



Quarterly Event Insights

January 2023

(Events held July - December 2022)

Finding The Way Forward



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NOTE FROM OUR CHIEF STRATEGIST



Have you ever walked along a riverbank and noticed an eddy—one of those spaces in the water that seems suspended in time, the water recirculating around in one place, while the river current flows downstream just beside it?

Reflecting on 2022 it feels like the event industry was in a bit of an eddy—suspended between doing events as we always have and continuing to produce baseline digital experiences, but not quite ready to move into the bold, new territory of reimagining the future of events.

While we all celebrated being back in-person and to have the human connection we had sorely missed, the reality is that the experiences we produced were not terribly fresh, or dramatically different. Most left uncharted territory unexplored. On the digital front, we've assembled some fantastic best practices that can be considered industry standards, yet the digital experiences of the past year also failed to wow.

As I mentioned in our last report, I do believe that real innovation and reimagination of events is on the horizon. And I expect we will see greater experimentation in events in the 2023 cycle.

Many of our clients and others we're talking to are curious about experimenting with new formats that will attract audiences away from their cozy home offices. They are rebalancing portfolios to ensure they can support always-on digital and use in-person events as key brand or audience inflection points or "moment makers." The investments will be smaller due to the economy and stagnating budgets, but as Plato said, "A need or problem encourages creative efforts to meet the need or solve the problem"—a quote often paraphrased as "necessity is the mother of invention."

So while it may reveal itself more slowly, and take longer, I do believe our industry is still undergoing transformation that will continue to emerge in the coming years. And, in 3-5 years, events will look much different than they do today.

As we set our sights on the more near-term horizon, trends and challenges we're watching closely include:

- Quality vs. Quantity — In-person experiences designed for value
- Going to the Customer — Portfolios that integrate local experiences
- Sustainability — Making choices in honor of our planet
- Generational Force Factor — Designing for younger audiences

Read on to learn more about what we see ahead for our industry in 2023 and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erica Spoor".

Erica Spoor,
President & Chief Strategist
Impact Point Group | [ImpactPointGroup.com](https://www.impactpointgroup.com)

II. By The Numbers/Content & Experience Design

Quarterly Event Insights



EVENT AUDIT: BY THE NUMBERS

This audit and forecast incorporates our observations and analysis of digital and in-person events with case studies and updated metrics taken from events that transpired in the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2022.

32 total events audited in 2022

Here's what unfolded, by the numbers.



45 - 120

Range of Opening Keynotes
45 minutes to 2 hours

Digital and in person, typically featuring more than one keynote speaker



16

Total Events Audited

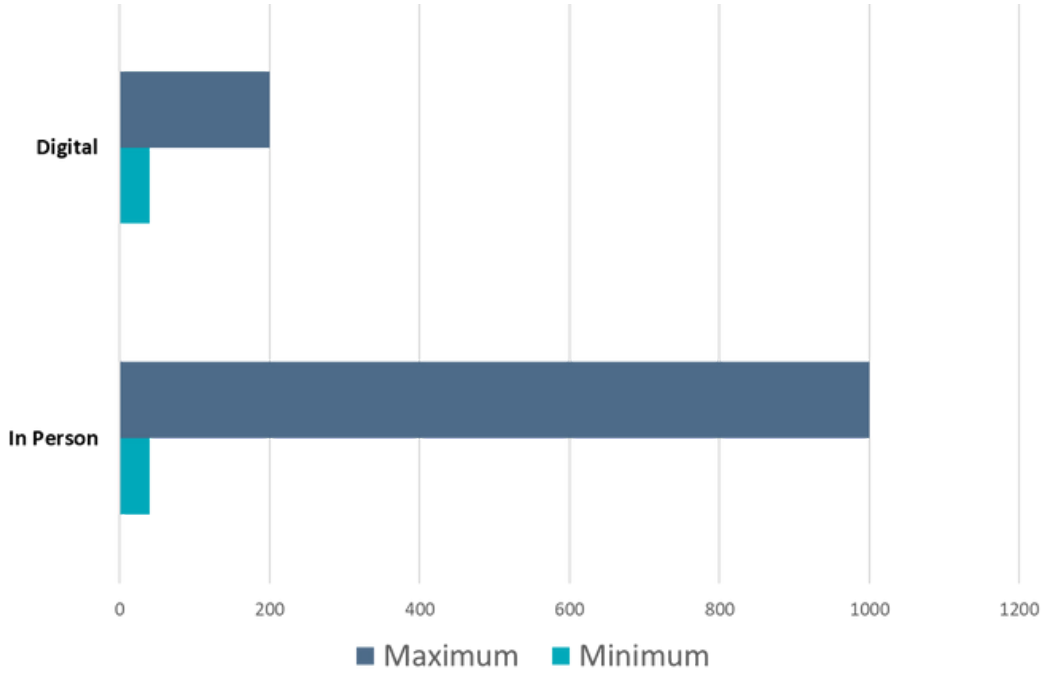
- 14** Digital only
- 2** Digital & in-person



5

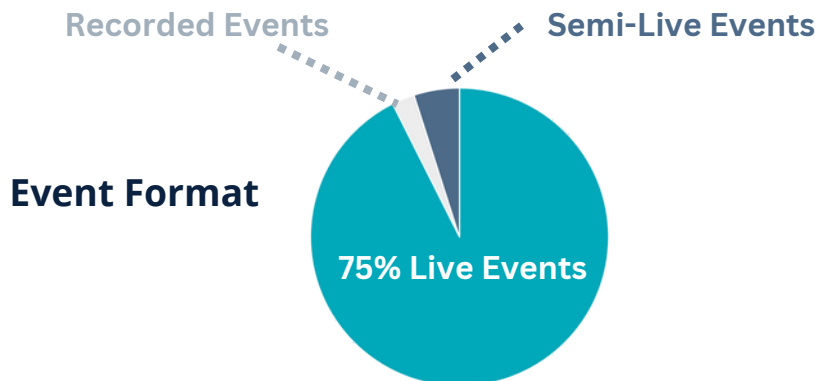
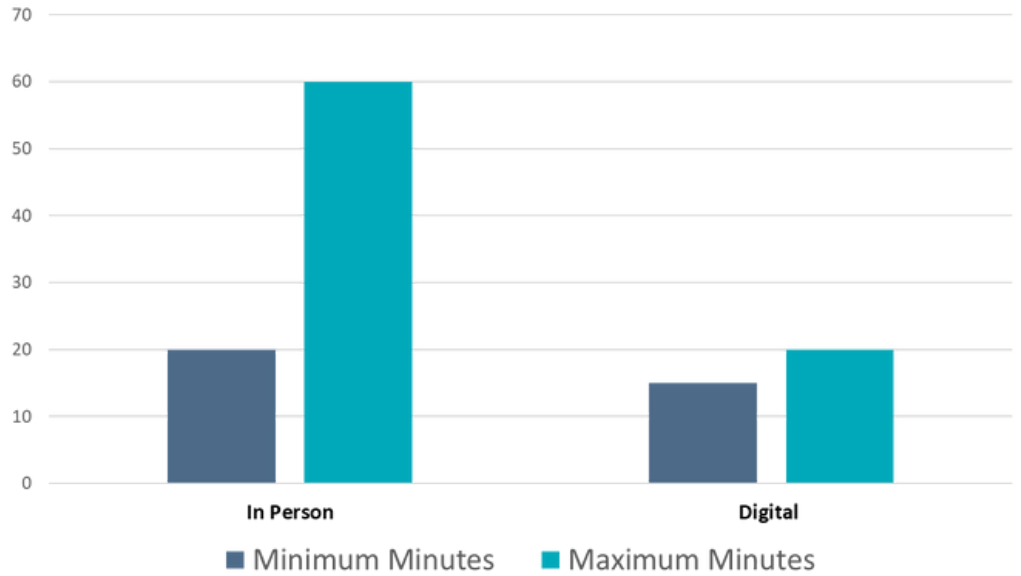
Events with topics focused on
Diversity, Equality & Inclusion

EVENT AUDIT: BY THE NUMBERS



Duration of Breakout Sessions

- In person: 20 - 60 minutes
- Digital: 15 - 20 minutes



EVENT AUDIT: THOUGHT LEADERSHIP BY THE NUMBERS

Thought Leadership programs—content typically driven by an authoritative and influential speaker—are top of mind for many event strategists and teams. We dialed in for a closer look at the numbers of these programs in 2022 for some insight on what to expect in the new year.*



15 - 120

Session Length

Ranged from 15 minutes to 2 hours
Longer sessions included multiple speakers



66

Sessions

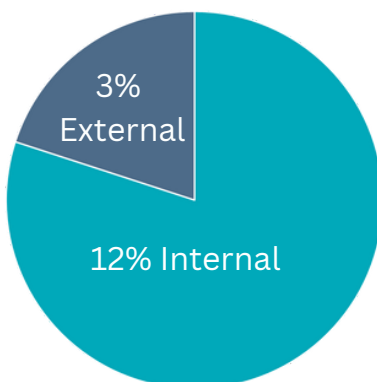
13 in-person and digital

53%

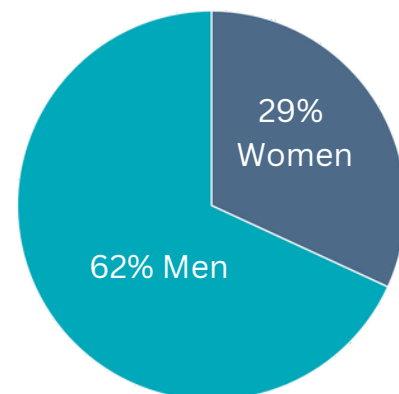
Percentage of sessions focused on DEI



Speakers



Gender Diversity (2:1 Ratio)



CONTENT & EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Event strategists have had nearly everything thrown at them this year. Fresh off the pandemic, they were met with inflation, labor shortages, and supply chain demands, and now they're being asked to do more than ever. All of the repositioning and repurposing have led companies to take a different approach and get creative in staying competitive. We have observed a growing awareness around sustainability, diversity and inclusion, as well as a focus on creating valuable in-person experiences after two years of disruption.

Over the course of the 3rd and 4th quarters, we've had our ear to the ground and have audited technology events to understand where we've been, where we are and where we're going.

In this piece, we'll capture all of the developing trends we've observed and what you can expect to see lead the market in 2023.

What's New and Inspiring?

Events are among the most powerful experiences for professionals and businesses, allowing for connection, exploration, and education.

Here's what we learned over the past few months:

Fresh Voices for Keynote Speakers

Learn the power of personality. Companies often turn to celebrities as a draw, but talent comes in all forms and a "celebrity" doesn't need to appear in a blockbuster movie to create a compelling draw or inspire audiences to take action. Look to a noteworthy entrepreneur, a polished Millennial or up & coming Gen Z) with a strong social media presence, or an industry innovator—all speaker types who draw attendees and work actively to engage with them.

Liv Boeree, the most successful female professional poker player spoke at one event and vividly explained the history of professional poker play to a rapt audience. She spoke to the metamorphosis of technology in her field, from the early "hustlers"—right-brained and gut feeling—to the digitization of poker, playing with analytics, and using technology to become better, faster. It was a fresh perspective on a common experience across multiple industries, packaged up by an engaging trailblazer.



Liv Boeree
SAS Explore

CONTENT & EXPERIENCE DESIGN

(continued)

Visually Innovative Presentations

All event sessions, but especially those that are digital and hybrid, are suffering from limited attention spans and demanding schedules.

The most innovative event designers are using video backgrounds and motion graphics to visually capture audiences. "The Human Side of the Way We Work" session presented at Miro Distributed '22 used motion graphics to capture and display key ideas from CMO Paul D'Arcy's live and interactive keynote, an innovative approach that rejected a slide deck altogether and reinforced the company's progressive brand.



***The Human Side of the Way We Work
Distributed '22, Miro***

Authentic Connections

One event team offered a "behind the scenes" view of what it takes to put on the biggest software conference (Dreamforce) of the year. Taking the opportunity to humanize the production (warts and all) helps make experiences memorable and cultivate brand relatability.



***Behind the Scenes
Dreamforce 2022, Salesforce***

CONTENT & EXPERIENCE DESIGN

(continued)

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Events have the power to bring a diversity of people together and allow them to discover new perspectives. We can use this dynamic medium to empower and celebrate new voices and champion inclusion.

Use hosts and keynote speakers with unique perspectives—we appreciated sessions featuring Barack Obama and Viola Davis—to highlight the importance and value of diversity and equity. Actor and storyteller Laverne Cox positioned art as a force for positive change and offered ways to build a more inclusive world, on-screen and off.



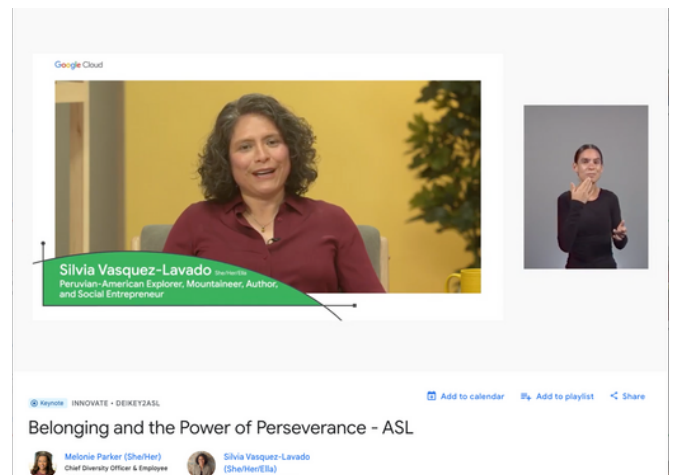
Former President Barack Obama
Inbound, Hubspot - Fireside Chat

In practice, strive to balance gender, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, religion, and other characteristics that make us all human.

Diversity spans far beyond gender and race, of course, and we appreciated event teams recognizing intersectionality and finding opportunities to foster conversation with a variety of groups and experiences, including sessions for “diverse leaders” and “women in analytics,” as well as others that featured neurodiverse speakers and others with physical differences.

Invite speakers and functional teams to get creative in recognizing and celebrating others. We appreciated the support for the LGBTQ community and stories of belonging and the power of perseverance. Stories from speakers such as Silvia Vasquez-Lavado, are heartfelt and open up the door to a lineup as diverse as the audience your event is reaching.

In practice, strive to balance gender, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, religion, and other characteristics that make us all human.



Silvia Vasquez-Lavado
Peruvian-American Explorer, Mountaineer,
Author & Social Entrepreneur
Google Cloud Next

CONTENT & EXPERIENCE DESIGN

(continued)

For the Generations: Gen Z and Millennials

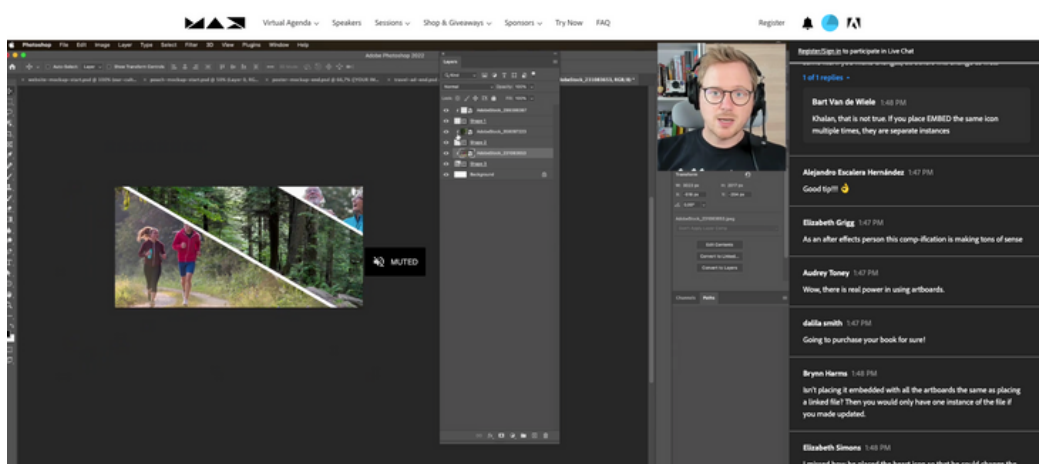
Older Gen Z (~24 years old) and Millennials are becoming an increasingly large part of the professional population and are set to make up almost a third of the workforce by the next decade, an expected upward growth of 51 million by 2030. This generational shift is also evolving the “average” when it comes to the expectations and habits of our target audiences, making many of the old corporate event planning rules obsolete. Basic hotel ballrooms and buffets full of unhealthy, processed food are definitely going to fall flat.

These groups want unique experiences, like the “Google Cloud Fly Cup Challenge”—a developer-focused competition to drive innovation into the sport of Drone Racing. Offered during Google Cloud Next's evening mixer, remote developers used race data and Google Cloud analytics tools to predict race outcomes and provide tips to pilots targeted to improve their performance.

Older Gen Z and Millennials also expect to connect authentically. These digital generations crave engaging, Instagram-worthy experiences. They also value two-way communication at events. They don't just want to attend monologue-like sessions. They want to interact with speakers and leaders. Accessibility and networking opportunities are important to this young audience.



*Drone Racing League
Google Cloud Next*



*Live Chat & Q&A
Adobe MAX*

CONTENT & EXPERIENCE DESIGN

(continued)

Many speakers and session facilitators—from professional artists and biologists to brand managers—are offering more vulnerable transparency than we've seen previously, sharing their motivations and the twists and turns of their own careers.

When thinking about content design for this audience, we suggest leaning on the great mnemonic offered by [Tahseen Kazi on the Hublio team](#)—the three C's: Climate, Communities & Causes. This is the generation that will be affected most by climate change, with 54% believing that climate change is a result of human activity.¹ They are a strikingly inclusive generation, valuing communities and environments that don't exclude based on economic and educational backgrounds. These audiences also actively contribute to charitable causes and expect opportunities to mobilize around causes, particularly via a very visible online platform.

These two generations are looking for meaningful connections with information, resources, and people that appeal to their core beliefs and values. Values-based communities can provide inspiration, emotional satisfaction and empowerment for Older Gen Z and Millennials, as they mobilize around those values they share content and recruit outside their community.

Understanding the deep relationship between these younger generations and their communities and putting it at the core of your marketing strategy will help you better anticipate the needs and expectations of your existing and future customers. It also provides a powerful way to connect and create brand relatability and advocacy.

This generational shift is also evolving the “average” when it comes to the expectations and habits of our target audiences, making many of the old corporate event planning rules obsolete.

1 **Pew Research

<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/05/14/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far-2/>

CONTENT & EXPERIENCE DESIGN

(continued)

Pushing Forward with New Technology

As we navigate the future of events, one thing is clear—technology will be a major player for the foreseeable future. We caught up with Brandon Wernli, owner and founder of event tech consultancy and services agency [BW Events](#), to discuss technology's role in the future of events, what attendees want, and best practices for hybrid, virtual and in-person programs.

“The biggest challenge I see is how do we combine being back on site with the success of virtual and larger audiences and do it with a budget that hasn't expanded,” says Brandon. “It's causing us to be more efficient around strategy and where you place the budget to give you the biggest impact.” **An event plan and strategy are critical to putting a virtual or hybrid platform to good use.** Goals and objectives like lead generation or an increase in sponsorship revenue help focus your team's effort and put dynamic hybrid platforms to work and keep your audience engaged.

“Engagement, whether virtual or in-person, is critical,” Brandon emphasizes. “The importance of tracking how those two audiences are using technology and consuming information differently allows for personalized engagement.” Avoiding technology burnout is paramount. Keep things fresh for both audiences and use technology to engage both online and offline. We're seeing event strategists use podcasts to deliver content and mix up mediums for both in-person attendees and those online. Another inventive option to avoid burnout is hosting arcade centers and other games that allow in-person and virtual attendees to compete against each other.



Gamification is a top engagement tactic for Brandon, something that was also echoed in our industry leader survey as a tool primarily to engage older Gen Z and Millennial audiences. It incentivizes attendees to get involved, connect with other attendees, and fire up different parts of the brain to process brand and marketing content in new ways.

Many virtual and hybrid event platforms allow audiences to complete challenges, earn points, and track their effort on a leaderboard.

CONTENT & EXPERIENCE DESIGN

(continued)

Brandon gave us a rundown of the most talked about digital tools of the year and what value event strategists can take from them:

RFID (Radio Frequency Identification)

This token technology, often built into unique wristbands and ID cards, is commonly used to create a cashless event environment, but can also be used to make activations respond uniquely to different individuals or audience sub-groups. Putting RFID to work usually **requires extensive investment**, both from a time and cost perspective.

QR (Quick Response) Codes

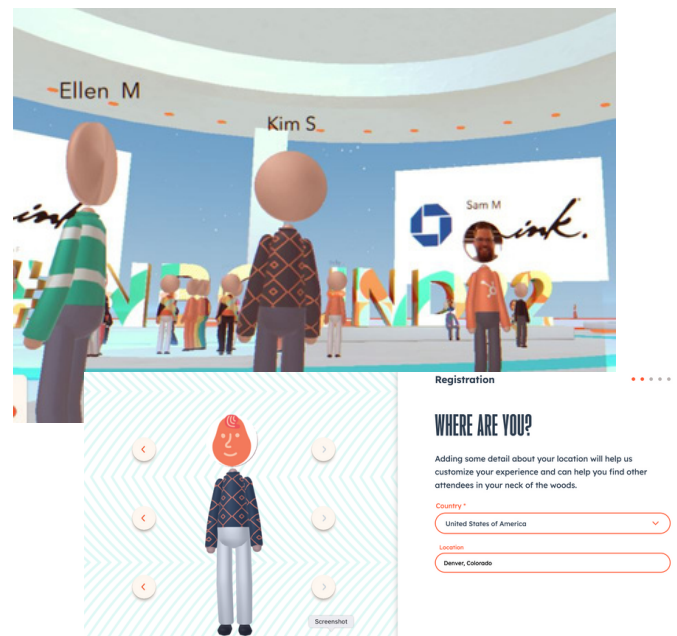
It's pretty easy to put QR Codes to work for sharing and networking, as audiences are now more familiar with the technology and how to read them using their mobile device cameras or mobile event apps. Use QR Codes as a **call-to-action** during sessions and within activations or to **connect** your online and offline media.

NFT (Non-Fungible token)

NFTs are individually unique digital files that act as a type of certificate of authenticity or ownership. In the current state of the technology, putting NFTs to work is expensive and likely not a good investment. Branding and offering NFTs to audiences will certainly come into play once immersive digital environments like the metaverse are fully developed, but that's a long game. But go ahead and get your wheels spinning! NFTs can be used to **drive or supplement** a digital marketplace, **indicate the completion** of virtual or in-person training programs, or **reward** winners or VIP audiences in a virtual environment.

VR (Virtual Reality)

Brandon told us that he sees some substantial benefits depending on how simulated VR experiences are put to use. Because individual VR headsets are currently a requirement for putting the technology to work, use is limited to smaller meetings or live activations. Audiences are transported while dramatically **reducing the event's carbon footprint**, feeling as though they've come together in a meeting space or transported somewhere else altogether. Interpersonal engagement can feel "real," even though participants are on opposite sides of the planet, and the **immersive environments** make distraction a non-issue, keeping attendees from checking emails or checking out during the session.



**Virtual Networking
Hubspot Inbound 2022**

CONTENT & EXPERIENCE DESIGN

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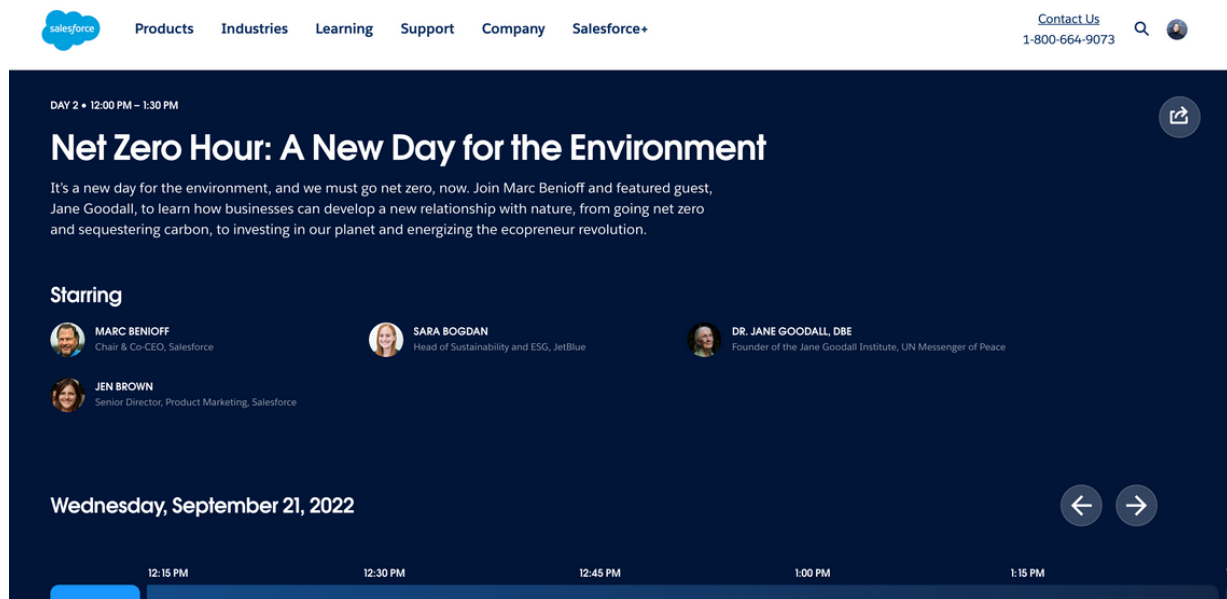
AI (Artificial Intelligence)

Respondents to our industry leader survey chose AI as their top new tech application for the year ahead. Brandon said that he, too, favors this technology, depending on the application and what you are trying to accomplish with your event. AI technology is taking large sets of data, identifying patterns, and putting them to work. For that reason, it's pretty critical to start with large, capstone events that can generate a sizable amount of behavioral data about your target audiences and sub-groups. Putting AI technology to work means inserting software into your in-person and digital spaces that can understand and respond to users, relying on smart learning and syntax to provide the "right," valuable, or novel answer or information. AI can be used to "read" an attendee's profile and make content or networking recommendations or in providing chatbots to engage attendees in an in-person activation. It offers both a **personalized experience**, as well as deep learning about your audience, **increasing conversion** by promoting the right content at the right time or allowing sponsors to engage with a more personal approach.

Sustainability

More brands and organizations have adopted an eco-friendly approach to their events, making sustainable event planning a movement in its own right.

Salesforce™ Dreamforce curated so much sustainability-focused content, they branded the collection as #TeamEarth on their on-demand platform. They also launched a dashboard where attendees could purchase carbon credits to offset carbon emissions from travel and other in-person event activities.



Dreamforce 2022

III. Trend Analysis

Quarterly Event Insights



Event Trend Analysis:

Dreamforce 2022

Feature Event Format: In-person, streamed live and available on-demand

Digital Event Format: Chat, APAC Encore

1st Engagement: Chair and Co-CEO Marc Benioff kicked off the event with a live presentation

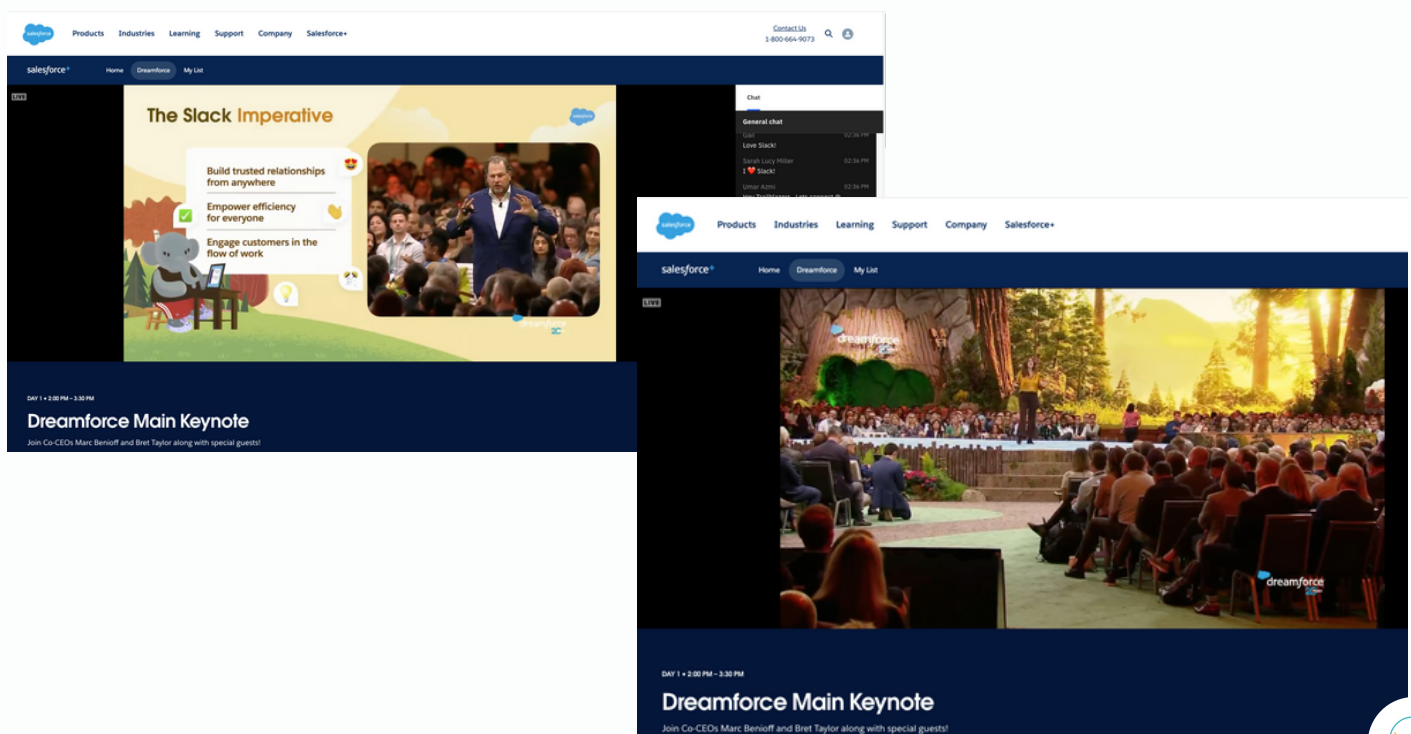
Dreamforce is an annual event that brings together the global Salesforce community for learning, fun, community building, and philanthropy. Attendees, referred to as “Trailblazers” by the leading CRM brand, from all over the world gather to share their insights, successes, and learn the latest in industry innovations.

The event offers attendees a way to discover new products and emerging technology via sessions, workshops, and keynotes, and get inspired by expert insight and research. Attendees also commonly take Salesforce certification exams.

This year was Dreamforce’s 20th anniversary, promoted as a “go big and come home” event in San Francisco. They branded it as a family reunion.

What we liked:

Even though the initial keynote with Marc Benioff hasn't changed much over the years, we were impressed by their set production and demos—they have always been and still remain at the highest level. For example, when presenting, the "slide" houses the content and the speaker as one and becomes the frame of the screen. Digitally this is a much better production than just a talking head as if in a Zoom.



Event Trend Analysis:

Dreamforce 2022 (Continued)

What we liked continued:

The event's commitment to sustainability was significant, both in the eco-friendly measures taken and in the volume of expert speakers offering to educate and encourage attendees to take climate action. They also provided information for attendees to learn how to move toward net zero across our own organizations, as well as support uniquely tailored toward "ecopreneurs" and other innovative businesses focused on sustainability.



Rock Climber Alex Honnold

The celebrity factor is still high at Dreamforce, but with a slant toward those using their star power to create positive change. We appreciated actor and storyteller Laverne Cox's insightful discussion on how to build a more inclusive world, on-screen and off.



Laverne Cox
Actress & LGBTQ Advocate



Bono
Musician & Activist

What we recommend:

The volume of sessions was incredibly high, making it difficult for any one attendee to get through it all, not to mention the content uniquely targeted for them. We'd suggest culling the list of breakout sessions through a strategic design process and organizing sessions by content pillar or using AI to direct attendees into tracks meant especially for them. Consider keeping session information available even after the event has ended, so attendees have more time to watch on-demand.

Event Trend Analysis:

MAX 2022

Feature Event Format: In-person and digital

On-Demand Content Extension: Communities, Live chat with speakers & other attendees

1st Engagement: The live presentation was kicked off by [Shantanu Narayen](#), Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at Adobe. After speaking about the company's milestones, he was followed by other executive speakers (11 in total).

Attended digitally and in person

MAX is an annual creativity conference held by Adobe™ Inc., presenting new developments for its suite of applications and building a community of creative professionals. The event showcases technological advances for developers and designers, providing them with opportunities to learn about new products, and entertains with talent and awards shows. Tech support labs, workshops, cyber cafes, and other special events and activations were all on offer.

What we liked:

MAX also applied a creative spin to the celebrity factor, bringing inspiring artists with renown to share stories on the "Power of Creativity." Artists such as Kadir Nelson, Steve Aoki, Christina Mittermeier, Sian Heder and Jeff Koons all shared compelling stories about their art, collaboration and creativity. It was a way to show that no matter what kind or type of art, there is creativity in all for everyone. The topics were multi-generational.

Artist Steve Aoki & Adobe's Heather Combs



We appreciated how Adobe organized and explained session types for attendees, whether focused on creative trends and updates to Creative Cloud or focused on creative inspiration and connection to industry superstars. "Sneaks" offered a peek at the innovations coming out of Adobe labs.

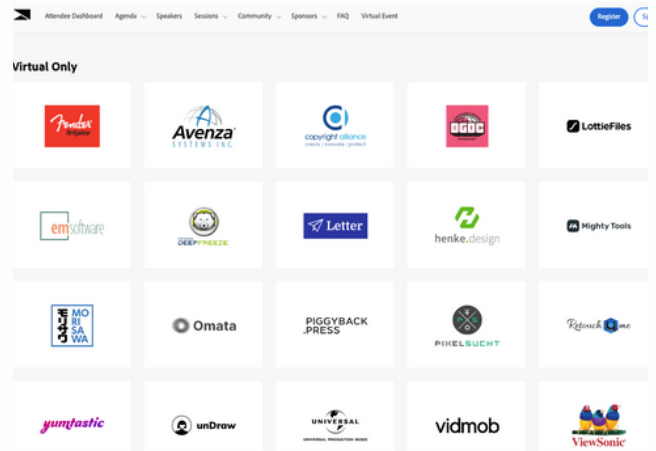


Event Trend Analysis:

MAX 2022 (Continued)

Adobe MAX is always a visual dream. So colorful and full of art, graphics, vignettes, creative applications of film, and digital creativity. It's a fun, optimistic, and engaging event to attend.

In IPG Digital Event Forecast v4, we mentioned that MAX “would have benefited from clear sponsor level differentiation throughout its website to allow participants to engage with sponsors of different tiers.” We noticed that in this year’s event their sponsorships were easily accessible online and tiered for differentiation. Attendees could filter by geography as well.

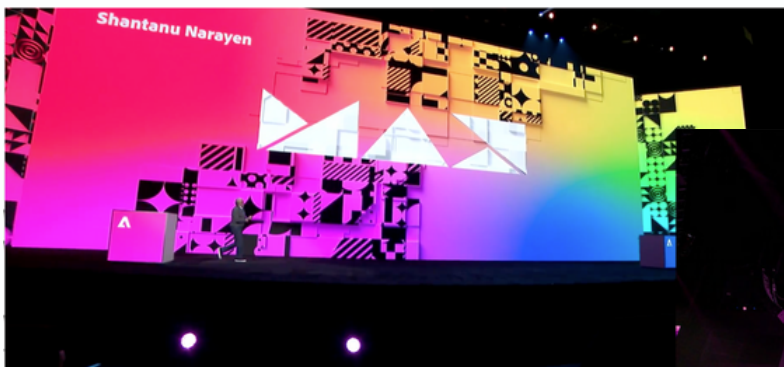


Sponsors Page

The mainstage broadcasts were available in Asia Pacific; Europe, Middle East and Africa; and Japan.

What we recommend:

Stage designers add ambiance and value that cannot be overstated—they create an immersive, theatrical environment, engaging the senses and wonder of the audience. We noticed that the lighting for live keynote speakers at MAX wasn't on point, making the speakers hard to see clearly at some points. We always recommend dry runs for all elements of your live and digital event—the speaker's presentation, audio, and lighting—to ensure that everything is working as anticipated and vetted from an audience perspective.



**Main Stage - Keynotes
MAX 2022**



Event Trend Analysis:

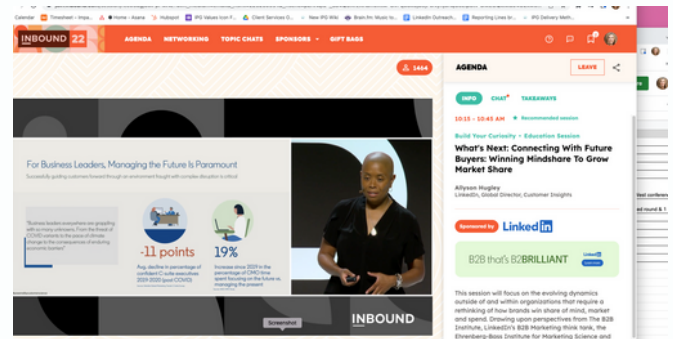
INBOUND 2022

Feature Event Format: In-person and digital
Digital Event Format: Chat, Live Q&A, Communities, immediate download of assets from each session

INBOUND is HubSpot's annual event targeted toward sales, marketing, and customer experience professionals. The event offers workshops led by industry experts, events and sessions meant to inspire, and the opportunity to network and learn about new business growth and marketing strategies.

What we liked:

INBOUND worked to create two different event experiences for digital and in-person attendees, outside of shared keynote sessions. Online attendees were offered content created uniquely for them. The hybrid integration can be extremely successful, but is also tricky to pull off for events and meetings of all sizes. Curating separate experiences is one way to serve and engage audiences on their own terms.



Right now, our audiences (and the world at large) can use some inspiration. They're looking for signs of stability, connection and opportunity for themselves, their families and their companies. Brands that offer that at their events, like Hubspot, can feel like safe havens during challenging times.

What we recommend:

The INBOUND virtual world platform proved difficult to use and our audit team reported they often got stuck and found it challenging to engage with others on the site. Make sure to test your technology in advance and keep UX as simple as possible to achieve your goals. While our audiences are becoming predominantly tech-able, never assume that they will have the time or attention span to navigate a buggy or unclear digital environment. Be sure to offer pre-event access and communicate connection and navigation instructions clearly on your event website and post-registration emails.



Event Trend Analysis:

Distributed '22

Feature Event Format: Digital

Digital Event Format: Chat, Live Q&A, Communities, Speed Networking, on-demand post event

Distributed '22 is Miro's end-user, community-focused, community-led annual conference. The event offers interactive sessions, thought leadership, education and networking opportunities. Tapping into the collaborative functionality of their platform they invite attendees to share and draw from each other's creative energy.

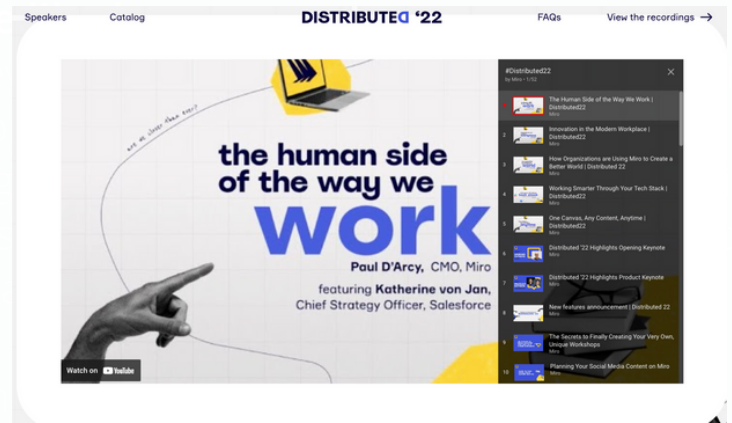
What we liked:

We really liked the use of art direction for the keynotes. Their use of motion graphics to capture and display key ideas from their CMO's live and interactive keynote, was an innovative approach that also demonstrated the company's creative brand.

As strategists, we appreciated the option they gave attendees to meet up in person through their Miro Meetups. From Austin to Sydney, they provided a way for Community members, Miro users and "Mironeers" to meet in a fun group setting and network with each other and other Miro experts. This is a good example of blending an all-digital event with an in-person option.

What we recommend:

Although colorfully creative and full of tools to collaborate, the issues of being live and casual speaker behavior were alive and well at Distributed. During the opening keynote, the co-presenter did not have the same level of background as the CMO and immediately announced her issues with feedback. It came across awkwardly and gave the impression that there hadn't been any pre-event tech check or preparation for a high-quality production. We can't say it enough, but we recommend dry runs for all elements of your live digital event—the speaker's presentation, audio, background, and lighting—to ensure that everything is working as anticipated.



Lastly, their post-event On-Demand videos were a combination of session recordings or highlights from their keynotes. The menu was offered as a playlist, which we found to be an original way to view all of the sessions.

IV. Recommendations & Forecast

Quarterly Event Insights

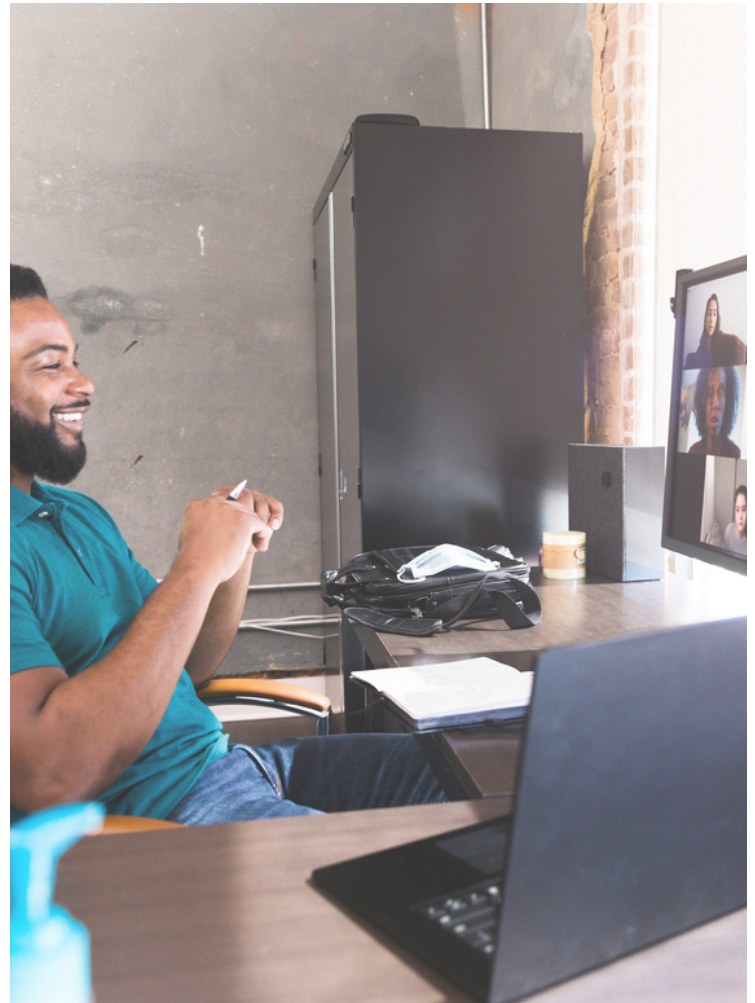


IV. Recommendations & Forecast



Tighten Up Existing Technology

Many smaller events continue to use Zoom as their main presentation platform. It's a reliable, accessible, and pretty dang ubiquitous platform at this point—all pros. That being said, we're still seeing a lot of casual attendee behavior on Zoom, which can mar your brand and distract from the objectives of your meeting or session. Engage moderators in managing video channels, as well as chat. Encourage meeting and session attendees to engage over video, but remind them if the session is going to be recorded and made available on-demand. Give your participants some direction as to when it would be best to go off video (i.e. if they need to walk around with their laptop or eat lunch) and allow your moderators to send thoughtful individual requests to participants or, if needed, end their video sharing to manage for distractions.



As we've discussed there are many communication platforms that do so many things that at times event planners miss some of the smaller items. One of the biggest misses is the opportunity for sponsors to engage further with attendees here. When planning an event it's important to think of all the different ways to maximize engagement for your brand and your sponsors throughout your technology.

Use technology to allow sponsors to engage with a more personal approach

IV. Recommendations & Forecast



Creating Community & Allowing For Open Discussion

As an online participant at the SAS Explore event, we liked that they offered to show our responses via Emojis within sessions. Unfortunately, we couldn't see what others used. You may see it as a risky move, but the value in these types of emotional responses within a digital environment is in allowing participants to engage with the greater community and feel as though they're part of an audience. Make sure their responses and reactions are visible to each other in order to cultivate communication and community. The reward is worth any potential risk and session moderators can manage misbehavior.

That being said, moderators need to be sensitive to the task and objectives at hand. Distracting participant video and audio feeds, lackluster emoji stream reactions, and criticism or questioning in the chat happen and can be managed or redirected thoughtfully and with professionalism.

But make sure your moderators have a light hand and allow for authentic interaction and engagement. In one event during our audit this season, we found that the chat was heavily censored and comments that included criticism or questioning were immediately deleted, not allowing for any discourse. Most global audiences expect the freedom and ability to make these types of public critiques and being "shut down" by moderators can damage brand relationships.

Event teams and leaders must find a balance between cultivating conversation and controlling it.



IV. Recommendations & Forecast



Separate Virtual & In-Person Experiences

Hybrid is very tricky and hard to pull off successfully. We're seeing more event teams experiment with curating separate event experiences for virtual and in-person attendees, and we welcome it! **Virtual attendees don't necessarily have to have access to all of your live keynotes or sessions and they don't need to watch live, at the same time that your in-person participants.** We've observed that the audience energy and production value of in-person events are often lost on virtual attendees.



Sessions, Schedules, Keynotes, Oh My!

Sessions and breakouts are fundamental for any larger program or conference. They give your attendees an opportunity to explore specific parts of your overall event's message by going wider and deeper into your theme, brand, and content. However, if there are too many sessions to choose from, you risk the chance to engage your full audience.

Consider sharing some of your sessions and breakouts on-demand post-event, extending the experience while allowing for more time to digest your extensive content library. And, sometimes, less is more.

Easy-to-use agendas are also important for attendees. We found at one event that the agenda page rolled up permanently after a session ended so we couldn't go back and recall what was missed or refer back to get the name of a speaker or product name. Your agenda page will connect attendees to your content and structure the experience for them.

Make sure your agenda is offered on-demand and fully accessible at any time during the event.

Positioning internal executives as speakers can get political and challenging for event teams and leaders, especially when it comes to CEO keynotes. Many execs are incredible, heart-led and sharp business leaders, but they struggle to engage from the mainstage. If this issue resonates with you, **consider different keynote formats that will support your internal exec or CEO and give them a boost.** They could be partnered with a charismatic celebrity or facilitate a group discussion that features other executive leaders. And always collect audience feedback on individual sessions, especially keynotes. Stakeholder and c-suite alignment is most of the work we do and it's critical to find artful and productive ways to communicate key concepts from your measurement program, as well as discuss needed changes for the next event cycle.

IV. Recommendations & Forecast



The New Generation

Older Gen Z and Millennials are yielding more and more power, not just as consumers, but also in the business world. To appeal to this tech-savvy generation with high expectations and shortened attention spans, companies must shift their approach away from the traditional “I talk, you listen” corporate event structure to a more engaged, lighthearted atmosphere.

As mentioned earlier, event gamification may help draw this generation to your event and connect with them in a meaningful way. It offers fun and engages attendees, while the instant feedback builds momentum and helps people keep their heads in the event. There are a lot of event apps today that come with gamification options that include leaderboards and scores. You can also host games like quests, networking bingo, or scavenger hunts if you’re on a tight budget and can’t invest in gamification apps or other technology.

Older Gen Z and Millennials also expect to connect authentically

This generation places a lot of value on face-to-face connections, even when they happen online. Make sure that collaboration and networking offerings are strong and intuitive. By planning activities that facilitate networking like icebreaker games or interactive sessions, you might be able to engage them better and hold their interest for longer. You can also break away from the traditional mold of events and host breakout sessions that rely more on collaboration and communication.

Consider creating Birds of a Feather Groups and other niche attendee communities, as well as curating small spaces throughout the event venue where people can meet after sessions.

We’re all pretty attached to our mobile phones, but younger generations were basically born with them in their hands and are expecting to use their phone to navigate your event, consume content, and connect with others. Make sure your event website is mobile-friendly. Connect them more easily to activations and trade show booths using QR codes, post announcements through the event app about impromptu sessions, and experiment with response rates when attendees can take post-event surveys right from the app.

And never, ever forget strong, secure, and free WI-FI or onsite charging stations.

IV. Recommendations & Forecast



Sustainability is Paramount

It's a global concern and growing crisis for all of us, as well as a top concern for younger audiences, and event leaders are responding through their planning and content design efforts. And as with all of your messaging and engagement goals, sustainability needs to be thoughtfully integrated into an overarching strategy for your capstone event and event portfolio. In addition to incorporating this messaging into your content, identify realistic initiatives you can put to work right now in order to “walk your talk” and set targets to keep your events on track. There are various venue-sourcing and events platforms that can help set measurable sustainable event objectives.

Leverage event and social media platforms, as well as technologies like RFID technology to reduce the use of paper signage, schedules, booth incentives and prizes, and branded materials. Communicate your sustainability commitment and tactics on your event website and in other attendee comms, giving them the opportunity to contribute to or amplify your efforts.

When it comes to sourcing what you need for your event, try to do so as locally as possible in order to cut down on transportation and carbon emissions. This also has the added bonus of supporting your local community. When it comes to food, work with vendors to create options that are both health- and earth-conscious.



Another key strategy is to focus your venue search on turnkey properties that meet green building standards like LEED® or operational ratings like Green Key and can also provide services like composting that are designed to limit the carbon footprint of your in-person event.

IV. Recommendations & Forecast



The Future is Now

As previously mentioned, we're seeing the use of AI to elevate opportunities to connect with attendees as well as strategically match attendees who share the same interests, experience the same challenges, and have aligned goals within an industry. Whether it's recommending which sessions to attend or people to network with, AI can help make your event much more personalized and accessible.

AI technology can also provide language and translation support if you're ready to take a nationwide event worldwide or expand your audience across language barriers. AI can accurately and instantly translate web pages, content, and event communications.

Finally, QR codes and RFID technology are great tools to keep your employees, clients, and guests safer while also saving money on paper, sanitizing tools, and staff time. They allow you to get information directly into your audience's hands and offer opportunities for enhanced interaction.

QR codes also make information more accessible to guests with vision impairments and other disabilities, ensuring that everyone feels included and connected at your events.

Quarterly Event Insights

V. Appendix

16 events audited

[Canva Create](#)

[Dreamforce 2022](#)

[Google Cloud Next](#)

[Hubspot Inbound 2022](#)

Adobe [MAX 2022](#)

[Mulesoft's Future of the Hospitality Industry Lunch & Learn](#)

[SAS Explore](#)

[VMWare Explore](#)

[AWS Re:Invent](#)

[Twilio Signal](#)

[Distributed '22, Miro](#)

[Zoomtopia](#)

[Octane](#)

[WebEx One](#)

[Wrike Collaborate](#)

[Reconvene Summit - Eventbrite](#)



What is the biggest challenge
your team is facing this year?

Let us know.

**Connect with us or email at
collaborate@impactpointgroup.com**

