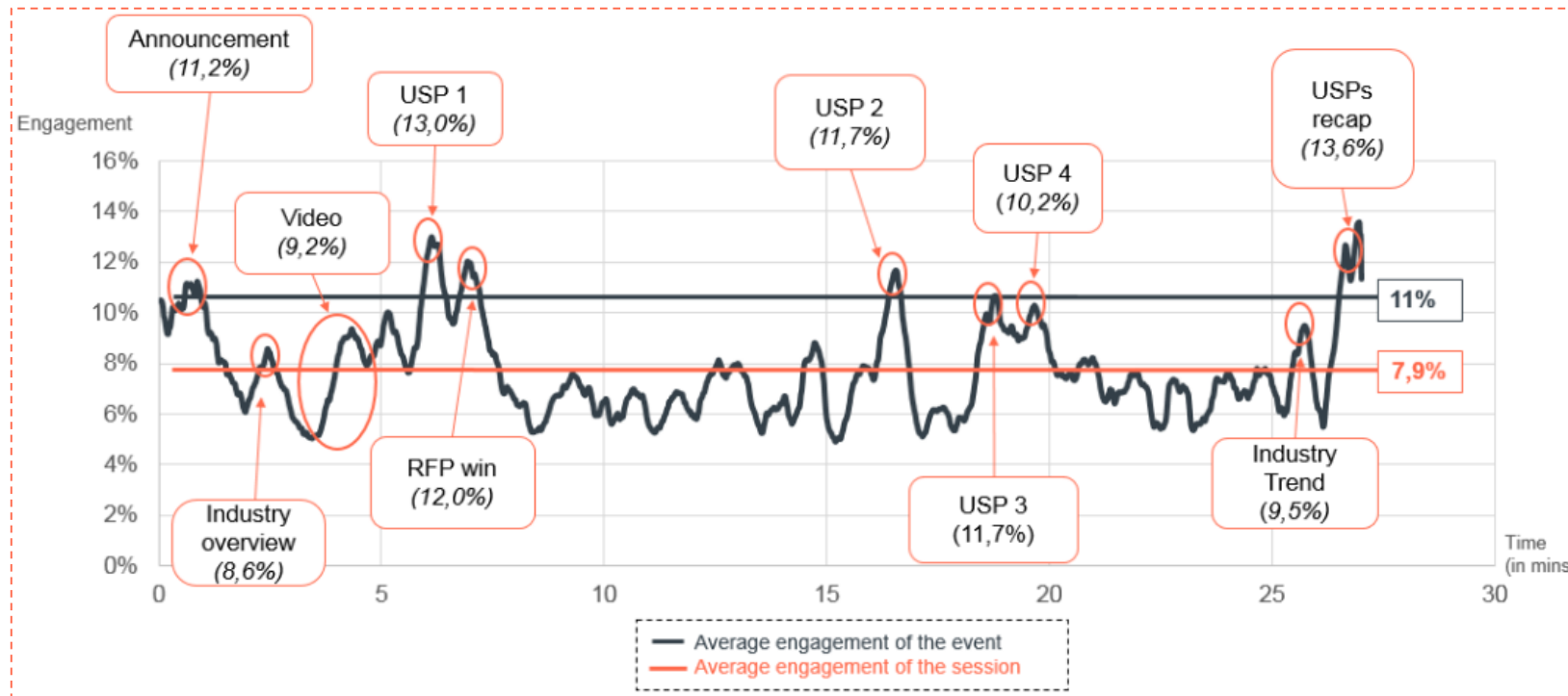
### Insights for future events

The cross-analysis of survey data and emotional data showed a clear link between high emotional engagement and attendee satisfaction. Looking at the scores of Sessions 3, 4, and 6, we can conclude that the topics were definitely relevant and got the attendees' attention, but the formats of these sessions should be redesigned for future events to drive up the emotional engagement.

## Deep Dive

What can these measures tell us for an individual session? Let's take a closer look at Session 6 to find out what insights we gathered, and what it could mean for this presentation in the future. Session 6, a new product announcement, had among the lowest engagement scores but a very high attention score. Meaning the topic was of interest, but the format could be made more effective.

The graph below gives us a brief overview of the “high notes” of the presentation. USP 1 resonated very strongly with the audience – we could recommend focusing on it longer next time. Using a video helped drive engagement making it a great tool to perhaps use later in the presentation. For example, between minutes 7 to 17. Talking about an RFP had a good impact as well, but it seems that the story that followed dragged on for a bit too long - this part should be more concise.



USP: Unique Selling Point  
RFP: Request for Proposal



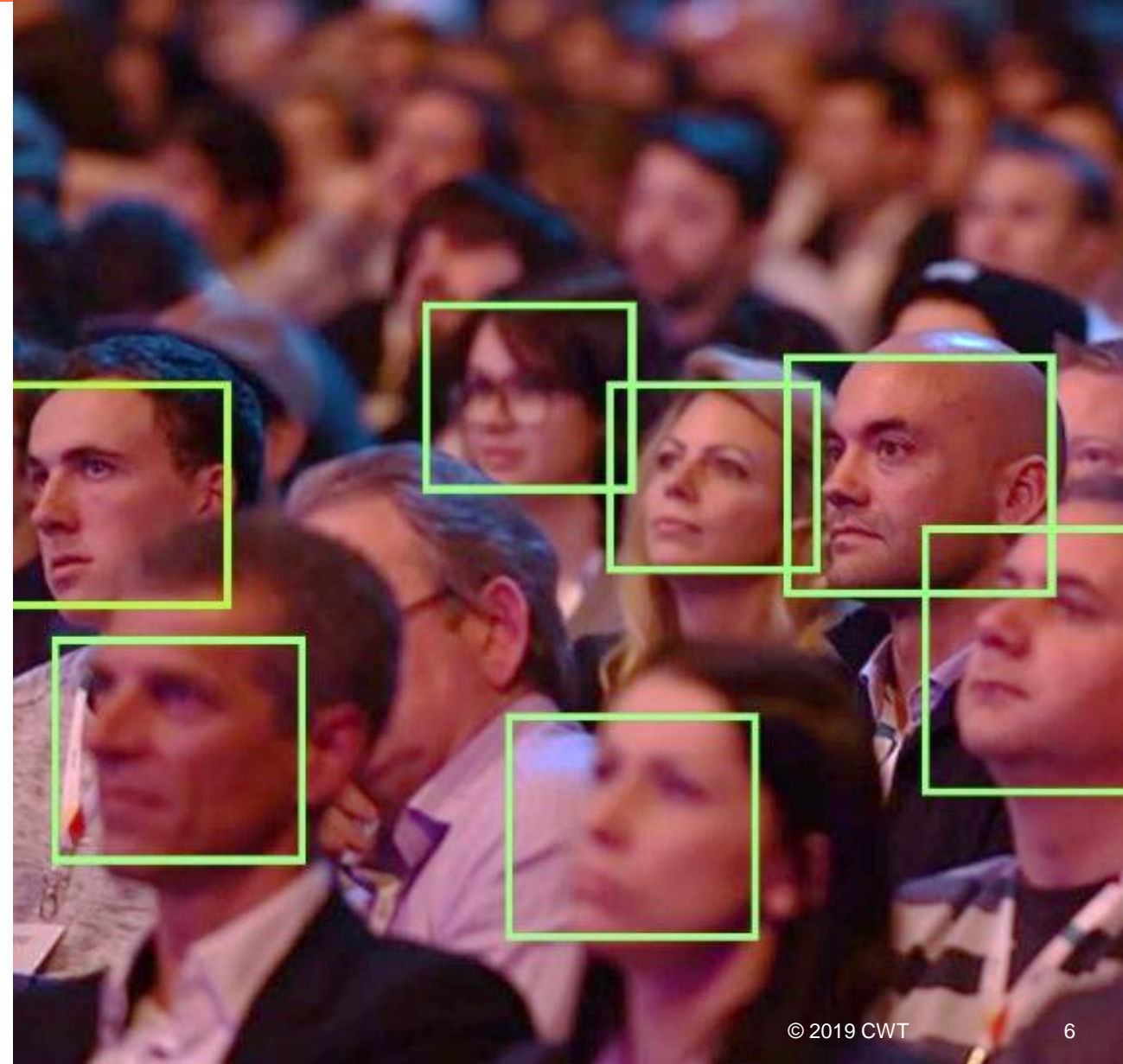
## Conclusions

As mentioned in the Methodology slide, attendees also answered questionnaires which measured if they **learned** and if they **enjoyed** each session.

The three **sessions with the highest emotional engagement were also the ones that scored the highest in surveys** on “learned” and “enjoyed”. Overall, we observed a disconnect between the emotional data and survey data on longer sessions. This can be explained by the fact that after 30 minutes, the attendee will not remember the session in detail but rather have a global impression of it.

**Questionnaires' results often come with a few biases**, such as preconceived appreciation of the speaker (is he a line manager, or someone valued / unappreciated) or lack of participation (only half of the participants answered, as is often the case).

With technologies like facial coding, we can collect unbiased, real-time data. By measuring high and low points of a session we're able to help presenters evaluate their presentation's impact and build on these insights. **Emotional data gives us the keys to improve content and format** for a more emotionally engaged and satisfied audience. It helps drive storytelling by improving delivery and timing based on knowledge of past events.



## How to boost engagement at your next event:

Although most insights were specific to the sessions that were measured, many findings can be applied to other events as well. Here are six tips from our experience with using emotions as a KPI to help you maximize engagement and the ROI of your future events:

### 1. Focus on speakers with strong storytelling skills

As measured in our study, charismatic speakers are key to captivating the attention of your audience. Use it to your advantage by alternating stronger speakers with less charismatic ones.

### 2. Place an inspiring session at the end of your event

While it might sound logical, it's not always the case. And, as observed here, even if the general attention is declining this technique is sure to get the emotional engagement of your attendees back on track to leave a lasting impression.

### 3. Humor

When planning your sessions, two important qualitative measures are: what the attendees learned, and whether they enjoyed the presentation or not. A balance of both is essential, so alternate between the serious and the casual. Make sure that attendees get to have a little fun!

### 4. Vary formats

We couldn't stress this enough. Throughout the day, engagement and attention are sure to drop. Keep your formats varied, especially after breaks. Have two speakers from the same industry? Why not put them together in a roundtable followed by a Q&A session.

### 5. Keep some tricks up your sleeve

Surprises are great and bring your attendees back in the action. Plan some videos here and there, or even a surprise speaker (or an unannounced video call?) – keep attendees on their toes.

### 6. Use the right data, and use it right

Finally, make sure that the measurements that you select are aligned with your objectives. Don't lose sleep over social media mentions if you're working on an internal learning event for instance. Once you know what to measure, make sure to **use the insights to improve your future events**. Make it a continuous improvement process.

## About CWT Meetings & Events

CWT Meetings & Events delivers 38,500 innovative, high-quality projects for customers every year – across all industry sectors, globally.

Our creative know-how helps us deliver awe-inspiring events, and our logistics expertise guarantees professional meeting services, group travel, and compliance. We manage your strategic meetings management programs with one aim in mind – to maximize your return on investment.

CWT Meetings & Events is a division of CWT.

### For more information:

There's more information about CWT Meetings & Events at [cwt-meetings-events.com](https://cwt-meetings-events.com)

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