

TECHNOLOGY TRENDS 2024

Shaping the Future of Events

STOVA

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SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EVENTS

Digital transformation in events is a constant. Advancements that made 2023 a standout year for innovation will keep reinventing our industry in astonishing ways.

Artificial intelligence, the convergence of our physical and virtual worlds, hyper-personalization, solution-driven technologies, and the evolution of the Internet will revolutionize events and our lives.

To help you stay ahead of the curve, [Stova](#) and [Bizbash](#) teamed up on a virtual event, [Tech Trends 2024: Shaping the Future of Events](#). Attendees learned about solutions pushing the boundaries of events as we know them.

David Adler, Founder and Chairman of Bizbash, moderated the panel. Joining him were four trailblazers in event technology and experiential marketing:



KC Bolcome
Vice President of Customer Experience, Stova



Scott Cullather
president and CEO,
INVNT Group



Jeff Benish
Vice President of Event Production, Blackrock



Stephanie Pearce
Director, Experiential Marketing,
Qualcomm

Our team of experts shared insights on six game-changing event tech trends along with strategies and tips to help you:

- Navigate the fast-changing event tech landscape
- Create immersive, on-brand event experiences
- Make the most of artificial intelligence and data analytics
- Deliver 1:1 experiences to a massive audience
- And more

Let's look at these trends and how you can use them for epic events in the year ahead.

T R E N D

1. AI will transform events

Artificial intelligence has become a powerful force enhancing lives and reshaping industries. In events, AI offers [significant advantages](#) in personalization, productivity, and planning.

Personalizing Events

One of the biggest advances in events today is the ability to deliver hyper-personalized experiences.

For instance, tech providers like Stova leverage AI in [mobile apps](#) to connect buyers and sellers who share interests.

AI also plays a role in tailoring event communications, recommending sessions, and providing customized post-event content. The technology improves the attendee experience and strengthens the bond between your audience and brand.

In 2024 and beyond “AI-driven recommendation engines will become mainstream to simplify events and deliver the experiences sponsors and attendees want,” Bolcome says.

The good news is that AI is changing the game for the better.

“This technology will profoundly impact experiential marketing,” Cullather predicts. “In the not-too-distant future, we’ll be able to use it to predict with greater certainty than ever which ideas will deliver the best outcomes. And that, to me, is super exciting.”

Personalizing Events

Adler uses AI as a tool for budget analysis. For example, ask ChatGPT how adding four liquor stations will affect your budget. Or how much you’ll reduce food and beverage costs by hosting 400 attendees instead of 500.

“It’s amazing how you can change things on the fly and get answers in seconds, Adler notes.”

AI is also helpful on the creative side for generating ideas.

“Use ChatGPT in a one-person brainstorming session,” Adler recommends. “You may not use the ideas, but they provide a good starting point. AI uncovers approaches you may not have otherwise thought of.”

Adler encourages event professionals to experiment with AI. “You need to know how to use these tools to critique them and decide what works and what doesn’t,” he advises.

Predicting Outcomes

Predictive analytics is another area where AI shines.

Companies spend millions each year to create an experience they hope will drive deeper connections between customers and brands. But anticipating consumer tastes is tricky.

TREND 1. AI will transform events

AI Challenges

Event professionals should strike a balance in how and when to use AI. These solutions offer considerable advantages as well as challenges.

Data privacy and security

With tools like ChatGPT, Siri, and Alexa integrated in our lives, many people worry about data privacy and security.

"Data is safer stored on your device than in the cloud," Pearce points out.

She recommends [on-device AI](#). These solutions put AI at the center of new smartphones, personal computers, extended reality devices, and wearable tech.

On-device AI offers advantages not only in data privacy and security. It also can improve performance and reduce costs and energy consumption.

Authenticity

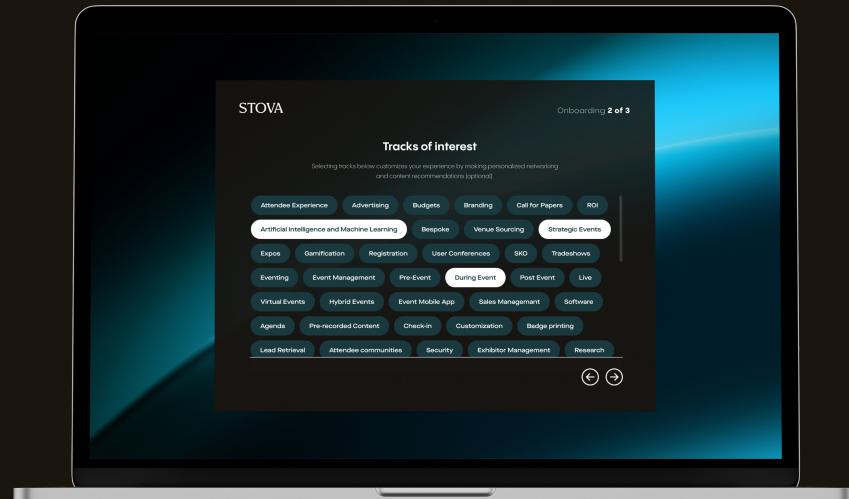
Should you rely on AI to generate event content?

The answer is no!

AI presents a compilation of information that's already on the Internet. By contrast, people attend events to hear new and exciting ideas that add to the existing body of knowledge. If you want to succeed in today's competitive market, your events must stand out from everyone else's.

In addition, prospective attendees expect information from event professionals who deeply understand their audience and brand. They don't want generic content produced by a bot.

"The beauty of events is that they bring people together for human connections," notes Bolcome. "Messaging must be authentic from start to finish, or people don't engage."



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2. Data will lead the way

Many marketers today must defend their event budgets because they have difficulty showing the [return on investment \(ROI\)](#).

Fortunately, the landscape is changing fast. Robust analytics and reporting solutions put data at your fingertips, ready to pull up at a moment's notice.

You can now demonstrate event value with ease by tracking ROI metrics like these below:

- Ticket sales
- Registration growth rate
- Sponsor/exhibitor growth and renewal rates
- Session attendance and dwell time
- Attendee engagement
- Meeting request acceptance rate
- Leads generated per sponsor and exhibitor
- Leads qualified
- Pipeline velocity

"We have the best ability ever to gather and evaluate data," Cullather points out. "Savvy companies now demonstrate event ROI with hard data. In the not-too-distant future, this practice will be the norm, making events more valuable than ever."

1:1 Experiences for a Massive Audience

Events today are managed increasingly by the marketing departments and are becoming more data-driven.

"This presents a huge opportunity for organizers to move from planning a single event to creating global event strategies," explains Bolcome. "An event isn't just one isolated occurrence. It's how you represent your brand, and it's critically important."

According to Bolcome, this means leveraging [data analytics](#) to understand your events on a deeper level from start to finish. What are the motions leading up to the event? How does the organization engage with potential attendees?

She advises event professionals to dive into the data and understand the different attendee personas. Then, shift the dialogue to tell prospects exactly how your event meets their needs.

WITH DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS, YOU CAN AUTOMATE OUTREACH IN AN AUTHENTIC WAY TO CREATE 1:1 EXPERIENCES FOR A MASSIVE AUDIENCE.

3. Extended reality will revolutionize experiences

What exactly is extended reality (XR)?

XR is an umbrella term for immersive technologies. It includes augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), mixed reality (MR), and others still to be created. XR blends the physical and digital worlds and creates immersive experiences.

For example, sponsors can take fans on new adventures at live sporting events via VR headsets.

- Imagine attending a National Football League game and getting the perfect view from behind the goal or right on the field with players.
- Or picture yourself in a thrilling, behind-the-scenes adventure at a Formula1 Grand Prix car race.

"Onsite with exciting digital components pushes the boundaries of event engagement and sponsorships," explains Bolcome. "It speaks to that immersive experience attendees want."

And the best part? "You can provide these experiences to as many attendees as you like," she adds. "You'll give everyone a personalized, first-hand touch."

XR Experiences

The global XR market is growing fast. By 2030, it is expected to surpass [\\$1,134.79 billion](#), exhibiting a compound annual growth rate of 36%.

XR events will be the entry point to imaginative worlds, with applications like these below.

- **Trade shows:** "Exhibit booths will be extraordinary," Adler predicts. "Within the next few years, you'll walk into a booth and enter a new world for a guided, curated experience."
- **Shopping:** XR powers next-level e-commerce platforms that give consumers a chance to try before buying. Depending on the platform, visitors can enter as avatars, shop, socialize, and immerse themselves in personalized brand experiences.
- **LED video walls:** Want to treat attendees to out-of-this-world experiences? Innovative brands use giant LED video walls and floors to create exciting virtual universes. Video walls are inspired by technology used in [The Mandalorian](#), the space Western television series on [Disney+](#).
- **Training:** XR also reinvents training. It offers ultra-realistic learning tools vital for health, medical, transportation, and other industries. Professionals can better hone their skills in a virtual environment before using them in the real world.

TREND 3. Extended reality will revolutionize experiences

Pro Tips:

While XR is incredible for storytelling, experts advise the technology must fit your event.

- 1. The No. 1 priority is to be true to your brand.** From there, decide what tools can tell the brand story best.
- 2. Content is still king.** It must be sensitively designed and executed to marry live events successfully with XR technologies.
- 3. Know your audience.** One challenge today is that organizers often must engage four generations of attendees at the same event: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. In general, tech usage varies across generations. Choose technology that fits your audience.
- 4. Having the right infrastructure is crucial.** Know how much capacity you'll need to bring an XR experience to life.

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4. Solution-driven tech will overcome hurdles

"For us, innovation is about creating tech solutions to event pros' biggest challenges," Bolcome explains. She says two of the top planner pain points today are shorter attention spans and delayed registration.

Capture and Keep Attention

Attendees today want sessions that are quicker, sharper, and more interactive.

KEEP ATTENDEES TUNED IN WITH CONTENT THAT HELPS THEM SOLVE PRESSING PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS.

As mentioned, **data analytics** is the key to deeper understanding. It provides a comprehensive view of attendees' preferences, pain points, and place in the buyer's journey.

Analytics also help you identify patterns in attendee behavior in real-time. For instance, what sessions, topics, speakers, activations, and formats are getting the most traction? Do attendees tend to drop off at a particular point in a virtual event?

Use these insights to finetune your agenda to fit attendees' evolving needs

6 Tips to Keep Audiences Riveted

The following tips will help you grab attention and keep eyes glued to the stage and screen.

1. Treat attendees to dazzling videos and live performances between presentations. Draw on local talent, including popular bands, DJs, standup comics, and magicians.
2. Avoid top-down, one-way presentations. Make sessions short and snappy with plenty of time for comments, polls, and Q&A's.
3. To foster interactions, mix education sessions with small workshops and roundtable discussions.
4. Combine content with networking via fun activations. Hands-on cooking demos, mixology, and wine-tasting sessions make great icebreakers.
5. Pump up energy levels by varying your agenda with wellness activities like Zumba, tai chi, and walking sessions.
6. Offer quiet places, too, with comfy couches and soothing music. Attendees can relax, recharge, and re-engage.

TREND 4. Solution-driven tech will overcome hurdles

Drive Earlier Registration

In today's uncertain economy, companies are cautious about their spend. As a result, attendees who once registered three to four months out now sign up a mere three to four weeks in advance.

Integrated Registration Platform

For smoother planning, use a state-of-the-art [event registration platform](#). Then, leverage these tips and tools below to capture early commitments.



Keep registration simple

Customize forms with all the fields you need to measure event success. At the same time, make forms easy to complete in a few minutes. The more complicated the process, the greater the risk people will put off the task.



Make it mobile-friendly

With [6.9 billion](#) smartphone users worldwide, mobile event apps are a convenient way to drive registration. Plus, you can integrate a chatbot into your event app so attendees can get quick answers with the ease of mobile.



Leverage real-time analytics

How do ticket sales compare against benchmarks? Consider what qualities early registrants share. Then, adjust marketing tactics to achieve event goals.



PC or mobile?

Analyze how visitors access your event website. Run digital ads and promotions on their preferred device.



Personalize follow-ups

All-in-one event management software (EMS) platforms like Stova combine registration with email marketing. Identify potential attendees who abandon the process. Follow up fast with customized content to encourage sign-ups.

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5. 5G will power the next leap forward

Investment in infrastructure like 5G networks will drive imaginative event experiences marketers could once only dreamed of.

Many emerging technologies come from solutions we've had for years but haven't been able to execute effectively. Thanks to companies like [Qualcomm](#) adding to the infrastructure, new technologies bolster older ones for game-changing experiences.

Hologram Concerts

Take holograms, for example. They arrived on the event scene more than a decade ago. "Now, ABBA has come up with an amazing way to make this technology exciting again," explains Benish.

The Swedish pop band's ABBA Voyage concerts in London star digital avatars, dubbed "ABBAatars," for groundbreaking hologram concerts.

ABBAatars blur the lines between physical and digital. They bring the pop legends to life via live music, spectacular lighting, and cutting-edge motion capture technology. Concertgoers delight in a trip back in time to see ABBA as they appeared in 1979.

Will ABBA Voyage-inspired experiences become mainstays in event marketing? It's too soon to tell.

"The investment in infrastructure will show us how far these innovative technologies will go," Benish says.

Connectivity and Inclusivity

In general, broad adoption of 5G moves the industry forward with ultra-fast, reliable connectivity.

5G empowers organizers to streamline operations. Attendees enjoy smooth virtual experiences, enhanced engagement, and fast content delivery. Plus, 5G supports real-time language translations to enhance cultural inclusivity.

6. Focus on sustainable events will grow

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Sustainability Technology

Here are some ways you can leverage technology to reduce the environmental impact of your events.



Paperless solutions

QR codes, NFC solutions, and event apps eliminate the need for printed tickets, badges, maps, and agendas. These tools reduce paper waste and energy required for printing and shipping. What's more, wearable tech enables attendee tracking for smart lighting and climate control. And so, they improve energy efficiency and attendee comfort.



Digital signage

This technology further minimizes paper waste. It provides marketing advantages, too. Videos, animations, and interactive displays can grab attention more effectively than static signage. Plus, dynamic digital signs display targeted messages to groups of attendees in specific areas of the venue for more personalized communication.



Virtual and hybrid events

Online gatherings cut travel and associated carbon emissions. Offering the choice to attend online also lowers costs and gives participants flexibility.



Data analytics

Organizers leverage historical and attendee behavioral data to make informed decisions about venue size, meeting room requirements, food quantities, and resource allocation to lessen waste.



Event management software

Finally, all-in-one EMS platforms digitize many aspects of events, from registration to marketing, mobile app, engagement, analytics, and reporting. You deliver more streamlined, personalized events while supporting environmental conservation.

WRAPPING UP

So now you have six event tech trends for 2024 and beyond that will revolutionize our industry as we know it. Along with these trends, you have valuable tips and tools to help you stay ahead of the curve.

Although event technology charges ahead at lightning speed, the goals it supports are a constant.

Keep an eye on emerging trends and follow these best practices.

You'll delight attendees with hyper-personalized, immersive event experiences that keep audiences riveted... simplify planning... lighten your event's environmental footprint... expand the possibilities of experiential marketing... and deliver a healthy ROI.

Catch a replay of [Tech Trends 2024: Shaping the Future of Events](#) here.

STOVA provides breakthrough solutions for the entire event lifecycle, including registration, virtual/hybrid platforms, marketing, content management, networking and engagement, mobile app, onsite services, and analytics and reporting.

Whatever events you're planning for 2024, Stova's team of specialists can help bring your vision to life. You'll get innovative technology and exceptional client support.

To learn more about Stova and game-changing event tech trends, visit stova.io.

