An A to Z Guide to Turning Events into Pipeline

# A is for Alignment

## Turn Your Event Calendar into a Business Strategy

For marketing leaders who need every event to answer to a business goal.

ANTWONE STIGALL



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READ BEFORE YOU USE THIS WORKBOOK

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# Antwone Stigall

CMP, CMM, DMCP

Antwone Stigall has spent 20 years turning events into marketing results. He led events as Partner, Events & Experiences at a16z, ran events and field marketing as VP at Course Hero, and served as VP of Events and Marketing at Girl Scouts of the USA.

He teaches Event Marketing Strategy for Meeting Professionals International and created the Boss Talk for Event Pros framework, which teaches event leaders to speak the language of the C-suite.

EXPERIENCE

**a16z**
Partner, Events & Experiences

**Course Hero**
VP, Events and Field Marketing

**Girl Scouts of the USA**
VP, Events and Marketing

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**When event leaders think and act like executives, they earn a seat at the table, then rebuild the table into a circle where collaboration, innovation and leadership thrive.**

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Connect with Antwone on LinkedIn or visit EventMarketingUnlocked.com for speaking and collaboration.

# A

LETTER 1 OF 26

# is for Alignment

**Welcome to Event Marketing Unlocked.**

## Every event strategy with a return starts with alignment.

Your CFO sees events as a line item. Alignment turns them into an investment with a measurable return. When each event ties to a company goal, every dollar, design choice and attendee experience supports a priority your leadership team already tracks.

Your event portfolio shows what your business values. Aligned events stop being dates on a calendar. They produce pipeline, renewals and brand lift you can report.

This letter gives you the framework. The companion template puts the framework to work across your full portfolio.



**Start here. The following 25 letters build on this one.**

A REAL EXAMPLE

# Alignment in Action

### WITHOUT ALIGNMENT

A regional sales team requests a customer appreciation dinner.

Your events team books a venue, arranges catering and executes flawlessly. Attendance is strong. Feedback is positive. Everyone calls the night a success.

Six months later, nobody connects the $40,000 spend to pipeline movement, retention rates or any company priority.

**When budget cuts arrive, this event goes first.**

### WITH ALIGNMENT

The same request comes in. This time, your events team asks one question:

**“What business goal does this support?”**

The answer: customer retention during a renewal-heavy quarter. The guest list shifts to at-risk accounts. Programming focuses on deepening relationships and surfacing concerns. Success moves from headcount to renewal conversion within 90 days.

**The dinner earns a permanent spot on next year’s calendar, with a bigger budget.**

**SAME DINNER. SAME BUDGET.**

## ONE QUESTION CHANGED THE RESULT.

**$40,000**
Dinner budget

**73%**
Attending accounts renewed

**+12 pts**
Lift over non-attendees

THE FRAMEWORK

# Turning Events into Business Strategy

## 01 Start with the Company Vision

Name your organization's top business goals for the year. Every event should support at least one of these priorities: revenue, reputation or retention.

## 02 Define the Event's Role

Turn the business goal into a clear event objective. Ask: what role does this event play in advancing the company's strategy?

## 03 Measure What Matters

Pick metrics tied to business impact. Move past attendance and satisfaction to pipeline influence, customer retention and brand lift.

## 04 Communicate the Connection

Alignment creates value only when leadership understands the link. Use plain language, visuals and short summaries to show how each event supports a company priority.

**The Strategic Event Alignment Template puts each of these steps to work.**

PRO TIP

# PAUSE

## Before You Plan

If you cannot map an event to a business goal, pause before you approve the budget. Use the pause to ask:

1. **Does this event still serve a strategic purpose, or does it repeat out of habit?**
2. **Can you refine or reposition the event to support a measurable goal?**
3. **What input from leadership would clarify its value?**

**IF THE ANSWERS POINT TO ALIGNMENT**
**Move forward with confidence.**

**IF NOT**
**Move the budget to programs that drive the business forward.**

THE COMPANION TEMPLATE

# How to Use the Strategic Event Alignment Template

The Strategic Event Alignment Template helps you manage your entire event portfolio, beyond individual programs. Use the template to:

- **Connect every event to a primary business goal**
- **Score alignment strength across your calendar**
- **Prioritize high-impact programs**
- **Show leadership the value of each event in their terms**

## HOW IT WORKS

1. List each active or proposed event in the Scorecard.
2. Assign a primary company goal.
3. Score alignment strength on the 1 to 5 scale.
4. Document your rationale and define next steps.
5. Use the Dashboard and Strategic Calendar to guide decisions.

Review the template every quarter and before you approve new programs or budgets. You don't need perfect data to start. Clarity improves as you use the tool.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

# Access the Strategic Event Alignment Template

**You're ready to move from strategy to execution. Use this editable Google Sheet to:**

- Map events to company goals
- Score alignment strength
- Decide where to scale, refine or pause programs
- Back executive conversations with data

**Access the Template**

## NEXT STEPS

**01** Save your completed template to your strategy or planning folder.

**02** Review alignment scores during quarterly planning and budget conversations.

**03** Use the Dashboard view in executive updates.

**04** Revisit and refine alignment as company priorities change.

## Review alignment every quarter.

**The same way finance reviews the budget.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Q1 | Q2 |
| Q3 | Q4 |

TEMPLATE INSTRUCTIONS · 1 OF 3

# Purpose and Understanding

**Purpose:** This template helps you connect every event in your portfolio to your organization's top business goals: Revenue, Reputation or Retention. Event decisions become data-driven, defensible and strategically aligned.

**By maintaining this scorecard, your events team can:**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Prioritize high-impact programs** | **Reallocate budgets effectively** |
| **Communicate value to executives** | **Eliminate legacy or low-impact events** |

## HOW TO USE EACH TAB

| | |
|---|---|
| **1_Scorecard** | The main working sheet. Capture event details, business drivers, alignment scores and next steps. |
| **2_Strategic_Calendar** | Auto-populated view showing all active events by month and business goal. Updates automatically from the Scorecard. |
| **3_Dashboard** | Live summary of total events, % aligned, budgets, ROI and goal distribution. Built for leadership reporting. |
| **4_Lookups** | Data validation lists for dropdowns (Goals, Drivers, Status, Quarters). Edit only to update global options. |

TEMPLATE INSTRUCTIONS · 2 OF 3

# How to Complete the Scorecard Tab

| COL | FIELD | WHAT TO ENTER |
|---|---|---|
| A–B | **Event ID and Name** | Assign a unique ID and name. Example: EVT-001 “Annual Customer Summit.” |
| C | **Status** | Planned, In Progress, Completed or On Hold. |
| D | **Company Goal** | The primary goal supported: Revenue, Reputation or Retention. |
| E | **Business Driver** | What the event accomplishes: Lead Gen, Awareness, Engagement, Education and more. |
| F | **Secondary Goal** | Optional. Use if the event impacts a second goal area. |
| G–H | **Start / End Dates** | Actual or projected dates. Assigns a Quarter automatically. |
| I | **Quarter** | Auto-calculated. Do not edit. |
| J–K | **Budget / Est. ROI ($)** | Estimated spend and expected value. ROI should exceed budget unless noted as brand or employee engagement. |
| L | **Key Metrics** | How you measure success: SQLs, MQLs, NPS, registrations. |
| M | **Owner** | Department or person accountable. |
| N | **Alignment Score (1–5)** | How strongly the event supports a top company goal. See the scoring guide. |
| O | **Alignment Rationale** | Why you assigned the score. Example: “Direct link to FY27 sales acceleration initiative.” |
| P | **Related Initiative / OKR** | The initiative or OKR the event supports. |
| Q | **Dependencies** | Product readiness, leadership approval and other critical needs. |
| R | **Sponsor?** | Yes or No for an executive sponsor. |
| S | **Next Step** | 5 = Replicate or scale · 4 = Strengthen metrics · 3 = Re-scope or refine · 2 = Reevaluate · 1 = Pause and reassess |
| T | **Notes** | Reminders, decisions or context for future planning cycles. |

TEMPLATE INSTRUCTIONS · 3 OF 3

# How the Other Tabs Work

## Strategic Calendar

- Auto-populates from Scorecard entries.
- Shows all events grouped by month and goal.
- Updates on its own. No manual edits needed.
- Spots overlaps and timing gaps.

## Dashboard

- Calculates total events, % aligned (score of 3 or higher), average alignment score, total budget and estimated ROI, events by goal and alignment by quarter.
- Charts update in real time. Use this sheet for executive readouts and quarterly reviews.

### Pro Tips

- Treat this file as your event portfolio health report.
- Check the Dashboard before approving new programs.
- Use the Alignment Rationale and Next Step columns as documentation for executive updates.
- Replace sample rows 2 to 7 with your real events, keeping their structure as examples.

SCORING GUIDE RECAP

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **5** | Directly supports a company goal with measurable KPIs | **Maintain and scale** |
| **4** | Strong alignment but needs tighter measurement | **Strengthen metrics** |
| **3** | Moderate alignment or indirect link | **Re-scope or refine** |
| **2** | Weak alignment | **Reevaluate or merge** |
| **1** | Misaligned or unclear | **Pause and reassess** |

## Governance and Maintenance

- Review cadence: quarterly with leadership.
- File protection: lock the 4_Lookups tab and the formula cells in Calendar and Dashboard.
- Versioning: save a new copy each year, for example Strategic Event Alignment 2027.
- Color key: Revenue #D83C3E · Reputation #2E5AAC · Retention #2E7D32.
- Conditional formatting: score of 4 or higher is green, 3 is yellow, below 3 is red.

YOUR NOTES

# Scratch Paper