

# 10 MUST-KNOW EVENT TRENDS FOR 2024

2024 promises to be a pivotal year for meetings and events. From the growing importance of AI to finding creative new ways to engage attendees, these 10 trends will help you stay ahead of the competition and deliver events that make a lasting impact.

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## IN-PERSON DOMINATES; VIRTUAL REMAINS

In 2024, in-person events will continue to be the heart of most event programs. But virtual experiences aren't going away anytime soon. Successful event strategies will blend the best of both worlds to meet attendees where they are, whether in-person or online. Having technology that can support all event formats will be an important strategic investment.

Of all event programs:

**86%** use in-person events

**45%** use virtual or hybrid formats

**11%** use all three event formats<sup>1</sup>

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## VENUES SUPPORT EXPERIENCE-FIRST EVENTS

Attendee experience is the name of the game, and event planners are looking for venues that support immersive, interactive experiences. That's why non-traditional venues, like movie theaters, bars, and restaurants, are becoming increasingly popular. While traditional venues still have their place, consider finding unique locations to help you create memorable experiences for attendees.

## 3 AI TAKES CENTER STAGE

AI has taken the industry by storm. Successful event professionals will continue experimenting with AI tools to automate tasks and simplify processes. Think of AI as your assistant, making it easier to craft event content and brainstorm new ideas. Just remember: AI is a tool, not a replacement for human expertise. Prioritize data security and always fact-check information.

## 4 REIMAGINING ENGAGEMENT

Attendees expect more from their events. They crave immersive experiences, top-notch content, and meaningful connections. So, offer tailored content and clear takeaways that resonate. Design exciting breakout sessions and keep the conversation going post-event with on-demand content. And don't forget about your attendees' wellbeing: provide breaks, self-care activities, and design spaces for their comfort.

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## TECHNOLOGY UNITES PLANNERS AND VENUES

With an ever-increasing workload, technology will be essential to help planners collaborate more effectively with suppliers and venues. Tools such as venue sourcing technology, event diagramming, and room block management will help streamline operations and ensure everyone is on the same page.

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## ACCESSIBLE, SUSTAINABLE EVENTS REFLECT BRAND VALUES

Sustainability, diversity, equity, and inclusion are top priorities in 2024. Events are an extension of your organization's brand, so ensure they reflect your commitment to these core values. Go green with initiatives like removing single-use plastic, sourcing eco-friendly venues, and choosing local food. Ensure your events are inclusive and accessible to all – your attendees will appreciate it.

## 7 EVENTS SHIFT TO MARKETING

Event and marketing teams are joining forces like never before. With marketers recognizing the strategic importance of events as a channel, close collaboration between both teams will be essential to ensure events meet objectives. For event planners, understanding the priorities of your marketing colleagues will be key to success.

**14%** of marketing budgets go toward event marketing, on average<sup>2</sup>

## 8 TECHNOLOGY IS A CORE SKILL

Technology is critical for event success. Keeping up with the latest advancements and being able to analyze event data will be highly sought-after skills. The rise of technology has also led to a new role emerging: the event technologist. This role combines event planning expertise with a deep understanding of the technology ecosystem, making it a highly specialized position.

**63%** of event technologists sit within the meetings and events department<sup>3</sup>

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## COST CONTROL PLACES A PREMIUM ON ROI

Costs are high, and budget constraints remain a challenge. With event ROI continuing to be under scrutiny, event teams will need to use event data – and have the right technology in place – to measure and report on the impact of events.

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## CENTRALIZING FOR SCALE

Standardized technology and processes across the organization will be an important way to scale global event programs. Centralizing event technology can reduce expenses and empower overextended teams to work more effectively. To achieve this, cross-functional collaboration with other teams, like IT and Procurement, will be essential for success.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Cvent Event Management Data, Jan-Oct 2023 <sup>2</sup> Source: American Express GBT Meetings & Events

<sup>3</sup> Source: The Evolving Role of the Event Technologist