Feathr
The Event Marketing Cloud

What Drove Us

Feathr began in 2012 making mobile apps for events. In two and a half years of that business, we worked with over 300 exhibitions and conferences, and we noticed three recurring questions:

1. How can I use this app to boost my registrations?
2. How can I use this app to add value to my sponsors?
3. How can I use this app to engage my attendees beyond the event?

What we heard: "How can I best leverage technology to grow my core business?"

Feathr's product at the time was trying to help, but mobile apps were only one piece of the puzzle. Despite the fact that people are spending more time online than ever before, the exhibitions industry has not kept up with modern advances in online advertising. Many digital marketing best practices continue to be ignored. Even more concerning is the fact that despite B2B marketing budgets pouring ever more money into digital efforts (over 50% of total projected B2B marketing spend in 2016), *less than 2%* of exhibition industry revenue comes from digital sources.

In other words, exhibition organizers are leaving money on the table.

Main Objectives

In mid-2014, we went back to the drawing board armed with those insights. Our objective was to build "the event marketing cloud", a suite of digital marketing and monetization tools *specifically* designed for the exhibition industry. We aim to help live events fully leverage their online reach to drive value pre-event, post-event, and throughout the year. This could be from increased attendee acquisition, cross promoting multiple brands are similar audiences to boost engagement, or unlocking new sources of digital revenue from sponsors/exhibitors/advertisers.

Simply put, we want to help organizers to know, grow, engage, and monetize their digital audiences.

Services

The first piece of the suite is website analytics so we can help organizers track the digital interactions that are already occurring. Understanding who visit your website when, what pages they look at, and how long they spend on your site before making their purchase decision is incredibly valuable information for any marketer. Using this data, Feathr is able to intelligently segment website visitors into groups based on their behavior, scoring each individual based on their engagement and their probability of registering for the show.

Next, Feathr helps organizers expand their online reach to new prospective attendees through two cutting-edge technologies. The first is called email mapping, which allows you to upload email lists (such as prior attendees or newsletter subscribers) to Feathr and then crawls the web to find those people. We match the email addresses to social networks like LinkedIn and Twitter—surfacing new demographic insights about your audience—as well as matching those emails to tracking cookies for ad targeting (screenshot below).
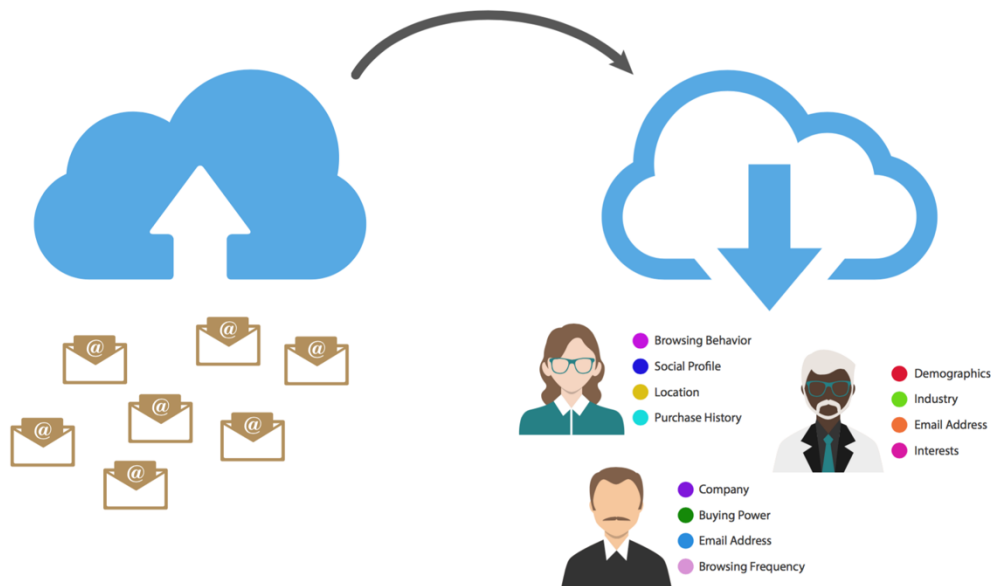
The second is called lookalike modeling, in which Feathr analyses an event's existing audience (cookies, emails, social media followers) and then we find *similar* people like them around the web based on demographic, industry, title, location, etc (screenshot below).
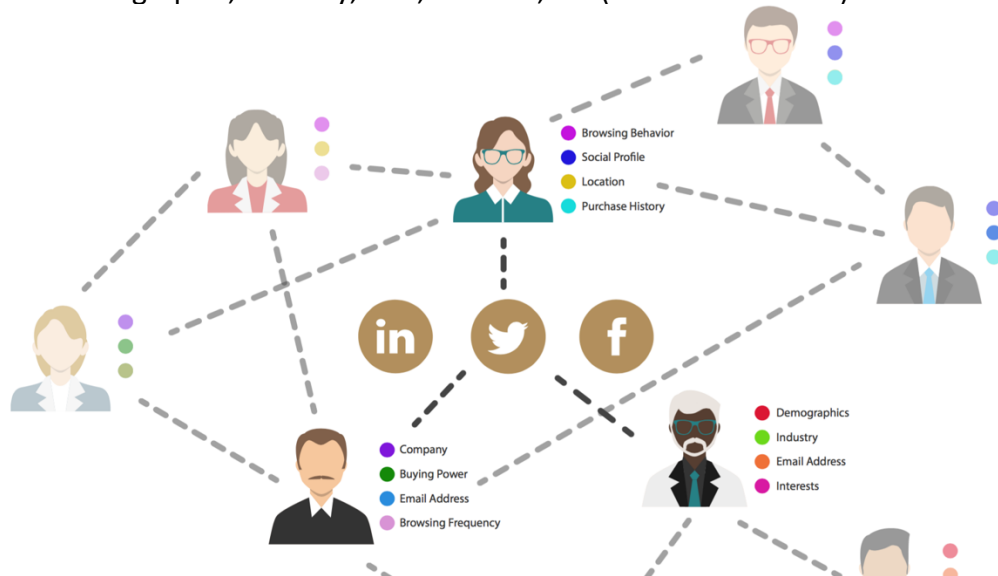
Once we've analyzed and expanded the digital audience, and segmented them based on behavior and probability of conversion, we can intelligently reach the right person with the right ad at the right time to maximize the chance that they come back to the event website and complete the registration process. This type of personalized digital advertising is possible through Feathr's integrations with 85+ ad exchanges and data platforms. And now that we have the site traffic patterns from the 200+ events that have used Feathr to date, our advertising algorithm has a strong data set of attendee behavior upon which to base these analyses and optimizations. Best of all, this is fully automated, saving the show's marketing team hours and hours of manual analysis and tedious campaign adjustment.
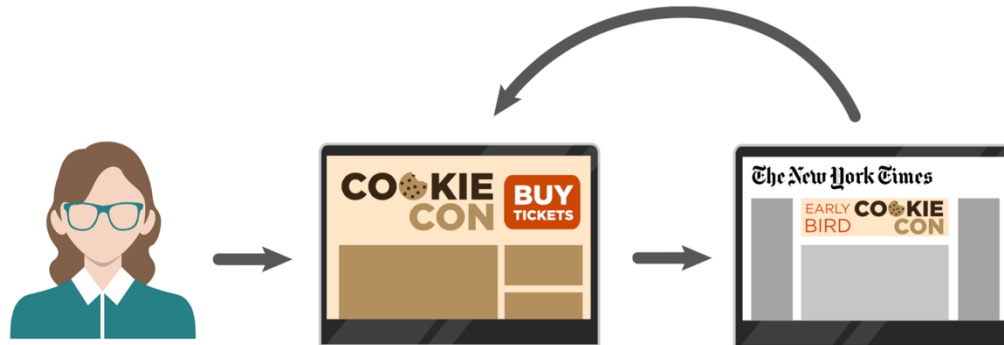
Feathr also provides a new, clever solution to the old concept of "ask exhibitors to promote the show". Our referral marketing feature provides a customized co-branded landing page for each exhibitor, sponsor, and speaker, highlighting their involvement with the event (screenshot below).

This method almost makes it feel as though the organizer is doing a favor to the exhibitor (as opposed to the other way around). It is also much simpler for the organizer; these pages are

automatically generated from a template (no manual work involved, just a bulk upload of exhibitor names, emails, etc) and we have included an auto-emailer to distribute the links to the exhibitors. It even follows up with the ones that haven't opened the email or started sharing their page yet! And because these pages are generated by Feathr, they automatically are tracked with the same web analytics mentioned above, so the organizer can see which exhibitors drove the most visits, clicks, and ultimately new registrations through their pages.

Finally, Feathr helps exhibition organizers unlock new digital revenue streams by offering sponsors and exhibitor a compelling new form of online exposure that we call "sponsored retargeting". Essentially, the organizer can leverage the same aforementioned ad targeting capabilities through Feathr to show *sponsors'* ads to their digital audience. Whether as an up-sell to an existing package or a standalone digital offering, organizers can allow exhibitors to pay an extra fee to have their ads shown to every registered attendee ten times (for example) in the weeks immediately before or after the event!

This is also an opportunity to continue adding value to (and extracting revenue from) sponsors throughout the year; three months after your event ends, those attendees are still qualified decision-makers in their industry and your exhibitors are still trying to reach them. You can continue to offer this form of hyper-targeted digital exposure twelve months of the year, all without handing over an email list or any other personally identifiable information about your attendees (screenshot below).

Measures Taken

We built the core components of the new Feathr product suite and began running pilots in November 2014 with Reed Exhibitions, Clarion Events, Questex Media, and other large industry-leading organizers. The initial results were very successful, and every single pilot customer renewed and expanded their usage. Over the course of 2015 we continued to fine-

tune the core product, add exciting new capabilities, and expand our team, including a dedicated group of Customer Success Managers that provide a human tough and proactive training and support.

We've continued to refine our vision and hone our craft, learning an incredible amount along the way from our customers as well as incredible advisors like Marco Giberti and Paul Woodward. As an ever-young startup, we intend to continue improving every day.

Challenges

While the adoption of our marketing features has been very swift, the logistical challenges associated with helping an exhibition sales teams add a new high-tech sponsorship offering to their line-up (like the targeted digital ad exposure Feathr facilitates) have been more significant. From creating pricing for the packages and marketing copy in the media kit to training sales reps in digital advertising terminology and getting appropriate compensation structures in place, it requires buy-in throughout the sales team from top to bottom. We help our customers through this process by providing sample sales material, pricing examples, and a knowledge base of common objections, while also being hands-on in the sales process, even jumping on calls with potential sponsors to answer technical questions if necessary.

Results

Feather has now been used by over 200 exhibitions and conventions worldwide, including those by industry leaders such as Reed, Clarion, UBM, Questex, Emerald Expositions, Access Intelligence, Urban Expositions, Northstar Media, and more. Reed recently signed a global deal covering over 100+ more shows in their portfolio across eleven business units including the UK, France, USA, Germany, Brazil, and Australia. Some specific case studies:

- **ICE**, a 20,000-attendee B2B show by Clarion, used Feathr to drive over 1,700 new registrants
- **FOLIO:Show**, a 1,500-attendee conference/expo by Access Intelligence with tickets priced at $1,000 each, drove over 200 new registrants
- **New York Comic Con**, a consumer convention with 100,000+ attendees run by Reed, sold over 4M sponsored retargeting impressions to major advertisers like T-Mobile.

The results are in: Feathr works, and our customers love it. The average event using Feathr sees 730% ROI for every dollar spent on or through our marketing platform!

Conclusion

Feathr is on a mission to help the exhibition industry take advantage of modern digital marketing and advertising technology, without the cost or complexity that has prevented such adoption so far. We aim to provide organizers with a suite of tools specifically tailored for their unique needs, since to date they have had to make do with generic solutions. We strive to empower live events to leverage their online reach in order grow both attendance and revenue, giving the business of face-to-face an even brighter future.