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6 Reasons Americans Should Source from Mexican Manufacturers

Over the last few decades, Mexico has emerged as the most attractive market and a powerhouse in industrial manufacturing. Since 2016, the **Mexican manufacturing output** has exponentially increased and is projected to continue its upward trend over the next years. Now is the time for the United States and other foreign businesses to capitalize on the Mexican manufacturing market's benefits.

Mexico has attracted many US and foreign businesses capitalizing on the countries manufacturing benefits resulting in these upwards trends. Now, established and smaller eCommerce businesses and start-ups alike choose to take their manufacturing operations to Mexico.

Here are 6 reasons why US eCommerce companies should choose to move their manufacturing operations to Mexico:

Increase US Profit Margins with Mexican Manufacturers

Historically, China has stood as the manufacturing leader, dominating the global manufacturing operations since the 1980s. China's advantage used to be that their lower labor costs but dramatic Chinese wage increases have risen – tips the scale in Mexico's favor where Mexican wages have remained relatively stable.

US eCommerce businesses can cut costs and maintain high-quality manufacturing with low-cost laborand skilled workers throughout Mexico. Currently, Mexico's production labor costs are almost two dollars less than that of China – for Us businesses, expect to save 20-30% in labor costs when movingmanufacturing operations to Mexico.

Mexico has a unique and attractive manufacturing workforce – young and highly skilled. The Mexican government understands the advantage of such an exceptional workforce and is firmly focused on increasing manufacturing throughout Mexico. They have dedicated initiatives to educate and train the future workforce to produce highly skilled engineers, machinists, and trade artisans. USbusinesses will find this level of increased proficiency highly desirable, looking to source quality production at a profit-maximized cost.

Valuable Mexican Industries in an Emerging Market

Mexican manufacturing expands in size and sophistication as industries become more skilled and specialized. The country receives international credit and recognition for its manufacturing productionand professional operations.

The central Mexican manufacturing industries are aerospace, automotive, medical devices, electronics, apparel, textile, appliance, and furniture manufacturing. These industries' size and complexity make Mexico the 12th largest exporter in the world. Current trends and figures indicate exponential growth in automotive and electronic exports due to the workers they employ.

According to industry, manufacturing companies in Mexico are group or "clustered" and are

geographically placed together. The coordinated placement of these "clusters" ensures that the manufacturing companies and facilities are collectively supporting each other in terms of technological assistance, production, and best processing practices. This is another example of **Mexican manufacturers' commitment to delivering quality** and experience What's more, Mexico is one of the most appealing emerging markets for 2021 – positioned above China for thethird year in a row – according to Bloomburg. The younger generation–-typically with the most purchasing power in any emerging market– is the largest in Mexico's recorded history.

It has never been better for US companies to establish a presence in Mexico as their economy will continue to grow. Locating yourself inside the country is beneficial to your business and sourcing capabilities for two reasons: one, it better positions you to recognize and regional research trends, it builds awareness and trust among consumers; two, it creates awareness and personal connections promoting trust and confidence among consumers.

Mexico Manufacturers' Location Advantages

Mexico's location's centrality makes the delivery, shipping sizes, shipping times, traveling, and communication easier than manufacturers in Asia or the pacific.

The proximity to the US offers companies a more flexible experience— for example, run adjustmentsare relatively easy and quick, despite the runs stage. The difference in time-zones means that most US businesses are only 2-3 hours ahead or behind any Mexican manufacturing facilities. The locational advantage optimizes problem resolutions and speeds communication for all American businesses– addressing queries faster and more promptly with emails and calls.

Visiting Mexican manufacturing facilities is hassle-free and accommodating. US businesses can expect to incur lower costs, plan less, easier visa requirements, less time-restricted, and cheaper accommodation visiting Mexican facilities than the Chinese.
Mexico is further advantaged compared to China as it is cheaper and more flexible in delivery and shipment options. Mexican manufacturing facilities can offer next-day or even same-day delivery; unique international shipment and **more comprehensive delivery options are exclusive to Mexican manufacturing facilities**. With the short distance and travel by land, exporting becomes a faster process.

Financially, Mexico is better situated to offer better shipping to the US. Typically, China limits yourUS business by restricting you to paying premiums for small quantity orders unless you can fill 40- foot shipping containers or paying a premium to ship smaller quantities. **Mexican Manufacturing facilities offer the choice** to use pallet or box quantities, which is perfect for e-commerce start-ups and smaller US business.

Mexican Manufacturing "Shelter Service" Benefits

One of the best models for Mexican Manufacturing is the "Shelter Model," which is uniquely devised with specific benefits. Operating in Mexico under a shelter service is one of the most popular eCommerce businesses and companies.

Using a shelter service means that you will be operating in Mexico under a Mexican legal entity. The Mexican-based entity will lease your manufacturing facility and run in-country operations – hiring and paying employees and any other administrative paperwork.

Essentially, a shelter provider acts as a trusted business partner who specializes in Mexican Manufacturing administration. During the early stages of your partnership and operations, shelter services will manage your

setup and administrative tasks: source the leasing-facility, hire employees, acquire necessary permits and licenses, etc. Operating within a shelter service can have your manufacturing running in as little as 3 months and relieve many of the stresses that come up along the way.

Once established, the Shelter service continues to manage the day-to-day administrative work like paying employees and maintaining detailed records, and track inventory as required for US companies participating with the IMMEX maquiladora program. The shelter service is a knowledgeable and trusted Mexican provider – ideal for e-commerce start-up businesses.

US businesses under these services do not legally own the facility under this model; however, they are entitled to the final say in operation procedures and manufacturing structuring. For example, a US company can choose to use their equipment or import raw goods. US and foreign businesses are guaranteed control of all manufacturing procedures and processes.

Choosing to operate under a shelter service, you can save 30% on your operating cost; schemes for US and foreign companies include not paying income taxes for the manufacturing facility's first four years of operation in Mexico. The shelter services are considered prime reasons US businesses chooseMexico for manufacturing their products.

Protected Intellectual Property in Mexico

The Mexican government is committed to protecting US and foreign companies' intellectual property. Over the last decade, Mexico has made significant strides to protect all businesses' intellectual property, local and foreign.

Recently, Mexico welcomed updates to the Mexican Federal Law for the Protection of Intellectual Property. This new framework provided updates to the 2018 Protection of Property Laws expandingand adapting Mexican legislation to the already enforced international standards of the TIPAT, TMEC, and the Free Trade Agreement between Mexican and the European Union.

The new IP framework incorporates best practices –already internationally upheld, stipulating more clearly legal requirements and facilitating these requirements to the local and international user of the manufacturing and intellectual property system. Additionally, the changes aim to streamline the administrative processes. All this is great news for US IPR owners looking to manufacture in Mexico.

Some of the critical areas of improvement to the laws that support US businesses and Foreign Intellectual Property include:

- Recognizes foreign examination results of Copywrite
- Artisanal products are now recognized as Industrial Designs, reinforcing their regulation
- Manufacturing company's trade Secrets and understanding are better protected by the law and prosecutions under the concept of undue appropriation
- Details explicit criminal actions for trade secrets under trademark piracy
- Increases the punishments for perpetrators of trademark piracy

IMMEX Maquiladora Program Rewards Foreign Companies

The IMMEX maquiladora program enables the US and other foreign manufacturers to import raw materials and manufacturing mechanisms into Mexico, tax and duty-free. This sizeable advantage forUS and foreign companies is conditional on the company's compliance that 100% of all manufacturedgoods within the Mexican facilities are exported out of Mexico within the mandated timeframe.

The US and other foreign countries greatly benefit from avoiding the 16% VAT tax on imported goods.

The IMMEX maquiladora program was initially implemented in 1996, putting Mexico in high competition with other leading manufacturing countries. The Mexican government specifically designed the IMMEX maquiladora program to promote the US and international manufacturing production and operations in Mexico. The program's significance is to generate more excellent employment opportunities and expand the Mexican economy by creating international manufacturingoptions.

By 1985, manufacturing through the IMMEX maquiladora program became the primary source of foreign trade in Mexico. The program is further recognized as a crucial and contributing part of the Mexican manufacturing industry's modernization. The exchange between the US and foreign entitiesand Mexican manufacturing offers Mexican manufacturing facilities specialized machinery, international expertise, and training opportunities to the manufacturing industry. This further fosters modernization and quality-assurance.

The IMMEX maquiladora program took off in 1994 in conjunction with the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement. This Agreement and the IMMEX maquiladora program was the catalyst for the Mexican manufacturing export boom as foreign trade lines opened, fostering free trade between the US, Canada, and Mexico.

What's Stopping You from Manufacturing in Mexico?

Over the last few decades, Mexico has emerged as the most attractive market and a powerhouse in industrial manufacturing. Since 2016, the **Mexican manufacturing output** has exponentially increased and is projected to continue its upward trend over the next years. Now is the time for theUS and other foreign businesses to capitalize on the Mexican manufacturing market's benefits.

Mexico has attracted many US and foreign businesses capitalizing on the countries manufacturing benefits resulting in these upwards trends. Now, more extensive and smaller eCommerce businessesand start-ups alike choose to take their manufacturing operations to Mexico.

If you are thinking about outsourcing to China, we challenge you to consider Mexico a better choice for your manufacturing operations. China manufacturing now has more drawbacks than Mexico, with significant wage inflation, high transportation costs, and labor shortage. Offshoringto Mexico is a more viable manufacturing solution, especially for the United States and Canada- based companies and headquarters.

With added regulations and tax benefits, lower shipping costs, and more feasible factory visits provided by the IMMEX and Mexico's prime location; you really should consider outsourcing toMexico. What is stopping you.

Metal Roof Gutter Guard Installation Instructions

One of the best DIY home improvement projects is installing Gutter Guard installation. Sound gutter guard systems have many benefits, from preventing blockages, bird and pest proofing, decreased property maintenance and many more. However, correct installation is essential to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency.

Gutter guards' significant advantage is their DIY-friendliness, but following gutter guard installation instructions is imperative. Notably, there are different gutter guard instructions for various roof types; such as corrugated metal roof, or tile roof and more. Ensure you have the correct gutter guard instructions for your right roof types, as the installation process is vastly different.

So if you are looking to DIY install new mesh guards, or replace existing worn gutter guard on a corrugated metal roof, here are the critical steps for installation.

Quick Instructions to Install Gutter Guard to Metal Corrugated Roof

Step 1: Clean out your entire guttering system
Step 2: Measure the mesh to the section of the house
Step 3:Cut the mesh from the remaining roll
Step 4: Fix gutter guard to the far gutter's edge with your trim Step 5: Make 2 x 40mm cuts either side of every second corrugation
Step 6: Secure mesh to roof via saddle and screws
Step 7: Repeat on all sections of your property Optional steps:
Step 8: If required, affix mesh to ridge caps of your property Step 9: If required, install the mesh to the roof valleys

Below, we detail each step of the instructions, including pre-installation, Ridge Caps affixation, and metal corrugated roof valley installation.

Pre-Installation for Metal Corrugated Roof Gutter Guard

Safety Considerations

As you will be working at heights and on ladders, safety is your first and most crucial pre-step to installing gutter guard. It is essential to understand how to assess your property for potential risks and understand how to work safely at heights.

Assessing your surroundings:

Like any DIY project, you must assess your property and illuminate any potential risks or hazards. We recommend to:

- Avoid working in wet weather
- Make a note of any wires or power lines
- Make sure there is no heavy machinery or protruding objects underneath your working areas
- Cutaway any overhanging or low bearing trees from the workspace
- Keep children and pets away from your working area

Recommendations for DIY projects at heights:

- Wear non-slip shoes and suitable outdoor protective clothing
- Wear gloves to protect your hands and enhance your grip
- Ensure all ladders are resting on even and flat ground
- Use a safety bracket to secure the ladder to your property -prevents the ladder from slipping or damaging your property
- Use a safety harness for DIY projects at significant heights. Full protection equipment is required for heights of 2 metres or above
- Keep all materials and tools tidy - prevents slips and trips

Gutter Guard Installation Kit Materials

Before starting the project, take out all your materials and ensure you have enough for the whole project, and it is the correct roof colour. Correct materials are:

- Mesh
- Trims
- Saddles
- Self-Drilling Screws
- Gutter Guard Installation Tools

Get your tools out ready in preparation for the installation. The tools include:

- Electric Drill/Screw Gun With The Correct Bits,
- Small brush for cleaning
- Hose
- Sheers Or Tin Snips
- Protective work gloves
- Relevant Safety Equipment.

Instructions for Gutter Guard Installation on Metal Roofs

Once you complete the pre-installation safety and equipment checks, you can begin installing the gutter guard to your corrugated metal roof. Follow the steps bellow

Step 1: Clean Out Your Entire Guttering System

It is vitally important to thoroughly clean your entire gutter systems before you attach any gutter guard to your metal roof. Failure to do so may result in clogging and obstructions forming under the gutter guard; once installed, blockages after installation are more challenging to remove.

There are two ways to ensure you have thoroughly cleaned out your guttering system. Use them both for in-depth clean.

1. Remove any large debris in the gutters, including sticks. Using a small brush sweep any medium-size debris, such as gum leaves or small twigs out of the gutter.
2. Using a hose, wash out the whole system.

Be aware that washing-out your guttering system will make the roof very slippery. To decrease the risk of accidents, do not get on the roof when it is soaking wet, allow to dry.

If you have roof valleys, clean them out at the same time. This will also ensure that they have time to dry out before installing the gutter guard later.

Step 2: Measure the Mesh to the Section of the House

Once the gutters are clean, measure out the right amount of mesh for the section of the house you are currently working. Work one area at a time.

Slowly, roll your mesh out, starting at oneendwitha20-30cm hanging. Then, finish at the other end with another 20-30 cm extra mesh.

Whilemeasuringthelength,makingsureyouhaveenoughdepthtocoveryourgutterfrom the roof to the gutter pipes far edge. The incorrect depth will not affix to the roof correctly, rendering the gutter guard ineffective.

Step 3: Cut The Mesh From the Remaining Roll

Next, cut off the remaining roll; don't forget to leave a 20-30cm overlap at each end.

Ensure that you are wearing gloves when cutting, as the edge of the material is sharp and can cut you.

Step 4: Fix Gutter Guard To The Far Gutter's Edge With Your Trim

At one end, place the trim along the outer gutter's edge, ensuring that the mesh covers the gutter and is entirely underneath the trim.

Ensure the mesh is laid flat, and then, screw the trims into position roughly every 2500mm using self- drilling screws—Screw-in one trim at a time. Continue the process along the entire section.

For gutter corner sections, cut through the trim at an angle to create a clean corner edge.

Step 5: Make 2 x 40mm Cuts Either Side Of Every Second Corrugation

To the mesh closer to the roof, make two 40mm cuts either side of every second corrugation. The cuts ensure that the mesh is secured seamlessly to your roof and prevents crevasses for debris to enter.

Next, Place the saddle over the corrugations where you made the cuts. The saddle should sit above the mesh covering the corrugations.

Step 6: Secure Mesh to Roof via Saddle and Screws

Screw the saddle onto the roof using screws. It is best to apply firm pressure while screwing the saddle to prevent it from moving off the corrugation.

Fixing the Guard to Ridge Caps

If your roof has ridge caps, the process is easy.

1. Start on one side.
2. Make sure the last corrugation before the ridge cap is secured with a saddle.
3. Cut the mesh to the angle of the ridge cap.
4. Screw the mesh into the edge of the ridge cap for seamless-look.
5. Repeat on the ridge caps other side.

Instructions for Metal Roof Gutter Guard Valley Installations

We recommend installing a gutter guard to your valleys for a complete solution to blockages and debris build-up. Roof Valleys is the most common places for debris accumulation and the hardest to maintain and clean. Installing gutter guard to your corrugated roof valley is the last step for comprehensive protection.

Tools: Drill, Safety tools, such as a harness.

Materials: Mesh, Saddles, Roof Screws

Safety Consideration: The valley is a problematic area of the roof to fit as the roof's angles can make it hard to grip. Ensure you have correct footwear – non-slip shoes - and do not attempt to install if the roof is wet.

Pre-installation: Measure the width of the valley. 330mm is the standard width for mesh gutter guard and will fit most valleys, but ensuring the mesh will cover the full valley prevents mistakes.

1. If needed, measure the valley's length and cut the mesh size to a suitable size.
2. Lay the mesh out from the top of the valley to the bottom, tacking it into position as needed.
3. Begin at the top of the valley, choose a side, and place a saddle on the roof's first corrugation.
4. Screw the saddle in place.
5. Slowly, work downwards fix the saddles to each corrugation of the roof with the screw.
6. Repeat the process on the other side of the Roof Valley.

DIY TIPS – The fixation of the saddles to the roof may be more challenging than the gutter installation. Corrugated Roof Valleys may have different lines, so you may need to reverse some or all of the saddles to better affix to the roof.

Other Tips for Installing Gutter Guards to a Metal Roof

Here are some other handy tips for installing DIY gutter guard:

- Take your time at each step. You want to work efficiently and accurately.
- The saddles will take the longest and is probably the most crucial step to ensure complete efficiency. Ensure you have secured them correctly, and they do not move or have any gaps.
- Do not over-tighten your screws along with the trims or at the saddles. You want to avoid strippingthethreadandmaintaintheguttergurdsystemmorechallenginginthefuture.
- Work on one-metre sections at a time.
- Ensure you have secured each part before moving on.
- Having a second person is best for safety and decreasing the work time
- Working around ridge caps, make sure the saddle closest to the ridge cap is secured.

Enjoy The Benefits of Gutter Guard System

After the installation, your gutter guard will provide your property with complete protection. The system will improve its efficiency and increase the gutter system's lifespan. It is one of the easiest ways to prevent most organic debris from entering the system. Itis essential to understand that no gutter guard offers 100% protection from all debris. While maintenance will undoubtedly decrease, using a hose to flush the system occasionally, will also prolong its effectiveness.

Gutter Guards are specially designed to prevent leaves and other organic debris from clogging and obstructing your gutters, maintaining good water flow. However, many people find further advantages of gutter guard, beyond its intended need, after its installation.

Gutter Guards' added benefits is a decrease in annual maintenance and, therefore, decrease risks associated with the upkeep, bird proofing and pest prevention of gutters and roof spaces, improved rainwater-harvest quality, and protection from ember attack in a bushfire.

Whatever the reason you need a DIY gutter guard, you can be sure that installing a gutter guard to your corrugated metal roof, is a wise investment in your property.

Choosing the best Gutter Guard For Your Metal Roof

A vast range of **DIY gutter guard solutions** on the market are suitable for DIY metal roof installations. These gutter guards' suitability also depends on your gutter guard needs, property requirements, and budget.

At Aussie DIY Solutions, we recommend our Corrugated Roof Gutter Guard kit as the best quality Gutter Guard for installation on metal roofs. Kits are available in 21 colours that can be colour- matched to your gutter and roof. You can purchase by the metre or buy a custom order on some products. **The Corrugated Roof Gutter Guard** kit includes all materials and easy to follow instructions for the installation, saving you time and hassle.

Aussie DIY Solutions has arrange of mesh materials in the Corrugated Roof Gutter Guard kit, including Aluminium mesh and Ember Guard in specific meterage measurements. At Aussie DIY Solutions, we want you to be able to protect your entire home, so we offer a range of roof fixing including roof-to-gutter, valleys kits and roof-to-box gutter installations.

Installing gutter guard to a metal roof is easy, for further information on installation instructions, products and reviews visit our website or get in touch with us.

Increase User Engagement For EventsWith Voting

Over the past decade, audience engagement has evolved into an entirely new concept when popularized virtual, and hybrid events arrived. Today, successful events, live sports, competitions,game shows, reality TV, and even corporate conferences need to provide clear opportunities for attendees, both in-person and virtual, to participate and be captivated.

Leveraging **voting platforms** at these types of events are an instrumental **event strategy** toimprove audience engagement.

Today, some of the most successful shows, virtual events, and in-person and hybrid conferences have successfully implemented **voting campaigns** into their event experience to improve audienceand attendee participation and captivation.

So, how can you use voting platforms to increase attendee engagement at virtual and hybrid events?How can you incorporate online voting with events that have live audiences and home viewers?
And, how do you measure audience engagement?

Use this voting platforms guide to **introduce a voting campaign** into your next live, in-person,virtual or hybrid event:

1. **Fundamentals of Audience Engagement**
2. **Understanding your voter**
3. **How to customize voting experiences for event attendees**
4. **10 best practices for voting campaigns**
5. **7 benefits of using a quality voting platform for audience engagement**

FUNDAMENTALS OF AUDIENCEENGAGEMENT

Live Events Vs. Virtual Events Vs. Hybrid Events

We assign the term **"event" to the act of bringing people together for a purpose** – to entertain,educate, inform, celebrate, discover or celebrate. The most traditional form of events is live in- person events. However, the rise in virtual and hybrid experiences has made the task of **engagingmultiples audience types** – virtual and in-person – more complex.

Here are four ways to describe an event:

- **Live events** – attendees physically view the event, either at the location or broadcast, inreal-time
- **In-person events** – attendees are physically present in one location
- **Virtual events** – attendees are virtually present and may include virtual meetings
- **Hybrid events** – Attendees are in person; others are virtually present

Event planners, brands, and webinar producers have all reported that **attendee engagement is an important KPI metric to measure the success of their events**. Still, more than half of organizersindicate that audience engagement in virtual or online events is the most difficult to maintain consistently. As hybrid events evolve, event professionals need to juggle the complexities of managing the engagement of both virtual and in-person audience members.

What is Audience Engagement?

Audience engagement is the level of participation and captivation shown by an audience towards anevent. It can be measured through metrics such as registration and attendance numbers, social media activity, audience interaction with event apps, and more. For virtual events and hybrid events, audience engagement can also be measured by clickthroughs, audience Q&A, live polls, and more.

Generally, the more engaged your audience is, the more satisfied they are with your event. However, **creating audience engagement opportunities is also about allowing fan's voices to beheard and how their decision-making might impact the game or event from home** – and it is precisely this that an audience's vote enables.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR VOTER

Before creating the ultimate voting platform for your event, you must take a step towardsunderstanding your event audience and voters.

Step into your audience and voter's shoes – well, their mind really. Why do they attend your event?What are their behaviors, habits, and interest? What motivates them to take that leap into an active voter rather than a passive audience member.

Audience or voter personas and other data inform event decision-making - and don't worry, itis not as complicated as you might think.

Start With Voting Personas

It is crucial you don't make assumptions about your audience or creating your ideal attendee. Instead, you want to base your voting persona on **tangible data** that focus on specific individualswithin your target audience.

Here's how:

1. **Define your target audience/attendee**, including demographics like geographical location, age, sex, marital status, income, interests (Your target audience encompasses various common elements within groups while a persona focuses on identifies differentiating factors in individuals).
2. **Leverage existing data to help inform your voter profile**. Website, virtual event software,and social media platforms have a wealth of easily accessible data.
3. **Create numerous persona profiles** that include basic, like name and age, and specific details,like career, lifestyle factors, income, interest personal challenges. Never stop at one profile; creating numerous profiles to give you a more diverse spread.
4. **Find out how the persona's interests and behaviors impact their voting habits. For example,** millennials are willing to use social media for voting; boomers prefer to text or paperballots, some people don't want to give out their personal information.
5. **Audit your current event management platform** with your defined data points from thepersonas.

The Importance of Voter Registration

The registration process for attendee-focused events cannot be understated, as engagement effectively starts at the level of registration. Use your different personas to create an optimal userflow for the registration.

For example, answer the following questions using your voter persona:

1. Are the multiple registration opportunities for attendees, sponsors, nominee family?
2. Are there clear instructions for the audience on where to go next?
3. Is your event 1-day or across multi-days/weeks?
4. Is your event employing standard voting, multi-voting, or sweepstakes?
5. Is there a live reveal, and how do you want to include the audience?
6. Do you need to inform your audience of the incentive to votes?
7. Do you need to get clothes sizes for merchandise giveaways and prizes?
8. Do you need to get postal addresses to give bags or prizes?

9. Is there a need for captions/real-time translation or audible/video instructions?

Distinguish what data you need to collect from your audience at registration and provide them withall the necessary information before they get there. Use differentiated ticket types, promo codes, QR codes, and conditional questionnaires that help your attendees purchase the correct ticket or find the right website page.

Using Voting Data

During your voting campaign, you will have collected copious amounts of data. Data can be used to**fine-tune your voting platform for future campaigns or sessions**. You can gather further information on your voting personas and therefore cater more specifically to that audience.

However, you must be aware that **some people will not vote if they have to use Single Sign-Ons(SSOs) because they do not want to give out their personal information.** Utilizing additional voting methods like SMS and Toll-free voting will ensure these voters can be heard and gives youother valuable data into your voters.

HOW TO CUSTOMIZE VOTING EXPERIENCES FOR EVENT ATTENDEES

Customize Metrics with Goals and KPIs

Before you start building and customizing your voting solution, be sure to define your metrics you want to measure. For virtual events, attendee engagement and satisfaction KPI's is the primary determinate of the event's success. So, metrics must be settled upon from the onset, and these are communicated as goals to all team members.

Creating User Flow

If sometimes virtual event planners find navigating a virtual event platform tricky, imagine how your first-time users can feel – don't expect voters to understand from the get-go. Planners choosing a self-managed campaign need to pay close attention to functionality for the user. Look for platforms that are UX-friendly and easy to navigate. A great addition is including FAQ sections or pop-ups or offering small video tutorials on how to place your vote.

The Connect Live interactive platform is a UX-friendly content management system (CMS) that is easy to navigate with easy-to-build templates that serve you and your audience. Alternatively, you can utilize Telescope's Operations team to develop and manage a voting campaign on your behalf.

Data Caption Points

Once you have established your metric KPIs and goals, you need to consider: 1) Which metrics best suit your goals and KPIs? 2) Which metrics best suit the type of voting event – in-person, virtual, or hybrid? 3) During the campaign, when are the best capture points to collect meaningful data?

Consider some of these critical audience engagement metrics for virtual, live, and hybrid events:

- **Audience retention:** (How many people attended the event at registration compared towhen the event closed? What was the average time spent at the event?)
- **Returning users:** (How many people have been voting for their favorite American idol for how many seasons? How many people showed up to this year's conference compared to lastyear's event?)
- **The number of App downloads:** (How many people downloaded your event app to vote?)
- **Social Media Activity:** (Are people talking about your event; what are they saying; andwho are they?")

Usable Reports

During and after your event, you will have collected mountains of data from different places, suchas your event management platform, social media, and mobile event app. Consider how you will store this data and how you will review the data in report form.

What are the critical data reports to have during vs. at the end of the voting campaign? Will you beusing snapshots of sessions or overviews of the whole campaign? These are essential discussion points for your **event management team** before your voting campaign initiates.

Live Companion Products

Why would you stop at just voting platforms? – take your experience to the next level with live companion products. Live companion products are a great accompaniment to voting software. Invite fans to play along (Bingo), comment on their favorite nominees and competitors (PassionMeter), or take virtual quizzes/trivia with personalized results (Inquizator) shared through their socials, live to air, or on the app.

Graphics Or Other Environmental Elements Integration

Use graphics in the studio or on-screen to display the user participation – the audience's level of participates for the nominee will prompt sounds effects for their nominee in the live event space.

The **NBA and WNBA "Tap to Cheer"** campaign allows fans to cheer on the favorite team doingbattle while also rewarding their efforts with animated pay-offs and full screen-take-over.

Customize For Live Reveals

Is there a live reveal? Audiences get excited to influence the live show/event and having it appearlive. Online voting systems that include custom voting tools for live reveals will engage your audience. Some great examples include hashtag battles for the final nominees in a category, or asave live on the air.

HOW TO MEASURE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT USING VOTING APPLICATIONS

Attendance Numbers

Ideal for: Live, virtual & hybrid events

For decades, event planners have used attendance metrics to gauge audience participation fundamentally – and it is still relevant today. Be aware attendance fluctuates across sessions, sorecord the number of people who log in or arrive compared with at the end.

Session Registration/Retention

Ideal for: Live, virtual & hybrid events

We have already mentioned the importance of registration, but viewer or attendee retention is justas crucial. How long do attendees stay at your event? Most **event management platforms/CMS integrate easily with standard google analytics for event tracking to log user behavior on a campaign**. Organizers use **tangible data** to see how long users spend on the website, how deep into the site they go, and if using event tracking, can see if they complete additional tasks (like sharing the vote).

Using Tangible Data for Event tracking

Ideal for: virtual & hybrid events

Data management on the server-side is where the pixel or tag transmits data into a web server which then passes that data to the Telescope destination server. **Event tracking is reliable, accurate, and tangible data that offers intelligence on how your viewers** respond to your votingapplication or app.

Client-Supplied Tracking

Ideal for: virtual & hybrid events

Client-supplied tracking allows event organizers to transmit data from their voting campaign, whichthen triggers other actions. This is commonly achieved using tags. **Client-supplied tracking enables event managers to contextualize and monitor fundamental data** like URL parameters/user agent data for audience engagement.

Ads

Ideal for: Live and virtual events

The number of clickthroughs and views of the advertisements on your webpage or a native app is agreat virtual indicator of audience engagement.

Long-term Returning users

Ideal for: Annual or seasonal Live and virtual events likes competitions and sporting events

Historical data from competitions and sporting events that are seasonal or annual can be precious. **Campaigns that display a high number of weekly Uniques vs. low cumulative Uniques mean many people are returning**.

Social Media Activity (Promoted Hashtags, @ mentions,etc.)

Ideal for: Live, virtual & hybrid events

Social voting campaigns can message out the how-to-vote information in sample messages that users can retweet or repost. This drives user engagement, and you can see it because it's traceable on Social Media. Social media also promotes graphics of voting information. Also, use celebrities participating in the vote - they can advertise on the swipe-up feature of Instagram and link directlyto the vote.

Use these social networks to promote the vote:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok

Event App Adoption and Usage

Ideal for: Live, virtual & hybrid events

Leveraging **event apps for mobile devices can improve voters' experiences**, especially for live and hybrid events. There are two metrics beneficial to track your organization's event app adoptioncampaign. Firstly, you want to know if voters are downloading the app whether, or Android.
Simply put, are your voters getting adequate use of your **event tech investment**?

Secondly, you will want to track your voters' use of your native app during the voting campaign.Are your attendees taking full advantage of all the app's features? Who uses the

app to vote?

Ideally, a voting platform and event management software will have **a dashboard with event analytics** that directly informs organizers how people are using the app and which featuresfacilitate the most engagement.

User engagement with interactive experiences

Ideal for: Live, virtual & hybrid events

Interactivity is vital. Offering sessions where audiences can choose to engage with nominees and contestants, live reveals keynote speakers, or celebrity guest interaction are three precious metricsthat can assess your voting campaign. Does your audience resonate with your contestants or nominees? Is your virtual audience using the chat and poll features with your wider community?

Live Polling and Q&A sessions

Ideal for: Live, virtual & hybrid events

Use polls and Q&A to give your voting campaign real-time audience feedback. You can put a polleverywhere for immediate feedback from your users and viewers throughout the campaign rather than simply at the end. Ensure you mix your poll question types with numerical ratings (1-5), multiple-choice, and longer forms.

Community Membership

Ideal for: Live, virtual & hybrid events

Community membership is a great way to foster engagement through cultivating connections and fortifying long-term brand affiliation. Your event's community's size (numbers) is a valuable metricbecause it is a trackable and quantitative way to measure success. After a voting campaign, measureto see if your community membership numbers increase.

Moderation tool

A moderation tool allows a moderator user to monitor, filter and approve audience responses for display on social media, live to air or virtual community platforms. Event management teams collect and moderate data, or you can deploy various UGC tools as automated moderation to rejector change audience UGC according to a set of established rules.

Social Wall is a great social media aggregator that showcases real-life UGC both on-site and from remotefans. Moderators can approve all content for best display.

Surveys and Audience Feedback

Ideal for: Live, virtual & hybrid events

Asking attendees and audience directly for feedback is the purest way to measure engagement andsuccess of your event management software. After your voting experience, follow up by sending your audience a survey to gather invaluable insight.

Infogroup is a great Telescope feature where event management teams receive user emails during the campaigns providing real-time insight into what's working well and make adjustments for futurecampaigns.

10 BEST PRACTICES FOR VOTING CAMPAIGNS

1. Clear Communication

Crucial for: Live, Virtual and Hybrid events

It sounds obvious, but it is crucial to **establishing a UX-friendly event experience**. Ensure that thevoting information is communicated throughout the show or event verbally and in graphic form.
Rules or FAQ must be easy to find and utilize social blasts to make it easy for audiences to find thevote and know when/how to participate. Make sure to keep accessibility in mind. **Give clear instructions on how to vote out loud and in subtitles for your audience members with disabilities.**

2. Voter Incentives

Ideal for: Live and Virtual Events

Let's be honest; people love free stuff – **twenty-three percent of people visit brands on social media to win something**. Using incentives not only increases voting numbers but also helps toestablish community and build brand equity. **Fifty-five million Americans enter sweepstake contests annually**. So, incentivize your voters with a sweepstake to win a trip tothe finale, giveaway brand/event merchandise, or use live streaming to show their vote on the big screen.

3. Know Your Nominees, Voting Methods, And YourAudience.

Crucial for: Live, Virtual and Hybrid events

As we said, knowing your audience is crucial, but this also includes understanding your nomineesand who will empathize and relate to them. Create in your user stories with your user to better understand why certain nominees do better or who is voting for them (e.g., what audiences tend tovote via which methods, where are contestants from, and are people from that area are voting for them, etc.)

Remember to maximize points of voting entry. We recommend three different entry points to vote(i.e., utilizing Voting App, Write-in Voting, Social Media vote, and SMS and Toll-Free Voting). **SMS and Toll-Free Voting caters to those unwilling to give out private informationbut still want to cast their vote.**

4. Promote Engagement Before, During, And After

Crucial for: Live, Virtual and Hybrid events

Always plan ahead of time! Planners who use voting promotional calendars and continuously monitor to look for spikes and dips have more successful voting campaigns. Also, **encourage nominees and celebrity fans to promote the vote** for visibility before and during the campaign.

5. Utilize All Social Media and other Channels

Crucial for: Live, Virtual and Hybrid events

If you want to create social chatter around your event's voting campaign, then you need to utilize all your media and social channels available to you. Always remember *that* different demographics use different channels to connect and voice their opinions, so the more tracks you create, the more yourevent will cater to all your audiences' needs.

Examples of social channels you should exhaust include:

- Twitter, hashtags, TikTok Vote, etc.
- **Hashtag votes** – be sure to include misspells in your acceptable keywords to account foreasy to make typos
- Facebook Messenger Vote
- Native Apps
- Smart speakers (Google and Alexa)
- Push notifications

Billboard Music Awards engaged millions with their TikTok Vote platform. Read more about thecollaborative success behind the TikTok Vote platform.

6. Using Different Engagement Methods

Crucial for: Live, Virtual and Hybrid Events

While adding voting software will increase your engagement – why would you stop there! Having multiple engagement tools at your audience's disposal can keep them captivated throughout a session. Design your campaign to build and hold the interest of your audience with Play-Along and Second Screen, trivia, or sweepstakes, before and after.

Predictor with Leaderboard offers fans an addictive and straightforward user experience thatencourages them to predict outcomes before and during the event, show/game.

7. Gamification Voting

Great for: Live and Virtual Events

Gamify everything! **Gamification attracts new potential users and retains existing attendees bykeeping them actively engaged in the event**. Universal Kids' and Telescope created **American Ninja Warrior Jr. Play-Along experience** with a storyline and implementing various rewards systems, On-Air integration, and live voting software, a.k.a Telescope's Passion Meter, to create impactful engagement for viewers. **Since 2015, Telescope has seen a 2700 percent increase in gamification on voter campaign use**.

8. Know The Rules

Crucial for: Live, Virtual and Hybrid events

From a legal standpoint, know what you can and can't do. For example, if you're an alcohol company, you can't do a regular giveaway or sweepstakes during your voting campaign. Also,understanding your geographical limitations will ensure a more successful campaign.

9. Timeframes

Crucial for: Live, Virtual and Hybrid events

Careful consideration needs to go to tailoring the right session length to the event. Usually**, more extended time frames are better suited to competitions** to give your fans more time to vote at their convenience. However, **live events do better with shorter time frames** to create urgency andallow for On-Air results.

10. Organization

Crucial for: Live, Virtual and Hybrid events

During a campaign, you collect copious amounts of data collecting so much data from registration,contacts, vote results, audience behavior, and more. Ensure you're using a well-established platform to manage and deliver a high volume of metrics.

7 BENEFITS OF USING A QUALITY VOTING PLATFORM FOR AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

1. Increase engagement on-page or overall event/campaign

Research shows us that your brand or organization's website gets instant on-page traffic by leveraging **audience response systems** in virtual events. Live and Hybrid events see overall engagement for the campaign or event. Adding a voting component to an existing campaign alsostrengthens its success – **sweepstakes see a sixty-two percent increase in conversion when adding voting elements.**

2. Branding & sponsorship

Events using voting platforms for higher audience engagement report increases branding in sponsorship exposure. The more you employ and promote interactivity, UX-friendly experiences, and community engagement, the more your brand's equity and affiliation increase in the eyes of your audience and attendees. Furthermore, creating these engaging and fun opportunities also attracts celebrity endorsement and sponsorship, which ultimately magnifies your brand's exposure.

3. UGC Content Generation

Curate a stream of content for an on-air big screen display using the data collected from your voting software. Use gamification, incentives, and rewards to get instant and simple content curation and abig pay-off for your fans and viewers sharing their opinions and voices.

Air API is a great content aggregator that allows you to review content, place voting results, comments, avatars, and names on-air, bringing fans into the conversation.

4. Increase Social Media Growth

The benefit of social media is a crucial feature of the article, but it simply should not be understated
– **social media is a must-have addition to voting campaigns**. Voting campaigns that use social media to promote their vote see more significant traffic and grow their social media presence, following, and community. Allowing your fans to create social chatter over your event's vote willguarantee you social media awareness of your brand or organization.

5. Push notifications

Use voting software that enables push notifications – essentially; it's a way for event organizers tocommunicate with their attendees. These are usually sent out in masses to your attendees and viewers as scheduling reminders, informing them of incentives.

6. Direct Messaging/Chat/ Live Q&A

Good voting software will also have avenues that enable networking. Increase messaging betweenattendees equals high engagement. This function can foster a sense of community for members within your events, especially within defined teams, such as fans of sporting teams or fans of nominees in televised competitions like **The Voice** or **So You Think You Can Dance**.

7. Event Polls/Reviews

Quality voting software seamlessly enables live feedback after the voting. Ideally, **voters review with a mixture of numerical style (ratings of 1-5), multiple-choice questions, and open-endedforms – avoid limiting their feedback.** Also, give attendees options to opt-out of providing feedback. Gathering this information gives event managers opportunities to look at the data and make adjustments if needed.

Key Take-Aways: Using Voting for AudienceEngagement

As a recap, here are some of the most crucial points to remember:

- Understanding your audience, nominees, contestants, keynote speakers will help you determine thebest voting methods;
- For hybrid events, remember to consider different engagement opportunities for both your in-personand virtual audience members;
- Technology is your best friend for live, hybrid, or virtual events – embrace it;
- Utilize different channels to promote your vote and include other voting methods across yourcampaign.
- Adopt a well-established voting platform that offers all the essential features to make your votingcampaign a success.

Accurate event management is key to your voting campaign's success which should be measured and strategized in considerable detail. As virtual and hybrid events are set to rise across all industries, planners must adapt **their event strategy** to captivate and engage all audience members. Use this guideto help you plan your next voting campaign, or use **Telescope's event management teams** to get professional help with your next project.

Publishing Your Passion: Creative Nonfiction in 2021

Thomas Slatin's new book, *"The Only Child of An Atomic Engineer,"* signifies the next chapter in the creative nonfiction writer's life. Though Slatin has enjoyed a rewarding career as an Emergency Medical Technician and Firefighter spanning some two decades, writing has permeated every aspect of Slatin's life since writing on his parent's New York City apartment walls as a child. Slatin says, when it became apparent that he was unlikely to stop, his parents set up a desk and chair with a pile of notebooks and pens. So, how do you rekindle creative passions and pursue them as your second career? For Slatin, rebranding himself as a writer has been one of the most significant challenges but equally one of the most rewarding.

It was reaching his retirement goal from the fire service and a failed relationship that catalyzed Slatin's conversion to writing and photography full-time - revealing on his 41st birthday, he packed up his car, drove away, and never returned. Today, you will find the Vermont-based writer scribbling ideas, song lyrics, snippets of news, or conversations on paper that he later incorporates in his writing – a change of pace from his former life.

For many amateur writers, success is incredibly challenging and habitual – it requires disciplines, portfolios, exposure, and contributions. Early on, Slatin turned to the online world, establishing his author platform and building his readership. His journalistic-style entries thrift first-hand accounts and layer them with assiduous hindsight narration - self-describing his writing style as reminiscent of the 1988 television show "The Wonder Years." Slatin derives much of his writing from personal experiences, some from childhood, though more from his firefighting career – relaying these into his new book. He devotes a passage to his favorite tree as an 8-year-old in his parent's backyard in Stamford, N.Y., titled "A Little Ghost For The Offering."

The new book amalgamates Slatin's most inspired pieces in chronological order – a tangible product, decades in the making. In essence, the book documents his life, careers, and relationships with the potential for expansion in future releases. Though he admits many aspects of his life are irreconcilable, returning even in a volunteer capacity was difficult once he left firefighting as they are so dissimilar. Nevertheless, in his work, Slatin deconstructs, then bridges the two spheres. Slatin recognizes, in life, as in his writing, that everything is connected in some way, even if connections are unseen or not fully understood.

He is also grateful to those who invigorated his writing passion. Slatin received mentorship and encouragement from his youth by some illustrious literary names, including American journalist Charles Kuralt and poet and writer Allen Ginsberg. He describes Ginsberg's mentorship included sharing his writing process and practices that Slatin still uses today. Beholden, too, is he to his list of personal supporters spanning across his writing career – Slatin dedicates his new book's title to his father, scientists on the Manhattan Project during World War II, and the entire novel his wife and agent, Amelia Desertsong. It is clear, talking to Slatin, that his wife is at the center of all his work as his muse, confidant, and biggest supporter. Desertsong's admiration, love, and respect are also clearly apparent in her description of her husband and his work, having written the foreword to the new book – challenging the myth that writers assume solitary existences and success.

When asked about the most challenging aspect of self-publishing, Slatin answers it takes an enormous amount of discipline, but the most challenging is wrestling with extremely high standards. He reveals that he seeks the absolute pinnacle of quality as a writer, refusing to publish anything short of such a standard. As a self-publishing author with Barnes and Nobel, Slatin also takes on editor, book cover designer, and marketer through his experience in photography and web design succors his endeavors in these roles. His photography work shapes Slatin's writing and thrives on its own as Slatin is a contributor for Canva, EyeEm, and Getty Images. In 2019, Slatin published his first photography book, "Entropy,"

immortalizing abandoned historic places lost forever to fire, decay, or intentional demolition inspired by his career as a firefighter. These successes and experiences already in photography further embolden him to traverse into the publishing domain.

Slatin continues to share his writing with readers and encouragement with other aspiring nonfiction writers on his website. He highlights that the best advice he ever received was that a successful writing career takes much time. He considers the practice highly personal, and his patience and persistence were necessary to his circumstances, and he advocates this for new writers.

Slatin's new book "The Only Child of An Atomic Engineer" will be published later this year, and you can find other shorter works on his website. His photography book Entropy is available for purchase on Amazon.

What does it cost to frame abasement?

Are you at the beginning of your basement finishing project or basement remodeling? Maybe you are planning a home theater, playroom, home office, or bedroom with a basement bathroom.
Perhaps you want an open living space with a kitchenette, wet bar, even a laundry room. No matter what you are planning, framing your basement is an essential subphase on the journey to a finished basement.

So, what does it cost to frame an unfinished basement? **The average cost to frame a basement isbetween $15 to $20 per linear foot of wall. The cost calculations vary based on the basement size, current material prices, labor costs, and contractor fees. If you plan an completing the project DIY, remember to also factor in tool rentals and purchases.**

The pricing above does not consider the costs of insulation or drywall, instead only framing an unfinished basement. Prices will also differ for a remodeling project and building a brand new basement. The current prices listed in this article are current from Spring 2021; please be aware thatthe material cost fluctuates.

Basement Finishing Costs: Framing

Total linear feet of wall	Cost
50	$750 - $1000
100	$1500 - $2000
150	$2,250 - $3,000
200	$3,000 - $4000

250	$3750 - $5000
300	$4,500 - $6,000
350	$5,250 - $7,000
400	$6,000 - $8000
450	$6,750 - $9000
500	$7,500 - $10,000

Costs are calculated in a total linear square instead of square feet because it reflects a more accurate cost estimation, especially placing orders for materials. Framing your basement can be costly, but you will see
a return on investment once you complete your finished basement. And, if you choose to do it yourself, youcan also save significant amounts.

Additional Basement RenovationCosts

- Demolition and removal
- Subfloor
- Drywall
- Insulation
- HVAC
- Electrical work (including electrician rates)
- Plumbing (including plumbers rates)
- Basement waterproofing
- Painting

- Building permit costs, and more.

Basement Wall Framing Basics

Generally, there are two ways to frame a wall: 1) Framing the walls in place: nail the top plates andbottom plates, then frame your walls with studs as you go. 2) Build then raise the wall: build each wall section on the floor, then raising it and nail in place.

Framing your walls in place is a little longer but better because your floor and basement ceiling won't be uniform. Therefore, framing in place for most basements is more common,especially for smaller square foot basements because of the limited working area.

So basic wall assembly consists of:

Studs and plates

- bottom plate
- studs
- top plate.
- double top plate

Fasteners

- 1-2 box 3 1/2" fasteners
- 1-2 box of 3 ¼" framing nails
- minimum 3" construction grade screws (Tapcons)

One phrase you will hear a lot is "**16 inches on center,"** meaning each of your studs is going to be16 inches apart from the center of your stud. This means that space in between your studs is only going to be 14 ½ inches. Your **insulation is 14 ½ inches wide, specifically for wall constructionassembly**.

Another reason you need to space your walls 16 inches on center is your drywall typically comes inkind of 4 feet increments. Therefore you are going to have an eight-foot board land halfway onto your studs.

One of the challenges you're going to run into when framing your basement is the bulkhead. You're going to have your ductwork, sump pump, and other utilities running underneath yourjoints.

You also need to account for your beam and issues fashioning your top plates in some areas. So youwant to be looking at the basement ceiling and finding a place for attachment. Also, if you

plan on inserting a drop ceiling, you will need to account for additional framing.

Fasteners

Whatever fasteners you're going to use, they have to be a **minimum of three inches as your studsand plates are all an inch and a half**. Your framing nails for the nail guns tend to be three and a quarter. For example, for your bottom plate, you will fasten downwards either diagonally, in, or

down through that an inch and a half of wood into whatever is on your basement floor - concretefloor or subfloor.

I recommend **framing your walls over your subfloors** to save you time and avoid cutting aroundall the walls, making the subfloor sturdier. Later, you would apply your wood flooring, carpeting, or laminate.

Importantly, your **basement walls aren't load-bearing because your structure is sitting on your foundation walls, and most likely, on a beam that goes across the middle of your basement**.
Your framed walls are used for hanging drywall, running wires, insulation pipes, etc. Even though your basement walls are not load-bearing, you still want to use construction-grade screws, not deckscrews, for strength.

The **difference between using screws and nails is strength; nails are more robust than screws**.A nail bends, adding strength because it's not going to break no matter what you do. If you're going to use screws, you're going to use a minimum of 3-inch construction-grade screws.

There are two ways to fasten your bottom plate; nails or 3 ½" Tapcons. **Tapcons are blue concretescrews that require a pre-drilled hole.** So you will need a hammer drill to pre-drill the holes and then an impact driver to drive the screw.

You should be aware that you'll only be able to screw and won't be able to use a nail gun in someplaces. You can get you can rent a cordless nail gun, but often this is not cheap.

Fasteners Pricing

Type	Costs
Fastening Systems 3 ½ Inch Pin	approx. $20 for 100 box
3 ¼ inch framing nails	approx. $40-$60 for a pack of 2500
3 ½ inch Tapcons	approx. $45 for a pack of 100

How to Calculate the Studs and Platesfor DIY Basement Framing

Calculating your studs:

For example, you have a 100 feet linear wall.

1. Calculate how many 100 feet linear walls are in the basement, including around the perimeterand the divisions or partitions. Divide that by 16 inches or 1.33 feet to give you the number of studs.

   To note: 1.33 feet is 16 inches, whereby you will space your wall **16 inches on center**. This meansthe center of each of your studs will be 16 inches apart or 1.33 feet.

2. Additionally, **you will add one stud for every door opening, every egress window opening, every corner, and every intersection**. The reason for doing intersections and corners is to provideyour drywall with something affix with a screw.

3. Once you have your total number of studs, you need to factor waste. **For DIY basement framing, I recommend using 10% waste.** The 10% allows you to make mistakes and account forwarped lumber, which if you don't use, you can return.

Calculating your bottom plates:

Now you need to calculate your bottom plates. So your **bottom plates and your top plates need to be a maximum of 10 feet long**. If your plates are 12 feet or longer, you will have difficulty getting those into your existing basement. So you need three types of plates: bottom plate, top plate,
double top plate.

1. Calculate the total linear feet of the wall and divide by 10.
2. Multiply that number by 3 for the different plate types.
3. Finally, multiply that number by 1.1.

For example, you calculate your total linear feet of wall at 100; you have to divide that by ten. Nowyou have ten plates; you got to multiply that by three to give you 30 plates. Multiply that by 1.1 to provide you with a total of 33 plates total. This will provide you with the total costs for your lumber.

So, so what are the material costs for wooden studs? **As of spring 2021, studs have gone from $3.50 to over $9 in the last 18 months. As the price of lumber fluctuates, providing a relevantfixed cost is very difficult.**

Steel Studs vs. Wood Studs Costs

Steel studs are usually commercial applications for office buildings, but it is possible to use them for your average basement wall framing. Whether it is a steel frame or a wood frame, costs dependon basement square footage, a total linear foot of the wall, labor costs, current material pricing, and the general contractor fees. However, steel studs are more expensive than wooden studs, anywherefrom 20-50% more expensive when you also factor in labor difficulty.

Steel studs also have additional costs as they require more fastener, needing a reinforcing bar, otherelectrical boxes with commercial-grade wires (or you add grommets to protect the wire) to complete the frame.

Pros of Steel Studs

- Always straight
- Do not warp, twist or bow
- fewer tools required
- Less clean up
- Lighter and easy to move around
- Holes for the wires
- Will not rot

Cons of Steel studs

- Not quite as DIY friendly
- Not easy to screw special drywall considerations with regards to doing your doors and yourtrim Will cut yourself
- Additional costs
- Additional labor time
- Requires special boxes or fasteners for your receptacles and your switches

In my entire career as a basement coach, I have only ever completed one basement framing using steel studs. For DIY, most people want to keep costs down, so that alongside its more

challengingconstructions make wooden studs often the best choice.

DIY Cost Factor: Basement Framing Tools

I highly recommend for DIY basement projects that you rent specific tools that you don't own, especially the more expensive tools you will need to finish your basement but never use again. Some of these tools include a chops saw, ramset, hammer drill, table saw, or compressor nail gun.

List of tools you will need:

- **1 X Circular Saw:** (I highly recommend this tool to add to your home renovation tool kit in general. Once you develop the skill, it is perfect for tight layouts, like a basement space, and it willhelp free up workspace and time);
- **1 X Impact Driver And Your Drill:** (to drive screws and sometimes even using nails, willoften come in a kit with your drill);
- **1 X Chop Saw:** (Preferably rent if you do not have them as they are expensive);
- **Table Saw:** (Preferably rent if you do not have them as they are expensive);
- **Compressor Nail Gun:** (Preferably rent if you do not have them as they are expensive);
- **1 X 4' Level:** (An excellent purchase for any DIY tool kit belt);
- **1 x Ramset:** (For using nails instead of Tapcons. It is better to rent preferably rent this tool);
- **1 x Hammer Drill:** (Preferably rent if you do not have);
- Chalk line;
- **1 x Laser level** (this is optional, but I highly recommend this as a fantastic one-off purchase, if it is in your budget – it will lay out your walls showing you not only the bottom but also the topwhere your studs and plates will go);
- All your basic hand tools like a hammer screwdriver, Olfa knife, etc.

Tool Pricing – Renting vs. Buying Comparison

Tool	**Cost to Rent from Home Depot**	**Price to Buy from Amazon**
Circular Saw	$23 per day	$129.95
Impact driver	-	145.83
Chop Saw	$45 per day	
Table Saw	$45 per day	$349.00

Framing Nailer	$45 per day	440.70
Ramset	$39 per day	$164.86
Hammer Drill	$46 per day	$338.51
Dewalt Laser Level	-	$180.35

This was just a simple introduction to the topic of framing your basement. We always encourage homeowners completing a basement finishing project or basement remodel to do theirresearch and ask questions. A finished basement adds to the value of your home and is a reading home improvement project.

Gold Coast Buyers Benefit from FirstHome Loan Deposit Scheme

The Australian Government's First Home Loan Deposit Scheme helps low and middle-income earners buy a modest first home with a deposit as low as 5%. The federal government provides aguarantee to the lender of up to 15% of the loan.

The government effectively acts as a guarantor for the cost of lenders' mortgage insurance (LMI) typically required by homebuyers who do not have a 20% deposit. First home buyers should take advantage of this Scheme to avoid paying potentially thousands in LMI fees since the governmentguarantees the difference (up to 15%).

The government initiative provides up to 10,000 first home loan guarantees each financial year. So,continue reading to find out how you can secure a place with the Scheme for the upcoming financial year.

How the FHLDS works?

Data from 2019 shows an average person or couple in Queensland takes up to seven to eight yearsto saves for a deposit.

However, under the FHLDS Scheme, if you've saved up a minimum of 5% of the property value,the federal government act as a guarantor of up to 15%, avoiding the hefty cost of LMI and fast- tracking your entry into the property market.

In other words, under the Scheme, you avoid paying the hefty fees associated with insuring your home loan with a lender's mortgage insurer. Instead, the government acts as your mortgage insurerfor the home loan and guarantees any shortage in your deposit.

The *National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC)* branch of the government guarantees the deposits. The NHFIC, in consultation with industry leaders, implements the Schemethrough a board of contracted lenders with an Australian financial services licence (AFSL). You cannot apply for the Scheme directly through the NHFIC.

In the initial launch of the Scheme in January 2020, 10,000 places were made available for first home buyers to purchase or build a new home with as little as a 5% deposit granted that they areeligible and meet the lenders' checks. These 10,000 places are renewed every financial year.

Of those 10,000 places, 2,000 guarantees were not finalised and rereleased. Since 15 February 2021, some lenders have accepted applications for the FHLDS. The Morrison Government announced that any unused guarantees from the 2019/20 financial year would be reissued on July2021 – an even greater opportunity for first home buyers to apply for reissued places.

Currently, there are no caps on the number of guarantees per state; so first-time buyers looking atthe Gold Coast property should take advantage. While states are not limited to a set

number of deposit guarantees, the government intends to monitor and modify the guarantee where needed continuously.

First home buyers taking out loans under this Scheme must adhere to the loan principal's requiredrepayments for the entire period of the agreement.

Loans relating to building a house on the land and the purchase of vacant land are payable withinterest-only repayments.

FHLDS – New Home Guarantee

Under the 2021- 2022 Federal Budget, the Australian Government announced another 10,000 newplaces under the FHLDS (New Homes) for first home buyers buying new or newly built homes.
The FHLDS (New Homes) extension differs from the existing FHLDS as it is only available forpurchases of a new or a newly built home rather than newly constructed and established homes.

In addition, the extension also includes an increase in property price threshold for new homes, withthe Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast seeing increases from $475,000 - $600,000.

Since the announcement, major lenders and some smaller lenders have started accepting newrequests from eligible applicants to join waitlists.

The previous year, occupancy of places was prompt, and it is expected that these deposit guaranteeswill be unavailable within the first couple of months after release.

Don't miss out; keep reading to find out how you can reserve your Scheme place today.

What is categorised as 'new home' under the FHLDS NewHome Guarantee?

Eligible 'new homes' under the FHLDS New Home Guarantee (NHG) include:

- newly built homes (freestanding house, townhouse, or apartment)
- off-the-plan dwellings (freestanding house, townhouse, or apartment)
- house and land packages
- land and a separate building contract for a new home.

Eligibility is dependent on the borrower's status as a first home buyer and the property's new homeclassification.

Am I eligible for the First Home Loan DepositScheme?

There are several eligibility criteria to qualify for the Scheme. It is also essential that the first homebuyers meet all the criteria and not a majority: The eligibility requirements are as follows:

- participate as a single or couple. Couples must either be married or in a de-facto relationship to be eligible. Borrowers cannot succeed three or more, and other relationships between borrowers, suchas siblings, parent/child or friends, are not eligible.
- First home buyers must be 18 years of age and Australian Citizens holding a Medicare card to be eligible. Permanent residents are not eligible even if applying as a couple where one is an Australiancitizen;
- Meet the income test whereby single first-home buyers earn up to $125,000 per year or couplesearning up to $200,000 per year. To qualify, your income recorded in the ATO's Notice Of Assessment must be from the preceding financial year;
- A minimum deposit of at least 5% (and under the maximum of 20%) is accumulated throughgenuine savings for most lenders;
- Applicants must never have previously owned or had any interest in a residential dwelling in Australia (separately or jointly owned). Company title properties or residential strata, regardless ofuse as investment or owner-occupancy, render you ineligible.
- Applicants must intend the property to be their principal place of residence as an owner-occupier.They must intend to move into and live in the property within six months from either the date of purchase or for newly constructed builds, from the date on the occupancy certificate is issued;
- The value of the homes intended to be purchased under the Scheme is under the price cap of thearea.

Many lender's websites have eligibility tools; however, each lender will also have their specificcriteria for the Scheme.

Do I only need a 5% deposit?

In addition to the minimum 5% deposit required under the Scheme, first home buyers must pay stamp duty, legal fees, bank fees, and government transfer fees, where the loan to value ratio (LVR)is greater than 95%.

For example, a first home buyer in the Gold Coast for a $500,000 purchase will need a $25,000(5%) deposit plus extra funds to complete the purchase.

Generally, for the example above, the extra funds required will be:

· Stamp duty – $0 (no stamp duty for first home buyers)

· Mortgage Registration Fee: $195

· Loan application fee – $600 (These fees vary from $0 to $600)

· Legal/conveyancing costs – $1,800

· Transfer Fee – $639.00

· Lenders Mortgage Insurance (LMI) fees – $0 (not applicable under the First Home BuyerScheme).

So, your total funds required to complete the purchase is $25,000 plus $3,234 (approx.) as extra funds. This does not include any costs incurred via inspections/reports or similar additional costs.

Does a deposit have to be genuine savings?

Under the Scheme, most lenders, including the major lenders, require your deposit to be "genuinesavings", which means that you've saved yourself for the deposit over time.

Smaller lenders will accept proof of genuine saving as paid rent or rental history.

What types of properties can be bought under theScheme?

Under the FHLDS Scheme, eligible first home buyers can buy the following types ofresidential properties:

- An existing house, townhouse or apartment
- A vacant land together with a separate contract to build a home
- An off-the-plan (freestanding house, townhouse or apartment)
- A house and land package

Upon pre-approved for a home loan, you'll have 90 days to sign a contract of sale for an eligibledwelling.

Finally, upon signature of the contract of sale, finalising of the paperwork and checks for yourhome loan must be completed within an additional 30 days.

Eligible 'new homes' under the FHLDS New Home Guarantee (NHG) include:

- newly built homes (freestanding house, townhouse or apartment)
- off-the-plan (freestanding house, townhouse or apartment)
- house and land packages
- land and a separate contract to build a new home.

Eligibility is dependent on the borrower's status as a first home buyer and the property's new homeclassification.

What are the property price caps for the firsthome loan Scheme?

To be eligible for the Scheme, the property's value cannot exceed the area's price cap where

that property's located.

The property price threshold differs between states and between the city, large regional centre or regional areas.

STATE/TERRITORY PRICE	FHLDS CAP CAPITAL CITIES AND REGIONAL CENTRES	FHLDS PRICE CAP REST OF STATE	FHLDS (NEW HOMES) ONLY PRICE CAP CAPITAL CITY &REGIONAL CENTRES	FHLDS (NEW HOMES) ONLY PRICE CAP RESTOF STATE
New South Wales (NSW)	$700,000	$450,000	$950,000	$600,000
Victoria (VIC)	$600,000	$375,000	$850,000	$550,000
Queensland (QLD)	$475,000	$400,000	$650,000	$500,000
Western Australia (WA)	$400,000	$300,000	$550,000	$400,000
South Australia (SA)	$400,000	$250,000	$550,000	$400,000
Tasmania (TAS)	$400,000	$300,000	$550,000	$400,000
Australian Capital Territory (ACT)	$500,000		$600,000	
Northern Territory (NT)	$375,000		$550,000	
Jervis Bay Territory and Norfolk Island	$450,000		$600,000	
Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands	$300,000		$400,000	

Source: NFHS

Is the Gold Coast considered a large regional centre?

As the **Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast has a population of over 250,000**, **and it is considered a large regional area** under the Scheme which is recognisably more expensive thanother regional areas.

What will I need to provide to apply for theScheme?

All application and documents must be submitted directly to the participating lender or yourmortgage broker, whom will give to the participating bank.

The NHFIC does not accept direct applications.

First home buyers will need to provide the following:

- Your **full name** and **date of birth** (DOB);
- Your **Medicare number** and your position (number) on the card;
- Your **Notice of Assessment** for the previous financial year; and
- Other typical **home loan documents**.

Important Note: To qualify for the FHLDS form the 1 July 2021, you need to provide your NoticeOf Assessment from the ATO starting from 1 July 2020.

First home buyers who get the Notice Of Assessment for 2020/21 sooner can sooner apply for theFHLDS, therefore, secure one of the limited spots in the Scheme.

In other words, **complete 2020/21tax return done as soon** as soon as possible to get in first –resembling a "first in best-dressed" scenario.

What is the application process to apply for a guarantee under the First Home Loan DepositScheme?

Borrowers are required to apply through one of the 27 lenders contracted by *The National HousingFinance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC).*

Note: *The NHFIC does not accept direct applications.*

The process to apply for a guarantee under the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme is as follows:

1. Assess your eligibility as a first home buyer
2. You or a broker enquires with one of the 27 participating lenders under the Scheme who will assess your first-home buyers' eligibility for the Scheme alongside standard home loanchecks.
3. The lender will then log onto the Scheme portal to ascertain if a Scheme place is available.
4. The lender will then reserve a place for you, if available, by providing your first name, lastname, surname, DOB (date of birth), and Medicare number.
5. You can apply with multiple participating lenders under the Scheme, but only one place isreserved per applicant at any given time.
6. Your initial home loan application allows you to make a Scheme reservation for up to 14 calendar days. It cannot be extended unless finance pre-approval is given under the SchemePortal.
7. To obtain a pre-approved place, the participating lender must provide your details and documents,including; the taxable income (single or couple), Notice of Assessment for the previous financial year, the date of finance pre-approval, and intended purchase location.

8. Obtaining pre-approved, you have 90 days from the date of issuance to search for a property withinthe purchase location.
9. Upon signing a Contract of sale, you and your participating lender have an additional 30 days tofinalise all the documentation to apply to the NHFIC for a Guarantee Certificate.
10. Upon a Guarantee Certificate, the participating lender updates the loan settlement information withthe NHFIC.

What if I am eligible, but there are no places at the timeof applying?

If you are eligible, but the places under the Scheme have been exhausted, you can still submit areservation request. You will then be waitlisted.

What are the differences between the lenders?

Despite being eligible for the first home buyer scheme, lenders apply their lending criteria beforeapproving you for the home loan. Therefore, an individual borrower's financial position will be more suited to different lenders.

For example, applicants with lower credit scores will be rejected by major lenders with a highly selective credit scoring system. Whereas smaller lenders generally offer more flexible credit scoresystems.

Some of the differing requirements between lender policies are:

- Genuine savings,
- Income and living expenses assessment
- Credit score systems
- Security

Finding the right lender can be challenging, so to start, make sure you choose your lender fromamong the panel of participating lenders under the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme.

Can I participate in any other government schemes if I get the First Home Loan DepositScheme?

Interestingly, your successful application for a first home loan deposit does not restrict you fromaccessing other federal or state government programs:

Other programs you may wish to consider for Queensland first home buyers include:

- First Home Super Saver Scheme
- First Home Owner Grant

- HomeBuilder grant
- Stamp duty Concessions
- Queensland Government's First Home Owners Grant
- Queensland Government's Owner-Builders and the first homeowner grant

These federal and state programs apply their eligibility criteria, and participation under the FirstHome Loan Deposit Scheme does not mean you are eligible for the other programs.

Additional Resources For First Home Buyers

For additional information and resources, please view the below links released by the NHFIC forthe first home buyers Scheme:

- FHLDS Scheme Information Guide
- FHLDS (New Homes) Guide
- First Home Loan Deposit Scheme FACT SHEET – 2020-2021
- FHLDS Borrowers Eligibility – Singles
- FHLDS Borrowers Eligibility – Couples
- FHLDS First Home Buyer Declaration Form – FY 2020-2021

Integral Development Group delivers unique "off-the-plan" real-estate opportunities for firsthome buyers on the Gold Coast, including the Gold Coast CBD, Surfers Paradise, Chevron Island and more.

Speak to one of our expert team members to find out how we can help you secure yourdream first home today.

Selling as For Sale By Owner in Greenville

Most Greenville sellers will be familiar with two home selling strategies– the traditional real estatemethod or For Sale By Owner sales. Both selling strategies have their benefits and downfalls. Still,most people are usually motivated by the selling strategy to help them walk away with the most money in their pocket. So, what would you say if there was another alternative?

For Sale by Owner (FSBO) sellers aim to increase their take away price by reducing the costs associated with realtor commissions and flat rates. If successful, a seller can save thousands oncommission but takes higher risks due to lack of real estate experience and the associated timeburdens.

This article aims to direct potential FSBO Greenville sellers on the rewards and risks of sellingwithout realty and educate you on a third option that all Greenville sellers must consider.

What is For Sale by Owner (FSBO)?

For Sale by Owner is a home selling strategy where the seller is entirely responsible for selling theproperty from start to finish. Some FSBO enlists real estate agents or other professionals to help with aspects of the sale, but primarily it is undertaken by themselves.

FSBO has many pros and cons, just like many people who succeed as FSBO sellers and equally fail, possibly losing more money. FSBO sellers are primarily motivated by the potential of more outstanding take-home money after the sale by avoiding real estate incurred costs. So let's look atthe justification for avoiding that realtor.

Selling with Greenville Realtors

The principal motivation for using an FSBO strategy is to keep more money in your pocket fromthe sale. So, let's break down those numbers for a seller in Greenville;

In 2021, the average NC real estate flat rate is higher than the state average, currently sitting around6%. The means an NC home in Cedar Creek selling for $300,000 with a realtor will cost you a flat rate of $18,000.

Before you decide to reconcile parting with $18,000 on a $300,000 sale, remember mostsellers *payout of their home equity,* not the sale of the home.

For example, your Cedar Creek single-family home is worth $300,000, but you have a mortgage of $200,000, which is covered by the sale. So you have net equity of $100,000, but now you have topay the real estate flat rate. So, reduce that $100,000 by $18,000 to give you $82,00 at closing.

Let me put that in perspective for you. The sale price determines a realtor's commission, but

thepayout of your net. So our Cedar Creek seller, at the end of the day, is paying 18% on their
$100,000. The grim reality is that many real estate agents either don't know this or neglect toeducate you as a seller - now, that's messed up!

Also, ensure to factor in other concessions such as closing costs which collectively might furtherreduce your net down to $75,000 or less – Are you kidding? No!

As a seller, it is essential to educate yourself on the realities of traditional selling. Reducing the commission costs associated with a real estate agent can save you significant amounts – keep that $35,000 in your pocket, or specific circumstances even make more profits on top of your sale price.

The Benefits of Being For Sale By Owner

LOWER COMMISSION COSTS

As we have already explained, selling with a realtor is expensive! FSBO sellers avoid commission, typically 6% for North Carolina sellers if they choose to market independently.

COMPLETE CONTROL

Sellers control their house for sale listing from start to finish, listing price, listing details, and themarketing strategy.

AVOID PRICE SKEWS

Some agents skew the price of your home to the value of other Greenville homes for sale undertheir listing in your area.

CONTROL THE SHOW

Scheduling private tours and open houses to fit into your schedule means you will never be caughtoff guard. Just be aware that while this is convenient for you as the seller, there is a downside to this benefit which we detail shortly.

FIVE FSBO COSTLY DOWNFALLS

WRONG MARKET VALUE

This is usually the first thing FSBO sellers get wrong. If you undervalue, you get less, overprice, and the house won't sell. Also, many sellers use an under-estimated figure to attract buyers - that isnot a ridiculous strategy! Get a certified home appraiser to determine the asking

price, but remember there is always a fee!

OVERLOOKING THE IMPORTANCE OFADVERTISING

Some sellers may revel in the ideas of complete control, but be aware that you are taking on one ofthe components in the selling process - marketing and advertising. Overlooking the importance of advertising and promoting your property locally and more widely is a colossal mistake.
Marketing and advertising are everything when selling a home.

NOT VETTING THE BUYER

FSBOs owners rarely vet the buyers in-depth, leading to wasting more time and energy showingnon-prospective buyers and potential issues at the closing. It is far better to use third-party preapproval lenders, but that is one more thing for you to organize.

TIME IS MONEY, AND YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH

The reason many people never attempt FSBO is the amount of work required. Realtors commit long hours to new listings - that is their full-time job! You will need to make and receive calls, schedule showings, and open houses, and organize the closing while also managing your work commitments. The harsh reality is that the time you put in may not equate to the amount of moneyyou get at closing.

DEALING WITH BUYERS

A key to selling your home is always to be readily available to your buyers. There are small windows of opportunity with buyers. Ensuring that a buyer can view your home quickly and readilywill more likely get you to a deal. Failure to do this and can quickly lose that buyer to another property. Maintaining a high level of organization is vital.

FSBO sellers' mistakes can be catastrophic, and these are only five of the most common - there are many more. Maybe you cannot commit to the amount of time and effort it takes to sell, perhaps youcannot afford to outsource, maybe you are worried about your inexperience, but you still don't wantto pay the real estate fees. Well, don't worry - there is an alternative.

The Third Option: Sell without HeftyCommission Costs

If you're worried that FSBO does not sound like it is for you or you can't gain traction, then don't worry. There is a third alternative to selling your home. At Little Pink Houses of Eastern Carolina,we offer our Executive Lease Program, perfect for any seller.

The program essentially allows you to **keep 100% of the money from the sale**. The executive lease purchase program increases your buyer traffic quickly and, in most cases, will enable you towalk away with roughly 10-15% more than a conventional sale.

An Executive Lease Purchase is a structured buying agreement where the seller agrees to lease to a buyer for a predetermined period, typically 6-12 months - thus resembling a rent-to-own strategy, but with more successful results. Our buyers pay a premium price for the opportunity and pay the seller monthly lease payments. These payments do not credit off of the seller's agreed-upon purchase price. We fully-vet our buyers using a 3rd party national lender that provides a comprehensive plan to become mortgage-ready. Our sellers enjoy risk-free security and a high levelof success due to the significant financial commitment and a contractual agreement to buy the homefrom the very start. Purchase buyers have ensured a high level of success.

The key features of the Executive Lease Program include:

- Maximum Agreed Upon Purchase Price
- Typically 12 Months Lease Payments with No Commission
- Rise In Buyer Traffic More Quickly
- Promotion And Advertising Expertise
- Risk-Free With A Guaranteed Vetted Buyers
- Full Service: Be Unburden By Showings, Calls, Contracts, And Closings
- Roughly 10% Or More Money In Addition To The Agreed-Upon Purchase Price.

A Great Option For Greenville Property Sellers

It is an exciting time for Greenville/Pitt County sellers as it continues to grow as a vibrant urban center of the State with new homes and infrastructure. With its proximity to the outstanding East Carolina University, regional medical center/hospital, and the county's above-average public schoolsystem, the area attracts young professionals and families looking to buy. More and more, buyers are looking for established suburban areas with access to community parks and recreational opportunities, like a golf course, shopping malls, and quality dining options – Greenville has it all.

The Little Pink Houses offers tremendous selling opportunities to Greenville sellers with the Executive Lease Purchase program. We have seen huge success in Greenville and surrounding Farmville, Winterville, Bethel, and Grifton, with a range of property types like townhouses andsingle-family homes ranging from 500 sqft to 5000 sqft.

Greenville attracts great buyers looking for suburban dream homes steeped in rich American history, especially with substantial square feet coverage of houses and lot size and various gorgeoustownhomes. It's never been better to sell in Greenville.

Download our *Think Pink and Make Green Report* on *How to Sell for Top dollar in Today's Market!* There is more money in the sale of your home; you just need to know how to navigate themarketplace.

Building Company Mindfulness: An interview with ‘Collaboration on Canvas’founder Katrina Sather

Corporate wellness and mindfulness practices aren't new concepts. For many US-based companies, wellness practices are the norm, offering myriad benefits; boosting productivity
and decision-making, reducing stress levels, and increasing employee well-being, engagement, and communication.

Today the direction of mindfulness programs continues to diverge into new spaces with distinct focuses that can transcend beyond the bounds of the company. Sather, founder of Collaboration on Canvas workshops, shares her experience in the space: “I think companies are hungry to be engaged in something bigger than them…To be bigger than what they do. To be connected to the community and with each other.”

Sather’s workshops, for non-profits and companies, each begin the same way: a big empty canvas in the middle of the room, black painted circles, aprons, paintbrushes, and a few simple rules – no words, you can add to existing paintings, but you cannot cover up others work.

“This thing happens when people are painting, especially in-person; with COVID, it is a little harder, but it is specific to when people are painting shoulder to shoulder…People will start to talk and share.”

Each workshop focuses on the creative process that encourages individual storytelling and connectedness rather than the final product. And, companies conclude the seminar with an unveiling that “captures stories of their individuals in the big painting. . . that then becomes part of a larger goal.”

There is a vibrancy in a painting, and the stories can be a catalyst for these companies. To be bigger than what they do. To be connected to the community andwith each other.

Dissimilar to other cooperate artistic workshops that emphasize team-building and communication, Sather’s workshops center on connectedness, empowerment, and story by simply engaging in the present moment collectively: “I love to be here in the community, and that's where a lot of Collaboration on Canvas' is in connection. We're just so much more powerful when we are in connection with each other.”

Participants require no artistic skills, but they benefit from painting’s therapeutic attributes: “It is so soothing to paint. It's relaxing. Forty-five minutes of creative expression can be the equivalent of meditation. It's just an open invitation—a very low bar to what is expected.”

The idea came to Sather in 2013 volunteering as part of an art program at a youth shelter. “I was going to put up all their art. Everybody's going to walk, in and that would be the end of it. But I thought that couldn't be it, so much riches in there. So I brought in a Canvas and said to the guys. Let's just put some black circles on here. We're all connected.…And people came. They looked at their work in the walls, but they went to the canvas. . .and together we created this painting, and there was just this beautiful energy while it was happening.”

Later, while Sather was transporting the painting home, a staging client saw it and purchased the painting. All the profit of the artwork went to the youth non-profit. And that was the beginning of Collaboration on Canvas. Each of the paintings created in Sather's workshops, either by non-profits or companies, are unique, vibrant, and dynamic. They speak to the human experience, which, as she points is collective and symbiotic. She quotes Laura Dauntly; "We grow unconditionally with others. "

In the same way that each of the paintings is dynamic, the road to Collaboration on Canvas has not been a direct path. Rather Sather's profound understanding of connectedness and storytelling in art is shaped by her own experiences and stories that form a much greater picture of her vision.

Sather's entrepreneurship is apparent. After graduating from The School of Art Institute of Chicago, she experienced successes across several landscapes as a trader, real estate broker, coach, and jewelry designer. But throughout her career, art and creating filtered to the surface: "I always found ways to be creative. . .as a real estate broker . . . I loved staging. . . I was always pulling these little pieces of creativity back into my world."

Similar in her workshops, "happy accidents," as she refers to them, surface in the openness of the workshop's space. "We create that state, just space…people might come and paint in non- profits or companies for five minutes. They may stand and watch and not create ever. But, they're changed just by being there."

While she sees arts as soothing, her own experiences in art school were less constructive; "School just about broke me from a creative standpoint…in art school, your critiqued continuously, and a lot of what happened in our critiques was pretty detrimental. It took a long time for me to recover. I am still recovering, personally, like from an artistic outlay - creating for myself looks very different from back then."
Fast forward, Sather's workshops are far from critical as she advocates the idea "it is one brushstroke at a time, one story at a time."

It is this emphasis on storytelling that has enabled her to get even the most vulnerable to be present in a moment, though it takes time; "a huge part of my story is being a witness."
"In the arts, it's a lot of the words you choose… Instead of being like, "Sam, you are such an amazing artist," Meanwhile Sophie's over there is painting, and I don't say anything - well, I just basically told Sophie, she stinks. You need to change the language to; "Sam, tell me about what you're doing." or "Tell me about why you chose that color." "Sophie, I'm interested in the flow of that line. Can you tell me more about that?" It's just holding more curiosity."

Taking a more facilitating role, rather than that of instructor or teacher, enables creativity and connectedness that together reap such positive effects. A lesson learned traveling Peru with her family before Collaboration on Canvas.

"I would be sitting in Peru, drawing with the kids, just with our sketchbooks, and other people whose language we did not speak would come up, and we would have them drawing with us. So it was just this collaboration… I got to do lots; I went into homes of weavers and got to sit and have tea with them and …and talk as much as we could through a translator

For Sather, art has become a way to bridge this invisible space between people. Her own stories from non-profit organizations and street pop-ups reveal how creativity inspires people and can transcend cultural, linguistic, and social barriers.

She shared a story of a construction worker, formerly homeless, who came over to paint and conversed alongside an executive director of a homeless shelter at one of her random pop-ups.
Sather recollects her amazement at the time —"not necessarily for the nuance of the conversation, but the fact that it just happened."

In domestic violence or homeless shelters, Sather's workshops showed to empower new members. While painting, women have conversations and get answers to question they desperately need, acting as teams without it seeming confrontational. Though different in context, the opportunity for team empowerment is easily translatable to the corporate world and for connecting with team members.

Many of Sather's corporate and non-profit workshops go longer than one session — sometimes, in the case of non-profits, no one may show up at all. The workshop process is sustainable to ensure exposure to a space that fosters individual growth and transformation.

"There was a woman who kept came down when I was there, and she was back. And she couldn't paint, but she said, 'I'm just happy to be out of my room today.' 'You are welcome. Glad you're here,' I said. She comes back the next week. Eventually, she started drawing with pencil drawings, just small but no color. She comes back another week; she starts drawing all these little circles in color. She ends up taking, in the end, this whole section of this corner of the painting... She was like, "Look at what I did." It was just such a testament to this change that had happened to her over time…It was just witnessing her being there. Just having that space and then eventually committing to it.

"I would say on a little tiny scale; I am changed forever from every single interaction. If every single interaction changes me, I can't help feeling so are they."

The painting from non-profit workshops champions the voices and stories shared amongst an extended community at auctions and art galleries: "When somebody purchases our painting, our story becomes part of theirs, and theirs becomes part of ours."

Sather's collection of poignant stories speak to the very heart of her organization and business. Collaboration on Canvas' application to the corporate world equally offers a rich experience that unifies teams.

When somebody purchases our painting, our story becomes part of theirs, and theirs becomes part of ours."

"I think there is a vibrancy in a painting, and the stories can be a catalyst for these companies. To be bigger than what they do. To be connected to the community and with each other. We need to continue that opportunity," says Sather.

It emphasizes the creative process, the unification of a team, in a single creative task that has straightforward rules and creative freedom that distinguishes Collaboration on Canvas.

“Not knowing what is happening with it, where it is going, nobody cares. They just wanted to paint it …to be part of something bigger to see something created out of all these random parts - talking to all these different people and their stories and what they bring to it.”

The added benefits of mindfulness at the individual level, such as stress reduction and decreases in burnout, speak for themselves; "Like my heart rate decreases, and so do other people's when they are just relaxed in that moment."

The paintings often shock and surprise the creators. Finished artwork usually hangs in communal office spaces speaking to visitors and employees – an amalgamation of voices that are essentially the foundation of any company.

Sather concludes, “there's no way somebody could see one of these paintings and not say, tell me more. I mean, they're dynamic. They're vibrant. They asked to be heard. It's a story worth witnessing.”

If your company or start-up is interested in a corporate wellness workshop, visit
the Collaboration on Canvas website. A session typically lasting 1-1/2 to 3 hours guided by a trained facilitator.

All corporate collaboration also directly supports the non-profit organizations that Collaboration on Canvas work with since 2013.

The History of WordPress

So, you're interested in the history of WordPress? Chances are you're either starting a WordPress website or, like us, part of the **40% of web users using WordPress**. In either situation, let's walkyou through the history of WordPress.

Allow us to set the stage: it's 2003, and a young Matt Mullenweg, an up and coming blogger, sharing photos and material online realises he has a problem. The open-source blogging platformsoftware b2/cafelog had stopped updating, and the developers were no longer reachable. The blogger in true form took to writing his frustration online, threatening a big "folk you" to the software. I know what you might be thinking, but we'll explain.

Back to our story, soon after, Mike Little, a developer, stumbled on Matt's post and commentedthat he too would like to jump in on his idea of "forking bv2". And that was it!

Okay. So, there is a little more to the story and a little more context needed here. But ultimately, WordPress was born to make a better experience for bloggers. Eventually, it evolved into an open-source platform for a dynamic virtual community for WordPress developers, designers, writers, bloggers, web publishers and more.

Sound interesting? Keep reading as we walk you through the history of WordPress in more detail.

How did WordPress start?

So, let's add some more context to the origin story. WordPress was born because the developers ofthe blogging software b2/cafelog stopped growing the site. In 2003, two b2/cafelog users, **Matt Mullenweg and Mike Little** met online while voicing their frustration about the shutdown.

While blogging, Matt wrote that he considered taking matters into his own hands using the b2/cafelog lock code to fork the software. If you're not aware, "forking the software" is a softwaredeveloper term and not just a funny play on words.

Forking is where developers divide software into branches that can stem from the same route butcan diverge into separate pathways, similar to a fork in the road. Like b2/cafelog, open-source software allows developers to take source code, copy it, and create a different piece of software.

And at this point, Mike Little enters to make good on Mark's threat. That is how WordPress cameto be, a fork of b2/cafelog.

Why did WordPress start?

In 2003, Matt and Mike's comprehension of the online community's need for a well-architected,open-source personal publishing system was prophetic – essentially the need to

democratise publishing.

Taking inspiration from open collaboration, WordPress has evolved into a progressive open-sourceproject using guiding principles from the open-source software movement. Its evolution is not credited to one group or person, but many skilled scientists, developers, designers, bloggers, dedicated WordPress users and more.

WordPress and democratising publishing and commerce come from the idea that opportunities tocreate, share and learn are necessary for all people and purposes. Language, technical ability or ideas should not limit this accessibility.

It enables people to access, despite limited tech experience, to take advantage of themes, templatesand plugins. While also allowing tech-savvy innovators to customise platforms in genuinely creative and ingenious ways.

The Age of Automattic

In late 2005, **Matt Mullenweg** founded Automattic, which has grown into a distributed companywhose entire mission is to make the web a better place.

They, too, seek to democratise publishing and commerce. Automattic provides and updatessoftware like WordPress.com, WooCommerce, Jetpack, The Atavist, and more for various languages and technological capabilities.

The systems created by **Automattic encourages and fosters collaboration** – an integral component of democratisation. Automattic shares the belief in the eventual death of all **proprietary software** (software that is copyrighted with limits to the distribution, use, modificationas imposed by the developer). It also sees the eventual take-over of open-source software in every market.

To further understand the concept of a distributed company, we recommend thispodcast: Distributed by Default: Matt Mullenweg on The Knowledge Project.

Yes! WordPress has Actual Philosophies!

Essentially the philosophies, sometimes known as “the WordPress way,” are overarching guidelinesor set principles. WordPress foundations are founded on ideals and beliefs that guide developers and designers in creating features in WordPress.

Most major software developers use a set of guiding principles informing their products purposes -Microsoft’s is driven by structure or “architecture,” Apple’s is driven by beauty and design,
and Google’s is driven by user experience. WordPress is no different – driven by user accessibility.

Some may never pay attention to WordPress’s philosophies. But we believe they’re instrumental inunderstanding your WordPress website, building your WordPress site for your visitors, and directing your theme and plugin directions.

The WordPress core philosophies are:

Out of the Box

The philosophy acknowledges that great software is fully functional with little structuring andsetup**.**

Design for the Majority

The philosophy indicates the average WordPress user wants usability and functionality to do whatthey need to do for their website.

Decisions, not Options

The philosophy determines the need to provide intelligent design decisions for users that limitstheir need to understand the technical side.

Clean, Lean, and Mean

The philosophy recognises that WordPress’s 80% or more features need to be usable and appreciated by the average user, ensuring depth in customisation as essential to cater to all differentWordPress users.

Striving for Simplicity

The philosophy acknowledges that continuous updates are essential, but updates need to focus onsimplifying tasks for all users.

Deadlines Are Not Arbitrary

The philosophy indicates that deadlines keep WordPress developers and users grounded andfocused on the real things that matter at each release.

The Vocal Minority

The philosophy acknowledges that future improvements need to consider a mixture of opinions,feedback and voices. They must also talk to those outside the online majority.

WordPress Bill of Rights

The philosophy specifies the platform is to be a teaching tool and is not owned by an individual.This means anyone can use it, tweak it, change it, share it, and yes, even fork it.

WordPress Bill of Rights

Similar to the United States of America's Bill of Rights, the WordPress Bill of Rights is all aboutfreedom. It's an essential accessory to WordPress's philosophies providing four core freedoms:

- The freedom to run the program for any purpose.
- The freedom to study how the program works, and change it to make it do what you wish.
- The freedom to redistribute.
- The freedom to distribute copies of your modified versions to others.

Source: WordPress.org

The Four Freedom's derive from what is known as the GNU Manifesto by Richard Stallman: a document that started the Open-Source movement. It's an insightful read, though a little long. Wehighly recommend everyone reads it!

The beginning of the WordPress Bill of Rights acknowledges that WordPress is licensed underthe General Public Licence (GPLv2 or later) and is one expression of the Four Freedoms.
Essentially, WordPress's philosophies and Four Freedoms say that the platform is designed to be ateaching tool and is not owned by individuals. This means anyone can use it, tweak it, change it, share it, and yes, even fork it.

A great article (also a recommended read) by co-creator Matt Mullenweg speaks of the true powerand value of the Four Freedoms, extending it more broadly to Open-Source Software.

"Open-Source abdicates your flexibility as a developer to better serve the people who actually use your products. You can see that as a constraint… or you can see it as a door to iteration, innovation,and constant progress."
Source: Matt Mullenweg, The Four Freedoms

Essentially, Matt advocates the sharing of code to give users the freedom to benefit from the codeand freedom to the creator when others repeat and transform the code onto amazing new things.

How has WordPress Changed throughout itshistory?

Let's be straight, WordPress did not magically enter the digital world as the powerful contentmanagement system (CMS) we know and love today. The software went through significant changes over the years.

Have a look at some of the greatest versions of WordPress and notice how these advancementsalign with WordPress's philosophies and the "WP Bill of Rights."

- **2003:** Our journey begins with WordPress version 0.7, a version that only allowed blogging. Withnot even a dashboard in this version, all you could do was write a post, set its visibility, comment options and put it in a single category.

- **2004:** A year after the launch, WordPress 1.0 welcomed search engine friendly permalinks and WordPress plugins (software components that add tailored features for users). WordPress 1.2 introduced users to a robust plugin system called Mingus, after Charles Mingus, the American jazzbassist, pianist and composer.

  Interesting fact: Matt and many other core contributors were passionate jazz fans; Matteven studied Jazz. Almost every WordPress version is named after a jazz legend - it's considered the aesthetic philosophy of WordPress.

- **2005:** The first significant redesign of the back-end user interface came at version 2.0, named afterDuke Ellington alongside a new default theme.

  Also, in 2005, the first WordCamp was held in San Francisco as a collaborative event runby volunteers for users and developers to discuss WordPress – no topic off limits!

- **2007:** In the 2.2 version, WordPress got its widgets enabling users to perform a function or access a service previously only possible by code. Its successor Dexter (Version 2.3), made it possible to addtext to posts. Also featured this year was autosave – the saviour of many!

  At this point, the changes were happening slowly and systematically and based only on theneeds of all users in the WordPress community, not just developers.

- **2008:** WordPress got a heavy facelift on the user interface. The new release 2.7, called Coltrane,introduced an admin interface menu that resembles today's one.

- **2010:** Contributors ushered in a significant turning point in WordPress history with WordPress 3.0bringing custom post types, post formats and custom taxonomies.

  2010 marked WordPress's clear evolution out of a blogging platform and its beginning as a CMS.

  During this year, WordPress also released a mobile app for mobile posting and auditing forusers.

- In the spirit of usability, WordPress 3.1 Reinhardt update brought the notable **admin bar** grantinguser access to every page's back end while logged in to your site.

- **2015:** Enhancements of WordPress 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 focused on improved localisation, theme customiser, building foundations for the WordPress REST API and importantly, emoji support: 👀❤️😊😂😀 .

  Perhaps more significant than emojis(😐), 2015 also marked the year Automattic (thecompany founded by WordPress co-founder Matt Mullenweg) acquired the most popular WordPress eCommerce plugin: WooCommerce.

- **2016**: Versions 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 brought many notable improvements and new features—one significant example is content recovery via browser storage. Also, WordPress announced at the endof that year that they could actively support *HTTPS* guaranteeing users more security to

send data between server and web browser.

- **2018:** The release of WordPress 5.0 shook up the WordPress world and won the CMS Critic Award's *"Best CMS for Personal Websites."* The WordPress Block Editor replaced the beloved classic editor. The classic editor will not mean much to you if you're new to WordPress, but it was adramatic change for us veterans.

  So, what was the famous classic editor like? It's similar to Microsoft Word or another wordprocessing software makes it easy to use due to its familiarity. However, drawbacks lay in its limits in images and text alignment provoking many users to exchange strong language with their screen, then finally give up. Plugins and code were also required for essential elements like buttons and tables.

  The new block editor, also known as Gutenberg, allowed you to format in drag and dropblocks. You need text and images side by side. No problem! Add a button or table. Too Easy! Each content element had an allocated block making editing and formatting supereasy.

WordPress Today (2019- 2021)

From 2019 to today, new releases have supported the betterment of the Block Editor for site administrators, designers and developers. WordPress contributors and developers continue toupdate with new editor features and tools.

They remain focussed on increasing design freedoms, WordPress themes, fresh layout options,style variations and the ability to fix configuration issues.

WordPress's mission stipulates its aim to provide accessibility and simplicity for all its users. They continue to support their community of people who collaborate and contribute to the platform whilealso looking for new ways to welcome more users in the spirit of inclusivity.

This is an introduction to the History of WordPress. Of course, there is richness to this history, more than we can fit in this article. Some of its stems back to the open-source software movementof the past.

Whether you're a new WordPress user or a dedicated community member, we encourage you tolearn more about WordPress's incredible history and story.

What is a Femininity Coach? Why You Definitely Need One?

As a femininity coach, it can sometimes be hard to describe my work because it takes many forms. A femininity coach is more than a stylist, an Instagram influencer, business coach, relationship guide, or etiquette teacher. At some point or other, I assume each of these roles, but there is more depth to it.

Femininity experts understand **femininity's true value** and power and use techniques to develop women's confidence to see the value in their own charm, beauty, image, and talents. Once women find that confidence, the coach's role is even more essential as we polish them to perfection for their ultimate career and life leverage.

So, what's a femininity coach? ***A femininity coach uses techniques and strategies rooted in science to teach etiquette, refinement, and soft skills to help women achieve personal and career goals. The coaching techniques vary from resources, masterclasses, academy curriculum, and one-to-one coaching. A femininity coach helps women become the feminine embodiment of themselves.***

Please continue reading to discover how high achieving women use femininity coaching to elevate their careers and life; and how you too can position yourself to achieve all your goals.

How does femininity coaching work?

Finding the desire to refine aspects of your life is easy. But, knowing where to start and the steps you need to take is a skill. And that's where I come in. I know how to connect women with their fears, aspirations, and dreams and transform them into a journey forward.

Building a strategy to achieve your goals is the most powerful tool imaginable. It allows you to embrace adversity, and it gives you a sense of purpose and direction. At The Duchess Academy, we provide **step-by-step and actionable strategies** to help you achieve your elegance and refinement goals. And that is precisely what femininity coaching is all about.

Coaching often connotes to masculine, sporting coaches, elite business coaches, aggressive strategies, and assertive presences. While that might appeal to some women, others appreciate a **softer coaching style** with femininity-focused content. And, that is not to say that femininity coaching cannot teach assertiveness to women - far from it!

So, who is femininity coaching for? **Femininity coaching is for any woman. Typically, clients want to learn to be more graceful, charming, and feminine. Clients may love makeup, glamour, and always looking their best. They may feel that modern society is too noisy and vulgar at times. Some of the most successful female entrepreneurs, business executives, or C-Suite executives have received feminine coaching and are now leaders in their fields.**

It is essential in femininity coaching to understand and foster qualities present in traditional femininity and today's successful **women.** Social science research shed light on some of the attributes of elite women.

Individuality

I focus my clients on embracing femininity and not shying away from it. I ask them to embrace their talent, style, or qualities - a perfectionist, deeply compassionate, traditional - and capitalize on them.

Confidence

Confidence attracts people in relationships and business. I teach people how to walk into a room exuberating confidence or to speak in public, gaining you the trust and admiration of the room.

Poise

Elite women have a sense of poise, gracefulness, and elegance that cannot be faked. Knowing how to behave at select social events make lasting impressions is highly underrated leverage.

Passion

Successful women are passionate because we tend to create opportunities in areas of interest and enjoyment. Sometimes women need some help connecting to their inner passions, believing in them, and turning them into something that makes them proud.

Self-belief

Self-belief is probably the most critical trait I teach, and often it is the hardest. If you don't believe you can succeed, then you won't get very far. Trust me, once you find it, friends and the rest of the world will notice.

Elegance

I revere myself as an elegance expert before the femininity coach. Some of the most influential women in our history were revered for their **elegance, grace, and style. Their appearances and manners are what elevated them in elite circles.** It is a powerful tool for women to possess, whether for elite society events or not.

Assertiveness

Female assertiveness is essential to achieving your goal, and the power of **soft skills** can help you obtain it. Women use soft skills to become more assertive. Adopting a confident manner, speaking clearly, asking powerful questions, and addressing criticism rationally is assertiveness. These are all **coachable skills** that benefit all people.

Humility and a Willingness to Learn

Feminine women cannot rest on their laurels. Successful women seek self-innovation and will work hard to learn and improve. They read books, go to workshops, and desire to learn from others because they are humble. They admit when they don't know something and strive to boost their skills.

The same is true for women seeking refinement. They will put in the hard work to make their dreams come true. So, let's get started today!

What does femininity coaching look like?

Femininity coaching takes on many forms, and there are many programs both online and in-person available to you. Finding the type of coaching solution for you can take time, and we recommend always doing your

research before committing to a coach or program.

Finishing School & Academy Programs

Finishing schools are designed mainly for young girls or women, focusing on upper-class cultural rituals and social accouterments. It could consist of an intensive course or specific learning experiences. In the USA, they are often referred to as **Charm Schools**. At their peak in the twentieth century, families sent thousands of wealthy women to colleges with finishing facilities available. A primary target was to help ladies gain skills to attract affluent men.

Now, **Finishing Schools for Women** aim to elevate every area of women's lives. They have tailored programs that span weeks or months, offering sequential modules and lessons crafted to underpin the next. Students leave with resources and skills from each module that sets them up for success. The curricular is challenging, enjoyable, and ultimately empowering for women. An example of modules you may find at a Women's Finishing School are;

- Mindset Mapping for Woman
- Harnessing Your Passion
- Channeling feminine energy for the workplace
- Style Guides – makeup, fashion, beauty, self-care
- Poise and etiquette training for women
- Secrets of Success for elite women

Perhaps the most beneficial element to a finishing school is the private access to a like-minded community fostering **female networking** in a supportive, safe environment. High-caliber finishing schools also provide students with a **personalized strategy** that works alongside their learning to meet a women's aspirations.

Discover a community that will inspire you to thrive with The Duchess Academy Membership Program. Learn More.

Private Coaching

Private coaching is the most intimate and extensive form of coaching service. **Private coaching** allows for a genuine and tailored approach to guide you through each stage of your level-up journey. The benefit of **personal coaching** is that women can select areas of their life to polish to perfection. Some areas of focus in private coaching include:

- Femininity
- Relationships
- Social Life
- Personal Branding
- Charisma
- Personal style
- Etiquette

The most important aspect of private coaching is making sure your coach aligns your training with your goals and aspirations. This is a clear sign that your coach is working for you.

Meet a true femininity expert and your secret weapon, Aarti, The Duchess Academy founder. Learn More.

Femininity Masterclasses

Develop the confidence you need quickly with instant access to simple but powerful masterclass lessons.

Perhaps you have a particular topic that you need a little bit of guidance from an expert. Or you want to explore an area of femininity that interests you. Maybe you need to learn some **feminine charm** for your next event quickly. These lessons are perfect for you.

Choose from a selection of online lessons that gives you the precise skill you need to shine in the real world.

Find exactly what you need at The Duchess Academy's Masterclasses. Learn More.

Coaching for Trans Women

Coaching for trans women is an important goal for femininity coaches. The coaching session helps a trans woman prep her/their mind and image to fully embrace who they are. As a femininity expert, I fully embrace **gender fluidity** that allows for less rigid presentations of gender. Thus, the focus of coaching trans people is about helping them become the most authentic version of themselves. I offer guidance and exploration on what **femininity means** and looks like to them.

Talk to The Duchess Academy today to unlock your femininity.

Feminine Embodiment Coaching

A trained **femininity embodiment coach** conducts feminine embodiment coaching. The "feminine" refers to feelings flowing through human beings, irrespective of gender identity. Embodiments are defined as "inhabiting the body." In inhabiting our body more fully, we find that we can fully inhabit our goals.

So, what is feminine embodiment coaching? **It uses meditation, feeling, and intuition to connect a woman with her body and dip into experiences or wisdom we have acquired from our life**. A feminine embodiment coach guides you to find YOUR own ANSWERS and doesn't seek to solve clients' problems with their own experiences.

How do you know a Feminine Coach is truly an expert?

Finding the right feminine expert will make all the difference. Elegance experts of the highest expertise will ensure success, so we recommend doing your research into their website and social media presence.

Below is a list of questions that can help you determine the expertise of a feminine coach.

- Do they present women with tailored plans for success?
- Do they offer live consultations and not just generic lessons?
- Do they hold several different qualifications, such as beauty, behavioral science, psychology, consultancy, and coaching?
- Do they have experience in consultancy and coaching?
- Do they present themselves on social media as feminine experts?
- Do they offer coaching in the areas I am interested in?

- Do reviews from clients document proof of their experience and quality of coaching?
- Do they offer initial consultations or meet the expert nights?

Remember ladies: **femininity coaching** is more than styling, etiquette, and manners. Just because an expert presents this fabulous life on her social media profile doesn't mean she has the consultancy skills to assist you.

The Benefits of Femininity Coaching

Femininity coaching benefits many women and gender identities that want to live more refined and abundant lives, regardless of age, race, faith, or sexual orientation.

Elegance experts understand the impact of **traditional femininity** on improving the quality of life. Coaching and finishing schools are suitable for all ladies seeking to enhance their current situations.

Some of the benefits of feminine coaching or include:

- Prep Woman's Mindsets
- Commanding your Feminine Energy
- Transform your career and business
- Attuning your relationships
- Attract lasting romantic love
- Harnessing your Personal Style
- Gaining Elegance and Etiquette
- Self-Care techniques
- Understanding what femininity means to you.

The Duchess Academy

Hi. I am Aarti, the founder of The Duchess Academy. I am an Elegance Expert passionate about etiquette, refinement, style, and soft skills. I know the power of femininity used to enhance lives and reach personal and career goals.

The cultivation of FEMININE ELEGANCE

At The Duchess Academy, we are about more than teaching you fluffy, Hollywood dreams. We take those dreams and turn them into a strategy.

- Want to learn how to style yourself for your best friend's wedding? Done!
- Learning how to apply that smoky eye? Book a session with us!
- Have a high-end function to attend and not sure which fork to use? We've got that covered too!
- Maybe you need to brush up on your public speaking skills for that next big presentation? Done!
- Or perhaps it's confidence and mindset to achieve your ambitions? We're here for you!

Discover more about how you can learn to be more feminine, softer version of yourself with our range of packages.

New Commerce Experience (NCE) | Don't Miss Out & Loose

In January 2022, Microsoft launched New Commerce Experience changing customer purchase and licence management through their Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) Program.

The change impacts Microsoft Windows 365 licence purchases to reduce complexity and provide cost savings for long term commitments. The changes also provide customers with additional features making CSP a comparable alternative to the longstanding Enterprise Agreement (EA).

To encourage Cloud Solution Providers to assist customers in switching from current EA and legacy licences, Microsoft is offering a 5% discount for annual Microsoft Windows 365 commitments.

The discount is available until the end of March 2022 and will not extend. So, time to capitalise on this is running as you read this article.

Additionally, Microsoft will increase licence prices from March 1 2022, for the following licences:

- Microsoft Business Basic
- Microsoft 365 Business Premium
- Office 365 E1, E3 and E5
- Microsoft 365 E3

In addition to the 5% discount, committing to an annual licence before the end of March 2022 will also avoid the price increase announced by Microsoft.

What does this mean for Direct Cloud Solution Provider Partners?

The CSP New Commerce Experience (NCE) helps Direct Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) partners build complete, predictable revenue streams with less licensing complexities. Your customers benefit from new terms and payment options with discounted prices.

Direct CSP partners will make considerable returns with the 5% discount up until the end of March 2022.

What dates do your customers need to know for the NCE launch?

The following dates are important for you and your customers:

- **January 10 2022** – The New Commerce Experience (NCE) launches and release Microsoft introductory promotions.
- **March 1 2022** – Microsoft 365 licences price increase and increases to all new and renewing subscriptions through New Commerce Experience.
- **October 1 2022** – All customers will be required to purchase through New Commerce Experience.

Please be aware: Committing to the new subscriptions before March 1 2022 ensures you leverage available

discounts.

Understanding these dates are essential to helping your customers make informed decisions.

What are the subscription options for NCE?

Alongside the annual subscription New Commerce Experience, Microsoft will introduce monthly subscriptions. In addition to the March 2022 deadline, Microsoft will make a 36-month subscription available. This extended subscription period will allow your customers to save on future cost increases by committing to the coming years.

The following are summaries of the three subscription types available through New Commerce Experience:

Monthly subscription

- Microsoft 365 licences monthly are **without** an annual commitment.
- Can make monthly changes to their Microsoft 365 or Office 365 licences plans and seat count for greater flexibility.
- 20% price increase across all licence plans.

12-month subscription

- Commit to your licences through a 12-month subscription.
- Monthly or annually billing options (Dissimilar to the legacy CSP model with a 12-month subscription.)
- Pricing is locked for the entire term, so your customers benefit from the additional cost savings of any price increases in that time.
- The subscription allows you to increase but will not decrease the seat-based count.

36-month subscription

- 3-year long term licencing commitment
- Monthly, annually or upfront billing options
- The subscription allows you to increase but not decrease the seat-based count.

How Total One is supporting the NCE changes

The Total One platform offers a robust Microsoft integration with all the capabilities you need to scale your CSP sales.

We continue to support the Microsoft CSP platform for

- Office 365
- Microsoft Azure
- Azure Plan
- Azure Reservations
- Azure Reserved Instances
- Software subscriptions
- Azure Marketplace

The CSP new commerce solution integrates with Microsoft Partner Center, Office 365, EA, SPLA, Azure, SCCM, Intune, Hyper-V, VMM.

Total One platform update series ensure clear and accessible functionality, making CSP New Commerce Experience (NCE) easy to procure, manage and bill.

Total One NCE Updates

The following updates to the Total One CSP offer a robust platform with improved functionality and capabilities to support the new Microsoft New Commerce Experience model.

The following are listing platform updates to ensure a smooth transition to the new New Commerce Experience model.

- **Create and manage NCE subscriptions**
  View, create and manage New Commerce Experience subscriptions in TotalOne alongside legacy subscriptions.

- **Sales price management**
  Total Ones platforms include full-price management support for New Commerce Experience and sales price customisation.

- **NCE renewals and suspensions**
  Configure CSP New Commerce Experience renewals and get notified of changes to a subscription at the point of renewal.

- **Monthly or annually billing display.**
  Configure and compare New Commerce Experience pricing options per the user subscription.

- **Product Selection enhancements**
  Find new product groups easily on the custom subscription dashboard.

- **NCE billing reports**
  View New Commerce Experience subscriptions and sales prices on the Total One dashboard or download billing reports to streamline the onward customer invoicing.

- **Subscription upgrades**
  Upgrade eligible New Commerce Experience subscriptions up to 72 hours after the Total One platform.

Total One will continue to make updates as we progress with our New Commerce Experience updates series.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact your Customer Support Officer.

How to hire the *best* sales leader | A Founders & CEO Guide

Eighty percent of all turnover is attributed to a poor hiring process, and turnover among sales leaders is higher than any other position across all industries.

Don't make the same mistakes as everybody else; fix your hiring process now.

So, how do you hire the best sales leader? **During the hiring process, you need to look for three traits: a high-performing seller, unwavering determination to hit the revenue targets, and a cultivator of sales culture that will command the respect of the entire sales team. Using selective questioning and sales leadership rubrics can help you determine these traits in a potential sales lead candidate.**

To achieve your company's vision, you require leadership from a top sales director. Understand the significance of who you choose for this position.

Key insights in this guide include:

- What is a sales leader?
- Why is hiring a great sales leader so essential?
- What are the essential traits you need in an effective sales leader?
- How to hire the best sales leader and the questions to ask when hiring?

What is a sales leader?

The **sales leader** is the spearhead of a company's bottom line generating predictable and repeatable **revenue growth** to ensure the company's growth.

Essentially, the sales leader is the person securing sales channels and driving the direction, the sales strategy, and the attitude approach to selling successfully.

However, the difference between a great sales leader and a good sales leader is someone who takes all of that and inculcates the **business ideals and vision** with the sales know-how to **leverage innovative sales processes**.

Startup sales in an early-stage or new company are usually led by the founder or founding team. There may be very little sales direction or lacking a fully established sales team.

In established companies, the sales leader carefully builds out sales teams or teams. They may also assign sales managers to lead the day-to-day operations of each department, overseen by the sales leader.

Why is hiring a *great* sales leader so essential?

Hiring the wrong sales leader can be detrimental to your sales teams and the overall profitability of the business.

For example, a founder in a fast-growing new startup requires a sales strategy full of sales exploration, experimentation, and flexibility. Their first sales leader is a **senior sales leader** with a proven track record from a previous company. This leader has impressive past experiences in established companies, extensive market knowledge, and **sales execution**.

However, the new Head of Sales couldn't find success in the startup's high-growth environment. The mismatch in the startup's business model and the leader's **leadership skills** could prevent the startup from attracting new business and meeting **revenue targets**.

Best case scenario; the founder identifies this mismatch early and course corrects in the next stage with a new hire. Worst case scenario; the startup closes its doors.

Take another example, as the CEO of an established technology company, you hire a new **VP of sales** who has an aggressive leadership style. Your sales organization always meets revenue targets, but your staff turnover rate is through the roof, and you begin to lose great salespeople and talent to competitors.

While your sales organization may be consistently meeting targets, the damage to the business, culture, and reputation was enduring.

In the best-case scenario, the founder steps in to correct the imbalance of culture and of course corrects the **VP of sales**. Worst case scenario; the startup loses their best sellers and cannot compete with the competition.

For **sales leadership roles**, hiring the right person matters because a great leader will:

- provides clear direction and a strong grasp of the business
- execute sale processes that prioritize customers experience
- instill core business objectives, values, and mission
- deepen existing customer relationships and relationships with potential clients
- build a sales playbook; a path to predictable sales growth
- build a sales hiring profile that can be replicated and scaled
- increase salespeople tenure and lower turnover, especially sales talent
- prioritize sales recruiting, development, and retention of team members
- increase employee (sales managers, sales reps, and staff members) motivation
- increase revenue numbers
- increase growth across sales reps and sales managers

What are the essential traits you need in an effective sales leader?

Sales Talent

Sales leadership requires sales talent; in other words, the candidate must have had success as a salesperson in the past.

They need to know when to jump on a deal and close it versus when they should let their team experiences failure as a learning opportunity. Only **high-performing sales experience** gives you this.

With that in mind, successful salespeople do not typically need to possess the key skills associated with team orientation – crucial to sales leadership. In fact, their ability to take ownership over a goal is what makes them good sales representatives.

Often as they become more successful in their career, those selfish tendencies, which made them successful, are reinforced and allow them to hit bigger numbers. Those results garner the attention of the organization, and everyone inherently believes that the best person to lead the sales team is the best salesperson.

At face value, that may be a decent idea for several reasons.

First, if your salespeople mirror your **sales director**, you would want that to be the most successful and accomplished person.

Second, if you have a **high-producing salesperson**, they're typically looking for career growth, and if you don't give them a path to leadership, they'll go outside the organization to find it.

For these reasons, conventional logic tells us to promote the most skilled person to lead the team. However, conventional logic can steer a founder or CEO in the wrong direction.

The reality of the situation is you are pulling your highest producing asset off the field. And, just because they can sell doesn't mean they can lead.

Do not promote a high performer out of a sales role simply for the sake of a promotion.

You effectively place them in a brand new role that they have not displayed any proficiency in, and what made them successful as a salesperson could make them poor as a sales leader.

Remember, this is all assuming this person knows how to sell. You need to validate that through an **interview process**.

Strategic decision making to meet business goals

You employ a sales director as a buffer from everyone else who believes you have overly ambitious goals.

A great sales leader is in the trenches with you, holding the fervent belief that your goals are realistic but actively strategizing to achieve those goals. It's an unwavering commitment to the goal — "there's always a way" mentality.

Far too many **business owners hire sales leaders** that produce data and reports that explain why they are missing targets and why the quarterly and annual projections will be missed.

Let me make one thing very clear: You can miss the targets on your own without a sales leader. The sales leader is effectively an insurance policy that ensures the targets will be hit without a founder or CEO involvement.

You need to make it abundantly clear that they need to be **solutions-focused** and **results-driven,** not effort-driven. This requires **strategic thinking** and **creative thinking** alike.

Cultivating Sales culture and respect of the sales team

A strong sales lead adapts their coaching and guidance to suit each salesperson and a new hire on the sales team.

If a salesperson or sales rep feels they get limited value from the sales leader, they will not utilize the sales leader to their fullest potential because they won't feel confident in the leader's abilities and training.

This also leads back to whether sales lead can sell or not. You need to be certain this person can garner the respect of the team by showcasing their ability to sell and create a culture of winning and high achievement.

The sales leader will need to hold everyone accountable to elite standards, so they must be capable of achieving those standards as well.

When the leader isn't beholden to any particular rep, they can push the boundaries and push the reps to achieve more. This also creates the need to have crucial conversations while also implementing the forcing functions that keep the team in line without constant hand-holding.

The leader must prioritize sales hiring to build and scale a team of the right people and retain highly accountable, professional salespeople while consistently weeding out unimproved low performers.

How to hire a *high-performing* sales leader

Great sales leaders display proficiency in many leadership and selling traits, but I combine them into five essential sales lead activities; they are:

1. Sales Talent
2. Strategic & Creative thinking
3. Sales Culture Development

Sales Talent

First and foremost, they have to be able to sell. You cannot hire a sales leader that isn't the highest producing salesperson on the team.

The sales team won't take the sales leader seriously, and they won't be able to hold the team accountable, nor will they understand the nuance of sales. The sales team will take them seriously, and the leader won't be beholden to any individual sales rep.

You cannot have a situation where the leader needs the rep more than the rep needs the sales leader. That would create a power imbalance that will offset the sales team's culture.

Now, you may be thinking, "didn't you just tell me not to promote my best salesperson?"

Not quite. I said, don't promote your best salesperson simply because they're the best. Being the best salesperson on the team is a qualification but not a deciding factor.

Typically, sales leaders or directors of sales come in from outside the organizations and aren't promoted from within. Now, that's not to say that sales leadership positions shouldn't be held by salespeople.

During the interview, some questions to ask:

- How have you used unconventional approaches to increase revenue at other companies?
- How do you propose making my/our business more profitable?
- What was your best and worst sales decision within the last 12 months, and what did you base that on?
- How do you determine the best sales process to meet targets?
- How do you adjust their sales methodology? When do you know how to pivot a sales strategy?
- While selling capabilities is essential, there are other factors you should look towards in finding the right sales leader.

Strategic & Creative Thinking

As a founder or CEO, you must systematically determine whether your next VP of sales will find a window when a door is closed. And if that window is locked, they will find another path.

You must clearly communicate this expectation to them before hiring them, and you need to test their ability to produce creative solutions when all else fails.

You only want people on my team that believe failure is not an option. I have found this to be one of the biggest reasons why certain **sales leaders** are successful while others fail. It has little to do with the solution, little to do with marketing, and even less to do with the current economy.

If you have categorically determined that this person has the willingness to achieve the desired result at all costs, that is the only way you stand a chance of hitting your ambitious targets.

During the interview, some questions to ask:

- How have you utilized unconventional approaches or sales funnels to increase revenue at other companies?
- How do you propose making my business more profitable?

- How would you incorporate our other departments like marketing, operations, and customer success teams in your sales efforts?

Sales Culture Development

Great sales leaders value sales culture and actively incorporate culture building as they build out sales teams, sales managers, and individuals.

They have an uncanny sense of the entire team's strengths and weaknesses, as well as individuals. However, they also recognize the diversity of selling styles by which salespeople can achieve success.

The sales hiring process is their responsibility, and they use sales hiring to recruit and retain top talent and to recruit positions to fill gaps.

Therefore, sales leaders are also like coaches and find ways to develop team members, helping them reach their fullest potential.

During the interview, some questions to ask:

- How would you describe your leadership style?
- How do you build a sales culture? How would you describe an ideal sales culture? Please share examples of strategies you've used.
- What does your sales recruiting or sales hiring process look like?
- How have you built high-performing sales teams in the past?
- How do you know when to step into a situation versus allowing the team to experience failure? Please share some examples.

Conclusion

The importance of attracting the best sales leader cannot be understated, but in today's evolving talent market, it can be challenging without guidance.

The Rose Garden Sales Leader Hiring Rubric categorically unroots the best for the job from the best available. You don't want the best available because good enough isn't good enough.

I systematically guide you through a rubric of grading your potential hire on all the key components of success and then some.

You can't afford to leave anything up to chance. To evaluate your potential sales leads, and ensure your organization's growth, download the hiring rubric now.