

# The Futures Landscape Report 2025

Understanding the issues  
most likely to shape the global  
business events industry





# EIC is the global voice of the business events industry on advocacy, research, professional recognition and standards.

- ❖ **32+ Association Members** representing more than 103,500 individuals and more than 19,500 entities
- ❖ **30+ Corporate Members and Strategic Partners** with global operations and event teams in countries around the world.



## Signature Programmes

**apex**

**cmp**  
certified meeting | professional

Centre for  
**sustainability &  
social impact**

**knowledge**

**leadership**

## Forward

While we live in a time of increasing volatility amidst a backdrop of geopolitical tension, climate crises and humanitarian emergencies, we remain steadfast in our belief that business events are essential in addressing our world's challenges. This is anchored to the view that our sector delivers vast economic impact and social transformation. We remain committed to delivering valuable, inclusive experiences that foster human connection and serve as a catalyst for change and trust.

It is in this context that we release the **Futures Landscape Report 2025**, the culmination of a year-long collaborative project designed to uncover and understand the issues most likely to shape the business events community. The research that fed into the final report included a series of workshops with industry leaders from EIC's 60+ association and corporate members as well as our volunteer leaders; insights from the EIC APEX Critical Issues Working Group; a global survey of industry stakeholders across every region and sector; and expertise from our research partners at Ipsos.

As a foresight tool, the Futures Landscape Report was created to help our sector, business event professionals and organisations better understand a wide swath of macro forces and correlating trends facing our world and global economies. It also highlights the importance of reflection and preparedness as we continue to adapt drive our industry forward.

The report looks at 12 key themes: Accessibility, Advocacy, Business Models, Climate Risk, DEI, ESG, Infrastructure, Mobility, Risk & Security, Talent and Workforce Development, Technology, and Wellbeing. None of these issues are mutually exclusive, and none should be politicised.

**We must remain steadfast and united on this journey to help create a better world for generations to come.**

Many thanks to the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) Foundation for their generous support, to GainingEdge for leading many of the discussions that led to the final report, and to Ipsos for leveraging their global market research expertise to bring it all together.

I am continually inspired and encouraged by the spirit of innovation and resilience that fuels our industry and look forward to many thoughtful discussions about the findings in this report throughout the coming year.



Amy Calvert  
President and CEO  
Events Industry Council



# What is the future of the events industry?

The pandemic reshaped the way that we come together as communities, professionals, and societies—but it also meant an opportunity for the events industry to reflect, reimagine, and innovate.

Five years later, the industry has returned to pre-pandemic activity levels, according to our [EIC Quarterly Events Barometer](#), and business events organisations and partners are looking to the future.

Amidst new growth and emerging spaces, we are reflecting on the path forward for events — from the attendee value equation, to new business models and the need for greater resilience.

We know there are major factors influencing events today, with the power to affect change in years to come. Planning for the future can help the industry anticipate and shape change, which is our focus for this study:

**Are we offering the experiences our audiences value, and do they align with our values as an industry or an organization?**

**We conducted research across business sectors and regions to understand perceptions of 12 key topics shaping the events industry**



**We are leveraging strategic foresight to anticipate the future of the events industry**

## Methodology

In 2024, the Events Industry Council asked industry professionals to identify the top issues affecting the future of the industry. We then conducted an online global survey of events stakeholders (November – December 2024) to dive deeper into these top issues. Respondents from all age groups, roles and different areas of the industry responded (business services, healthcare, food and beverage, and education) in the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia, and Oceania.

The Future Landscape Report 2025 seeks to better understand current and future issues impacting the industry and help industry professionals prepare for the future and collaborate with stakeholders to adapt and innovate.

In addition to analyzing the results, we've augmented the report with perspectives on the macro forces shaping the world around us and sought to understand what's shaping the industry from the outside in to provide a deeper understanding of factors influencing our stakeholders.

*The Futures Landscape Study was conducted with the support of the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) Foundation; GainingEdge, a consultancy focused on business events; an Ipsos, a global leader in market research.*

# Future readiness is no longer a “nice to have” for organisations

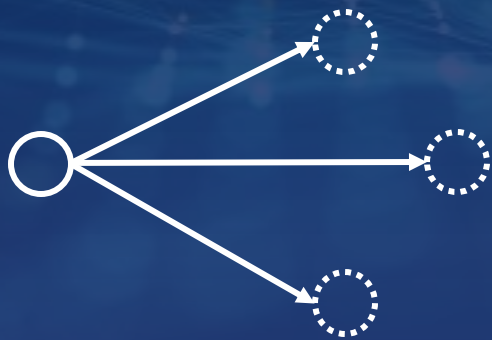
In our fast-paced, constantly evolving, and increasingly interconnected world, organisations need to **anticipate change and become future ready.**

**Future-  
prepared  
firms  
outperform  
the average:**

**33%** higher  
profitability

**200%** higher  
growth

**Rather than predicting a singular future, foresight helps us prepare for multiple potential scenarios**



## Why do we care about foresight?

Practicing strategic foresight seeks to:

- help you understand change
- anticipate disruption
- build resilience
- develop more informed and future-forward ideas and strategies

Instead of thinking in a “business as usual” mindset, imagining multiple future scenarios lets us account for today’s increasing complexity and recommend strategies growth pathways to **increase competitive advantage in the business events industry.**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





# Top forces affecting the future of the events industry

Leaders in our industry identified 12 key forces affecting change, which formed the basis of our study

**01 Accessibility**  
Awareness of disabilities, the regulatory environment, and adaptable and flexible environments

**02 Advocacy**  
Coordination, collaboration, urgency, unified voices and proactive messages for industry success

**03 Business Models**  
Budget and resource challenges, evolving expectations from participants, sponsors and exhibitors, and cost increases

**04 Climate Risk**  
Emissions, policy and agendas, public perception, disruption mitigation efforts, and place-based impacts (e.g., displacement)

**05 DEI**  
Driving and measuring change and impact within organizations across diversity, equity, and inclusivity

**06 ESG**  
Public policy, compliance, messaging, corporate values, and employee and customer engagement

**07 Infrastructure**  
Capacity, changing models, technology, and infrastructure in need of investment/advances

**08 Mobility**  
Protectionism, visa challenges, travel disruptions, and ability/access for participation in knowledge sharing

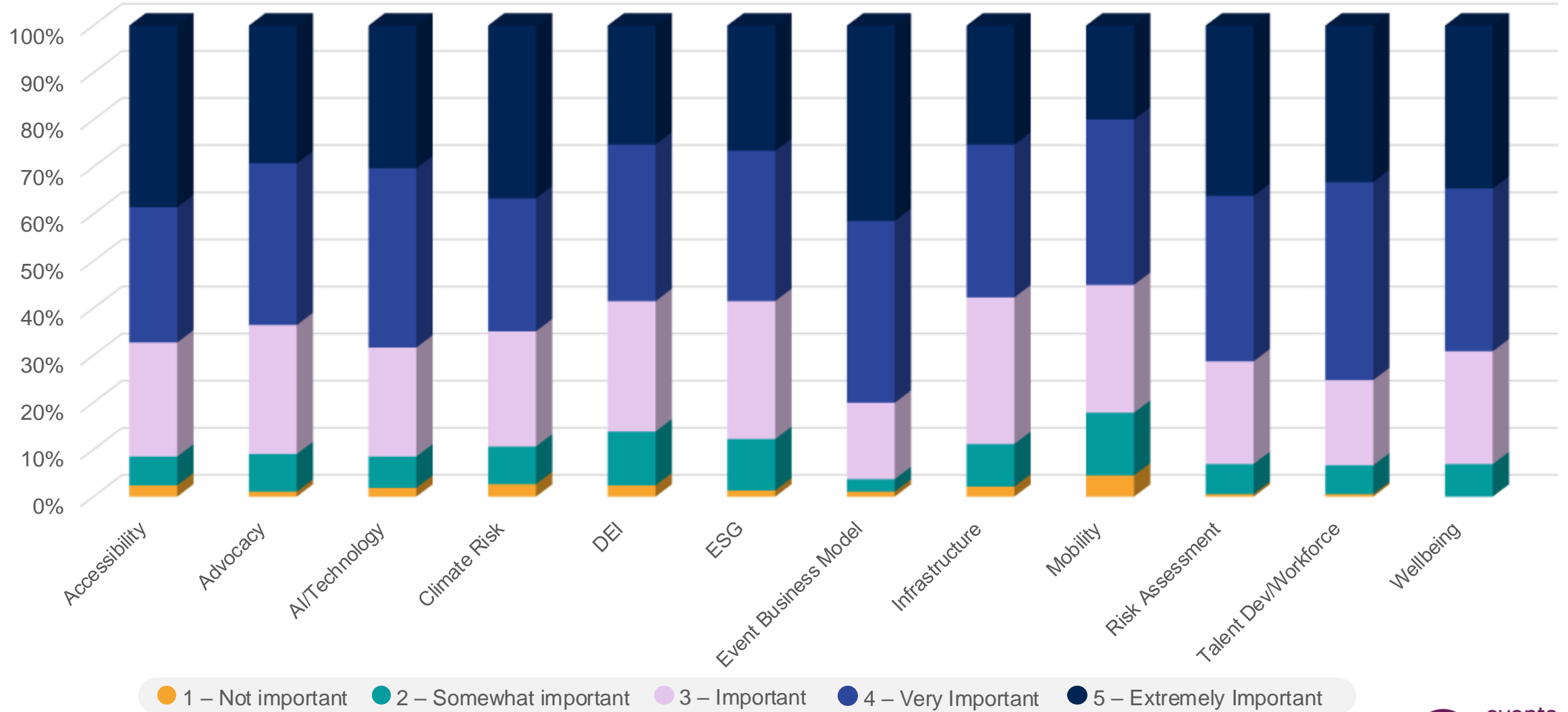
**09 Risk & Security**  
Data security, geopolitical-driven risk and risk management, technology evolution, and harm reduction strategies

**10 Talent and Workforce Development**  
Leadership opportunities, new talent strategies, team growth needs, and generational differences

**11 Technology**  
Job security, trust equations, productivity impacts, regulatory changes, and training and education needs

**12 Wellbeing**  
Workplace wellbeing (physical, mental, social, etc.), supportive environments, and employee longevity

# Most industry professionals agree all 12 topics pose very important or extremely important impacts to the future of the events industry.





# The future of the events industry hinges upon how these 12 topics are evolving today

## Events professionals need more demonstrated support.

Individual and industry **Advocacy** efforts are picking up as employee-employer relations and power dynamics change with cultural norms and macroeconomic conditions.

Simultaneously, employers are facing **Talent** shortages as generational value (e.g., the importance of mental health and inclusivity) and career expectations evolve and markets age. Many also grapple with the value equation of fast-paced, in-person environments.

**Meanwhile, Technology** holds promise for productivity gains but is challenging human capacity. The result is many event professionals feeling burnt out (**Wellbeing**), underpaid, and underrepresented (**DEI, Accessibility**), calling for changes in the **Events Business Model**.

## We're operating in a changed business and climate atmosphere.

As certain markets open for business while others favour protectionism, logistics, venue selection, and planning operations are shifting. But with geopolitical conflict undercurrents, **Risk & Security** measures are increasing with added complexity such as travel requirements.

Disruption across the events supply chain is rampant as **Climate Risks** increase year-over-year. The events industry is beginning to respond to its own role in environmental stress, and **ESG** requirements are initiating new planning practices.

And while the number of aging venues and off-limits places grow, **Infrastructure** investments and sophisticated **Mobility** solutions are attracting many to new destinations.

# The events industry can turn challenges into growth avenues

## Lean into opportunities to expand audiences

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**Advocacy, Accessibility, DEI, and Talent** topics offer chances for the events industry to grow its reach by inviting more people in and onto the stage.

Calls for increased representation will enable business growth, but only with authentic intention.

**Specific sectors** that could see growth include hospitality, event platform hosts, and venue managers.

## Tackle today's risks to create tomorrow's resiliency plans

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**Climate Risks, ESG, Risk Mitigation, Security, Infrastructure, and Mobility** all pose vulnerabilities for future events. Planning for extremes and mitigating externalities will ensure less disruption and a better experience.

**Specific sectors** (e.g., travel, sports, hospitality) must create contingency plans in addition to risk mitigation strategies to avoid major financial and cultural disruption amid geopolitical and climate events.

## Invest in the longevity of people and the industry

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**Talent, Wellbeing, Technology, and the Events Business Model** connect to provide a holistic picture of individual and organizational stress because of short-termism.

Burnout and talent shortages coupled with increasing financial return expectations demand a new, long-term mindset that invests in the most valuable factor: human capital.

**Specific sectors** where this is relevant include business services, hospitality, event management, travel, and education.



# Events industry sectors can take action

While all insights from our study generally apply to all segments of the global business event industry, there are discrete implications and opportunities by sector.

## Tradeshows & Exhibitions

The display of innovations in evolving industries and emerging topics such as cybersecurity, data privacy, AI, ML, and climate tech will require adaptations for tradeshows and exhibitions while the sectors' resilience continues to demonstrate the value equation of in-person events experiences.

## Business Events & Event Organisers

Organisations will need to work against ubiquitous 'organiser burnout' to continue people operations and a healthy management of 'human capital' to attract and retain talent. Events are essential for building trust and human connections.

## Transportation & Logistics

Climate risks and ESG requirements will command more thorough disruption mitigation plans to ensure smooth travel for attendees, speakers, and organisers. Supply chains will need to be futureproofed given extreme weather, volatile pricing, and carbon scrutiny.

## Hotels & Venues

Technology integrations will require more staff training and education and will not be able to replace the 'human touch' needed in hospitality services.

Labour shortages and an aging workforce in many markets will create tensions with increased global travel. The bar for basics (e.g., fast Wi-Fi) is also elevated, but most don't want added complexity.

## Destination Management Organisations

As critical partners to event organisers, destinations will be increasingly determined by accessibility and vulnerability factors (e.g., infrastructure age, geopolitical conditions/stability, climate resilience levels). Their ability to deliver meaningful, safe and inclusive experiences will be increasingly important.

## Food & Beverage

Supply chain disruption and consumable goods shortages in an uncertain climate will be more frequent. Furthermore, many will look for healthier eating options for optimal on-the-road travel wellness. Waste management will be a key strategy to cost reduction and climate targets for compliance.

## Technology and Data

Attendee data privacy and event organisation data security is paramount in a world with multiplying data collection points and use cases. All will look for maximum protection and ultimate reassurance of risk mitigation strategies.

As AI use cases manifest, be careful to keep a 'human in the loop' for information accuracy and empathy.

# FUTURES LANDSCAPE REPORT





# 12 topics are shaping global systems, impacting events

01 **Accessibility**

02 **Advocacy**

03 **Business Models**

04 **Climate Risk**

05 **DEI**

06 **ESG**

07 **Infrastructure**

08 **Mobility**

09 **Risk & Security**

10 **Talent and  
Workforce  
Development**

11 **Technology**

12 **Wellbeing**

# When we look at these 12 topics across regions, we see regional differences in broad consumer attitudes

**ESG:**  
60% of citizens agree in North America  
“Business leaders have a responsibility to speak out on social and political issues”  
68% in EMEA  
76% in APAC  
77% in LATAM

**Technology:**  
60% of citizens agree in LATAM  
“I try to limit use of my smartphone these days”  
53% in North America  
53% in APAC  
50% in EMEA

**Climate Risk:**  
85% of citizens agree in LATAM  
“Companies do not pay enough attention to the environment”  
76% in EMEA  
75% in APAC  
73% in North America

**DEI:**  
61% of citizens agree in APAC  
“People from different backgrounds and ethnic minorities in my country are treated fairly”  
51% EMEA  
47% North America  
39% LATAM

# Several larger macro forces are influencing the 12 topics shaping the events industry

Macro forces are **known knowns that operate at a broader, global level.**

Macro forces have been **forming over a longer time horizon and have far-reaching impacts** that change human behaviour over the next 5-10 years.

These seven macro forces also both positively and negatively influence progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals, creating complex interactions that require integrated solutions. These forces and their implications represent both opportunities and challenges to achieving a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

## ECONOMIC REDISTRIBUTION

Global wealth divides are growing in developed nations while developing markets are experiencing a growing middle/consumer class.

## TECH-TONIC SHIFTS

With growing familiarity and wariness about AI, ML, and increasing ubiquity of data collection, many are both welcoming tech-enabled challenge and apprehensive of its impacts.

## POPULATION FLUCTUATIONS

The Americas, Europe, and other select nations (e.g., Japan) are experiencing slowing (and aging) populations while nations across Africa and Asia will lead global population growth.

## POLARIZED POLITICS

Around the world, the geopolitical landscape is reflecting new nationalist and populist tides manifesting as highly polarized and fragmented societies.

## HEALTH IS WEALTH

With a wellbeing industry revolution underway, people are seeing the benefits of better health while struggling to mitigate the effects of modern life (e.g., pollution, toxins, stress).

## RESILIENCE & RESISTENCE

The majority of global citizens believe in and are feeling the effects of climate change while experiencing pushback led by fossil fuel industries.

## EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE POWER SHIFTS

Employees now have more leverage due to factors like tight labour markets, technological advancements allowing remote work, and a focus on employee well-being, but economic fluctuations and industry trends can influence this balance.



# Accessibility expectations provide an opportunity to grow audiences

## Macro forces driving change

### Population Fluctuations

- Aging markets bring a host of new accessibility needs for venues and experiences

### Polarized Politics

- Increasing awareness of invisible disabilities like neurodiversity is an accelerating trend, but some supporters of this momentum (e.g., Gen Z) face political backlash

### Tech-ionic Shifts

- Digital technologies that leverage AI and ML are enhancing in-person accommodations and helping create inclusive experiences (e.g., catching human bias in events design)

# 67%

of EIC study respondents say Accessibility is either very or extremely important for the future of the events industry

# 96%

The percentage of the world's top one million web pages that are not accessible ([Accessibly](#))

# 18%

Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) use in events has surged 18% in 2024, showing creative applications for immersive accessibility ([Swoogo](#))

# Our respondents told us that the future is about empathetic planning for more accessible events

**Key tension:** Events organisers are struggling to understand how to discern expectations and needs (e.g., for aging markets) while creating budgets to allow for accessibility implementation.

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## Expand your network

**“Accessibility allows businesses and merchants to expand their customer base** by making their products or services available to everyone, including those with disabilities. It also enhances legal compliance, improves user experience, and contributes to increased revenue by attracting a wider segment of the market.”

– *Event Owner & Freelancer, Business Services, Africa*

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## Budgets must bend

**“The industry struggles to balance cost implications of accessibility improvements with growing expectations for universal design**, while regulatory fragmentation forces organisers to become experts in multiple accessibility frameworks. **Digital transformation** adds new layers of accessibility requirements, while **hybrid events** create additional challenges for ensuring equal participation opportunities.”

– *Owner, Education, Europe*

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## Universal design approach

“People are expecting to be accommodated, rather than hoping for it or just not attending events...I'm seeing more and more event folks taking a universal design approach, where they are building in design/planning elements of their events that are already accessible without people having to ask.”

– *Assistant Director, Education, US/Canada*

# In the future, accessibility-optimisation will improve event experience and outcome

## Growing awareness and adaption are raising the bar

“We must make changes now so that our future events can be viable.”

– *Manager, Education, US/Canada*

## In the next 5 years...

Venues and host cities will be chosen based on their accessibility features. Expect regulations to mandate accessibility rather than treat it as an optional add-on. The range of event services (virtual, hybrid, and in-person) will also likely grow in response to accessibility initiatives.

## Future events industry implications

- Accessibility considerations will impact all aspects of event planning, from venue selection and logistical arrangements to budgeting and company reputation.
- Increased participation from a larger, more diverse audience can lead to greater spending and more clients, and failure to provide adequate accessibility can damage an organization's reputation.
- However, we expect there will be a backlash to certain modes of accessibility, as we've seen happen with other divisive issues where citizens feel that companies have gone too far.
- Talent acquisition will also be centered around accommodation and respect for all needs.



# Many are increasingly sticking up for themselves and their jobs

## Macro forces driving change

### Employer-Employee Power Shifts

- Gen Z is advocating for themselves — as employees, for their industries and their sectors. They expect a reciprocal advocacy relationship from employers and institutions to protect them

### Resilience & Resistance

- Amid climate emergencies and now chronic climate-induced weather events, many industries are more vulnerable to disruption, including travel, hospitality, and tourism

61%

of EIC study respondents say Advocacy is either very or extremely important for the future of the events industry

7%

The U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics projects a faster than average 2023-2033 job outlook for the events industry ([BLS](#))

8 in 10

business travelers globally experienced travel disruptions in 2024, with strikes being one of the major causes, indicating growing calls for advocacy ([TravelPerk](#))

# Our respondents told us the industry needs a louder voice to advocate for itself and its professionals

**Key tension:** Event organisers told us that industry advocacy efforts are fragmented due to diverse stakeholder interests, lack of coordination, and inconsistent messaging, despite the need to rev up in a post-pandemic landscape.

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## A reputation-builder

“Advocacy in business is important because it **helps companies enhance their reputation and build strong relationships** with the community and customers.”

– *Freelancer/event owner, Business Services, Africa*

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## From reactive to proactive

“**Advocacy, coordination, and urgency for a unified voice are highly important**, especially in an environment that requires **moving from reactive to proactive strategies**. When advocacy efforts lack coordination, organisations miss out on impact and alignment, resulting in a diluted or fragmented message. Establishing a unified voice allows stakeholders to **rally around shared goals, enhancing credibility and influence**.”

– *Sr. Director, Education, US/Canada*

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## Repping a large workforce

“We saw during the global pandemic that the events industry was left behind. Although we impact airlines, hotels, and many other businesses in markets where events are held, **we were grossly underrepresented** on the national stage when it came to the **financial hardships that impacted our 12M+ workforce**.”

– *CEO & President, Business Services, US/Canada*

# In the future, the industry may move from silos to collective self-support

## A unified voice of all

“To have a unified voice will only enhance our advocacy performance.”

– *President & CEO, Business Services, Latin America*

## In the next 5 years...

The events industry could focus on centralised coordination mechanisms, consistent messaging, and unified measurement standards to strengthen advocacy efforts. Leaders will be more proactive in addressing issues to secure their place in the events industry amid tighter budgets and increasing expenses from partners (e.g., lodging, transportation, food and beverage).

## Future events industry implications

- Effective advocacy can protect the events industry and its employees from future crises and ensure long-term viability.
- Events organisation leaders must communicate the industry’s value proposition to the world (e.g., what is the core purpose of the industry beyond simply organizing events?) while considering its purpose as a connector of individuals.
- Conversely, a lack of advocacy for the industry (e.g., thought leadership on the importance of in-person events) can harm all stakeholders, from thought leaders to networkers, mentors, venues, hotels, airlines and associations.
- Strong advocacy can lead to better infrastructure, policies, and resources (e.g., financing instruments) that support the industry.



# The events industry is seeing continued recovery and growth

## Macro forces driving change

### Tech-ronic Shifts

- Technology evolutions are reshaping human capabilities but bringing new financial and technological capital into industries that have been focused on human connection

### Economic Redistribution

- Across many markets, professionals are living through a rising cost of living while businesses similarly face rising costs

### Employer-Employee Power Shifts

- Employees are demanding better treatment amid increasing productivity expectations, but economic fluctuations and industry trends can favour employer priorities

# 80%

of EIC study respondents say the Events Business Model & Impacts is either very or extremely important for the future of the events industry

# \$2T USD

The estimated size of the global events market in 2032  
([Allied Market Research](#))

# 91%

The percentage of marketers that believe in-person events contribute significantly to achieving business objectives  
([Eventcube](#))

# Our respondents report a convergence of disruption, new expectations and investments evolving the business model

**Key tension:** Events organisers are grappling with attracting sponsors, participants, and suppliers in an Attention Economy while also trying to support financial objectives required to meet business goals.

## Convergence of ROI & CSR

**“Sponsors and exhibitors seek better ROI from their investments, with a focus on targeted, measurable outcomes rather than just brand exposure. The growing demand for sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in event sponsorship can create challenges for traditional event models.**

– *Executive, Sporting Goods/Travel & Amusement, Latin America*

## Business model effects

**“The effects of issues in event-related business models include reduced profits, dissatisfaction among participants and sponsors, difficulty attracting exhibitors, negative impact on reputation, and reduced investment in improving customer experience. These factors limit the event's success and its ability to achieve its goals.”**

– *Event Owner & Freelancer, Business Services, Africa*

## Clashing ownership models

**“The MICE industry is experiencing fundamental disruption due to increasing investment group involvement, creating a clash between traditional industry values and corporate profit expectations. Investment groups' focus on standardized business metrics fails to account for the sector's unique characteristics: seasonality, relationship-based business models, and the essential human-to-human connection that defines MICE.”**

– *Owner, Education, Europe*

## Adaptation and advocacy will be key for riding future waves

### Financial pressure grows

“I am being asked to provide ROI for every event to define how or why we need to attend.”

– Director, Financial, Legal & Real Estate, US/Canada

### In the next 5 years...

The industry will need to adapt as new business models emerge, and the lines between physical, hybrid, and virtual events continue to blur. Addressing labour shortages and rising costs will be crucial for the industry's long-term viability. Others may witness increasing investment group involvement in business ownership.

### Future events industry implications

- Industry professionals must address evolving participant expectations and implement accessible, sustainable and regenerative events with budget and supply chain impacts.
- Events organisations' finance teams are likely to see increasing costs (e.g., supplier relations, event quality). Macroeconomic trends are trickling down to hospitality and supplier businesses (e.g., hospitality staffing shortages). Financial pressures have the potential to eliminate events without a clear ROI.
- The integration of technology and the strategic use of hybrid and virtual formats will shape the future of professional events. Personalisation, data-driven decision-making, and a focus on attendee experience will be essential.



# Climate change poses increased industry disruption

## Macro forces driving change

### Resilience & Resistance

- The longevity of systems (financial, social, and environmental) is in peril due to increasing environmental risks

### Tech-tonic Shifts

- Technological revolutions are taxing environmental systems and creating new climate risks while climate solutions race to mitigate damage

### Polarised Politics

- While most people around the world agree climate change is negatively affecting business and lifestyle, most feel progress is stifled by naysayers.

# 65%

of EIC respondents say Climate Risks are either very important or extremely important for the future of the events industry

# 80%

of global citizens believe we are heading for environmental disaster unless we change our habits quickly ([Ipsos](#))

# 552%

The volume of ESG reporting regulations alone has grown from 23 regulations in 2021 to 150 regulations in 2023 – a 552% increase ([Compliance & Risks](#)).

# Our respondents believe sustainability needs a seat at the events planning table due to increasing climate risks

**Key tension:** While the current narrative puts the impetus on individuals rather than industry, our stakeholders believe the events industry must play a bigger role in mitigating event externalities (e.g., pollution, waste).

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## Tools for industry impact

**“Our industry needs to focus on developing the right tools to ensure that all stakeholders can minimize and measure our footprint and overall impact on the environment. We also need to work on the purpose to maximize the impact of our industry.”**

– Executive, Transportation, Europe

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## The role of the supply chain

**“Suppliers have a duty to society to provide a clean/natural environment for stakeholders and how the industry can be as sustainable as possible to protect natural resources for mankind to thrive.”**

– Event Planning Manager, Business Services, US/Canada

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## Ubiquitous disruption

**“As extreme weather and climate-related crisis increase, the ability to meet becomes disrupted, insurance to protect meetings becomes harder to obtain, and downstream, geopolitical stability is threatened by migration and related issues such as famines, etc.”**

– Vice President, Education, US/Canada

# Business continuity will hinge on a climate resilience-focused strategy

## Evolving from today

“We must make changes now so that our future events can be viable.”

– *Events Manager, Education, US/Canada*

## In the next 5 years...

Sustainability will become increasingly integrated into event planning, from venue selection and waste reduction methods to carbon footprint minimisation and supplier choices given global Scope 1/2/3 requirements. Expect greater demand for sustainability speakers, conferences, and networks. Climate-related disruption is set to increase, bringing new types of risk management strategies.

## Future events industry implications

- Sustainable practices (e.g., carbon negative), speakers, and initiatives will become essential for attracting attendees, sponsors, and clients.
- Organisations that fail to integrate climate risk prevention and mitigation will face financial risks/losses and increased costs.
- Event professionals will encounter new ethical responsibilities, venue vulnerability, regulatory pressure on logistics, and climate disclosure transparency/reporting frontiers.
- Longevity of the events industry depends upon the wellbeing of environmental systems given the role of natural capital in events.



# Diverse voices are crucial for industry representation

## Macro forces driving change

### Population Fluctuations

- Many countries are becoming increasingly diverse and multicultural
- Gen Z is heavily prioritising and focusing on the value of diverse perspectives and visibly intentional inclusivity

### Polarized Politics

- Increasing backlash against DEI is calling for a revamp of what corporate integration of representation and inclusivity looks like

### Economic Redistribution

- With inequality growing in major global markets, representation of voices across the socio-economic spectrum is increasingly important

The EIC's 2022 Equity Benchmarking Study revealed "widespread DEI dissatisfaction among event professionals, especially amongst minority groups and women" ([EIC](#)).

# 1%

The percentage of Black individuals in leadership roles at events companies ([BeaconLive](#))

Set up in 2022, WTM Latin America's Diversity Committee brings together professionals with different experience in distinct sectors of the travel and tourism industry ([WTM](#))

# Our respondents told us that DEI is a growth pathway with local-nuance considerations

**Key tension:** Events industry leaders told us that DEI (and belonging) efforts are needed, but genuine internal implementation often lags, with stunted progress and lacking authenticity.

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## Equitable experience for all

“DEI initiatives actively **address barriers that may discourage or exclude individuals from fully participating in events.** This could involve accessible venues, providing language interpretation, ensuring dietary considerations are met, or eliminating obstacles to participation. **Such measures contribute to a fairer, more equitable event experience.**”

– Sr. Director, Education,  
US/Canada

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## A way to move forward

“Our industry is evolving on a rapid scale, where **we are now seeing our industry becoming more diverse across all sectors.** Our industry has to adapt DEI, in order to move forward.”

– Executive, Transportation,  
Europe

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## DEI across borders

“**Need to think about [DEI] through both a "global north" and "global south" lens;** most thought leadership on the topic now is too Western-centric; but when you invite other POVs into the conversation, even from a place of genuine curiosity, people seem to get offended/hurt quite quickly.”

– Account Director, Business  
Services, Europe

# DEI efforts could help to prepare event organisations amid changing demography

## Social & financial impact

“DEI has to be a key element of our industry, as it not only helps our business to become more diverse but also has a positive financial and social impact.”

– *Executive, Transportation, Europe*

## In the next 5 years...

As attendees diversify and become more multicultural, the focus will shift from performative actions to meaningful choices as younger, diverse leaders rise to management. Organisations will prioritise long-term, ground-up DEI strategies integrated into their core values and operations through sector specificity rather than generalised efforts. The industry must address inherent biases and leverage non-Western-centric ideas to elevate content and experiences.

## Future events industry implications

- Culturally sensitive programming (e.g., speaker selection) and inclusive event design will be essential for attracting and retaining both a diverse audience and workforce.
- Events industry professionals will need to understand the inherent biases (e.g., cultural blind spots) of AI productivity tools used for event planning.
- Stakeholders must develop a “common language” for inclusivity measures to unify efforts and avoid confusion.
- Failure to prioritize DEI could lead to reputational damage.



# ESG puts the events industry in the context of people and planet

## Macro forces driving change

### Resilience & Resistance

- Many seek to find resilient solutions for longevity of systems (financial, social, and environmental) despite backlash.

### Tech-tonic Shifts

- Technological revolutions and evolution are changing how we manage people and creating both greater efficiencies and carbon burden on the planet.

### Polarized Politics

- While most people around the world agree climate change is negatively affecting business and lifestyle, most feel progress is stifled by naysayers.

# 59%

of EIC study respondents say ESG is either very or extremely important for the future of the events industry

# 97%

of event professionals believe that Social responsibility will be an integral part of their future events ([Event Industry Forecast 2022](#))

“**T**he MICE industry faces challenges due to insufficient collaboration and knowledge sharing, making it difficult for motivated leaders to implement sustainable development effectively” ([European Center of Sustainable Development](#))

# Our respondents told us the industry struggles to make the leap despite alignment on ESG's role in growth

**Key tension:** ESG implementation varies across regions, and organisations face challenges balancing profit with ESG goals, but many see its importance for brand reputation, employee engagement, and attracting attendees.

## Growing awareness & demands

**“Attendees, clients, and sponsors are becoming more aware** of the environmental and social impact of the events they participate in or support. They are now demanding eco-friendly and socially responsible practices, pushing the industry to integrate sustainable practices into event planning and execution.”

– *CEO & President, Business Services, Latin America*

## A needed long-term mindset

**“The shift towards stakeholder value from shareholder value stems** from an increasing awareness of the business impact of long-term focus solely on maximizing financial returns over strong social, environmental, and governance practices.”

– *Vice President, Education, US/Canada*

## Impact measurement barriers

**“The challenge of quantifying** social and environmental impact in financial terms adds another layer of complexity to ESG implementation.”

– *Owner, Education, Europe*

# ESG adoption can lead to long-term risk mitigation and growth pathways

## Competitive advantage

“Ignoring ESG risks financial, legal, and reputational damage, while embracing it can lead to long-term benefits such as client loyalty, cost savings, and innovation. As the event industry evolves, ESG practices will continue to define success in an increasingly competitive and socially conscious market.”

– CEO, Business Services, Latin America

## In the next 5 years...

Regulatory pressure and stakeholder expectations will drive ESG integration, but regional implementation will vary. The events industry, while not a strong ESG advocate yet, is beginning to recognise its importance for corporate resilience and expansion among chronic disruption (e.g., political, social, environmental).

## Future events industry implications

- Events will become platforms for showcasing ESG commitments and engaging attendees in sustainability efforts.
- Legal compliance implications will likely expand.
- ESG considerations will influence all aspects of event planning, including supplier/partner relations, event format/scale, waste management practices, carbon impacts, and community engagement.
- Sustainability will be part of what organisers look for in sourcing RFPs and managing the events lifecycle, with many turning to [ISO 20121:2024](#) (in alignment with the UN SDGs) to cut through the noise of myriad fragmented sustainability standards.



# Infrastructure investments need to keep pace with expectations

## Macro forces driving change

### Resilience & Resistance

- Aging infrastructure and climate risks are leading to the growth of vulnerable spaces and places around the globe

### Economic Redistribution

- With a growing middle class in some markets and expanding wealth gap in others, economic investment across communities is fragmented

### Tech-tonic Shifts

- Technology evolutions are reshaping the digital and physical built-environment

# 58%

of EIC respondents say Infrastructure is either very or extremely important for the future of the events industry

# 56%

agree that venues need to add greater value to offset higher pricing of food and beverage (Flik)

# 81%

of event professionals rate hotel/meeting facility service levels as highly important when selecting destinations (Hotel Business)

# Our respondents believe infrastructure drives competitive edge, even if modernisation is lacking

**Key tension:** Infrastructure is vital to event success, impacting everything from attendee experience to cost management and sustainability, but existing infrastructure is aging and lacking adaptation strategies, at-risk of destination avoidance.

## Move beyond table stakes

**“Suppliers (hotels/convention centers) are still viewing required/necessary infrastructure such as Internet access as a "nice to have" and something to monetise.”**

– *Event Manager,  
Building/Construction, US/Canada*

## Leverage collective potential

**“Infrastructure challenges extend beyond physical modernisation to encompass broader destination strategy alignment.** The current individualistic approach ('my business, my investment') fails to leverage the collective potential of MICE destinations. This fragmentation of efforts undermines the destination's ability to create a cohesive value proposition.”

– *Owner, Education, Europe*

## Impact & influence opportunity

**“This is another area for advocacy.** The events industry should be advocating for better infrastructure to support groups in cities. It's the **part of the attendee experience that we can't always control, but an area we should influence.**”

– *Global Events Director,  
Medical/Healthcare, US/Canada*

# Future infrastructure investments must match attendee and regulatory expectations

## Event professionals bear the burden

“Our industry needs to have a proactive view on infrastructure, technology in order to meet the demands of the future and changes.”

– *Executive Officer,  
Transportation, Europe*

## In the next 5 years...

Venues will need to prioritise upgrades and invest in sustainable infrastructure to remain competitive. Expect to see a combination of aging infrastructure amid rising costs and new experiential events spaces that investing in staffing, safety, and technology (including VR). The industry will likely advocate for greater investment in infrastructure to support the growing demands of attendees.

## Future events industry implications

- Infrastructure limitations (e.g., older tech, room size) can impact event quality, attendee experience, and overall costs in a world where “experience” is a major driver.
- Sustainable infrastructure will factor into event organisations’ ESG reporting and disclosure (e.g., venue carbon impact).
- Venue selection will continue to be impacted by local infrastructure (e.g., transportation, lodging) investments and cultural capital as a form of infrastructure.
- Investments in information infrastructure (e.g., NDC) will grow.
- Digital hospitality (hotel) and airline infrastructure is set to expand, with more biometrics, AI, and automation.



# Global mobility continues to accelerate post-pandemic

## Macro forces driving change

### Tech-ronic Shifts

- Technology evolutions (e.g., AI, ML, virtual spaces) are reshaping how we navigate around the digital and physical built-environment environment

### Polarised Politics

- Tides of protectionism and populism are changing the former globalisation “status quo” of expansion into and exploration of other markets, changing how people travel the world and interact with each other

# 55%

of EIC study respondents say Mobility is either very important or extremely important for the future of the events industry

# 47%

“Fewer people worldwide now require a traditional visa to travel, falling from 77% in 2008 to 59% in 2018, and then to 47% in 2023” ([UN Tourism](#)).

# 3.4B

The **Asia-Pacific** region is expected to lead in year-on-year (YoY) passenger traffic growth in 2024, with a 13% increase, reaching 3.4 billion passengers by year-end ([ACI](#))

# Our respondents say a world with increasingly complex and fragmented mobility needs to revisit its value proposition

**Key tension:** While many worry about the impacts of global political forces (e.g., populism, protectionism, globalisation currents, travel documentation/requirements), others fear the commoditised value of mobility.

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## Supply and demand

“More and more people are traveling, but **there isn't enough supply to meet the demand** in staff, hotel rooms, air seats, etc.”

– *Events Owner, Business Services, US/Canada*

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## Replacement of quality

“**The mobility landscape has shifted from value-based to purely transactional.** Aggressive commercial strategies and marketing now dominate over actual service quality... **Traditional MICE travel expertise is being replaced by standardized, commoditised services that prioritize volume over experience.**”

– *Owner, Education, Europe*

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## Mobility threats are ubiquitous

“[Mobility] should be factored into an event plan, as travel **disruptions** from weather, global/regional conflicts, etc. **have become more frequent in past years.**”

– *CEO, Business Services, US/Canada*

# Future infrastructure investments must match attendee and regulatory expectations

## A critical junction

“Without addressing these mobility challenges, events may struggle to maintain their global relevance and reach.”

– CEO, Business Services, Latin America

## In the next 5 years...

The trend toward on-demand mobility services (e.g., traditional & autonomous vehicle ride-hailing, micromobility) will accelerate, especially among younger generations.

Expect to see continued innovation in transportation technologies and services, with a focus on accessibility and EVs while autonomous vehicles and Mobility-as-a-Service platforms will play a larger role in the future of events transportation. Business travel will see the continued acceptance of ‘bleisure’ (business + leisure) as blended trips fit changing traveller preferences amid corporate budget tightening.

## Future events industry implications

- UX must adapt to keep up with a multi-modal business travel model so that attendees experience minimal pre- and post-event disruption.
- Events organisers may see new partnerships across the mobility landscape to offer rewards and traveller benefits.
- Many events attendees are likely to face fewer travel requirements, opening more countries for events destinations.
- Increased urbanisation, diverse transportation options, and demand for sustainable and efficient systems make travel more complex amid rising costs (e.g., [4% global increase](#) from 2023).



# We face a new, fragmented global security and data protection era

## Macro forces driving change

### Resilience & Resistance

- Increasing climate risks are leading to the growth of vulnerable spaces and need for more contingency plans amid heightened disruption (e.g., supply)

### Tech-tonic Shifts

- Technology evolutions are reshaping human capabilities but bringing a host of new data management strategies and protocols to protect the volume of information collected, stored, and used to power our tools

# 71%

of EIC study respondents say Risk Assessment & Mitigation/ Security is either very or extremely important for the future of the events industry

# 90%

of global disasters “are now classed as weather- and climate-related, costing the world economy 520 billion USD each year” ([UN](#))

# 204 days

The average amount of time it takes a typical organization to identify a data breach, not including the average additional 73 days to contain it ([IBM via RIT](#))

# Our respondents say the industry must adopt globalized risk management standards

**Key tension:** Event professionals are forced to be experts in a constantly evolving security and risk management landscape, against the threat of client loss, brand reputational damage, financial loss, and employee retention.

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## Event quality is at stake

**“These challenges significantly impact event execution...**

**Compliance costs increase** while efficiency decreases. **Attendee experience suffers** from inconsistent security requirements.

Organisations struggle with risk assessment across varying regulatory landscapes, while maintaining event quality and participant satisfaction.”

– *Owner, Education, Europe*

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## Education & capacity-building

**“There needs to be more awareness, education and knowledge** around data security and precautions, as well as safety at events due to growing global unrest.”

– *Executive, Education, US/Canada*

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## No industry standard

**“Risk complexity is intensified** by inconsistent global security standards and regulations.

The **lack of standardised global security frameworks forces event professionals to become regulatory experts across multiple jurisdictions**, adding complexity to event management while questioning the rationale behind differing national approaches to common risks.”

– *Owner, Education, Europe*

# In the future, complexity will drive risk and resiliency planning

## What's at stake

“The result [could be] fewer people interested in events.”

– *Director, Business Services,  
Latin America*

## In the next 5 years...

The industry is likely to develop more robust risk management frameworks (e.g., for venue/attendee safety, data privacy and security, climate-related disasters, and geopolitical security) as uncertainty continues to be the norm. However, the relationships between these risk types will continue to complexity, demanding regulatory standards and a non-reductionist approach.

## Future events industry implications

- Event organisers will need to develop comprehensive risk management plans that address all four emerging and intensifying risk categories: venue/attendee safety, data privacy and security, climate-related disasters, and geopolitical security.
- Failure to adequately address these risks can lead to financial losses, reputational damage, and legal liabilities.
- Risk management strategy will be an increasingly important expertise area for event organisers who must be well-versed in disaster and disruption mitigation.



# Events professionals are adapting to tech and socio-economic dynamics

## Macro forces driving change

### Population Fluctuations

- With four generations in the global workforce, generational demographic, value, and skill gaps are growing across both aging/shrinking and younger/growing markets; talent diversity is paramount

### Tech-ionic Shifts

- Technological revolutions (e.g., AI) are changing how we work and interact with each other, bringing productivity gains and new types of professional burnout

### Health is Wealth

- Many find the stressors of modern lifestyles in conflict with attempts to slow down and prioritise wellbeing

# 75%

of EIC respondents say Talent and Workforce Development is either very important or extremely important for the future of the events industry

## “Jobs for life”

are rapidly “on the decline” – 20% would prefer to work in a different industry altogether by 2030. ([FutureLearn](#))

# 46%

The percentage of global workers who predict their current skills “will die out” in the next few years. Another 46% of global workers said if their employers didn't offer them opportunities to upskill, they were likely to leave their job ([Degreed](#))

# Our respondents believe many organizations are overlooking the talent and workplace dynamics of the future

**Key tension:** Populations are aging but many experience agism; rifts between generational working styles and ideas about work-life balance and purpose are coupled with a lack of investment in career trajectories and upskilling.

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## Talent development shortfalls

**“The retirement of experienced professionals is creating a vacuum in leadership and specialised knowledge [while] some organisations deprioritise talent development in favour of short-term gains, exacerbating leadership and skill shortages.”**

– *CEO, Business Services, Latin America*

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## Generational gaps

**“Every generation has struggled to understand and involve the next one, only we do not remember how much our bosses complained when we started the job.”**

– *Managing Director, Medical/Healthcare, Europe*

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## Phygital management

**“The rapid technological advancements in the events industry (e.g., virtual events, AI, hybrid models) create a demand for new skills that traditional training programs may not address. There is a growing need for employees who can adapt to diverse roles—managing both physical and digital elements of events—which requires continuous skill development.”**

– *Executive, Sporting Goods/Travel & Amusement, Latin America*

# Generational differences and demands for burnout-free careers may grow

## A critical junction

“Being in the service business, our services are as good as our people.”

– *Managing Director,  
Medical/Healthcare, Europe*

## In the next 5 years...

We'll see talent shortages begin to crop up in aging markets and industries where salaries are not keeping pace with macroeconomic conditions (e.g., cost of living). Gen Z will continue to age into management and prioritise work-life balance while professionally “growing up” during a critical AI learning curve. Talent growing pains/generational style challenges will continue to present with each new generation.

## Future events industry implications

- A low birth rate for many developed nations may create events staffing shortages due to agism in an aging workforce.
- Organisations will need to create inclusive work environments that foster cultural and lived experience diversity and growth.
- Many events employers will shift talent acquisition strategies from degrees-based to experience-based criteria.
- The need for impactful events for all sectors and organisations will grow as professionals seek out spaces to build their networks and develop/nurture their careers.
- Events organisers may exit after burnout from the pace of tech adoption and VUCA-optimised risk management requirements.
- Investments in upskilling, reverse mentoring, and management are likely to be demanded as technologies evolve.



# Rapid technology shifts and tools are now ubiquitous

## Macro forces driving change

### Population Fluctuations

- Generational demographic, value, and skills gaps are growing across both aging/shrinking and younger/growing markets

### Tech-tonic Shifts

- Technological revolutions (e.g., AI) are changing how we work and interact with each other, bringing productivity gains and new workload stressors

# 68%

of respondents say Technology (including AI) is either very important or extremely important for the future of the events industry

# 61%

of event technology companies offer at least one AI-powered feature ([Skift](#))

# 89%

of venues say they see cybersecurity becoming an even bigger concern over the next three years ([Prevue](#))

# ~40%

of event tech companies use AI to provide personalised attendee connection suggestions; 1/3 use AI for content suggestions ([Skift](#))

# Our respondents say call AI a new “Wild West” that is outpacing industry understanding and adoption

**Key tension:** While AI may not altogether replace humans, many are fearful that its productivity enablement and capacity-building potential will create increased professional burnout due to increased demands

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## Chronically catching up

“**The unprecedented speed** of technological advancement, particularly in AI, **has created a VUCA environment** (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) that challenges our traditional understanding of work and society. **Organisations and individuals face mounting pressure to adapt and perform at increasingly higher levels** while resources and adaptation time become more constrained. The gap between technological capability and human/organisational readiness continues to widen, creating significant stress points in workforce development and regulatory frameworks.”

– *Owner, Education, Europe*

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## New tools, new approaches

“In the long-term, we should embrace AI. It helps to make us more efficient and creative, so that we can focus more on strategy than operations. **I don't have any concerns that AI will replace us, as it's just a tool like anything else.**”

– *Global Events Director,  
Medical/Healthcare, US/Canada*

# Adaptation with technology is as vital as caution is obligatory

## In the know

“Being knowledgeable on this front is increasingly important from both an event planning perspective, and for job security.”

– *Podcaster/Consultant,  
Communications/IT, US/Canada*

## In the next 5 years...

AI will play an increasingly important role in event management, but human expertise will remain essential. The industry needs to develop guardrails and ethical guidelines for AI implementation as misinformation grows, data biases present new problems, and generational skill gaps evolve. Legislation on IP and data security will also likely emerge.

## Future events industry implications

- Mitigate the loss of “personal touch” of events.
- Events professionals must prioritise human interactions, personal touch, and personalisation, but ensure accuracy, accountability, and human presence in AI use cases.
- We are already seeing evolved event planning data analysis, from smarter attendee data aggregation and pattern recognition/analysis to data-driven decision-making to post-event analysis.
- Event experience personalisation (e.g., pre- and post-event experience) will be table stakes, not a competitive advantage.
- Overreliance on AI for entry-level professionals could hamper professional development and business acumen.



# New workplace wellness values are attempting to mitigate burnout

## Macro forces driving change

### Health is Wealth

- Many find modern lifestyles in conflict with attempts to slow down

### Employer-Employee Power Shifts

- Employees are demanding better treatment and lifestyle balance amid increasing productivity expectations

### Population Fluctuations

- A growing number of markets are aging, bringing together four generations in the workforce

### Tech-tonic Shifts

- Productivity advancements are also driving trends in burnout and isolation (e.g., social media)

# 69%

of EIC study respondents say Wellbeing is either very important or extremely important for the future of the events industry

# 84%

of global citizens say they want to do more to look after themselves physically; 81% want to do more to look after their mental wellbeing ([Ipsos](#))

Gen Z and Millennials are more likely to expect mental wellness support and benefits at work compared to Gen X and Boomers ([MSCI](#); [SHRM](#))

# 48%

of the global workforce felt burnout in 2023; when employees feel included at work, burnout is halved ([BCG](#))

# Our respondents believe organisations struggle to promote wellness in an accelerating and complex world

**Key tension:** An 'always-on' industry with increasingly real-time, high-pressure demands is at odds with growing trends that promote better wellbeing to retain employees and boost business performance.

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## The cost of ignoring

“There has been no infrastructure built around a people first culture...Leadership is hiding behind masks and **the result can be easily measured in talent changes at every level of the chain.**”

– *Founder, Education, US/Canada*

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## Challenges on the horizon

“**The MICE industry faces a critical wellbeing challenge driven by multiple factors: intense work demands, irregular schedules, high-stress environments, and constant pressure** to deliver perfect experiences...The industry's 'always-on' culture conflicts with growing awareness of wellbeing importance. The gap between available support resources and actual needs continues to widen, while younger professionals demand more comprehensive approaches to mental health and overall wellbeing...**the industry risks losing young talent to sectors offering better work-life balance.**”

– *Owner, Education, Europe*

# Longevity of the industry is tied to longevity of employees

## What's at stake

“By focusing more on employee well-being, we can ensure that we keep our good employees happy and within the industry.”

– *Global Events Director, Medical/Healthcare, US/Canada*

## In the next 5 years...

Wellbeing will become an increasingly important factor in attracting and retaining talent in the events industry. Organisations will need to prioritise employee wellbeing by offering flexible work arrangements, realistic expectations amid AI productivity demands, better health benefits, and supportive leadership. A focus on stress mitigation in the workplace will be essential for the long-term health and sustainability of the industry.

## Future events industry implications

- The high-pressure environment of the events industry, characterised by long hours, tight deadlines, and demanding clients, can lead to burnout and mental health challenges.
- Prioritising employee wellbeing can lead to increased productivity, improved creativity, and better event outcomes. Organisations that invest in wellbeing initiatives will be better positioned to attract and retain top talent.
- Events can incorporate more wellness elements, such as mindfulness breaks, healthier food, and physical activity opportunities—enhancing attendee wellbeing and creating a more positive and engaging atmosphere.



# How to use this report

Trends and Macro Forces are tools that can help us prepare our organisations for change and help accelerate growth. There are four ways to get started with this report to build organisations of tomorrow, today.

Future-focused input into **strategic planning for your organisation**

Share insights about potential future impacts to guide decision-making processes as part of growth strategy.

Inspiration for **white spaces innovation** workshops and ideation with your leadership team

Develop innovation ideas and opportunities to chase based on potential future impacts (e.g., in- or out-of category).

Content for workshops to **inspire your stakeholders and partners**

Create specific learning opportunities tailored to event-types across the topics covered in this report.

Ingredients for **foresight scenarios**

Develop multiple future worlds based on potential impacts to help decision-makers visualise a future decision-maker, client or partner's context and experience.

# EIC Association Members



# EIC Corporate Members





# The Futures Landscape Report 2025

To learn more about EIC and this study, visit [www.eventscouncil.org](http://www.eventscouncil.org)





# APPENDIX



# Additional resources & references

## Events Industry Council

[Economic Significance of Business Events Study](#)

[Equity Benchmarking Study](#)

[Quarterly Global Events Barometer](#)

## CEIR

[Exhibition Index and Forecast](#)

[Exhibitor Future Outlook](#)

[Areas of Focus for Improvement for Future Attendee](#)

[Acquisition Efforts](#)

## Destinations International

[RFP of the Future](#)

## GCB

[Future Meeting Space](#)

## IACC

[Meeting Room of the Future Trend Report](#)

## Ipsos

[Ipsos ESG Council Report 2025](#)

[Ipsos Global Trends 2024](#)

[Ipsos ESG Council Report 2025](#)

## MPI

[Intentional & Immersive: Events in 2025](#)

## PCMA

[EMEA Engagement Survey: Meeting at the](#)

[Intersection of Digital and Analog](#)

## SITE and IRF

[Travel Index](#)

## SITE

[inSITE Series](#)







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