

TRANSFORMING
YOUR CAREER:

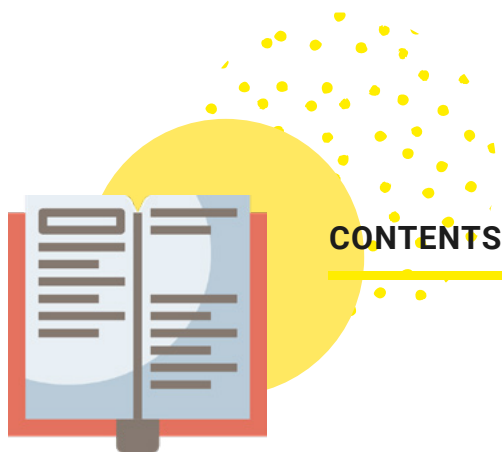
FROM

EVENT PLANNER

TO

**EVENT
STRATEGIST**

WITH 
EVENIUM



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
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EVENTS ARE CHANGING: FUTURE PROOFING YOUR EVENT PLANNING CAREER	6
--	----------

THE MOST MARKETABLE EVENT PLANNING SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS	19
---	-----------

THE TOP 20 RESPONSIBILITIES ACROSS JOB POSTINGS	20
--	----

TOP 5 QUALIFICATIONS	23
----------------------	----

HOW TO GET A SEAT AT THE DECISION- MAKING TABLE	25
--	-----------

EVENT PLANNER ROLE EVOLUTION: THEN VS NOW	36
--	-----------

LOGISTICS PERFORMANCE	37
ANALYSIS ENGAGEMENT	38
BUDGET MANAGEMENT	39
CONTRACT NEGOTIATION	40
MARKETING	41

THE TOOLBOX OF THE MODERN EVENT PROFESSIONAL	43
---	-----------

Traffic Flow And Check-in Data	44
Engagement	46
Support Presenters' Success Risk	48
Assessment	49
Supplier Decisions	50
Sponsors And Exhibitors Boosting	51
The Attendee Experience	52

IN CONCLUSION	53
----------------------	-----------

ABOUT THE AUTHORS	54
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EVENIUM

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION



Our research is crystal clear: 76% of job ads currently on the market require event professionals to be capable of analyzing the business value of events.

Event professionals are experiencing an unprecedented change in their job description.

The stereotype of the busy task manager is being replaced by the image of a very strategic individual. It is now more imperative than ever that planners familiarize themselves with the data available, and be able to action that business intelligence. Data is at the core of this movement, and the richer it gets, the more it will become a key driver in coordinating brand marketing activations, complex conference programs, crowded trade show floors and aligned internal meetings.

'Let's do an event' is the statement event professionals most dread hearing from upper management. It very frequently lands on the event planner unaccompanied by any plan with clear objectives and outcomes.

The real challenge is that, often times, there is no board-level VP of Events who can make calls about event needs – someone that is able to marry company objectives with live experiences.

Well, that trend is changing.

This report will offer any corporate event professional willing to elevate their game the strategy and tools to get a seat at the decision-making table.

Here is what's in store for you:

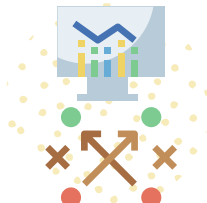
Trends

The macrorends defining the ole evolution of event planners.



Career progression guidance

A deep dive with 10 strategies to change your role in your current company.



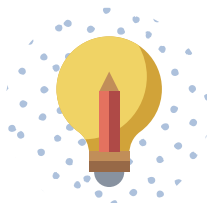
Research

An analysis of 250 job postings and unprecedented insight into how requirements are changing.



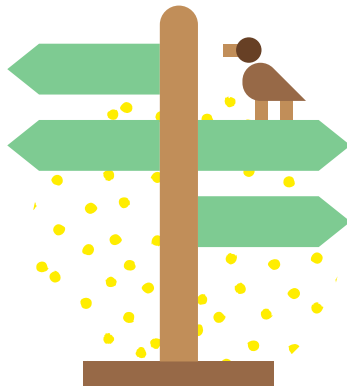
The Toolbox of the 2023 Event Professional

The tools you need to progress your career and project your job into the future.





EVENTS ARE CHANGING: FUTURE PROOFING YOUR EVENT PLANNING CAREER



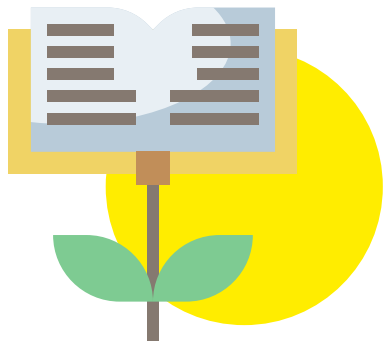
EVENTS ARE CHANGING

Many trends are affecting the job description of event professionals.

Technological evolution together with a definite shift in consumer needs are shifting the trajectory of event planning toward something more strategic.

We anticipate that this shift will produce two outcomes:

- ☑ Those individuals able to step up their game and meet the new challenges of the market will survive.
- ☑ Those incapable of implementing these changes and consequent advances in their plans will gradually see their role becoming more stressful and less rewarding, and will eventually disappear.

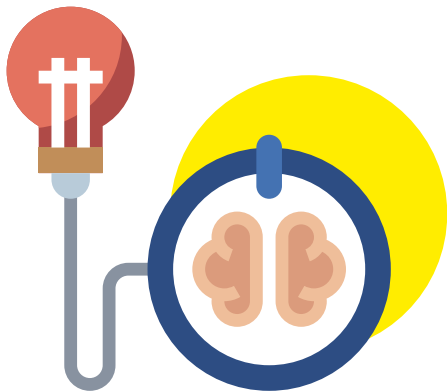


WHAT ARE **THE FACTORS** DRIVING SUCH MASSIVE CHANGE?

Let's have a look.

1.

ADVANCES IN AI FOR EVENTS



Artificial Intelligence is quickly taking over many aspects of our lives. It is also impacting the event industry.

Some job roles within the industry are already being affected by the AI revolution. Well implemented chatbot programs are replacing the need for temp staff. According to Gartner¹ 54% of the CSS professionals they interviewed were using some form of chatbot, VCA or other conversational AI platform for customer-facing application in 2022. They predict it to become a primary Customer Service channel within five years.

We can anticipate the same trend affecting the event industry, with artificial intelligence enabling automations for planning and executing various aspects of the job. In fact, tools are already available to replace countless iterations of the same jobs.

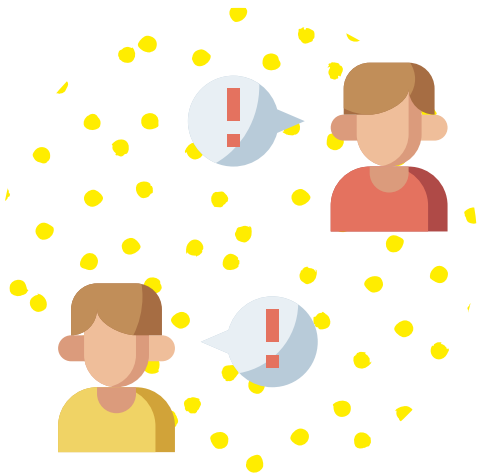
AI also means liberation from research-intensive jobs, as tech is emerging regularly that delivers curated options for everything from event contacts to exhibitors to vendors and suppliers.

Those who keep abreast of these services will save time on finding the best options – time that they can spend fostering more valuable relationships with the people behind them.

¹ <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2022-07-27-gartner-predicts-chatbots-will-become-a-primary-customer-service-channel-within-five-years>

2.

GENERATIONAL SPLIT



In the past seven years, we have surveyed over 12,000 event professionals on the role of technology in the event industry. Our own research says that over 60% of event planners still didn't use any type of event management software in 2018, before Covid forced many organizations into digitalization.

We can confidently conclude that the industry is currently **split in two:**

- ☑ **Planners that embrace technology and innovation**
- ☑ **Planners who resist any change to their planning, engagement or project management processes**

When we say 'generational', we don't mean it in the literal sense. Championing the legacy of traditional event planning is not an age-related phenomenon; this problematic mentality affects many planners across a range of demographics.

Needless to say, change-resistant planners expose themselves to becoming less relevant in the long term. As the array of event planning tools and technologies continues to evolve, so must event planners.

It comes down to courage. And to competition. A modern event program is inconceivable without software support, solid data, and due diligence in considering new and effective forms of education and engagement delivery.

At the end of the day, those who don't keep up with innovations that empower them to make more strategic decisions will be left behind. Simple list executors are becoming increasingly replaceable, and will find it increasingly more difficult to compete on the job market.

3.

INCREASED TECH ADOPTION



Perhaps the best way for planners to get ahead of the innovation curve is by staying abreast of event technology. As it becomes more ubiquitous, it becomes easier to use, and event professionals will increasingly depend on it to plan and execute events.

Moreover, technology empowers us with the time and information needed to take a more strategic approach to our roles. As more and better tools emerge to help us smooth out (and simultaneously speed up) our day-to-day activities, we'll have more and more time to find new ways to add value. In the immediate future, that value will depend on data.

We can now measure signals of engagement, satisfaction, learning success and efficiency in more depth than ever before. Knowing what works and what doesn't – or even what works slightly better – is key to translating failures and missed opportunities into better events.

Ultimately, modern event technology allows us to make decisions based on rich, accurate data rather than pure instinct (or worse, routine).

The ability to make sense of this data is highly sought after. Planners in this tech-saturated market are accountable for substantiating the ROI of their events and their year-over-year improvements with specific, quantifiable data.

But it also gives us a language for demonstrating our achievements through measurable, predefined success metrics – a real edge during performance evaluations and interviews.

4.

SHIFT IN MARKETING BUDGETS



All statistics at the beginning of 2023 confirmed a massive shift back of marketing budgets to events. This is great news for our industry, but it comes with increased and challenging responsibilities.

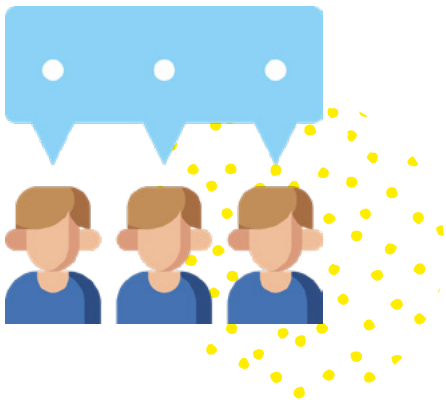
CMOs (chief marketing executives) in 2023 expect a significant amount of accountability for their budget allocation, and event professionals are faced with increased pressure to deliver numbers that substantiate the usual claim that it was 'a great event'.

The event planner-turned-marketing strategist is now required to provide a framework of KPIs and other metrics that allow them to measure their event marketing activations and make their performance tangible.

The promise (or lie) of 'exposure' is simply not enough for very demanding decision-makers in marketing, who had a similar tech revolution 15 years ago and are already used to advanced tech and analytics tools.

5.

PRESSURE TO JUSTIFY THE EVENT INVESTMENT



John Hussman correctly guessed the economic meltdowns of 2000 and 2008. Now, he is saying that, without a doubt, the US economy will correct the inflated performance of the past year with a decline of up to 60%².

If there is one thing the event industry can learn from the crisis of 2008 and like it was confirmed in our more recent Covid crisis, it's that the first item to go on every business' agenda is events. There is still a wide misconception that events are a nice to have – a very expensive exercise with little return.

Given this negative economic outlook, migrating to a more strategic role is looking more like a solid survival tactic than a way to advance a planner's career.

Creating a business case for events that competes with highly accountable activities, such as digital marketing, is the new battleground for event professionals that want to secure their career progression.

² You Are Here [https://www.businessinsider.com/stock-market-crash-bubble-sp500-valuations-sentiment-bearish-outlook-hussman-2023-5?](https://www.businessinsider.com/stock-market-crash-bubble-sp500-valuations-sentiment-bearish-outlook-hussman-2023-5?r=US&IR=T)

[r=US&IR=T](https://www.businessinsider.com/stock-market-crash-bubble-sp500-valuations-sentiment-bearish-outlook-hussman-2023-5?r=US&IR=T)

6.

INCREASED COMPETITION



Thanks to the influx of capital from marketing budgets, event programs are getting more sophisticated. Whether it is a marketing activation, a convention or a conference, planners are stepping up their game to create more mind-blowing experiences.

There are two effects linked to this trend:

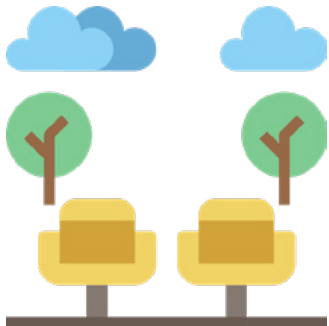
☑ **Expectations are rising.** Getting prospects to attend and keeping them engaged is increasingly challenging. Tech-powered event strategists are in a much better position to deliver experiences that hit the mark with needy attendees.

☑ **Share of voice is diminishing.** There is no doubt that a sense of duplication is pervading the industry. There are dozens of events that cater to the same audience. If you take a vertical like tech, there are hundreds of blockchain events, each claiming to be the most popular or the best or the most influential.

The role of the event strategist is to truly differentiate their program against competitors. Tips on how to do that appear in the following sections.

7.

GROWING CONFUSION ABOUT THE RISE OF EXPERIENCES



We attend events for several reasons. When it gets to business events, we can sum major drivers to two key needs: education and networking.

The rise of event experiences is deeply affecting how planners deliver on these objectives. There is a growing misconception that creating a show helps attendees to learn or connect. To be more specific many event professionals tackle experiences appealing to the wrong side of the brain, favoring stunts and entertainment (jugglers, magicians, fire breathers, live bands, etc.) over opportunities for learning and connection.

Confusing live experiences with live entertainment is a trivial mistake that will set apart true strategists from those who open up a Google tab and search for 'creative ideas to entertain audiences'.

8.

GEN Z LOVE EXPERIENCES



We try to stay away as much as possible from age-related consumer categories, but there is a shift happening, and younger generations are at the forefront of it.

This is most notable in industries like travel, which caters largely to Gen Z and millennials. The travel industry is becoming increasingly about unique and elevated experiences³.

TIP

Now more than ever, events in exciting locations are a perfect playground for meaningful experiences to unfold. A true strategist can take notice of such a trend, and exploit the opportunities it offers.

The sense of being there, sharing a purpose, and **creating memories** through social media is one that strategists can fully master, opening up blue oceans of revenue opportunities. Event strategists are able to leverage experience-driven travel trends for the benefit of their events.

³ Gen Z Habits Disrupting The Travel Industry <https://www.forbes.com/sites/serenitygibbons/2022/12/20/gen-z-habits-disrupting-the-travel-industry/>

9.

SECURITY CONCERNS



There are two main security issues affecting events. One is the threat of terrorism and gun violence, which has affected events with an incredible loss of lives in the past 5 years. The other is a digital threat, which has resulted in data theft at many events and properties hosting large gatherings around the world.

This trend is pushing planners to become more strategic in their technology, venue, and meeting architecture choices. As a planner, becoming a strategist means navigating priorities like security with a full understanding of the issues and what tools are at their disposal for combatting them.

These threats force event professionals to **evolve their thinking and scope of work**, as it becomes crucial for the wellbeing and safety of attendees and their data. A strategic perspective is necessary for the attention to detail required to get the security element of event planning right.

10.

CHANGING INDUSTRY DYNAMICS



The industry has flourished over the past three years. Some of the reasons discussed above have forced dramatic changes in who does what. Three entities in particular have been impacted, DMOs (destination marketing organizations), DMCs (destination management companies) and venues (hotels and independent venues).

To further differentiate their services from the competition, many within these three entities are now offering event planning and management services. This is happening at different levels, but we must face facts: some brands are skipping out on hiring planners altogether to take advantage of what these partners have to offer.

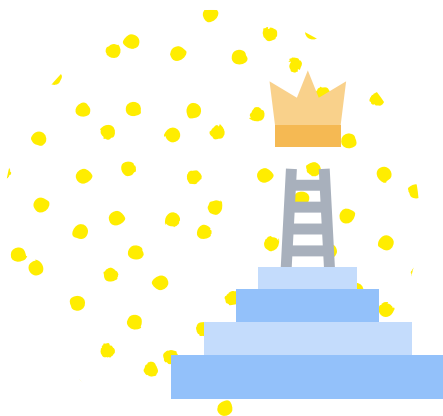
Heresy. Of course.

You should ask yourself how you can set yourself apart from the services these entities are offering. Given the turmoil this is causing in the market, event strategists who are better able to demonstrate their value with objective data, and who can take on more high-level, strategic responsibilities, will have much stronger job security.



To help you better orient your career progression with the continual rise in event technology and the need for a more strategic skillset, **we've researched the top in-demand skills and qualifications oday.**

THE MOST MARKETABLE EVENT PLANNING SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS



SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

What are the roaring 2020's looking like for event planners? We researched 250 online job postings to give you an overview of the most marketable skills.

The data was gathered by reviewing postings from major cities across North America, the UK, and Australia. The job titles reflected a range of seniority levels, with over 50% falling into the category of 'Coordinator.' Almost 1/3 of the positions were listed under the title of 'Manager,' and less than 10% were designated 'Directors' or other high-level executive positions.

The postings were collected over a period of three weeks on a variety of job sites, but LinkedIn was used for over 80% of the research.

As would be expected, 100% of job descriptions list the management of event logistics as a key responsibility. But looking more closely at how those responsibilities are defined and the peripheral duties attached, the trend is clearly moving towards a more tech-savvy, strategic role for event planners.

While only 6% of job postings explicitly required an expertise in digital tools, the second most sought-after skill set was in metric-based performance analysis.

THE TOP 20 RESPONSIBILITIES ACROSS JOB POSTINGS

↓ RESPONSIBILITIES

PREVALENCE ↓

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1. Logistics: Management of logistical operations
(e.g. arranging the catering, floor plan, V rentals, etc.) | 100% |
| 2. Performance Analysis: Reporting on key metrics post-event
to evaluate ROI | 76% |
| 3. Budget: Budget forecasting, management, reconciliation, and reporting | 69% |
| 4. Vendor Management: Liaising with established vendors, tracking related
payments, and overseeing the delivery of supplies/services | 55% |
| 5. Marketing: Collaborating with the marketing team to research ideas, develop
effective strategies, and execute key campaigns | 43% |
| 6. Sponsor Recruitment and Management: Negotiating sponsorship contracts
and managing related deliverables | 37% |
| 7. Project Management: Setting and tracking the event's critical path | 35% |
| 8. Onsite Supervision: Monitoring staff and overseeing the registration desk | 34% |
| 9. Customer Service: Acting as the first point of contact for all stakeholder concerns | 34% |

↓ RESPONSIBILITIES

PREVALENCE ↓

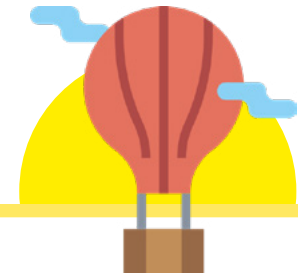
- | | |
|--|-----|
| 10. Vendor Contract Negotiation: Using negotiating tactics to secure the best value for money | 31% |
| 11. HR Management: Staff and volunteer management and training | 29% |
| 12. Policy Design and Oversight: Drafting policies to ensure consistency and compliance with all relevant regulations | 27% |
| 13. Speaker Management and Agenda Planning: Identifying potential speakers and managing all sessional and contractual arrangements | 26% |
| 14. Venue Research and Negotiation: Conducting a cross-comparison analysis of venue options and negotiating contracts | 26% |
| 15. Event App and E-Portfolio: Outlining the design requirements of the event app and web platform, as well as managing related updates and data collection | 23% |
| 16. Stakeholder Mediation: Coordinating planning committees to gather stakeholder input and brief relevant parties on key metrics | 22% |
| 17. Strategic Guidance: Collaborating with upper management to define the event's goals and ensure adequate consideration of stakeholder priorities | 20% |
| 18. Invitee and Attendee List Management: Researching prospective invitees and keeping detailed records of past and current attendees | 17% |
| 19. Cash Flow Management: Tracking incoming and outgoing payments and monitoring credit control | 14% |
| 20. Risk Management: Identifying potential risks, developing contingency plans, and proposing improvised solutions when necessary | 11% |

While there was remarkable consistency across nations (an emphasis on strategic analysis was evident in every geographic location covered), there were the occasional outliers.

For example, ensuring compliance with regulatory policies was cited in over 50% of UK job postings, where the EU's GDPR applies, but under 10% in the US.

Some jobs emphasized marketing more, while others highlighted negotiation skills. Which responsibilities were foregrounded often depended more on the type of organization than on the seniority of the position.

For example, corporations hosting events for their staff will often put strict limitations on sponsorship arrangements, so their event planners are usually not expected to master **the art of sponsorship negotiations.**



GOOD TO KNOW

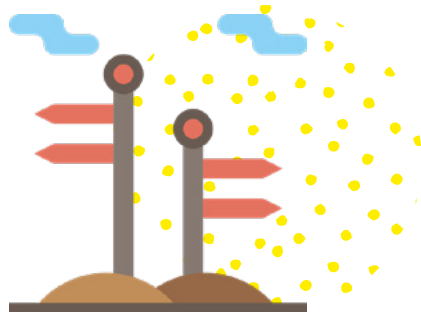
Organizations that specialize in event planning tend to have the most emphasis on creative marketing campaigns, while medical and governmental groups put more focus on policy compliance.

Some responsibilities may simply have been taken for granted as an expected requirement. Just over one third of job postings specified project management as a key responsibility, but it's probably safe to assume that almost all of the organizations would require their event planners to have mastered that aspect of the role.

(In many cases, when project management was omitted from the list of job duties, it was flagged as a skill under the list of required qualifications.

Although the responsibilities and qualifications sometimes complemented each other to fill in the missing pieces, they usually presented a very consistent job profile. Much like logistical operations in the list of job duties, event management experience reached 100% saturation in the list of qualifications.

TOP 5 QUALIFICATIONS



- 100%** EVENT MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE
- 94%** ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS
- 71%** OUTSTANDING COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- 57%** ADVANCED COMPUTER SKILLS (particularly in Excel)
- 37%** PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS AND ADAPTABILITY

While more than 50% of job postings listed a university or college degree as an asset, only 7% required one. Another 9% specifically asked for CMP designation or a comparable form of certification

Still, it's fair to conclude that experience outweighs education in the event planning sector. While formal training may not always be necessary, competence with the key data-crunching computer programs is essential.

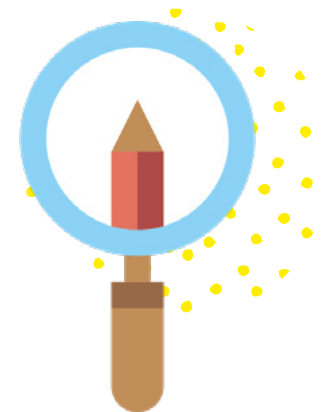
Technological know-how is only going to become more important.

🎯 **21% of job postings specifically highlighted familiarity with data metrics as a necessary skill**

🎯 **14% of jobs demanded experience with operating an event management software program**

These statistics should give you a better idea of how to flesh out your skillset to remain competitive within the changing events landscape. But preparing yourself to **take on a more strategic role is the next step.**

You still have to get buy-in from those in the industry who are accustomed to thinking of you as a list executer. In the next section, we'll look at some of the reasons why that mentality is so sticky and what you can do to overcome it.



CHAPTER 3

HOW TO GET A SEAT AT THE DECISION-MAKING TABLE

Why aren't event planners included more often when it comes to high-level decision making?

Event planners are still seen primarily as list implementers. Given a predetermined set of directives, the event planner's job is to handle all the logistical legwork needed to make the executive team's brainchild into a reality.

This is evident from our research. Logistics are still king.

The problem with this model is that it overlooks the strategic expertise that comes with knowing the event process inside out. To overcome this mentality within your organization, you need to persuade your executive team that your input will translate to improved ROI or depict a clear path to achieve the set objectives.

To do this, reinforce that hard-won knowledge and experience with the latest in data and analytics. Based on our research, data analysis and data-driven decision-making were integral to 76% of new roles. Follow-up reporting is now more advanced than ever.

Let's take a look at 10 winning data-driven strategies for earning a seat at the decision-making table.



1.

SHOW THAT YOUR PROBLEM- SOLVING SKILLS DEMONSTRATE STRATEGIC VISION



Most event planners are familiar with the drill: after an event is over, it's standard procedure to evaluate its successes and failures. The problem is that it may not always be clear how your strategic input made the difference between exceeding expectations or falling short.

TIP

When reviewing the event, isolate the key challenges you faced and explain how you used your unique expertise to overcome them.

Show the thinking behind your decisions: lay out projections for alternative paths, and use metrics to demonstrate that your choice led to the greatest ROI.

This approach will not only show that you know how to think strategically, but will also demonstrate that your in-depth industry knowledge translates to higher profits and better experiences. For more in-depth advice on how to leverage technology to maximize ROI, check out The Toolbox Of The Modern Event Professional in this report..

2.

EXPLAIN HOW YOUR DATA SUPPORTS INFORMED DECISION MAKING



Show that your data needs to be factored into major decisions. Upper management may already recognize that you know how to optimize the directives you've been handed.

But do they see how much more you can deliver with a little more influence over the directives themselves?

TIP

Make your case with hard data wherever possible. It is very difficult to argue with objective analytics.

First, explain how you used measurable outcomes from previous events to weigh your options and deliver the best ROI.

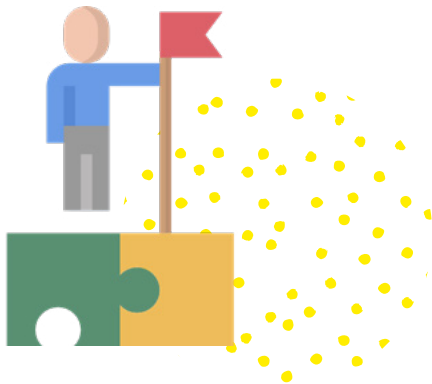
Did you, for example, invest in demographic data collection to profile our attendees, and then leverage this data to attract investments from high-profile sponsors? If so, compare sponsor investments year-over-year to underscore the efficacy of our approach.

Next, identify bottlenecks that are preventing you from fully realizing the potential cost savings and value added. Does your research suggest that more upfront investment in sponsor outreach would ultimately lead to greater revenue?

Explain how your past successes could be scaled up for greater impact, and thereby create an argument for more involvement in big-picture decisions. Your expertise can reap greater rewards when it's applied from the top level down.

3.

POSITION YOURSELF AS AN EXPERT ON EVENT TECHNOLOGY



Of course, if you don't have adequate event tech at your disposal, it may be hard to collect the data needed to make truly informed decisions. Even if you do have access to the most important tools, event technology is continually advancing and there is always room for improvement.

Doing your research will pay big dividends. Becoming an authority on the latest technology is one more way that you can establish yourself as a valuable expert. With this knowledge under your belt, you can position yourself as a strategic advisor on tech-related decisions and investments.

Explain its value in terms of optimal ROI. Show how the technology you are already using has saved time and money through automation and other efficiencies

Don't rely on your own statistics alone. Point to leaders in your industry and their innovations in technology. Make the executive team see that automation, interactivity, and strategic data collection are the future, and you are the person to steer your company forward through this trajectory.

4.

RESEARCH THE JOB MARKET TO IDENTIFY YOUR CAREER GOALS



You are what you do. It's up to you to figure out what value you can offer in a more strategic role for your organization, but you can take cues from other successful senior planners.

Look to other organizations where event planners have a more strategic role.

- 🕒 **How have they benefited from giving event planners more influence?**
- 🕒 **How do the responsibilities for higher level planners differ from yours?**
- 🕒 **What skills are expected?**

TIP

When doing your own research, narrow your focus on postings that highlight strategic guidance as a key role.

By determining what sorts of things higher level planners do, you can get a better sense of what value gaps you can fill in your own organization.

These needs might not even be on upper management's radar, so investigate any data sources you can use to make your case. If your organization is used to a certain way of doing business, upper management may be reluctant to restructure the chain of command.

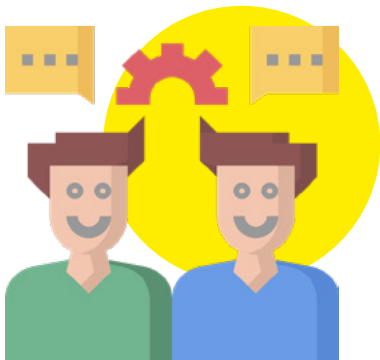
DO THIS

To place the value/benefit for upper management front-and-center, frame your professional advancement in terms of increasing your responsibility rather than widening your authority.

If your target position requires more in-depth knowledge of a specific area, consider taking a specialized workshop or enrolling in a certificate program. If your company funds professional development, taking advantage of this opportunity will show that you are serious about advancing your career.

5.

STAKEHOLDER LIAISON = STAKEHOLDER STRATEGIST



The executive team in your organization might not see how your day-to-day knowledge of event management translates to strategic insight. To help them recognize your value, emphasize that you are ideally positioned to provide guidance on stakeholder priorities. Who knows the stakeholders better than the person who works with them every step of the way?

If you want to convince your executive team that you have the expertise needed to optimize their stakeholder outreach, consider organizing your ideas around the following criteria:

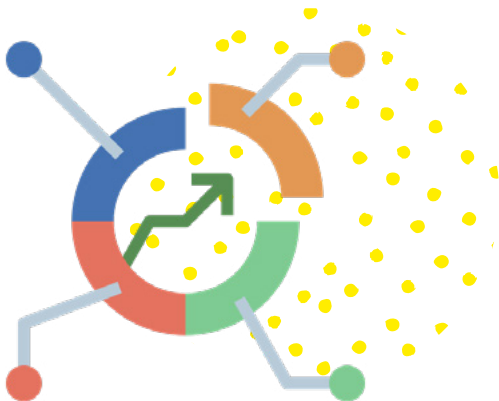
- ☑ **Attendees:** Gather data on previous attendees to segment them into key demographic categories. What concerns do these groups share? If they belong to larger communities, is there any way to expand your audience within these groups?
- ☑ **Past Sponsors and Exhibitors:** Collect lists of prior exhibitors and sponsors. What attracted them to your event? What can you do to ensure repeat business from them?
- ☑ **Prospective Sponsors and Exhibitors:** Look into other events in your industry or geographic area, and research their exhibitors and sponsors. Are there any promising leads? Will modifying your event's branding help to attract them?

Figuring out who you are serving is the first step in optimizing that service. Their interests should direct the focus of your event.

As the event planner, you are ideally positioned to ensure that the right data is being strategically collected and thoroughly considered in the decision-making process.

6.

BACK UP YOUR MARKETING VISION WITH HARD DATA



If you aren't fully included in decisions about the overall marketing budget, show that your advanced knowledge of web analytics gives you the upper hand in forecasting ROI.

Show that you are using web analytics and other engagement metrics to isolate the most effective marketing techniques, and empower yourself to answer a number of key strategic questions:

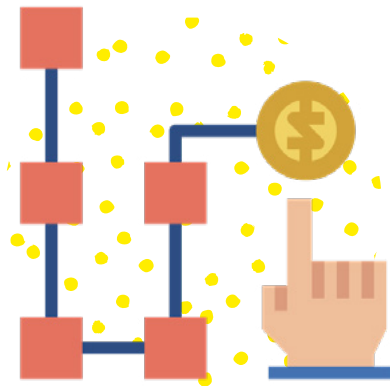
- ☑ Which social media platforms attract the most traffic?
- ☑ What types of hashtags perform best?
- ☑ At what times of day are your followers most active on social media?
- ☑ What newsletter headings generated the highest open rates?

Using engagement metrics to guide your marketing agenda will lend credibility to anything you propose. If you can correlate your decisions with spikes in registration and a growing online audience, you'll have proven your marketing savvy with hard evidence.

Once you've demonstrated your strategic insight, you can push for more influence on where marketing funds are invested.

7.

SHOW THAT YOU KNOW THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS



Your executive team may not realize that it's crucial to include you when they're making major budgetary decisions, but your knowledge of the details can translate to big-picture takeaways.

Our research says that budgeting is in the top three most sought after skills in event professionals. It's time to double down on them.

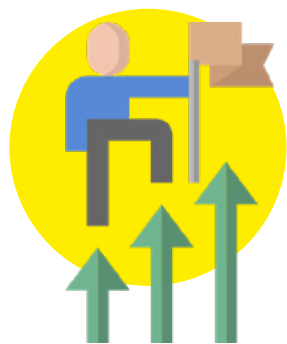
With today's event management software, you can quickly create a timeline that charts your records of incoming revenue against outgoing payments. This data gives you unique insight into projected cash flow, and it can help you manage the risk involved with big upfront investments.

Can you depend on a minimum level of revenue by the opening week of your event? Being able to answer such questions accurately is **crucial** for credit control.

When you combine this knowledge with your expertise on engagement metrics and registration patterns, you can offer invaluable guidance on maximizing ROI while respecting the practical aspects of the event budget.

8.

RAISE YOUR PROFILE AND REFINE YOUR BRAND



If you want your management to respect your expertise and your authority, you need to work on your personal brand.

Here are some ideas to build your reputation as a top influencer in the industry:

- ☑ Create or contribute to an event trends blog.
- ☑ Take active roles in communities and peer associations that demonstrate your ability to take on high-level responsibility.
- ☑ Become a go-to resource for a niche aspect of events (i.e. storytelling, gamification, augmented reality, etc.).
- ☑ Become an active contributor to online message boards. Don't be afraid to tag key influencers when you have a thoughtful question or comment to add.

Last but not least, you have expert training in effective marketing strategies--don't forget to apply this knowledge when refining our own brand.

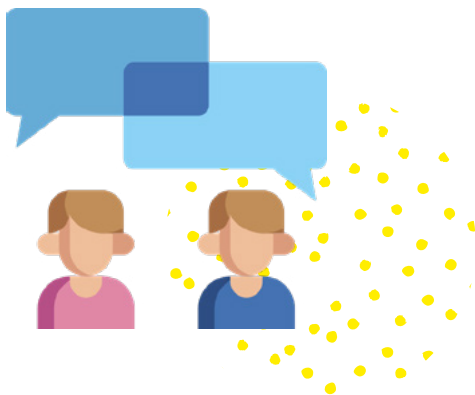
9.

PUSH FOR THE AUTHORITY TO DELEGATE

If some of your responsibilities could be handled by a less experienced member of staff, you need to let your management know.

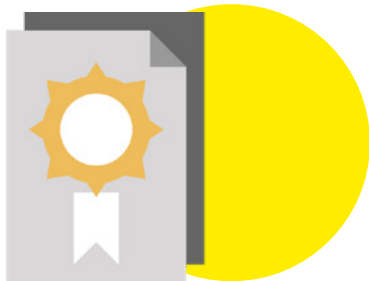
Delegating responsibilities will give others a chance to **develop new professional skills** while you learn the leadership skills required to handle greater supervisory responsibility.

Explain that this kind of restructuring will afford you more time to analyze key metrics and research new developments in the industry



10.

RENEGOTIATE YOUR JOB TITLE



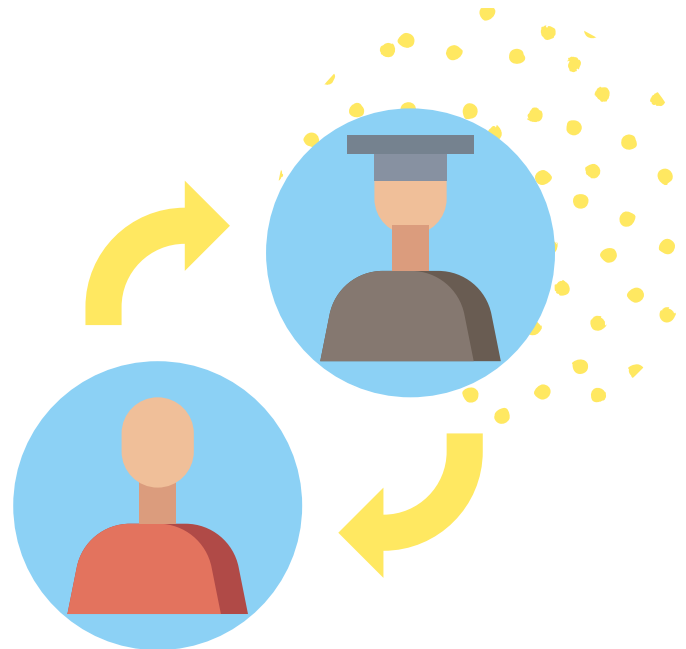
If your official position hasn't changed in years, it may be time to push for a job title that reflects your level of experience. Although it may seem superficial, your job title is an important signal of your progress.

When coming to the bargaining table, use data to show that your contributions to the organization have improved in both efficiency and effectiveness over the course of your tenure. Point out any supervisory roles you have assumed since you began working, and highlight your most constructive executive decisions.

A more senior title will inevitably lead to greater decision-making authority.

EVENT PLANNER ROLE EVOLUTION: THEN VS NOW

All of the skills that have traditionally been fundamental to event planning are still highly valued, but now there is more emphasis on **applying those skills strategically.**



LOGISTICS



Managing event logistics	Using data analytics and eventtech features to make the right logistical choices and automate wherever possible
Manage venue relationship	Choose venues that help to drive the message of the event
Choose vendors and ensure service delivery	Analyse vendor performance, read online reviews to select the best options, and use RFP platforms to obtain multiple quotes
Oversee the selection and delivery of catering services	Analyse social media feedback on vendor performance
Design the floorplan for trade shows and other events involving booths	Consider analytics from traffic flow and check-in engagement when designing floor plan
Arrange seating plans to reflect sponsorship and networking priorities	Use survey information and client profiles to optimize the networking value of seating arrangements
Manage the registration process, website design, and check-in as siloed activities	Select event management and registration tools that efficiently collect and process data to streamline the check-in process and enhance event app engagement features

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS



THEN

Compare registration rates year-over-year to assess the marketability of varying features

Conduct a post-event survey to gather attendee feedback

Evaluate engagement through attendance numbers at specific sessions and activities



NOW

Use web analytics to evaluate what announcements, marketing platforms, techniques, and topics work most effectively to drive up registration numbers

Use social media polling and gamified event app survey features to gather feedback before, during, and after the event

Evaluate engagement through event app interactions, social media analytics, attendee check-ins, message board activity, and AI topic analysis

ENGAGEMENT



THEN



NOW

Secure speakers known to be crowd pleasers	Use influencer metrics and poll to get markets to make data-informed speaker decisions
Equip speakers with a mic-runner to facilitate audience questions	Empower speakers with live engagement tools (e.g. an event app that conducts real-time polls and crowdsources audience questions)
Brief moderators on key topics and provide them with adequate AV equipment	Crowdsource and use AI to generate discussion topics, use sophisticated live Q&A platforms that allow moderators to vet and curate questions, and allow audience members to upvote questions and topics they want to discuss
Create lounges and other shared spaces to encourage networking	Use "smart match" AI and messaging features to facilitate strategic networking between industry peers or buyers and exhibitors; use AR and VR to activate shared spaces; design strategic event games to stimulate networking and engagement

BUDGET MANAGEMENT



THEN



NOW

Make budget projections based on revenue-to-expenditure analysis of prior events

Manage cash flow and credit control more intelligently by utilising event management software that creates a timeline for incoming revenue and outgoing expenditures; use this data to make more accurate budget projections for future events

Ensure that all payment obligations are met

Use event management software to track invoices and payments more efficient

Perform a post-event audit to assess budget performance

Assess whether your capital was invested as strategically as possible by evaluating data on revenue-to-expenditures relative to social media reach, event-app user engagement, survey feedback, and registration numbers

CONTRACT NEGOTIATION



THEN



NOW

Venues: generate RFPs for venues and do a cross-comparison to select the best deal

Venues: come to the bargaining table equipped with data to measure the value-added by select features (e.g. central location, hall sizes, private meeting spaces, AV equipment, etc.)

Vendors: negotiate deals based on service offerings and budgetary constraints

Vendors: use data to quantify ROI on vendor services

Sponsors: communicate sponsorship levels and ensure follow-through on all deliverables

Sponsors: use traffic-flow and engagement data to demonstrate the market reach of features like signage and in-app promotional material

MARKETING



THEN



NOW

Maintain a database of event registrants and use the related contact information for promotional e-blasts

Maintain a database of event registrants and key influencers, and use web analytics to search for similar audience groups online--mine their followers and group contacts to expand your outreach

Use newsletters and other forms of email communication to promote your event

Use web analytics to track open rates, number of links clicked and related conversion metrics to gauge which email campaigns are the most effective; use A/B testing to compare techniques; keep messaging on track with automated drip campaigns

Use word-of-mouth from loyal clients to expand your reach

Track SEO, hashtag performance, and other key online engagement metrics to optimize viral marketing opportunities; create programs and contests that incentivize social sharing/invites

Offer the best possible quality in terms of tried-and-true marketing campaigns

Research innovative approaches to experiential campaigns in order to set your event apart from the crowd

THE TOOLBOX OF THE MODERN EVENT PROFESSIONAL



THE TOOLBOX

We made it clear by now: data is central to elevating the role of event planners to event strategists.

Event apps, web-based software, and event management tools can be used for more than just processing registrations and planning agendas. This technology can be used to track important data that will help you demonstrate ROI, improve the event experience, and focus on higher level strategic duties.

TIP

76% of planners being hired right now must bring data collection and analysis to the table.

A great event management tool will streamline the work involved in managing your key priorities, from client relationship management (CRM) to budget tracking. Many of your day to day tasks will become more automated, which will give you more time to focus on higher level strategic operations.

For planners angling for a more strategic role or title, it will become increasingly important to invest in tools that offer the right analytics.

Now, let's take a look at some of those analytics and how they can help you make smarter, data-driven choices.

THE TOOLBOX

Traffic Flow And Check-in Data



Long gone are the days of manual door-counting. Contemporary technology allows you to collect information on visitor movement *every step of the way*.

RFID (radio-frequency identification) badges and cellphone beacon technology allow you to track the flow of traffic through an event. When these functions are integrated with your event app, they can provide you with compelling strategic data.

Session check-ins can give you insight into which content and speakers your attendees were most attracted to. Similarly, heatmaps offer powerful foot traffic data, which you can use to demonstrate value to exhibitors and sponsors.

It can also give you insights to help you improve the layout of future exhibition spaces, remove traffic bottlenecks, and encourage movement.

DO THIS

Use heatmap data to determine the prime exhibition floor real estate, and then put a premium on it.

If you can demonstrate a significant ROI, companies will pay for the traffic advantage.

There are even developments in facial recognition technology that seek to pair this quantitative traffic data with qualitative engagement data based on what facial expressions people are making.

SURVEY FEEDBACK

Surveys have long been the backbone of qualitative feedback collection, but technology is taking this industry staple to another level.

Registration Questions

Without being too intrusive, use the registration process to gather useful information about your attendees. Things like job title, primary residence, and budget spend help to sort your attendees into key demographic categories.

DO THIS

Make responses to sensitive questions optional to reduce the risk of attendees opting out entirely just to avoid answering them.

Create Consumer Profiles for your Attendees

Remember—your attendees aren't just business professionals. They're also consumers. Ask questions related to their purchasing power.

- ☑ ***How large is their organization?***
- ☑ ***Have they used an event app before?***
- ☑ ***What types of beverages and snacks do they prefer?***
- ☑ ***What are their top travel destinations?***

This information won't just come in handy when you're planning your next event – it is exactly the kind of data that would convince a potential sponsor to see your attendees as a target market worthy of investment. In the long run, a sponsorship deal will drive down costs for everyone, including registrants.

DO THIS

Curb the risk of a registrant dropping off by explaining what you need the information for, either in or adjacent to the field where the registrant has to enter it:

"Email: Enter the email you want to use in order to access the event app."

Follow-up with Post-Event Surveys

It's never a bad idea to check in with your attendees after the event is over. Getting their feedback on the event will help you to assess its successes and identify areas for improvement. Open-ended questions can even let your attendees share creative ideas!

Processing these can present a challenge, especially if each answer is unique. Natural Language Processing (NLP) is a branch of artificial intelligence that analyzes text, not only picking out frequently used words, but linking them to a set of emotions and grouping them with word clusters that often appear together.

DO THIS

If you receive hundreds of responses to your open-ended questions, consider using AI to analyze the feedback for key takeaways.

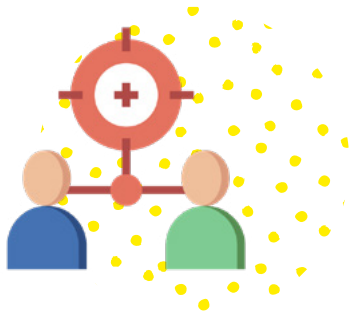
Be Strategic When Asking for Unusual Information If you want to surprise your attendees with added layers of personalization, think about what information you need, and then brainstorm what types of surveys will give you this feedback when you need it most.

DO THIS

Use conditional logic in your surveys so that the questions asked will cater to prior answers. For example, if attendees indicate that they have purchasing authority at their corporation, the survey can prompt them to estimate their budget.

THE TOOLBOX

Engagement



Engagement is half the battle when it comes to delivering on corporate event objectives. Old-school game shows might have used clap-o-meters to measure audience approval, but fortunately, our technologies have come a long way since then.

Here are a few things advanced planners know to strategically implement to hit their engagement objectives:

✔ **AI & smart matchmaking.** Artificial intelligence can be used to facilitate smarter matchmaking. With AI, the matchmaking program will continually analyze a user's activity to optimize connections. It will track when a suggested match is either ignored or followed-up through direct messaging. These patterns of acceptance or rejection help the AI program to predict successful matches.

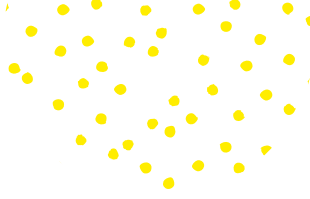
✔ **Visual collaboration tools.** Give participants and meeting stakeholders a voice with the ability to add notes and diagrams to presentation slides, or insert and move ideas around in an interactive mind-mapping program. This enriches the discussion through

collaboration and enhanced idea sharing in a way that's very visually accessible. This can be particularly useful during internal meetings, where collective brainstorming is an important part of the visioning process and key decision-makers can provide input in real time.

✔ **Social walls.** Monitor social media engagement through hashtags, followers, and online interactions, and compound that engagement by displaying positive or trending comments on live screens around the event.

✔ **Augmented reality.** Augmented reality (AR) presents many exciting opportunities to encourage engagement. Consider offering a branded SnapChat-style filter for attendees to create and share mementos of their experience. Enhance your floor plan by giving exhibitors and sponsors the chance to create strategically located AR features made visible through the attendees' smartphones.

✔ **Virtual reality.** Virtual reality (VR) creates immersive experiences that are perfect for innovative product demos and remote access to special events.



🕒 **360° livestreaming.** Combining interactivity with real-time access, a 360° livestream offers remote participants a chance to take in the full scene at your event. Engagement is no longer limited by the bounds of geography.

🎮 **Event games/gamification.** Where appropriate, divide attendees up into teams and award points for active participation in surveys and other activities. Display leaderboards to encourage friendly competition.

Engagement metrics are an important tool for figuring out what content your attendees found most engaging, and how successful your activities were. Here are some steps you should be taking right now:

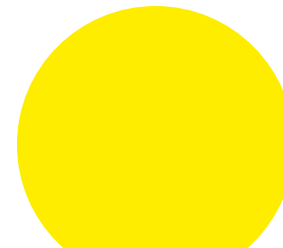
📊 **Conversion metrics.** Assess follower conversions in terms of registrations, subscriptions to newsletters, or downloads of presentation slideshows.

🌐 **Web traffic.** Collect detailed information on website traffic, including who is visiting our event homepage, where website visitors are located geographically, which pages are least and most popular, and what percentage of unique visitors convert to registrants.

📱 **Event app engagement.** Track engagement on your event app, including session selections, speaker profile visits, sponsor and exhibitor profile visits, the number of messages sent through networking features, comment or question posts and upvotes, clicks on external links, and completion of survey features.

🤖 **Chatbots and AI analysis.** If your event app features a chatbot, use AI to collect information on the most popular topics and the greatest areas of confusion or interest. Questions about where to find charging stations or how to reserve a seat at a meeting could help you understand how to make your event more user-friendly. Questions about educational lectures could also be mined for future presentation ideas.

Engagement metrics provide **the best insight** possible into how your audience thinks.



THE TOOLBOX

Support Presenters' Success

Survey feedback and engagement metrics can help you figure out what speakers are most popular, but how can you use technology to help your speakers deliver an optimal session?

Here are some of the **best strategies** being used today:



✔ **Twitter polls.** Leveraging social media channels not only increases the engagement of your attendees, but it also extends your marketing outreach to a larger audience. Twitter polls are a great way to generate real-time presentation feedback that everyone can access.

✔ **Influencer outreach.** Encourage speakers with a large social media following to conduct Twitter polls in the lead-up to your event, and use event-branded hashtags to establish continuity across content streams. Maximize publicity while learning more about your audience.

✔ **Registration surveys.** Share insights from registration surveys with your presenters.

✔ **Q & A.** Use an event app that allows registrants to pose questions for speakers. For increased interactivity, consider letting other attendees vote on their favorites, and display the results back on a live screen.

✔ **Live polling.** Choose an event app with live polling features so that your presenters can ask hot-topic questions to drive engagement. Keep participants in the loop by using infographics to display results in real-time.

✔ **Speaker bios and networking features.** Highlight speaker bios in your event app and include links to their LinkedIn profiles. To drive networking and

engagement beyond the session, offer similar LinkedIn integration for all attendees. The more speaker sessions are integrated with networking opportunities, the more your attendees will engage.

✔ **Break-out sessions.** Draw inspiration from attendee questions and comments when setting up break-out sessions for smaller group discussions.

✔ **Slide sharing.** Allow speakers to share presentation slides with attendees so they can concentrate on interacting with the speaker instead of scribbling bullet points.

✔ **Interactive slideshow technology.**

Push the interactivity up a notch with a collaborative slide-editing feature that allows registrants to share notes and comments directly on the slideshow.

✔ **Infographics and marketing.** After the event, share presentation highlights in the form of infographics and key quotations. Creating highly shareable documents will help spread the word about your event and keep the momentum alive in industry blogs long after the closing day.

The key word here is “interactivity.” If you can make your audience part of the conversation, you stand a much better chance of keeping their full attention.

THE TOOLBOX

Risk Assessment

Risk management may not be the most glamorous part of event planning, but it's vitally important to keep all the cogs in your machine running smoothly.

TIP

At 37%, problem-solving skills and adaptability were the fifth most common qualification listed in job postings. If it can go wrong, it will at some point or another, and you should be prepared.

While some pitfalls are impossible to prevent, anticipating them will go a long way to helping you find workarounds on a tight budget.

HOW CAN TECHNOLOGY HELP TO MANAGE RISK?

A good risk management tool will help take some of the stress out of risk assessment. With all your risk-related data consolidated in one place, it will be easier for you to develop efficient strategies to deal with worst-case-scenarios *before* they arise.

Here are some ways that risk management software can help lighten your load:

🎯 **Rank priorities.** When identifying potential risk factors, rank them in terms of both probability and severity. Your event management tool should provide a matrix to synthesize this information and help you organize potential risks in terms of priority.

🎯 **Create strategies.** Determine whether you want to tackle individual risks in terms of avoidance, harm reduction, or contingency planning.

For example, if a problem is highly probable and not that severe, harm reduction might be the primary tactic. If it's more severe, like a cyber security threat, avoidance would be the preferred tactic and a significant spend might be allocated to it. Contingency planning might be set up for an eventuality that is unlikely but also difficult to avoid, such as severe weather conditions.

🎯 **Monitor insurance.** Keep careful records on all internal and third-party insurance policies to avoid any oversights.

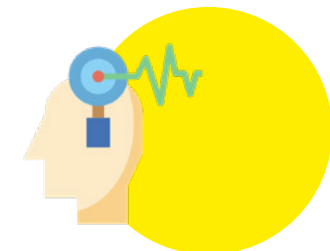
🎯 **Ensure regulatory compliance.** Track internal and third-party compliance with regulatory requirements.

It may require a bit of upfront investment, but the right software will help you keep tabs on all your major responsibilities.

USE FACIAL RECOGNITION AND AI FOR RISK CONTROL

While it's impossible for you to be everywhere at all times, you can combine camera surveillance with facial recognition software to enhance security at your event. If your risk analysis suggests that your event might be prone to a major security threat, it may be worth the investment.

For less extreme risks, use AI to monitor **real-time data** on traffic flow and chatbot question. This will help you to identify overcrowding and other issues before they escalate.



THE TOOLBOX

Supplier Decisions



Use engagement metrics and survey feedback to identify which supplies and services give you the biggest bang for your buck.

NEGOTIATE CUSTOMIZED SERVICE OVER PACKAGE DEALS

Was the interactive wall screen a favorite feature, but the canned music too much background noise? Did registrants prefer cucumber-enhanced water stations over plastic bottles? Were swag bags a big hit, but elaborate table centerpieces a distraction?

DO THIS

Collect qualitative feedback through surveys, and empower yourself to have an intelligent conversation about which services can be trimmed.

A bonus feature in a package deal isn't bringing much value-added if your attendees could take it or leave it. Come to the negotiating table ready with the data to demand tailored services over package deals unless substantial discounts are presented.

EVALUATE VENDOR PERFORMANCE

Event management tools will also help you keep detailed records on your vendors' services. Keep track of prior performance metrics—including any lapses in timeliness, safety, or professionalism—in order

to assess their service and incorporate any added expenses into your overall cost evaluation.

Pay attention to **peer reviews** as well. We're not far from a Yelp for event venue selection. Services are emerging to facilitate easier search, filter, and evaluation of event venues to streamline the venue selection process.

CONVINCE SPONSORS TO PROVIDE SUPPLIES

Surveys can also give you important insight into your attendees' consumer habits. If they're prime buyers of malt whiskey, chances are there's a whiskey brand out there that wants to tap your market. If your organization allows you to set up sponsorship deals, use your attendee survey feedback to help you find sponsors that will give you free products.

THE TOOLBOX

Sponsors And Exhibitors

When it comes to securing sponsors and exhibitors, you want to be able to present them with as much information about your registrants as possible. Although it's wise to present the data in a compact and digestible format, you also want it to be **comprehensive**.



WHERE ARE PEOPLE GOING? WHAT ARE THEY LOOKING AT?

Information on traffic flow and attendee engagement is invaluable to exhibitors and sponsors. They are all looking for the booths and signage that translate to maximum CRO (conversion rate optimization).

TIP

RFID (radio-frequency identification badges, beacon technology, and “smart mats” make it possible to track movement throughout your floor plan

How do the number of people walking by an exhibitor's booth compare to those who stop for an informational chat? How many of these use their RFID badges or NFC (near field communication) to exchange contact information, or use an exhibitor's QR codes to access discounts and other weblinks?

Encourage your exhibitors and sponsors to share the data they're collecting on attendee engagement. When you combine traffic-flow data with other engagement metrics, like QR code usage, you gain insight into how location and marketing tactics can work together to optimize leads. It's not just a question of where the most people are, but where they are the most focused.

USE IMPRESSIONS TO DEMONSTRATE ROI

How many people can a sponsor or exhibitor reach?

Crunching the numbers can help you to pinpoint your prime hot spots, and just as crucially, it can help you to demonstrate ROI when you're at the negotiating table with future sponsors and exhibitors.

Armed with foot-traffic data and stats for all the interactions recorded by past exhibitors, you can quantify future investments in terms of cost per impression. If your event app has sponsorship opportunities, see if you can get impressions data on things like profile page views and banner ads, too.

COMBINE PROFILE INFORMATION WITH FOOT TRAFFIC DATA

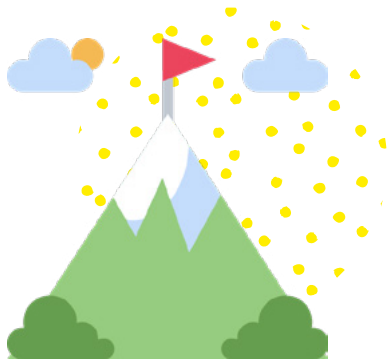
Sponsors and exhibitors don't just want to know how many people they can reach, but what types of people. Leverage your survey data to identify your key demographics. What level of decision making do your attendees have in their professional roles? What are their buying habits as consumers?

CASHLESS PAYMENT SYSTEMS ENABLE SPENDING PROJECTIONS

NFC (near field communication) technology allows attendees to make cashless payments with the tap of their phone. If you encourage registrants to load their accounts in advance of the event with a small incentive, you can give exhibitors and sponsors accurate projections about how much money attendees are likely to spend on the spot.

THE TOOLBOX

Boosting The Attendee Experience



But what's in it for the event's registrants? These technologies can also bring major benefits for your attendees.

Survey feedback will help you to tailor future events to the needs and tastes of your audience, not to mention driving down the ticket price through cost-saving sponsorship deals. It can also help to match them with potential networking contacts.

Similarly, location-tracking can be used to guide visitors via interactive maps. Even better, it can be synchronised with push notifications to alert attendees when they're approaching exhibitors in their industry.

Monitoring crowd movement can help you to respond quickly to bottlenecks in the flow of traffic.

Heat mapping gives attendees an idea of what areas might be overcrowded, and it gives you a chance to open up extra entrances or exits where needed. Notice a long line up at one of the bathrooms? You can send a push notification out to all attendees notifying them of overlooked bathroom facilities.

You can also create message boards for specific sessions. When attendees who are attending a given session check in, they can add to the conversation or suggest questions for the speaker. Maximize the interactivity by allowing other participants to upvote their favorite questions.

And of course, the more your attendees engage, the more **evidence** you have that your event is working well!

CONCLUSIONS

IN CONCLUSION



Macro trends and research say it clearly: the role of event professionals is changing, and data is driving its evolution.

Being an event strategist is very different from being an event planner. A strategic approach is key to demonstrating the value of events and a secure career progression path.

The pressure is on for those planners who want to step up their game and align with business objectives. For those who embrace (or better yet, get excited about) event technology, this attitude and mentality will earn them a seat at the decision-making table.

If you want to become the VP of Events at your company, it's time to dig deep into the data set of your events, rethink the experience design choices you make, and ultimately make smarter, more data-rich decisions about how to engage attendees at their core.

Game on!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Evenium is a global technology company providing innovative solutions for professional events, meetings, and workshops.

Evenium's event app ConnexMe and event management platform, Evenium Net help transform live **and virtual** events in meaningful ways by **creating dynamic and interactive learning environments that allow participants to engage with the content, speakers and each other**; enhancing networking; and simplifying event management thanks to an intuitive, all-in-one platform.

Our platform is user-friendly and designed to make the event experience smooth and efficient. Don't miss out on this opportunity to elevate your next event and leave a lasting impression on your attendees and other stakeholders.

Contact us today to learn more and [schedule a demo](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

EVENTMB STUDIO TEAM



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EventMB Studio is powered by **meetings.skift.com**, the most influential website in the meeting and event industry. Founded in 2007, EventMB has been widely referenced as the go-to resource for innovative event professionals wanting to learn more about trends in the event planning industry.

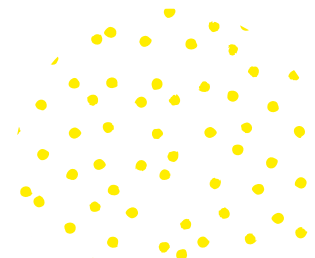
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