

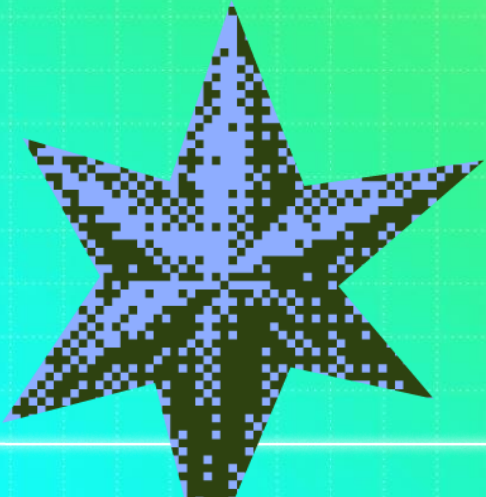


TREND·WATCHING



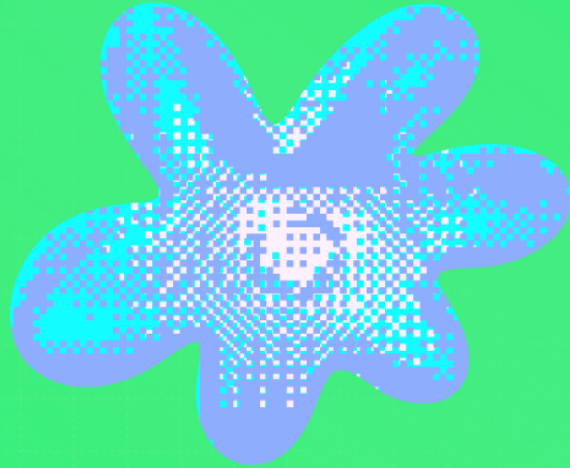
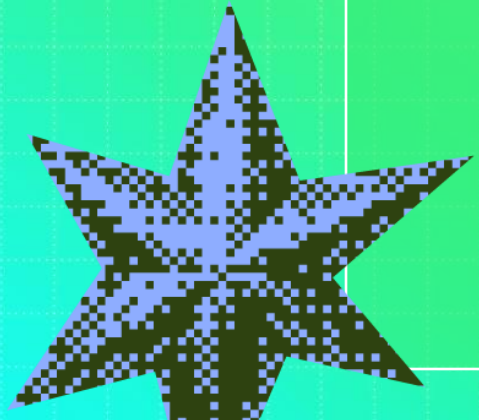
# Designing For The Next Generation

KEY TRENDS FOR ENGAGING  
GEN Z & MILLENNIAL MICE-GOERS



# Welcome

## to what's next...



The MICE industry faces a generational reckoning. Gen Z and Millennial attendees — burned out, eco-anxious and craving more authentic connection — are rejecting the generic formats that defined business events for decades.

This report examines their evolving expectations through three themes: GREENSHIFT tracks how environmental action shapes every decision, PLACE-MADE explores the demand for culturally rooted experiences over copy-paste formats while CALM & CONNECTED reveals new approaches to wellbeing and human connection in an overwhelming world.

Across seven trends, we showcase real-world innovations, practical takeaways, and actionable insights to transform your next meeting, incentive, conference or exhibitions. One-size-fits-all events are over. But what comes next is far more interesting.



# Report Summary

## Calm & Connected

**ZEN ZONE:** Smart events embrace stillness, using intentional moments to help attendees reset, reconnect and engage more meaningfully.

**INTRO-VERTED:** As loneliness rises and surface-level interactions fall flat, new tools turn networking into a more intentional experience built on values.

**AI COMPANIONS:** AI acts as an invisible co-pilot, anticipating needs, guiding experiences and making personalization feel effortless at scale.

## Greenshift

**ECO BY DEFAULT:** Designing events where greener choices are intuitive and rewarding makes environmental action feel effortless.

**CIRCULAR INTELLIGENCE:** Smarter systems are turning sustainability into a reality by cutting waste, refining operations in real time and building trust through transparency.

## Place~Made

**HERITAGE RENEWED:** Events that lead with local culture create deeper connection, with heritage shaping not just the setting but the overall experience.

**VALUES CO-DESIGNED:** Shared authorship turns attendees into collaborators, transforming events into conversations rather than one-way broadcasts.





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Heritage Renewed

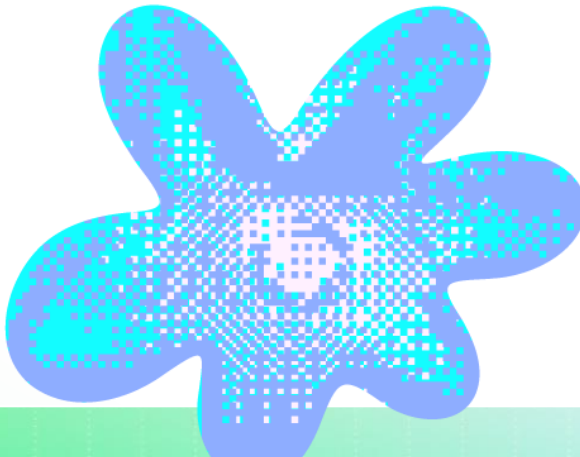


50

Values Co-designed

56

Industry Insights







# ~28%

**Over the next 7 years, Gen Z, which constitutes 26–30% of the global population, is expected to be the most influential group of MICE travelers.**

## The new MICE-goer comes of age

Gen Z is poised to be the largest generation in the workplace by 2035. And they're not waiting for permission to transform MICE. Both this generation and Millennials choose events like they choose brands: for values alignment and cultural credibility.

Crisis-tested and digitally native, they treat business travel as personal growth, expect sustainability as baseline and for technology to reduce friction. Cookie-cutter conferences won't capture them. The future belongs to purposeful experiences that justify the journey.





# +60%

**Over 60% of travelers indicate their companies will exclusively choose event organizers that prioritize social and environmental responsibility, especially in the M&I space.**

## **Purpose is non-negotiable**

More than 60% of companies now choose only ESG-committed event organizers — a threshold that's rising fast. This isn't generational preference anymore; it's procurement policy. Zero-waste venues, community partnerships, carbon tracking... What seemed radical five years ago is the minimum standard today.

The shift extends beyond compliance: events must demonstrate measurable impact or lose contracts entirely. Forget greenwashing with bamboo name badges. Tomorrow's RFPs will demand verification, not virtue signaling.





# 80%

**When reflecting on diversity and inclusion, 80% of event planners say venue accessibility is their number one consideration.**

## Inclusion begins at the venue

Diversity, equity, and inclusion aren't abstract ideals for younger MICE goers. They're must-haves. Gen Z and Millennial attendees want more than empty statements: they're scanning menus for variety (hello, halal and vegan options), looking for diverse speaker line-ups and checking travel costs for equity.

If your event isn't built to reflect the full spectrum of diversity, it risks being left behind. In today's events, representation is part of the ROI.







# 86%

**86% of Gen Z and Millennial professionals fly on business at least once per year, with 70% flying between one and five times.**

## The professional perk

Millennials and Gen Z don't just attend events. They view them as launchpads for connection, exploration and personal growth. With the majority flying for business at least once a year, interest in bleisure – blending work and leisure – is growing.

The top perks? Experiencing new destinations (51%), collaborating with colleagues (47%), escaping routine (46%) and meeting new people (37%). Gen Z may lag in MICE attendance for now (35% vs. 46% of Millennials), but as they climb the ladder, expect them to show up.





# 73%

**73% of attendees expect in-person conferences to incorporate modern event technology, up from 63% in 2023.**

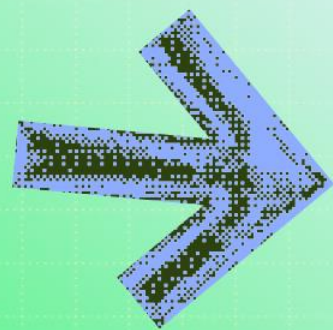
## Extended experience

Tech expectations saw a 10-point jump in two years, signaling that digital is no longer a novelty. Gen Z and Millennials judge professional events by consumer standards – they expect seamless personalization, authentic connections and interactive content.

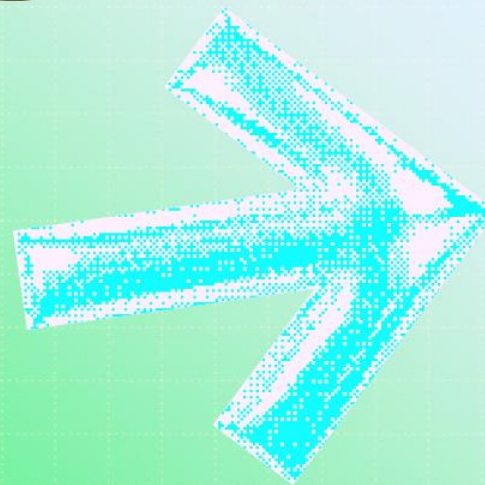
Forward-looking events already borrow UX wisdom from platforms attendees navigate daily. The goal isn't maximum technology, it's minimum effort. Make the experience as intuitive as MICE-goers' favorite apps.







**On to the  
trends**







DESIGNING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION  
CALM & CONNECTED

# Calm & Connected

## Depth in an age of overwhelm

Today's youth isn't doing so well. Living paycheck to paycheck, drowning in doomscrolls and AI slop, facing workplace automation. Gen Z and Millennials are depleted. They don't want more – they want *meaning*.

Rather than adding noise, standout events offer a reset. Real engagement starts with human-centered design. Of course, 73% still want the wow-factor. How will you entertain but not overwhelm?



## Zen Zone

The power of pause



## Intro~verted

Engineering connection for the anxious generation



## AI Companions

Personal event oracles level up experiences

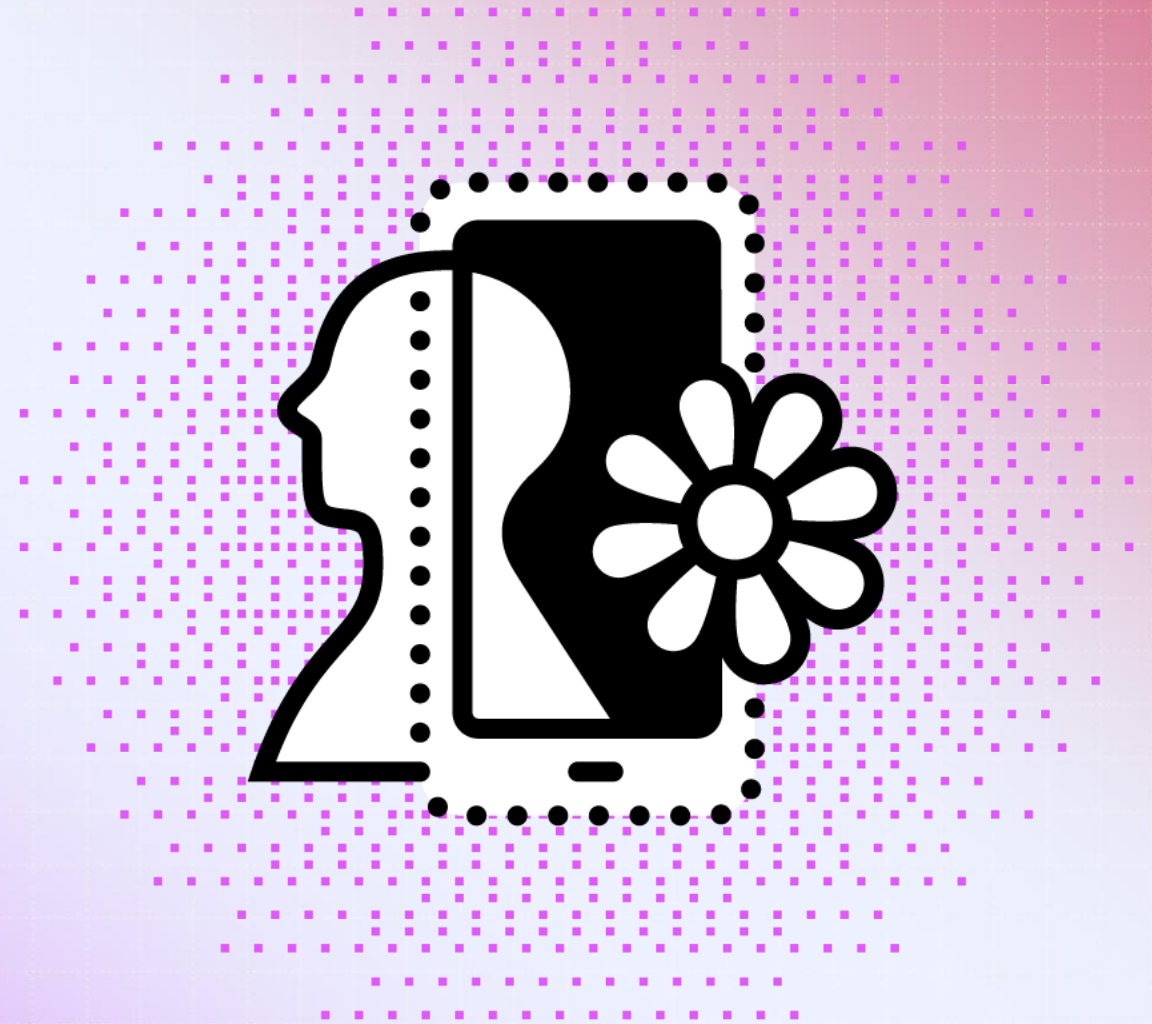


# Zen Zone

## The power of pause

In an always-on world, even the most high-energy events are waking up to a quiet truth: attendees need a break. Not just from packed schedules, but from screens, social performance, and sensory overload.

Future-forward events are intentionally creating spaces for stillness, with sensory-neutral environments, phone-free rituals and analog experiences offering resets that help attendees feel more present, empathetic, and open. Rather than slowing down momentum, these pauses restore the mental clarity and emotional bandwidth needed for genuine connection.





# Why Now?

## BREAKING POINT

The modern workplace has become a chaos machine. Employees face 275 interruptions daily, with 48% of global employees describing work as 'chaotic and fragmented'. That's having a negative effect on mental health: two-thirds (66%) of Asian Gen Z are at a high risk of challenges. Factor in almost 8 hours of daily screen time, and basic needs like sleep have become precious commodities. Many attendees don't arrive at events ready to engage. Instead, they arrive depleted.

## ATTENTION CRISIS

Between venue-created sensory bombardment and attendee phone use, meaningful connection has become nearly impossible. 41% of Gen Z and Millennials across the US, UK and Netherlands report frustration with excessive phone use at concerts, signaling widespread fatigue with divided attention. Overstimulation could diminish the creativity and focus that's needed for genuine networking... and the harder events organizers try to capture attention, the more elusive it becomes.

## OFFLINE IMPERATIVE

27% of travelers intend to reduce social media use during vacations, while 59% of Gen Z seek nature-based wellness rituals like forest bathing. Growing mental health awareness and the nagging feeling that constant connectivity erodes creativity are fueling the digital detox market, which is predicted to grow at over 9% CAGR through 2030. For younger generations, unplugging isn't optional. It's essential self-care that's expected in many scenarios, business events included.





# 70%

**of consumers across 57 markets rank sleep as life's greatest joy, but  
28% rate their sleep quality as poor.**



**IKEA**

February 2025



Illuminate Festival

## Digital detox takes center stage at Adelaide festival

The Offline Club brought its phone-free social gathering to Adelaide's [Illuminate Festival](#) in July 2025, offering a full-day digital detox at Papershell Farm near Willunga. Attendees locked away their phones before enjoying a guided tour of the farm and a shared lunch. Guests also planted trees, leaving a lasting mark on the property. The day ended with live music by farm owner Surahn Sidhu. The Offline Club was founded in Amsterdam.



Digital detox has hit a tipping point. Being offline shifted from social liability to social currency – especially among younger attendees. Can you position unplugging as a premium experience rather than a restriction?



Audible

## Cherry blossom-filled train provides a moment of calm for busy commuters

As part of the Zen Commute campaign, [Audible](#) introduced a cherry blossom-filled train carriage at London's Kings Cross station. Coinciding with 'Blue Monday' in January 2025, the immersive activation featured soothing audio from Audible's wellbeing catalog. Commuters could pause, listen and explore titles in a serene space. Created by Hyperactive, the five-day experience encouraged more mindful commutes.



Rather than competing with phones for attention, Audible created an alternative that made stepping away feel intentional rather than accidental. Physical design can shift behavior: when calm spaces exist, people use them.





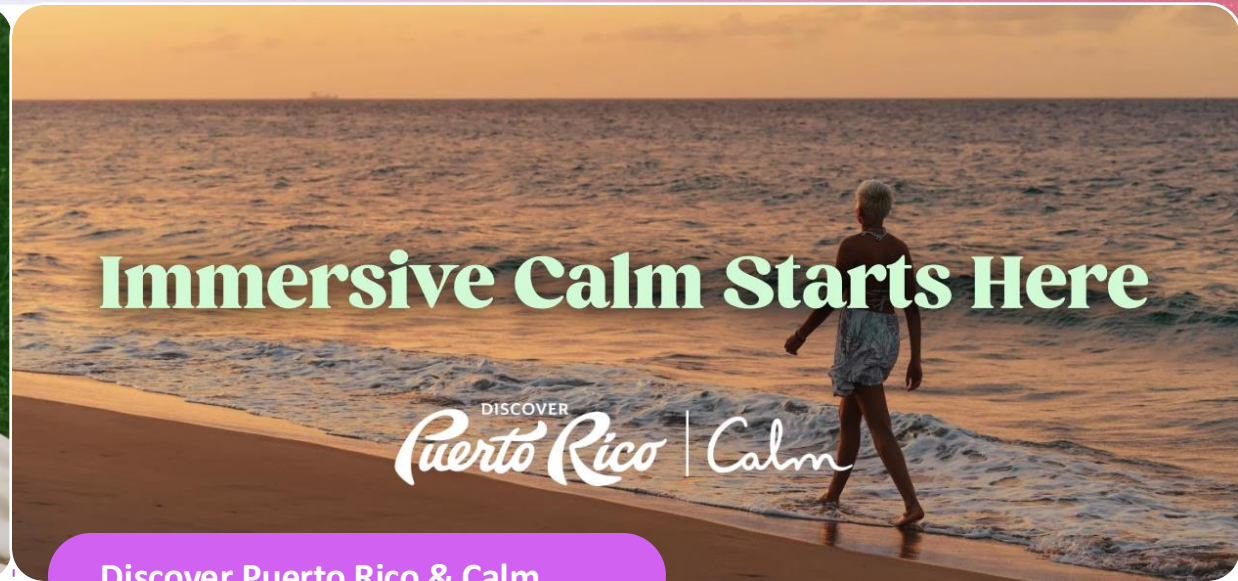
### Soul App

## Poetry and music take center stage at mental health event in Shanghai

Soul App partnered with the Shanghai Mental Health Center on the first Poetry & Music Healing Exhibition at the Shanghai Expo Culture Park, running in May and June 2025. The event featured over 20 poetry installations, a wellness-themed market and a live concert on Children's Day. Meanwhile, Miu Miu transformed Beijing's Chaoyang Park into a reading lounge, offering books as part of the brand's Summer Reads series.



Culture is becoming the new wellness. Younger consumers are looking to analog-focused experiences as an antidote to digital immersion. What if events offered cultural breathing rooms where attendees could restore through art, not apps?



### Discover Puerto Rico & Calm

## Audio series explores Puerto Rico's most peaceful places

May 2025 saw Discover Puerto Rico and mental health app Calm launch an audio collection that spotlights the island's top wellness destinations. The series features six experiences, including guided meditations and soundscapes of iconic sites like El Yunque National Forest. One sleep story is narrated by Lin-Manuel Miranda in English and Spanish. The collection offers a sonic escape into Puerto Rico's rainforests, rivers and beaches.



Pre-event sonic journeys could help attendees mentally arrive before physically landing. Could you partner with meditation apps to create destination-specific soundscapes that ease travel stress while celebrating local heritage through native voices and natural environments?





Nominom / Best Dream Concert



## 12-hour sleep concert offers beds instead of seats for insomniacs

South Korean event agency Nominom hosted the country's first-ever sleep concert, the Best Dream Concert, in 2024. Designed for those battling insomnia, the sold-out, 12-hour event featured live soothing music from 7 pm to 7 am, alongside a light yoga session.

Instead of seats, attendees were provided with beds and pajamas, creating a fully immersive overnight experience. Tickets were priced at KRW 70,000 (around USD 50), and the event quickly became a wellness sensation.



### APAC Spotlight

Asia's counter-productivity movement is gaining momentum. Sleep concerts join a wave of stillness-as-status trends: 'bed rotting' (spending entire days in bed by choice) has become Gen Z's self-care mantra, while Space-Out competitions now tour globally. In achievement-obsessed cultures, mastering rest has become the new flex.

For MICE organizers, this signals opportunity: overnight formats aren't just about accommodation logistics anymore. Consider multi-day conferences with built-in sleep programming, jet-lag concerts for international arrivals or sessions where executives compete for the lowest heart rate instead of highest ROI.

The practical challenge lies in selling 'productive rest' to corporate clients who measure success in networking connections. Yet with 63% of Southeast Asian workers reporting burnout — higher than any other region — venues offering certified 'stillness spaces' might become the ultimate differentiator. The most innovative MICE experiences will celebrate pause over performance, recognizing that in hustle cultures, permission to stop is the ultimate luxury.

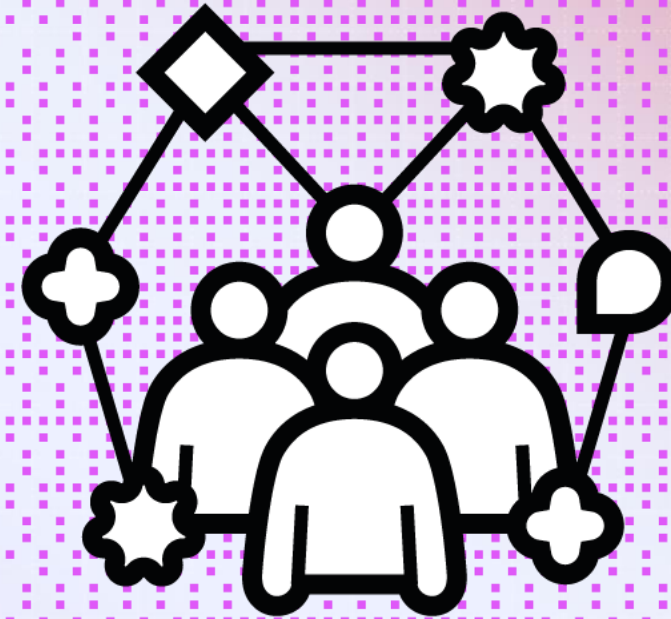


# Intro~verted

## Engineering connection for the anxious generation

The loneliness epidemic has reached the convention floor. When satisfied with workplace camaraderie, employees deliver 23% higher enterprise contribution versus just 13% when dissatisfied. Meaningful networking is a business imperative.

Smart tools can finally deliver what digital natives need: AI-powered matching that recognizes multi-hyphenate identities, structured interactions that bypass small talk and connections based on values not job titles. Traditional networking is evolving – and what's emerging looks very different.







# Why Now?

## LONELINESS OF THE YOUTH

Over half (56%) of global consumers feel lonely, rising to 69% in Thailand. The sentiment is higher among younger people, but they're not waiting for solutions to find them. They're exploring sober meet-ups, coffee shop raves and sunset sessions that give them permission to connect *without* the pressure. This hunger for authentic connection is reshaping every interaction — from how they network at conferences to how they collaborate with colleagues.

## SOCIAL BATTERY DEPLETED

Gen Z's careers started on Zoom, so they missed out on in-person professional development. For this generation, phone call anxiety is real – and business travel triggers stress. Meanwhile Millennials resist return-to-office mandates, losing daily practice with casual colleague interactions. Both generations face LinkedIn's highlight reel pressure and digital burnout. Because they demand unfamiliar skills, networking events can be anxiety inducing.

## NICHE-FIRST NETWORKING

When one-third of Gen Z and Millennials have side-hustles, 'What do you do?' becomes an impossible question. Multi-hyphenates (a consultant-podcaster-investor) don't fit traditional networking categories. And for generations algorithm-trained to expect hyper-targeted connections, industry mixers feel outdated. They need matching based on values, hobbies and passion projects, not job titles.



# 46%

**of lonely workers across the globe are likely to leave their job because of loneliness. That rises to 54% among Gen Z.**



**Compass Group**

October 2024



# INTRODUCING Jabber Yak<sup>TM</sup> MEETUP

JabberYak

## App turns casual interests into conference connections

In May 2025, JabberYak launched JabberYak Meetup within its ConnectNOW app, letting event attendees create and host their own interest-based meetups. From entrepreneurship to pickleball or Yoga, users can organize gatherings around shared passions. ConnectNOW also suggests local meetup spots based on interests.



Encourage attendees to self-organize around their interests. When people bond over genuine passions, professional relationships follow naturally. Awkward ‘networking time’ is passé. Give attendees tools to find their people.



UFI

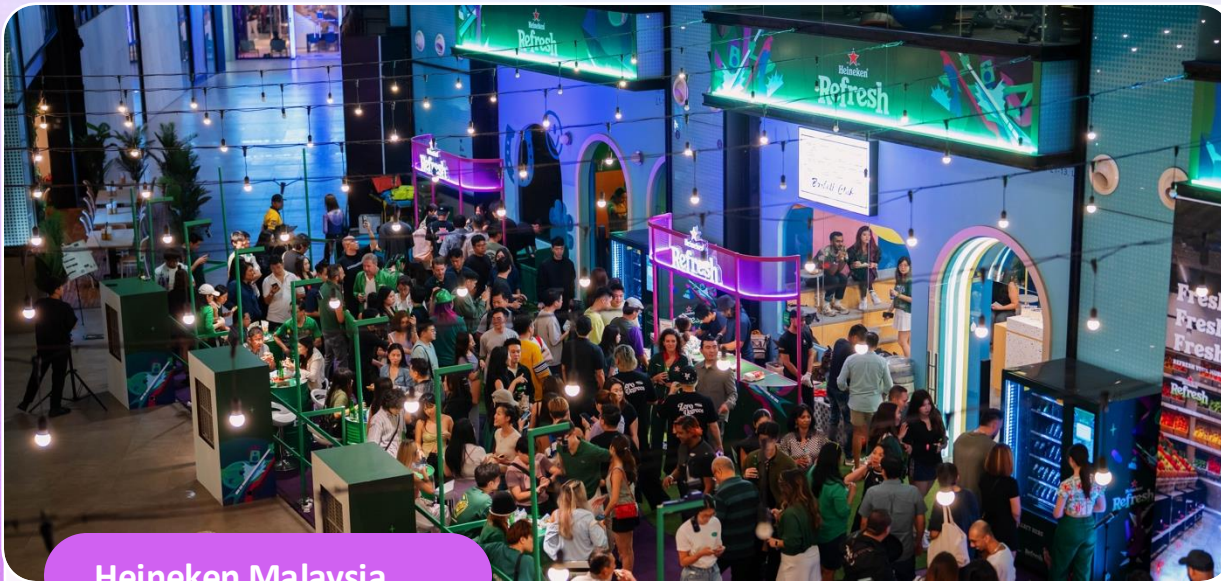
## Sunrise workouts connect exhibition leaders worldwide

At UFI events — gatherings organized by the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry — early morning exercise sessions are part of the schedule. From Asia to Europe, attendees join group runs, yoga, cycling or Zumba before the day begin. Run under the UFI Sports or Run Club banners, the sessions offer a low-pressure way to meet others while fitting wellness into busy conference agendas.



Strava saw a 59% surge in participation in run clubs in 2024, with 58% of runners saying they made new friends. For younger generations, wellness *is* socializing. What activities could you program that get attendees moving together?





Heineken Malaysia

## Music pop-ups turn strangers into friends in Kuala Lumpur

April 2025 saw Heineken Malaysia introduce Refreshing Sessions, a series of pop-up music events designed to connect strangers. Part of the Refresh Your Music campaign, the sessions encouraged music discovery in unexpected places. Powered by Timeleft, the invite-only events matched attendees with new people. The kick-off event transformed a gym into a live music space; future venues included a supermarket and bookstore.



Bringing live music into a supermarket feels like an adventure, not networking. The weirder the venue, the easier the conversation. While professional events are often formal, the real innovation might be removing pressure entirely. Make it strange enough and people won't be anxious!

# better friends



Pie

things to do,  
people you'll love  
all in one place

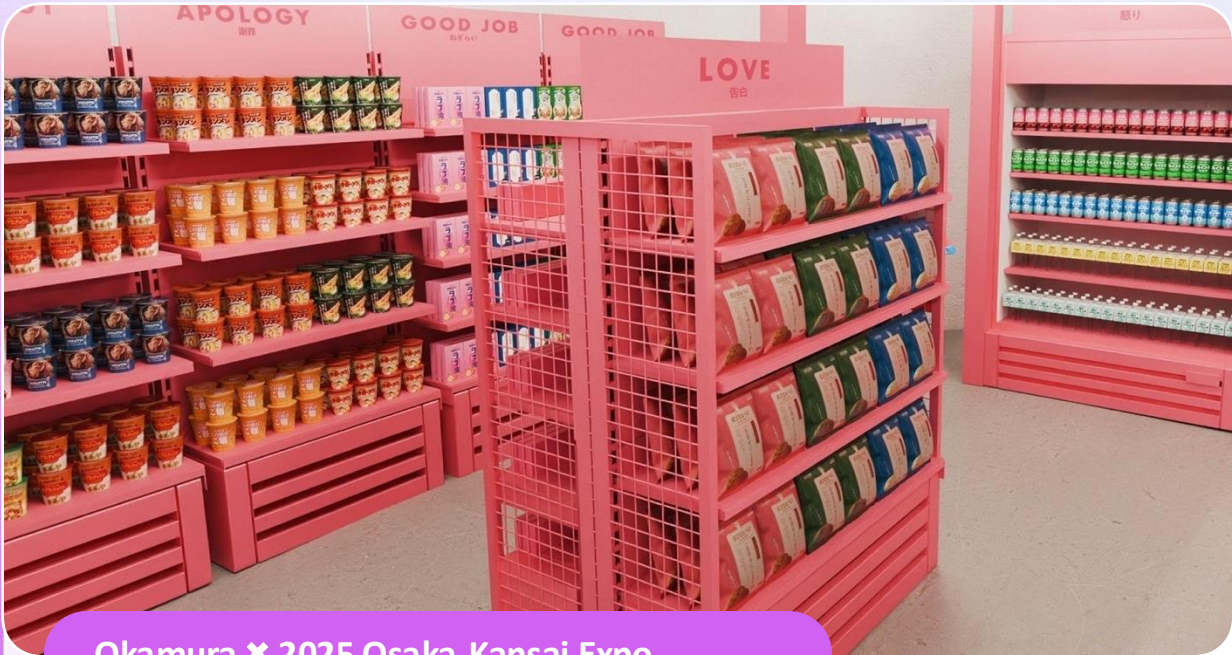
## AI helps strangers connect at busy events

Pie, a social app from Bonobos founder Andy Dunn, is tackling the challenge of forging friendships at packed events. Users take an AI-powered quiz before meetups, grouping them with others who share similar values and interests. At events like 'Coffee with Stranger', attendees chat in small groups ahead of time via the app, making connections easier. Meanwhile, social app 222 is also betting on curated, AI-driven in-person gatherings to spark friendships.



Can networking enter the group chat before attendees arrive? It's the same psychology behind Ticketmaster's Virtual Venue, applied to social connection. When attendees can preview both the space and the people, uncertainty evaporates.





Okamura ✖ 2025 Osaka-Kansai Expo

## Emotional convenience store invites visitors to shop for feelings

At the 2025 Osaka-Kansai Expo, Japanese office furniture brand Okamura swapped corporate showcases for emotional connection. Its Kimochi Kiosk — named after the Japanese word for ‘feelings’ — reimagined convenience store shopping as a way to share emotions.

Visitors entered in pairs to browse shelves stocked with 46 ‘emotions’, from playful options like Otsukare Rice (‘good work’) to deeper themes like love or forgiveness. After selecting a feeling to ‘purchase’, visitors received a printed receipt to share their chosen emotion.



### APAC Spotlight

Offering a combination of mindful moments and structured social interaction, the Kimochi Kiosk sits at the intersection of ZEN ZONE and INTRO-VERTED. So, the first insight: what happens when you combine other trends in this report?

The second insight: vulnerability can be easier within a framework. Gen Z might openly discuss mental health online, but struggles with emotional expression at work events. The retail format here turned vulnerability into a simple transaction. Imagine conference badges displaying feelings instead of job titles. ‘Overwhelmed’ could spark more insightful conversations than ‘Senior Manager’.

Finally: low tech options can have a big impact. It might be tempting to opt for digital solutions but a shelf of printed emotions proves that connection needs structure, not software. Which human moments at your event are you trying too hard to digitize?

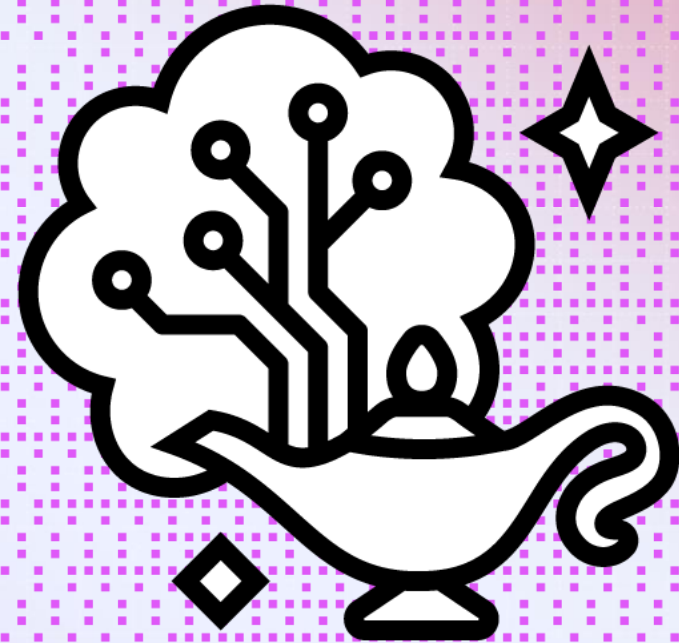


# AI Companions

## Personal event oracles level up experiences

As AI companions evolve from novelty to necessity, younger generations familiar with intelligent interfaces will expect AI-powered guides that offer more than information. These proactive, context-aware companions can curate agendas, translate in real time and anticipate needs.

Event organizers are tapping AI to improve the attendee journey before, during and post show. And as the tech powering these companions improves, MICE events will become individually tailored yet scalable.







# Why Now?

## AI AGENTS, EVERYWHERE

From classrooms to kitchens, intelligent agents are being integrated into many aspects of daily life. 81% of global leaders anticipate a future where AI agents handle routine tasks and curate entire experiences, freeing up time and mental energy. Travel platforms like Mindtrip already guide users from airport to café with ease. For digitally fluent MICE goers, extending that intelligence into the exhibition hall is a natural progression.

## FROM TOOL TO COMPANION

Beyond assistance, consumers are turning to generative tools for collaboration. From therapy-style interactions to creative ideation, AI companions are being anthropomorphized and trusted with users' thoughts, moods and personal goals. At events, these digital oracles could support objectives or spark inspiration. As MICE shifts from transactional to transformational, emotionally attuned AI goes beyond service to become a creative partner.

## CONVENIENCE CULT

People across Asia are embracing digital delegation: 88% of APAC consumers (the highest globally), are inclined to delegate work and personal scheduling duties to AI assistants. This cognitive offloading aligns with rising demand for smooth, low-effort event experiences. While early voice assistants (hey Siri!) lacked nuance and personalization, more sophisticated AI companions better understand context and culture.



# 61%

**of people across 22 countries now expect AI-powered, hyper-personalized services.**



**Zendesk**

January 2025

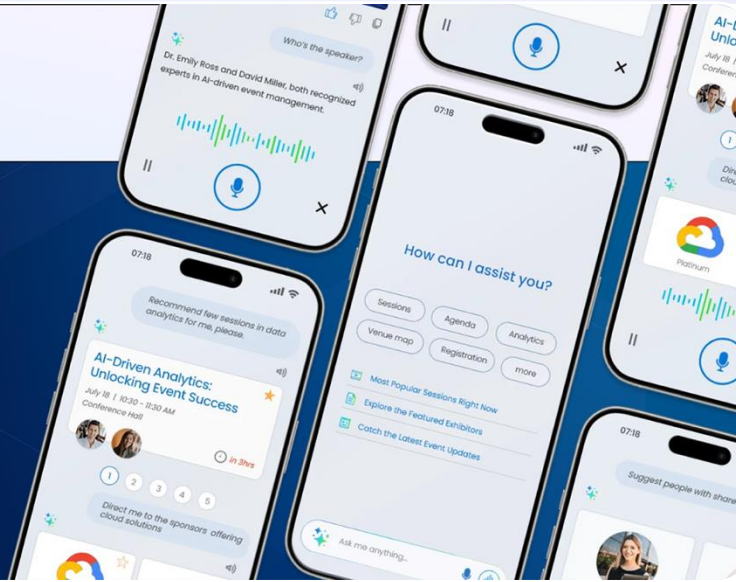




New Offering: An intelligent voice-activated AI assistant embedded in your Eventbase event app.



Eventbase



## Voice-activated AI assistant elevates attendee experiences

Mobile event app Eventbase launched [eventCopilot](#) in May 2025. A voice-activated AI assistant built with TurnoutNow, it's embedded in the Eventbase app to deliver real-time answers, personalized agendas and one-command meeting booking via voice or text. Machine learning powers tailored recommendations for sessions, exhibitors and networking. Meetings and favorites sync to the user's schedule.



**Voice-first interfaces blend utility and familiarity, offering intuitive interactions. Now the tech is coming to multi-day exhibitions, with the potential to boost participation and provide real-time engagement data for future events. Is voice the future interface for AI companions at MICE?**

# ADWEEK

YOUR CANNES LIONS AI COMPANION

Ask anything...

Powered by Gist

ADWEEK

## AI tool surfaces relevant content for festival attendees (and those at home)

For the Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity in June 2025, news outlet [ADWEEK](#) unveiled its first AI companion, aiming to serve attendees and remote followers alike. The AI tool, powered by Gist.AI, drew on content from nearly a dozen ADWEEK creators covering the festival, offering real-time updates on news, award winners and event highlights. It also acted as a practical guide, offering packing tips, local weather forecasts, dining recommendations and sightseeing advice.



**From [Pinterest style readings](#) to [Reddit launches](#), the Cannes Lions schedule is packed. Intelligent filters reduce overwhelm while allowing organizers to surface overlooked content.**





Google Cloud Next 25

## Retro phone booth provides a hotline to an AI agent for idea development

Google Cloud Next 25 held in April 2025 in Las Vegas, brought together over 36,000 tech professionals to explore the latest in cloud computing and AI. One standout feature was a retro phone booth dubbed Dial an App, where developers could pitch app ideas directly to an AI agent. This playful yet practical setup let attendees engage one-on-one with the AI, which quickly generated prototypes, image mockups and more.



Moving AI interactions off screens and into tangible, physical environments elevates engagement from passive consumption to immersive experience. Event activations that anchor advanced tech in nostalgic, tactile settings spark curiosity and make abstract technologies feel intuitive.



Poem Booth

## AI poetry booth debuts at Rotterdam station for Poetry International

Dutch railway operator NS welcomed a new arrival to Rotterdam's main train station in June 2025: the Poem Booth, an AI-powered poetry kiosk installed as part of the Poetry International's festival. Resembling an out-of-home ad unit, the booth captures a photo of each user and generates a personalized poem using AI trained on the work of poet Ellen Deckwitz. Verses appear on a mirror-like screen and can be saved via a QR code.



Cultural institutions are reimagining engagement with participatory, bite-sized experiences. Unexpected, AI-powered creativity captures attention and imagination. What delightful, share-worthy AI keepsake will attendees take from your event?





LOEWE

## Digital pass turns personalized virtual bag into exhibition pass

LOEWE celebrated its 179-year legacy with The Crafted World exhibition in Tokyo's Harajuku district in April and May 2025, partnering with Stink Studios to introduce a digital companion. Accessible online, the experience began before arrival, with ticket holders invited to create a customizable virtual Tool Bag — complete with colors, tools, stickers and a monogram — that doubled as their exhibition pass.

At the venue, the digital guide unlocked curated room-by-room highlights and exclusive content. An integration with LINE supported local engagement.



### APAC Spotlight

In the end, it's all about entertainment. LOEWE's digital companion extended the event lifecycle, maintaining audience interest from pre-arrival through post-departure (an interactive quiz inspired by Japanese game shows brought the exhibition's playful spirit to a broader audience).

Persistent, personalized interfaces enabled long-tail engagement across platforms, blending education with entertainment in ways that resonate with younger audiences. The virtual Tool Bag was a playful element that fit the brand personality.

For younger MICE attendees, the most successful AI companions won't just inform; they will surprise, delight and reflect the spontaneity and serendipity found in everyday life. This approach — combined with a quirky TikTok presence — helps LOEWE maintain its popularity among Gen Z.

What would your event's AI mascot look like? How would it deliver companionship across the full event lifecycle?



DESIGNING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

GREENSHIFT

# Greenshift

## Go green or go unseen

Eco-anxious and exhausted, many Gen Z and Millennials are rethinking where they work, travel and, in some cases, whether to attend events at all. Climate worries are already shaping business travel decisions.

Welcome to the GREENSHIFT, when MICE experiences must offer peace of mind, not more pressure. With 67% of APAC event planners cutting event carbon and 47% choosing only sustainable suppliers, a movement is underway. The question is: are you moving with it?



## Eco by Default

Making green the easy choice



## Circular Intelligence

Leveraging smart tech for sustainable impact





# Eco by Default

## **Making green the easy choice**

Younger MICE attendees, sustainability-savvy but decision-fatigued, crave environmental action without agonizing over every decision.

Instead of lecturing attendees about being greener, design systems where sustainable behavior happens by default. Consider embedding micro-rewards, behavioral nudges and gamified experiences that make eco-friendly choices the obvious option.





# Why Now?

## BROKEN PROMISES

Decades of climate pledges have had little impact, with tourism emissions actually growing despite endless sustainability declarations. This has created profound skepticism among younger consumers who have inherited environmental challenges they did not create while watching institutions continue to underdeliver – 62% of Thai youth say that business leaders aren't doing enough to fight climate change. They demand immediate action over empty promises.

## CLIMATE ANXIETY

While the vast majority (80%) of Gen Z across the globe feel personally affected by climate change, research suggests that their engagement with sustainable solutions is declining. Younger consumers are simultaneously wise to the consequences of climate change and paralyzed by the sheer scale of action required. Every choice becomes a moral judgment, creating decision fatigue that disconnects them from the solutions they desperately want.

## SMALL WINS WORK

86% of APAC Gen Z claim they'll pay premiums for brands that align with their values, but the intention-reality gap persists and many don't act on those claims. Financial incentives could bridge this divide and have tangible impact. Consider deposit return schemes: they were found to reduce container litter by 54% (Slovakia cut metal can waste by 75% in two years). When sustainable choices become financially rewarding rather than morally burdensome, behavior change follows.





# 65%

**of global Gen Z and 35% of Millennials said they felt worried or anxious about the environment in the last month, with just 24% of Gen Z and 29% of Millennials saying they did not experience extreme weather-related events in the last year.**



**Deloitte**

May 2025



## Decathlon

### Brand offers full refund on returned tents to reduce festival waste

Outdoor retailer Decathlon is tackling festival waste in the UK with No Tent Left Behind, offering customers a full refund in gift card form for any tent returned. The initiative applies to all Quechua and Simond tents bought in-store or online between June and September 2025. Customers must be Decathlon members and return the tent with proof of purchase before the deadline. Returned tents are repurposed via Decathlon's Second Life program.



Event organizers could partner with gear companies to create take-back programs where attendees get refunds or credits for returning equipment. What if sustainable choices became profitable opportunities rather than financial sacrifices?



## Tomorrowland

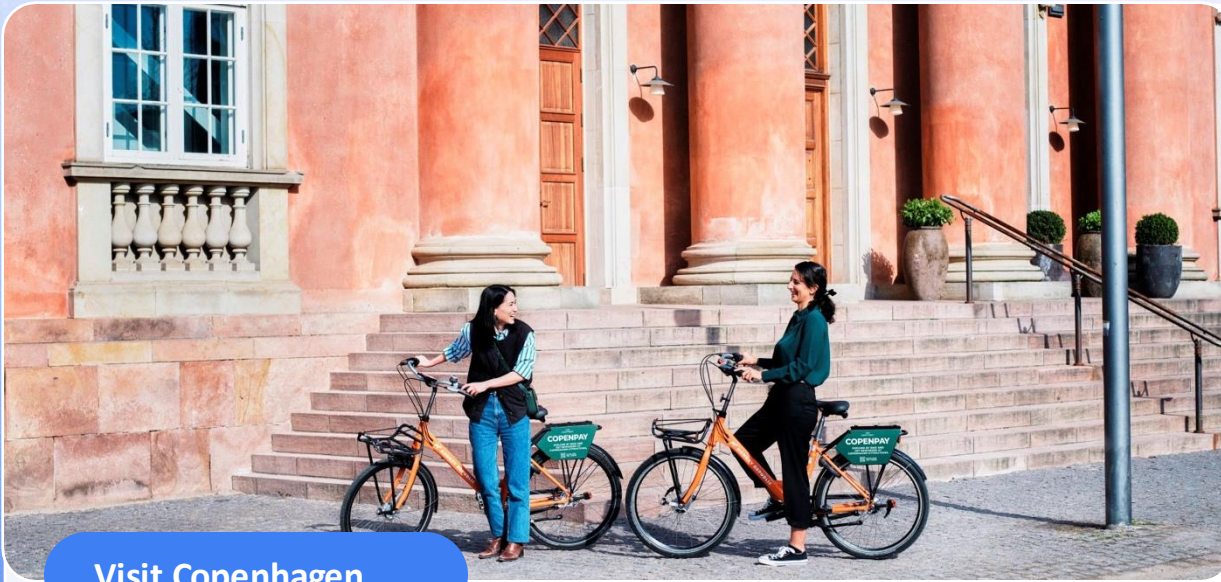
### RFID-enabled reusable cups cut waste and speed up service

At Tomorrowland Winter 2025 in Alpe d'Huez, smart reusable cups made their official debut, marking the first implementation of the STAR RFID solution at a major music festival. The system combines sustainability with convenience by embedding RFID chips into each cup. Festivalgoers received automatic refunds via linked payments. Aucxis provided the RFID tech, deSter designed the cups, CupNation handled logistics, Weezevent enabled payment integration and Citymesh ensured network performance.



Sustainable solutions need to be more convenient than the alternative. Automatic refunds remove friction that could prevent attendees from joining an eco-program. Provide sustainability options that become the path of least resistance.





### Visit Copenhagen

## City doubles down on sustainable tourism with expanded CopenPay scheme

Copenhagen's sustainable tourism initiative CopenPay returned in June 2025 for a nine-week run following a 2024 pilot. Created by Visit Copenhagen and involving over 90 attractions, the scheme rewards visitors who make eco-conscious choices, such as arriving by train. Perks include free bike rentals, yoga classes, vegetarian meals and discounted access to landmarks. The pilot saw a 29% uptick in bike usage; 98% said they would recommend the program.



The program doesn't just reward individual actions, it creates a network effect where sustainable behaviors unlock access to cultural attractions and local experiences. Could your event design sustainability as a gateway to deeper engagement?



### Boolet

## Campaign turns discarded skewers into charcoal

Indonesia discards around 15,000 tons of single-use chopsticks and skewers annually. To tackle this, sustainability start-up Booleet launched Re-Skewer in Jakarta, targeting satay skewer waste through education, incentivization and upcycling. Street vendors collect used skewers, which are processed into charcoal briquettes using a recyclable packaging format developed with materials labs. On its first day, Re-Skewer gathered enough waste to produce 45 kilograms of briquettes.



When waste is repurposed to benefit local vendors, eco-practices become community contributions. Partner with local initiatives to turn attendee waste into community resources, or create a waste-to-value program for items like lanyards.





Skechers Sundown Festival

## Music meets climate action at Singapore's Sundown Festival

Skechers Sundown Festival 2025, held at Singapore's Haw Par Villa in July, put sustainability at the heart of its programming. The festival introduced Gaia, a new pillar focused on eco-conscious experiences, including plant-based food vendors, workshops, talks and a marketplace for pre-loved and sustainable goods.

Sundown also became Southeast Asia's first festival to launch a Music Climate Action Pledge, committing to phase out single-use plastics at live events. Ten local organizations, including Resorts World Sentosa and Music Matters Live, signed on.



### APAC Spotlight

Earning Asia's first 4-Leaf certification was proof of concept, but the smarter move was breaking sustainability into achievable stages. Start with plastics (achievable), build toward carbon-negative operations (ambitious), eventually go 100% plant-based (transformative).

Getting ten organizations to pledge together meant sustainable practices would follow attendees across multiple venues, helping to normalize behaviors that stick.

For MICE organizers, this reveals two truths: tackle sustainability in digestible phases rather than overwhelming transformations, and create standards that travel with your attendees. When someone encounters plastic-free events at Resorts World, then at your venue, then at their next conference, the behavior becomes embedded.

The endgame isn't just sustainable events. It's sustainable attendees who expect nothing less wherever they go.





DESIGNING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION  
**CIRCULAR INTELLIGENCE**

# Circular Intelligence

## Leveraging smart tech for sustainable impact

AI is rewriting the sustainability playbook. From forecasting food demand to automating greener travel choices, machine learning is eliminating waste and inefficiency at scale.

As AI integrates invisibly into everyday experiences, sustainability becomes effortless. For MICE organizers, this means smarter decisions with tangible impact — reducing waste, anticipating attendee needs and providing instant feedback to refine practices. For eco-aware attendees, AI delivers transparency and clear pathways to action.





# Why Now?

## BETTERMENT, AUTOMATED

Sustainability shouldn't feel like a burden – but it often does. In many Asian cities, from Hong Kong to Jakarta, low recycling rates stem from confusion and patchy infrastructure. Yet younger consumers expect better, and increasingly trust technology to simplify sustainable choices. In fact, 41% of UK consumers already rely on AI to guide eco-friendly decisions. To satisfy expectations, circular habits — from catering choices to waste management — must become intuitive.

## THE AI TRANSFER

AI agents, digital twins and smart interfaces were once confined to research labs. Now they've moved into everyday life. From coffee orders to Netflix recommendations, intelligent tech quietly shapes behavior. People now expect brands and events to bridge intention and action, making sustainable choices effortless. For MICE organizers, this presents an opportunity: events become living showcases where AI empowers attendees and partners to put circularity into practice.

## CARBON CONTRADICTION

Headlines often highlight AI's heavy energy use, but the technology could cut global emissions by up to 5.4 billion metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually by 2030. Whether optimizing energy grids or mobility systems, AI's sustainability potential depends on deliberate choices. For event organizers, this means prioritizing lean algorithms, transparent tools and smarter deployments to ensure AI saves carbon. Real sustainability requires spotting greenwashing just as clearly as embracing green tech.





# 78%

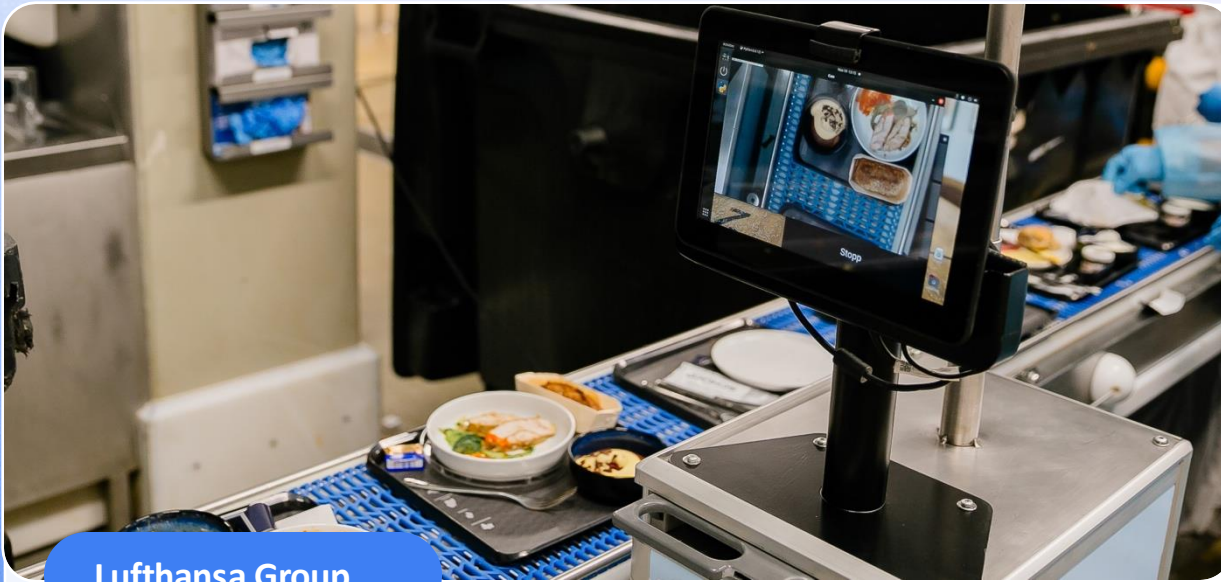
**of businesses agree that technology is crucial for achieving global sustainability goals, with top markets including Malaysia (89%) and Singapore (86%).**

**This belief is strongest in the Middle East (86%) with emerging Asian markets second (83%).**



**Alibaba Cloud**

October 2024



Lufthansa Group

## AI-powered tray tracking cuts food waste in the skies

April 2025 saw [Lufthansa Group](#) expand its AI-powered Tray Tracker to Munich Airport, following a pilot at Frankfurt airport. The device scans post-flight meal trays to assess whether meals were fully eaten, partially consumed or untouched. Factoring in route, class and meal type, the system helps optimize future catering needs. Less overproduction means less food waste and lower aircraft weight, which further cuts emissions.



A circular MICE journey could include airline meals and on-site behaviors. Lufthansa's Tray Tracker and [Nestlé's AI food chain accelerator](#) show how upstream intelligence reduces downstream waste. Could your event embed similar invisible feedback loops?



Orbisk

## Smart kitchen cameras fight food waste at hotels

Dutch startup [Orbisk](#) uses AI and computer vision to monitor food waste in commercial kitchens. The system scans discarded ingredients, calculates losses and feeds insights back to chefs, allowing hotels and venues to identify patterns, reduce over-ordering and track cost and carbon savings. In May 2025, [Mercure Amsterdam City Hotel](#) reported a 34% reduction in food waste, saving over 8,000 kg of food, EUR 46,000 in costs and 18,000 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> in under a year.



[Less than 1%](#) of Thai hotels currently meet global sustainability benchmarks. Smart kitchens could be the missing piece. Imagine MICE venues where food waste is monitored in the background, delivering real savings with zero attendee effort.





Event:decision

## AI tool reduces travel emissions at events around the globe

Track, developed by the UK-based [event:decision](#), is a carbon footprint tool used by over 200 global event brands. It delivers tailored emissions data, benchmarking and practical sustainability insights from an event brief. An integrated travel planner analyzes attendee journeys and suggests lower-emission alternatives, like ride-sharing over solo trips. Track aligns with GHGP, CDP, ISO 20121 and other major standards.



Could your event registration platform double as an eco-concierge? Smart tools like Track guide attendees to greener decisions with timely, tailored nudges. ECO BY DEFAULT meets CIRCULAR INTELLIGENCE!



SHE @ IMEX Frankfurt

## AI-powered platform helps event organizers plan sustainable events

The Sustainability Hub for Events ([SHE](#)), developed by Gevme with Net Zero Carbon Events and the Strategic Alliance of National Convention Bureaux of Europe, launched globally in Q4 2024 after a successful beta at IMEX Frankfurt. Powered by LLMs, the platform offers multilingual, role-specific tools and expert-reviewed content to support emissions tracking, waste reduction and legacy planning. In 2025, SHE was opened up to community contributions and cross-sector input.



What if your MICE ecosystem had access to an AI-powered community playbook to help embed circular thinking into every role? From caterers to keynote speakers, AI could show each stakeholder how to contribute in a practical way.



## Green AI

### Smart bins aim to clean up Hong Kong's recycling rates

In early 2025, the Hong Kong-based startup [Green AI](#) rolled out its patent-pending smart bins that use conveyor belts, compactors, scanners and AI-trained sensors to auto-sort waste into plastics, cans, cartons and more. Unlike traditional bins that rely on visual cues, these identify materials at the molecular level, improving accuracy and compliance.

Trials in malls, hotels and offices sparked interest across Hong Kong and mainland China, especially as new mandates push cities to raise recovery rates from 32% in 2022 to 40–45% by 2035.



## APAC Spotlight

The MICE industry has a dirty secret. Large-scale events generate massive waste, everything from single-use plastics to uneaten catering. One music festival can produce 500 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> over three days (equal to 5 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per attendee, per day).

While many MICE destinations promote zero-waste practices like composting and recycling, actual execution often falls short. Infrastructure gaps, unclear bin labeling and logistical complexity make circularity feel like a burden.

Gen Z and Millennials care deeply but they won't do the work for you. They expect smarter systems, not lectures. In [Southeast Asia](#), these digital natives are frustrated by recycling confusion and demand seamless, tech-enabled solutions that match their values.

AI-powered sorters like Green AI, [Greyparrot](#) and [PLAEX](#) double as both a practical solution and a live demo of better recycling. Could your event flip this backstage challenge on its head and put CIRCULAR INTELLIGENCE on display?





# Place~Made

## MICE for all

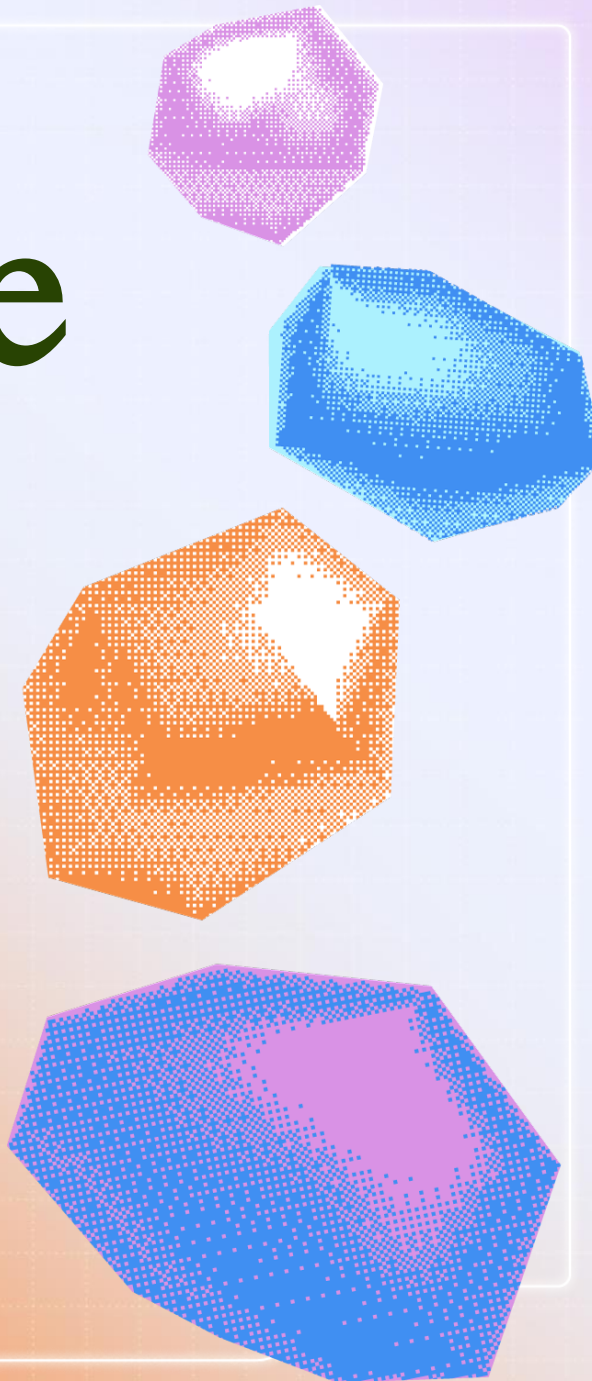
There are six million Indigenous people in Thailand.

Almost the same number identify as LGBTQ+. These aren't demographics — they're cultures demanding recognition.

Gen Z and Millennials, diverse and proudly intersectional, expect events celebrating heritage while amplifying marginalized voices.

Authenticity means both: showcasing traditions and ensuring everyone's reflected. Tomorrow's events must embed culture and inclusion by design. The payoff?

Inclusive campaigns see 16% stronger ROI.



## Heritage Renewed

Local traditions take center stage



## Values Co~designed

From passive attendees to active stakeholders



DESIGNING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

**HERITAGE RENEWED**

# Heritage Renewed

## Local traditions take center stage

Forget generic hotel ballrooms and copy-paste formats. Gen Z and Millennial MICE attendees expect events where heritage isn't a backdrop decoration but the main act. Growing up amid K-pop's global domination and watching Asian brands build empires without westernizing taught them a key lesson: cultural roots amplify, rather than limit, international reach.

Future events will embed heritage into every decision — from venue selection to session design. Being deeply local drives attendance and loyalty.







# Why Now?

## ROOTS GO GLOBAL

Niche culture has evolved from regional quirk to global export. Filipino budots went from Davao's streets to TikTok phenomenon. *Ne Zha 2* broke box office records by diving into Chinese mythology rather than diluting it. In the beauty industry, K-beauty now outpaces US cosmetics exports. Finally, Pop Mart turned local characters into global collectibles. Young attendees absorbed the lesson: specificity sells. Events should reflect this cultural confidence.

## HANDS-ON DEMAND

Gen Z's embrace of 'bakery tourism' reveals a hunger for authentic craft in an algorithmic world. Hands-on encounters with tradition offer what feeds can't: human skill. From Nike's partnership with Indian weavers to Gucci's celebration of Chinese bamboo artisans, global brands are celebrating and elevating local makers. As local traditions deemed 'outdated' take their place on the global stage, demand for products with provenance will grow.

## WORK & WANDER

Business trips aren't strictly business. Over half (55%) of Asian Gen Z and Millennials extend work travel for leisure, above the global average (42%). And they don't separate professional and personal growth. Younger business travelers rank destination experiences above networking as travel's main draw. With work becoming an excuse to explore, the lines between 'business' and 'leisure' are increasingly blurry.



# 49%

**Consumers in India (49%), South Africa (45%), Indonesia (45%), Brazil (43%), and the UAE (43%) want products to be adapted to local cultures.**



**Edelman**

June 2024





TelevisaUnivision

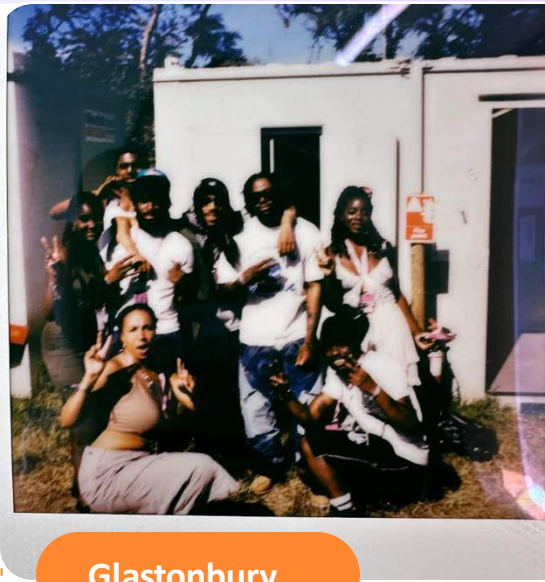
**ViX**  
MÚSICA

## Media giant turns up the volume on Hispanic youth culture

TelevisaUnivision, the world's largest Spanish-language media company, will host YA Fest, a live music festival taking place in Miami, Houston and LA during Hispanic Heritage Month 2026. Targeting young Hispanic audiences, YA Fest will spotlight emerging Latin artists and offer immersive fan experiences. Each event will be broadcast across TelevisaUnivision's TV networks and its ViX streaming platform.



ViX reports up to **5x** more impact when campaigns are deeply rooted in Hispanic culture, with purchase consideration rising by 40%. Could you help diaspora youth reconnect with their past and build cultural moments that transcend borders?



Glastonbury



## Black culture finds a space at Glastonbury

Black at Glasto debuted at Glastonbury in June 2025. Founded in 2024 by longtime festivalgoer Elsie Cullen, the group began as a WhatsApp chat connecting Black attendees. It evolved into the festival's first dedicated space for Black creativity, community and music, rooted in African and Caribbean sounds. The venue served as a daytime hub and nighttime club, hosting workshops, DJ sets, acoustic performances and a crowd-sourced library of books, art and mixes.



**Black at Glasto** offers a platform for underrepresented genres and a safe space for Black festivalgoers. Go beyond a diverse speaker line-up and enable cultural belonging.



## Hella Creative & Last Supper Society

### Celebrating diasporic flavors through food, storytelling and AI

Oakland's Juneteenth celebrations opened in June 2025 with the [Futureproof Dinner](#), an AI-powered experience hosted by BIPOC collective Hella Creative and the Last Supper Society. Held at the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA), the event saw Black chefs present dishes celebrating African diasporic flavors, paired with AI-generated visuals created from their spoken stories using software by Samer Dabra. Each USD 200 ticket included drinks and access to an exhibition.



AI visuals aren't just [attention-grabbing or mouth-watering](#) — they can bring untold stories to life and help people reclaim their narrative. Could you use generative AI tools to renew heritage and amplify voices too often left out?



## KAWS & Central Embassy

### Thai herbal staples get a Pop Art upgrade

KAWS, the art pseudonym of Brian Donnelly, brought his Pop Art style to Thai wellness with limited-edition versions of TAKABB herbal lozenges and HONG THAI menthol inhalers. Part of the KAWS:HOLIDAY THAILAND exhibition with [Central Embassy](#), the items kept their original herbal formulas but featured collectible packaging. The collection included a plush cushion modeled after the TAKABB tin.



The [viral green bottle](#) had Thailand's tourists (yes, [even Lisa](#)) hooked, with the limited-edition line quickly selling out. Consider fusing local culture with collectible design to engage art- and wellness-obsessed youth.



# Algae × Hello Kitty

32種類の藻類 × ハローキティ



Osaka-Kansai Expo

## Hello Kitty promotes an algae~powered future

At the 2025 Osaka-Kansai Expo, the Japan Pavilion featured 32 life-sized sculptures from the Algae x Hello Kitty Encyclopedia. Each blended the beloved Sanrio character with the distinct shapes of real algae species — some microscopic, others up to 50 meters long.

Designed to spark curiosity, the sculptures revealed algae's role in carbon capture, nutrition and sustainable materials. Visitors were invited to vote for their favorite algae, explore the surprising science and unwind in a photobioreactor ZEN ZONE surrounded by live spirulina cultivation.



### APAC Spotlight

When cute meets climate action! This crossover shows that collectibles aren't just decorative objects, they're emotional vehicles. Hello Kitty, Labubu and Louis Bear's popularity is the result of physicality, treat culture and communal meaning. As Gen Z and inflation-weary Millennials look to emotional consumption for comfort and identity in uncertain times, fandom-fueled experiences are booming.

In APAC, 57% of Gen Z say they wish they'd grown up when their parents did, revealing a nostalgic pull toward deeper cultural roots. Hello Kitty isn't rooted in tradition, but the character channels Japan's kawaii culture that's rich with emotion and generational meaning.

By pairing Hello Kitty with science, this exhibition taps into an emotional sweet spot and spotlights algae's overlooked superpowers. For younger MICE attendees, the future lies in playful purpose: events that tap beloved icons or local aesthetics to spark curiosity, foster belonging and make heritage — and urgent issues — feel both tangible and deeply personal.



DESIGNING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

VALUES CO-DESIGNED

# Values Co~Designed

## From passive attendees to active stakeholders

Today's attendees expect experiences shaped *with* them, not just *for* them. Inclusion means shared authorship — from agendas and speakers to session formats.

When attendees become co-authors, events transform into living conversations. Interaction sparks innovation, voices reshape visions and passive participation evolves into meaningful ownership. The most memorable MICE experiences won't be designed behind closed doors — they'll take place collaboratively, in real time.







# Why Now?

## CO-CULTURE

Co-creation has gone mainstream. From branded Roblox worlds to Coachtopia's community-designed fashion collections, today's youth have grown up in a culture of remixing and collaboration. Beyond digital platforms, Gen Z and Millennials are co-investing in brands, co-buying homes and co-owning their futures. Access is no longer enough. Instead, they expect genuine influence.

## CHRONICALLY MISUNDERSTOOD

Too often, Gen Z and Millennials — particularly LGBTQ+ individuals, Black women and other under-represented groups — feel sidelined or mis-represented. In Malaysia, 56% of Gen Z and 47% of Millennials say they feel like minorities at work, prompting many to seek digital spaces where their identities are affirmed rather than questioned. Now, they crave physical events that capture the authenticity of these online communities.

## TRUST ISSUES

Trust is fragile. Just 1 in 4 Gen Z in Australia trust brands, but the majority trust music artists. Why? Because realness resonates. Gen Z is drawn to brands (and events) that open the curtains: showing the messy, in-progress, human side. They don't expect polished perfection, but they do value transparency. Co-creating events with their input makes them feel seen, not sold to.



# 69%

**of Gen Z find co-creation and collaboration important to participate in online communities.**



**Tumblr**

2024





### KWE! Festival

## Roundtables gives Indigenous youth a voice on key issues

Returning to Quebec City in June 2025, the 8th [KWE! Festival](#) highlighted Indigenous youth during National Indigenous History Month. At a [Radio-Canada](#) roundtable, four leaders under 35 shared perspectives on identity, technology and ancestral wisdom. From AI tools preserving endangered languages to calls for links between academia and traditional knowledge, the session emphasized cultural continuity via youth leadership.



Listening is the first step, but real inclusion means passing the mic. The KWE! roundtable shows how youth-led sessions can surface lived truths and new tools. Flip the format and let underrepresented leaders set the agenda at your next event.



### CinePride

## Festival empowers LGBTQ+ filmmakers in LA

With Outfest suspended due to financial issues, a new LGBTQ+ film festival will debut in September 2025 in Hollywood. [CinePride](#) aims to spotlight 30–40 films across 17 categories, from narrative features to web series, with an emphasis on intersectionality and underrepresented voices. It was founded by filmmaker and Filipino immigrant Cecilio Asuncion.



Representation isn't just about who's on-screen. Who curates the frame matters, too. Could your event shift from 'for the community' to 'by the community,' with an emphasis on sharing decision-making powers?





## Breezer India

### Beverage brand opens applications for in-house Gen Z creators

In June 2025, Breezer India launched the Breezer Tribe Creator Program, inviting creators aged 21–25 to co-create from within the beverage brand. Applicants submit a short reel and content idea, aligning with how Gen Z expresses identity and builds community. Developed with culture agency OML, the paid, part-time role includes creating weekly content — like reels, behind-the-scenes and event coverage — all while working at Breezer HQ.



**No briefs, no barriers — just access.** Breezer’s model turns Gen Z from a target audience into core team. Reach younger MICE goes by introducing real roles that allow young stakeholders to shape content, formats and strategy from within your event.



## ZCON

### Conference invites young voices to lead ~ and executives to take notes

ZCON, which started in 2023, flips puts Gen Z creators front and center and asks Fortune 500 CEOs to listen. Organized by Gen Z-led JUV Consulting, the annual event gathers over 150 creators and 500+ brands. ZCON features diverse speakers and sessions on topics like digital activism and identity, alongside interactive activities. After debuting at Cannes Lions 2025, ZCON plans to expand to new locations.



**What happens when Gen Z sets the table?** ZCON swapped token panels for power-sharing, proving that collaboration beats top-down messaging. Could your event become a sandbox for intergenerational dialogue — not just a showcase?



## 全球名校 Z 世代领袖交流活动

Global Campus Gen-Z Leaders Exchange

Z-LEADERS  
ONLINE FORUM

FOUR ONLINE SESSION  
· Climate Change · Technology Applications  
· Media Culture · Emerging Industries

Z-LEADERS  
TOUR

THREE ICONIC CITIES  
OF CHINA



主办：中国公共外交协会 | 环球网 | 上海交通大学 | 同济大学 | 澳门大学 | 北京外国语大学  
Organized by: China Public Diplomacy Association | Global Times Online | Shanghai Jiao Tong University | Tongji University | University of Macau | Beijing Foreign Studies University

### Global Campus Gen Z Leaders Exchange

## Gen Z diplomacy tour launches across China

In April 2025, the Global Campus Gen Z Leaders Exchange kicked off, bringing together over 50 student reporters and youth delegates from around the world. Co-organized by the China Public Diplomacy Association and Global Times Online, the program features two parts: the Z-Leaders Online Forum and an in-person tour across key Chinese cities.

From livestreamed dialogues on climate, AI and digital culture to visits at enterprises, labs and heritage sites, the initiative immerses Gen Z in China's development through real-world experiences and youth collaboration.



### APAC Spotlight

This isn't just a soft power play. It's a wake-up call to the global MICE industry.

The combination of hybrid forums, youth-led content, expert briefings and cross-cultural fieldwork reflects how Gen Z wants to engage with the world: actively, collaboratively and across borders. Programming with young people gives them space to share insights, shape narratives and build global networks on their terms.

As Asia eyes the next wave of MICE audiences, this initiative offers a blueprint: events must become more mobile, hybrid and values-driven. When 62% of Gen Z and 60% of global Millennials say they're eager to collaborate with brands on social issues, are standard keynotes and panels going to win their attention?

Student media teams to participatory forums. Co-designed agendas to immersive learning journeys. Your next standout event might not just feature Gen Z. It might be *led* by them.

# Industry Insights

**EVENT INNOVATORS REVEAL STRATEGIES THAT RESONATE WITH  
GEN Z AND MILLENNIAL ATTENDEES**







## Jon Lor

Managing Director, Wonderfruit



**“If you pulled 10 people aside and asked them what Wonderfruit is, I bet nine out of 10 answers would be entirely different.”**

### **Authentic cultural programming draws international audiences more effectively than chasing global trends.**

Most festivals compete on star power, bringing bigger names each year to drive ticket sales. Wonderfruit developed a different approach over its decade-long evolution from sustainability platform to cultural showcase. They feature 70-80% local and regional talent, working with Thai tourism authorities to elevate heritage rather than import international headliners. The festival eliminated sponsor logos, VIP tiers and backstage areas.

This commitment to authenticity has attracted 70% international attendance despite primarily regional programming. Attendees participate in cultural preservation through tree planting and traditional medicine workshops rather than passive consumption.

Rather than measuring success through sales or social buzz, for Lor, success means people leave feeling the experience added lasting value to their lives. “How can we actually have everyone at Wonderfruit walk away knowing that it added real value to their lives?”.



**Cultural platforms that showcase local heritage create deeper value than entertainment-focused experiences. When attendees participate in cultural preservation rather than passive consumption, they develop stronger connections to both the event and the destination.**



## A living forest classroom where music, healing and heritage converge

The festival has worked with SUGi since 2022 to rewild and expand the **Ancestral Forest**, which is also home to a wooden stage that hosts music performances and workshops that explore the link between nature and humanity. Signs narrate forest stories and ancestral botanical knowledge.

Current rewilding efforts focus on trees and plants that have healing properties, with the forest serving as a living classroom for workshops on traditional Thai medicine.



## Exploring the relationship between sound and wellbeing

Over three days in The Fields, the inaugural **Sonic Minds** sound camp brought together musicians, scientists, monks and artists to explore how sound connects to space, health and wellbeing. Led by MSCTY\_Studio's Nick Luscombe and James Greer, alongside OIST's Mark James, the camp featured field recordings, meditations and workshops that sparked collective reflection and collaboration.

Held partly in normally off-limits areas, the setting encouraged deeper connection to place.



## Late-night village spotlights traditional Thai culture

**Molam World** celebrates Isaan culture from the northeast of Thailand. In 2024, Molam World was curated by Maft Sai (ZudRangMa Records) and featured Molam artists alongside DJs and global acts like LAIR from West Java. Food stalls served classic dishes from the region. Reflecting Isaan's marathon festival style, the space is open until 4am.

Workshops and interactive experiences allowed visitors to learn about Isaan culture; they could also visit the Molam Bus and a new Molam Theater.





## Cindy Sirinya Bishop

CEO & Co-Founder, Dragonfly 360



**“I don’t want people to come and talk shop. They’re going to exchange contact details anyway, so let that be the byproduct, not the purpose.”**

### **Holistic event design that integrates wellness and business content increases attendee receptivity and participation.**

Rather than bolting wellness onto business programming, Dragonfly360 weaves them together from the start. “We don’t separate leadership, ambition, productivity and wellbeing – we feel that it should be very much integrated,” Sirinya Bishop explains.

This shows up in concrete ways: pre-event breathwork helps attendees set intentions, varied seating from floor cushions to mountain-style tiers accommodates different comfort levels, and dedicated spaces like the Sanctuary allow people to reset between sessions.

The focus is on creating environments where people feel cared for – and that increases receptivity. When demand forced expansion of the Sanctuary space from 40 to 80 capacity, it proved attendees want these integrated experiences. By encouraging people to suspend labels and titles, business connections happen naturally rather than being forced.



**Creating receptive environments through thoughtful design generates better business outcomes than traditional corporate event formats.**



## Wellness sanctuary offers a quiet retreat

The **Well-Nest Sanctuary** offers attendees a nature-inspired space to recharge. Designed in collaboration with wellness brand Chiva-Som Hua Hin, the area features soft lighting, calming sounds and a peaceful atmosphere.

Guests can join daily sessions like yoga, meditation and breathwork led by wellness practitioners, or simply unwind and connect with others in a relaxed setting. Access is included with summit tickets, with some add-on activities available for a fee.



## Mission-led marketplace blends commerce and community

A celebration of creativity, community and conscious living, **The Bazaar** promises more than shopping. It features lifestyle goods, food and social impact brands from Thailand and across Asia, with a focus on wellness, innovation and social change.

The Bazaar encourages visitors to explore, connect and support local enterprises, showcasing commerce as a tool for wellbeing and community building.



## Bali retreat promises personal clarity and leadership impact

Hosted in Bali in Q4 2024, the **LEAD WELL Retreat** brought together leaders for five days of reflection, connection and purpose-driven growth. Co-hosted by Dragonfly and Elevation Barn, the program focused on personal purpose mapping, peer collaboration and legacy building.

The retreat combined wellbeing practices with Elevation Barn's brand clarity method, helping attendees align personal beliefs with external impact.





**Adrian Phoon**

**Board Member,  
Sydney WorldPride**



**Matt Akersten**

**Diversity Officer,  
Sydney WorldPride**

“

**Authenticity is vital. If people don't see themselves – or people like them – reflected in some way meaningfully in the festival, then the festival doesn't have a right to exist.**

— Adrian Phoon

“

**Why do people come to our events? More often than not, it's about meeting others and connecting with their community. They want to party with a purpose.**

— Matt Akersten

## **Sydney WorldPride's approach to inclusion offers a blueprint for events seeking authentic community engagement.**

Younger attendees — especially those from marginalized communities — want genuine co-creation. For Sydney WorldPride, partnering with established organizations like Twenty10, rather than trying to reach communities from scratch, proved essential. Real inclusion meant creating pillars of targeted outreach, with practical solutions like MobTix (see the next page for more on both of these) both increasing accessibility and providing data on which events resonated with different communities.

Authentic community building requires stepping back from traditional marketing approaches. Instead of imposing uniform branding, consider ways to amplify diverse community voices without forcing them through a corporate filter. This authentic approach particularly resonated at World Pride because many attendees come to events driven by loneliness and a need for belonging.



**Meaningful representation requires moving beyond surface-level diversity to systems where communities genuinely shape the event experience from the ground up.**



## Ticket program opens doors for First Nations inclusion

**MobTix** was a ticket program designed to improve access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at Sydney WorldPride 2023. The initiative provided discounted tickets to key events such as the Mardi Gras Parade and Human Rights Conference.

Eligible applicants could purchase tickets at a reduced price through a dedicated application process managed by ACON's First Nations Health Programs. In total, 2,163 MobTix tickets were sold. MobTix has since influenced other festivals, setting a benchmark for inclusivity.



## Youth-driven programming puts young voices at the center

Sydney WorldPride 2023 partnered with community organization **Twenty10** to center LGBTQIA+ youth throughout the festival. Twenty10 curated youth-friendly events – ranging from drag makeup workshops to film screenings, museum takeovers and inclusive parties – creating spaces often missing from Pride festivals. Over 300 free tickets were also distributed to young LGBTQIA+.

Beyond the festival, Twenty10 was chosen to lead the Inner West Pride Centre.



## First Nations voices guide cultural and creative direction

First Nations voices were involved throughout Sydney WorldPride, with board directors, creative leaders, engagement managers and an advisory committee representing every Australian state and territory. Key events included **Marri Madung Butbut** (Many Brave Hearts), a six-day First Nations Gathering Space at Carriageworks featuring theatre, drag, art and food, and **Blak & Deadly**, a gala concert at the Sydney Opera House showcasing First Nations LGBTQIA+ performers. Sydney WorldPride also worked with Traditional Owners during planning and delivery.





## Esmee Bouwmeister

Sustainability Manager, DGTL



**“We’re not unhappy if something goes wrong because then we know where we can improve. And because we don’t expect perfection, partners and suppliers are more willing to work with us.”**

### **Building sustainability partnerships requires accepting experimentation and failure as part of the innovation process.**

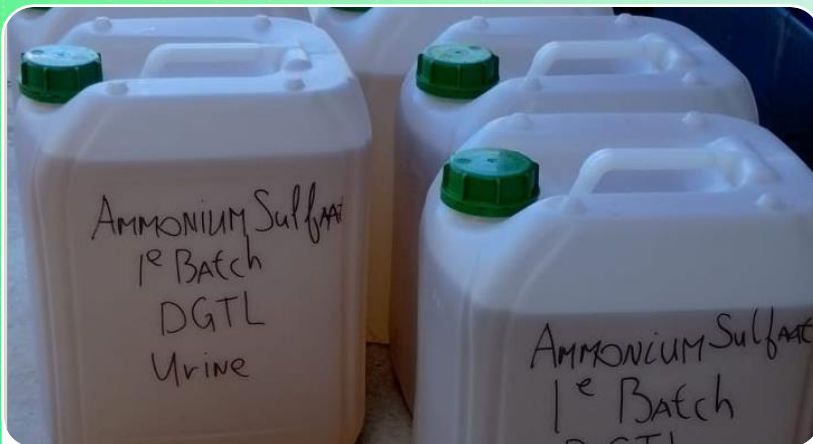
DGTL’s sustainability strategy centers on iteration. When their hydrogen generator failed during heavy rain, they didn’t abandon the technology – they worked with the same supplier to fix the problems for the following year. “Testing, learning, improving. That’s what we do every time,” Bouwmeister explains.

This willingness to experiment has unlocked breakthrough innovations including a circular urine chain, though converting urine to fertilizer still requires ongoing regulatory changes in Amsterdam. By reassuring suppliers that failures won’t end partnerships, they attract collaborators willing to take risks.

The broader goal extends beyond event boundaries. “You can’t expect attendees to stay in your bubble after the event. You have to make sure that you are switching mindsets in their own bubble,” Bouwmeister explains. Data from material flow analysis and CO2 calculations guide each year’s experiments across DGTL’s five sustainability teams.



**True sustainability requires testing multiple innovations simultaneously across different operational areas. The data from multiple experiments creates a feedback loop that accelerates innovation across the entire event ecosystem.**



## Circular toilet system recycles waste into water and fertilizer

Urine collected across the DGTL site is treated to separate nutrients like nitrogen and phosphate, producing greywater for toilet flushing and fertilizer for local use. Toilets are also flushed with greywater from the IJ river, reducing drinking water use.

The system, developed with city agencies and suppliers, cuts emissions and keeps nutrients in circulation. Trials continue to test the fertilizers and irrigation water for wider use, offering a blueprint for cities and large events seeking low-waste, decentralized solutions.

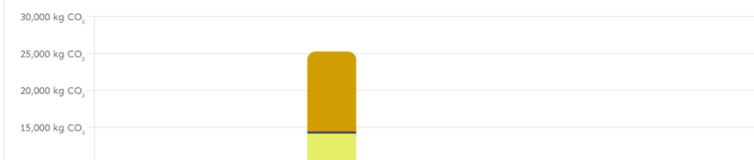
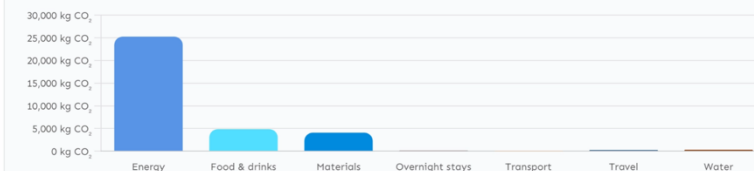


## Diesel generator replaced with plug-and-play hydrogen option

In 2024, DGTL began powering the entire food court with zero-emission electricity through a partnership with **Watermeln**, who provided a hydrogen generator.

Replacing a typical diesel setup, the generator operated completely off-grid using hydrogen fuel cell technology and battery storage for peak demand. With a plug-and-play design and up to 7,000 kWh capacity per delivery, the WM-200 provided stable, clean power while enabling real-time energy monitoring.

Categories



## Emissions-tracking software helps monitor sustainability metrics

DGTL uses AI-powered software developed by Amsterdam-based technology company **Go Zero** to track sustainability data across a range of sources, including energy, food and drink, materials and transport.

The app allows users to visualize and filter data and supports sustainability frameworks including Greenhouse Gas Protocol and the Green Deal Circular Festivals set.





## Anick Beaulieu

CEO, C2 Montréal



**“The days of all-inclusive experiences where attendees are passive are over. Participants want specific, personalized experiences. You’re not solely a spectator in the experience – you’re an active contributor.”**

### **C2 Montréal’s generative experiences transform attendees from passive consumers into active contributors who shape event outcomes.**

Participant agency drives every design decision – creating events where people actively generate content rather than just receive it. The Release Lab, Braindate algorithm and other activations offer new ways for participants to contribute their expertise.

What makes this irreplaceable is recognizing what digital *can’t* replicate. “What is uniquely human? We want to smell things, taste, touch stuff, feel awe and be amazed,” Beaulieu explains. Physical spaces allow for multisensory collaboration. When younger professionals increasingly expect personalized, participatory experiences across all areas of life, events must go beyond information delivery towards collaboration.

Technology integration follows the same principle. “Technology should facilitate, it’s not the purpose. Instead, ask how it can help provide the best possible experience. It’s a tool.” The stakes are high in what Beaulieu calls the ‘attention game’: “people aren’t entertained with a bad PowerPoint... you need to do more to make them present.”



**Designing events where attendees contribute expertise rather than just consume content delivers stronger business relationships and outcomes. When people shape experiences through creativity and collaboration, they develop deeper investment in both the content *and* each other.**



## Exploring emotional release through art and guided prompts

The **Release Lab**, held in partnership with the **Montreal Museum of Fine Arts**, offered a space for intuitive, unfiltered creative expression. Focused on the artistic process of automatism, the Lab invited attendees to let go of outcomes and use spontaneous gestures to spark self-reflection. Sessions featured bilingual, guided exercises, some with movement or sound.

Aligned with C2 Montréal's theme, 'Motion: The Art of Taking Action', the Lab encouraged creativity as a tool for personal reset.



## Immersive experience where attendees explore multiple identities

Designed as an intimate and experimental space, the **ALTER EGO.Σ Lab** offered an immersive, sensorial experience focused on identity. Participants moved through a guided process combining ritual, performance and technology to create an alter ego that's an exaggerated version of themselves.

The lab uses creative prompts and activities to encourage reflection and help attendees explore new perspectives on leadership and creativity.



## Culinary experience connects participants to community impact

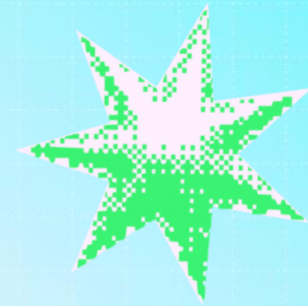
**La Tablée des Chefs** brought its mission to life through the **Nourish Lab** – an immersive experience connecting food, community and social impact. Known for fighting food insecurity and teaching young people to cook, the Montréal-based organization hosted hands-on workshops focused on food waste, solidarity and shared meals.

Founded in 2002, La Tablée des Chefs has distributed over 21 million meals and trained more than 78,000 youth through its culinary education programs.





TREND·WATCHING



Thanks for reading  
& happy innovating!

