




PURE
COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

2024 **EVENT** HORIZONS

A Forecast for the Global
Corporate Events Frontier





The topics shaping the event industry in 2024 are...

AI, SUSTAINABILITY, BUDGETS & ACCESSIBILITY



At **Pure Communications Group**, we pride ourselves on driving industry thought leadership through our publications, blogs, and broadcasts. This year, we asked our expert Operations Team, with a collective 50+ years of events experience, to share their top predictions for 2024.



Our Predictions

90%

believe AI will change industry processes from event planning to on-site delivery

70%

expect sustainability to be a defining feature of incoming briefs

50%

expressed concern about reduced budgets

30%

agreed that more emphasis will be placed on accessibility

Our predictions are based on the team's personal experience, working across our wide portfolio of services, delivering strategic conferences, incentives, communication campaigns, and production solutions. Our predictions are further supported by the findings of other industry reports, including the AMEX Global Meetings and Events Forecast (AMEX), ICE's Annual Benchmark Report (ICE), and Cvent's 2024 Meeting and Event Trend Report (Cvent).

Industry Overview

The event industry, although faced by many challenges, is experiencing dynamic growth. According to AMEX Global Meetings and Events Forecast (AMEX)...



of surveyed event professionals rated the industry's health at 8 or above on a scale of 1-10. This is a 5% increase from last year and an 11% increase since 2022.



of respondents indicated their events have either exceeded, reached, or are expected to reach pre-pandemic attendance levels in 2024, attesting to the sector's expansion.

AI

“2024 will have a focus on how AI can enhance attendee experiences and boost engagement. However, we will also need to strike a balance between technological innovation and maintaining a human touch.”

- Genine Aristides, Event Director

The event industry will see an accelerated **adoption of AI across on-site experiences**, as well as **pre-production**. Generative tools will develop tailored copy and campaign content for specific audiences, scheduling software will evaluate task priority and create event timelines, and live transcription will be introduced into client meetings, to ensure a delivery with no details missed.

Equally, event AI solutions will be integrated into events, to help drive engagement and optimise on-site processes. AI-enhanced registration, activations, and set design promise experiences that are more interactive and allow data-driven personalisation. However, as budgets are cut, the emphasis will be on quality over quantity.

AI

Event teams will need to select technologies that enhance content and effectively deliver strategic messages. To prevent data confidentiality breaches, event professionals will need to familiarise themselves with the AI policies of their clients.

Finally, with the integration of new technologies, such as AI but also AR, VR, and holograms, **production requirements will grow in importance**. To cater for this demand, agencies will have to adapt their service offering.



SUSTAINABILITY

“Responsibility will be placed on agencies to reduce the carbon footprint of their clients’ events.”

- Janine Hart, Head of Events

Sustainability has been a buzzword in the industry for years. In 2024, it will receive the response it deserves, as more companies enact their ESG commitments.

The common barriers to sustainable experience design, as described by event professionals, are costs (40%), resource constraints (23%), and knowledge gaps (15%) (ICE). Facing this challenge head-on, **78% of businesses** surveyed in AMEX’S Global Meetings & Events Forecast indicated they **have pledged themselves to net zero policies by 2025**. This suggests a value shift in the industry that will translate into changes in event delivery practices.

As noted by our Senior Event Manager Philippa Edwards, “the pressure will increase on small to mid-size event companies to showcase their commitment to sustainability, as industry leaders introduce new processes and reports.” The sector will thus have to undergo an educational effort that will, hopefully, push it past the obvious shift towards digital signage, plant-based catering, recyclable staging, and an avoidance of single-use plastics.

SUSTAINABILITY

According to CVENT, **65% of event agencies** already **conduct research on venues' sustainability credentials**, considering energy use, food sourcing, and water consumption as factors in their decision-making. Equally, some agencies have pioneered the use of **carbon footprint trackers** as evaluative tools to assess and offset their events' ecological impact. It is expected that this trend will become more prominent as demand for carbon-neutral experiences grows from corporate clients.



BUDGETS

“Event budgets are likely to be cut and the UK/US elections might mean a slower end to the year as clients become cautious.”

- Zoe Light, Client Services Director

Effective budget allocation will grow in importance in event planning, as costs rise and **event budgets are cut**. According to AMEX, 53% of event professionals see **rising costs as the primary obstacle** facing the industry in the next year.

In 2023, event budgets returned to their pre-pandemic levels, as businesses were eager to deliver the standard of experiences they had been used to. **In 2024**, however, a projected slowing of the global economic growth rate, inflationary pressures, and a political landscape dominated by conflict and elections, pose a challenge to the industry.

BUDGETS

While companies seek to cut budgets, costs, including food & beverage, staff wages, and production equipment, are rising. To illustrate, the expected **cost per attendee** for a client meeting and a senior leadership incentive **has grown by 3.5% and 3.9%** respectively (AMEX). This means that event planners and experience agencies will have to negotiate and prioritise, assessing what elements of their creative design are key to delivery.

Cost effectiveness will be a **deciding factor** in winning new business in 2024.



ACCESSIBILITY

“There will be better representation for neurodivergence and different learning styles.”

- Russel Young, Content Producer

Companies will become more responsive to their employees' disabilities, be they physical or mental, and so will events.

Approximately **16% of the world's population suffers from a disability**, with this number rising up to 25% in Europe (WHO). The question of access should therefore be considered throughout the event planning process. Accessibility requirements should be surveyed during pre-event communication and be integrated into every touch point of the guest journey, to **ensure the same quality of experiences for all attendees**.

As public dialogue on disabilities continues to strengthen, practices such as closed captioning live debates, hiring sign language interpreters, and using accessible furniture solutions will become more common across corporate events. Equally, as **mental health** conditions and neurodivergence diagnoses, such as ADHD, autism, and dyslexia, become recognised in the workplace, they too will **permeate event design**.

ACCESSIBILITY


In 2024, there will be a strong trend of creating quiet spaces at events, providing on-site mental health support, and incorporating mindful activities into programmes. It is, however, key to remember that **not all disabilities are visible**, and that the **access requirements of two people with the same disability may not be the same**. Event professionals should therefore continue to educate themselves on the individual needs of their guests in order to create truly inclusive experiences.




Conclusion

The event industry is being forced to re-evaluate its priorities under the pressure of tightening budgets and economic uncertainty, to ensure the continuation of its post-pandemic growth. At the same time, it is experiencing a dynamic value shift towards greater inclusivity, corporate responsibility and AI-led automation.


IN 2024...




The event industry will see a wider implementation of AI across both on-site and pre-production stages, as processes are optimised and events become more data-driven.



Sustainability will become a standard in event planning. Companies of all sizes will feel a pressure to deliver environmentally conscious solutions and offset their carbon footprint.



Budgetary constraints will force event professionals to create more cost-effective experience designs, prioritising elements necessary for content delivery.



Accessibility will play a central as businesses increasingly recognise their employees' physical and mental health needs.



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