

A GUIDE BY AISLING

Beyond the Screen: Engaging prospects with impactful in-person events

Why Lunch & Learns and dinner events out-convert cold digital touches — and the exact run-of-show to host one that fills your pipeline.

INTRODUCTION

Cutting through the digital noise

In today's hyper-connected world, our inboxes are overflowing, our social feeds are saturated, and virtual meetings can often feel transactional. While digital outreach is essential, it often struggles to build the deep trust and genuine rapport that truly drives business relationships.

Prospects are experiencing digital fatigue. They crave authentic interactions, real conversations, and opportunities to connect on a human level. This is where the power of in-person engagement becomes undeniable.

The paradox of modern selling: the more automated outreach becomes, the more a well-hosted dinner or Lunch & Learn stands out. Scarcity of human attention is your opportunity.

CHAPTER 1

The undeniable power of in-person engagement

Imagine an environment where your ideal clients are genuinely engaged, actively listening, and participating in meaningful dialogue. This is the magic of well-executed in-person events. Lunch & Learns and dinner events offer a unique opportunity to:

1

Build genuine connections

Break down the barriers of a screen. Shared meals and intimate settings naturally foster rapport and allow for more personal, memorable interactions.

2

Foster deeper conversations

Beyond the quick pitch, these events provide ample time for in-depth discussions about challenges, solutions, and shared visions. You can truly understand your prospects' needs and position your expertise effectively.

3

Showcase expertise authentically

Instead of a sales presentation, you deliver valuable insights, lead thought-provoking discussions, and demonstrate your capabilities in a relaxed, non-pressured environment. This builds credibility and positions you as a trusted advisor.

These events transform prospects from distant contacts into engaged individuals, ready to explore how your solutions can truly benefit them.

The Lunch & Learn run-of-show

A great event is a system, not a vibe. Here is the exact sequence we use when we run Lunch & Learns for clients:

1

3 weeks out — Pick a teaching topic, not a pitch

Choose a title your buyers would attend even if you sold nothing (e.g., "How manufacturing plants are cutting inspection costs with AI"). Book a private room close to your prospects.

2

2 weeks out — Curate 20, seat 10

Personally invite 20–25 named prospects that fit your ICP. Expect 40–50% to attend. A tight room of 8–12 peers beats a crowd of 40 strangers.

3

Day of — The 60-minute agenda

10 min welcome & introductions · 20 min insight talk (teach, no demo) · 20 min guided discussion where attendees share their own challenges · 10 min close with one clear next step.

4

The soft ask

Never pitch from the front of the room. Close with: "If any of this resonated, I'll follow up personally this week." The event earns you the meeting; the meeting earns the deal.

5

48 hours after — The follow-up window

Send personalized recaps referencing what each attendee actually said. Book 1:1s while the goodwill is fresh. This window is where events convert to pipeline.

CHAPTER 3

Measuring event ROI

An event you can't measure is a party. Track these four numbers for every Lunch & Learn or dinner you host:

Cost per attendee

Total spend ÷ attendees. A focused dinner often runs \$60–150 per seat — far below the blended cost of an enterprise cold meeting.

Meetings booked in 14 days

The single best indicator of event quality. Target: 1:1 follow-up meetings with 50%+ of attendees.

Pipeline sourced in 90 days

Tag every opportunity that originated at the event in your CRM. This is the number your CFO cares about.

Second-touch acceptance rate

How many attendees accept your next invite? A rising rate means you are building a community, not just hosting dinners.

Rule of thumb: one well-run event per month with 10 ICP attendees will outperform 2,000 cold emails in meetings booked — and the meetings show up warm.

CHAPTER 4

Your partner in event success

At Aisling Consulting, we transform the concept of in-person engagement into measurable client acquisition. Planning and executing a successful event is complex and time-consuming — so we handle everything from concept to execution:

1

Strategic concept development

We define your goals, identify your ideal clientele, and craft a compelling event theme and content strategy that resonates.

2

Seamless execution

From venue selection, catering, and invitations to content delivery, attendee management, and follow-up strategies — we manage every detail.

3

High-value, intimate experiences

Quality over quantity. We design events that feel exclusive and valuable, ensuring attendees feel respected and engaged.

4

Targeted client attraction

We leverage our outbound expertise to ensure your message reaches the right individuals — key decision-makers and high-potential prospects.

We create the environment where your brand shines — so your team can focus on what they do best: building relationships and driving meaningful business conversations.

CONCLUSION

Driving measurable impact beyond the screen

In an age of digital overload, the human touch remains an unparalleled differentiator. By strategically leveraging in-person Lunch & Learns and dinner events, businesses forge stronger connections, cultivate deeper trust, and accelerate their client acquisition efforts.

Aisling Consulting is your trusted partner in harnessing this power. Let us help you create unforgettable experiences that attract key clientele and drive the meaningful business conversations essential for your growth.

Ready to transform your client engagement?

Book a complimentary strategy call and we will design your first event together.

Book a call

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