

The Event Technology Engagement Study

Survey of Leading Event Producers, Meeting Planners, & Event Marketers

Exclusive Industry Analysis by

cvent

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Introduction

The Event Technology Engagement Study: How event producers, meeting planners, and event marketers are using technology to add value, capture and analyze data, and enhance the attendee experience.

Events and technology have a unique and powerful relationship. To analyze key trends in this area, Cvent and the Event Marketing Institute have worked together to quantify industry best practices, benchmarks, and opportunities in the following areas:

- The Most Important Event Technologies
- Importance of Capturing Event Data and How Event Data is Used
- Important Technology Systems for Event Data Integration
- Where Event Planners Want to See More Innovation
- And additional data and analysis

To access this unique information, a survey of leading event producers, meeting planners, and corporate event marketers was conducted between July and September 2016. The response is from an elite group of leading associations, corporations with major event and meeting programs, and conference and exhibition producers. The respondents represent many of the largest event management organizations and corporations in North America. The findings are broken out by all respondents, corporations with event and meeting programs, associations, and for-profit conference and exhibition organizers.

Cvent and the Event Marketing Institute thank all of the respondents for their invaluable contribution to the study.

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Executive Summary

The relationship between events and technology has evolved from being important to absolutely critical to event producers and meeting planners – as well as to attendees, exhibitors, and sponsors. From pre-event to on-site to post-event, technology is intermeshed with the live experience across the entire event ecosystem. What is also different today is the value placed on capturing and analyzing event data generated from various technology services and platforms. In short, event producers of all types are fast becoming focused on data.

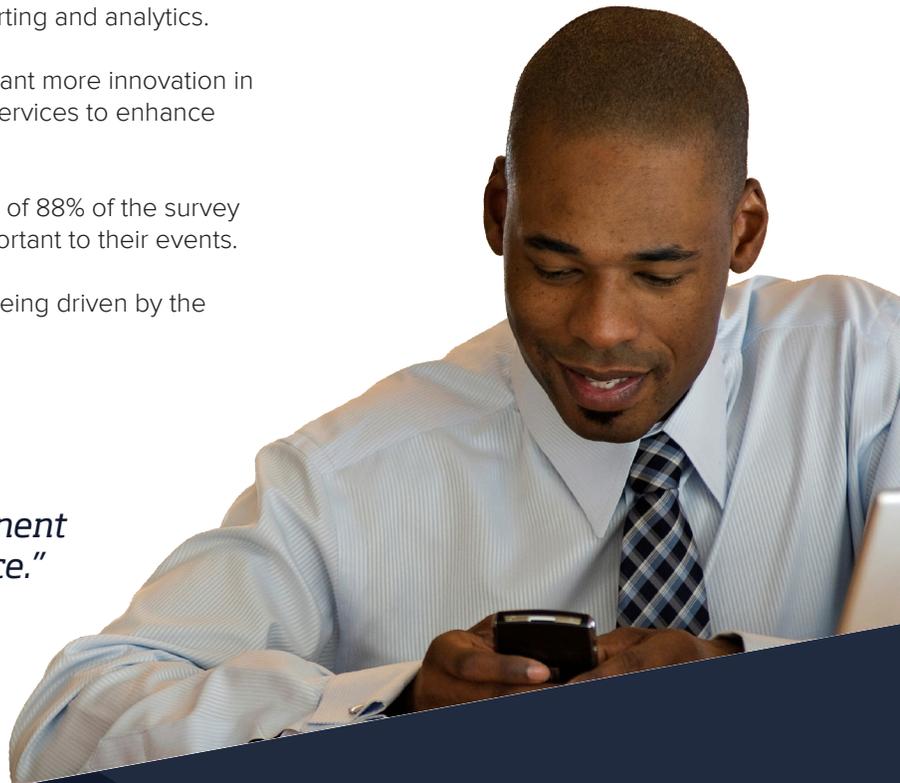
Over just a few years, the event and meetings industry has evolved from using technology mainly to connect and communicate with attendees and members, to now using technology to capture data for reporting and analysis, and to enhance the attendee experience.

Some of the key research findings and insights include:

- The #1 most important event technology area is reporting and analytics.
- Event producers and meeting planners collectively want more innovation in two areas: ease of use of technology; software and services to enhance their reporting and analytics process.
- Another indication of the focus on event data: a total of 88% of the survey respondents say capturing data is critical or very important to their events.
- Many of the trends impacting event technology are being driven by the increased usage of mobile devices by attendees.

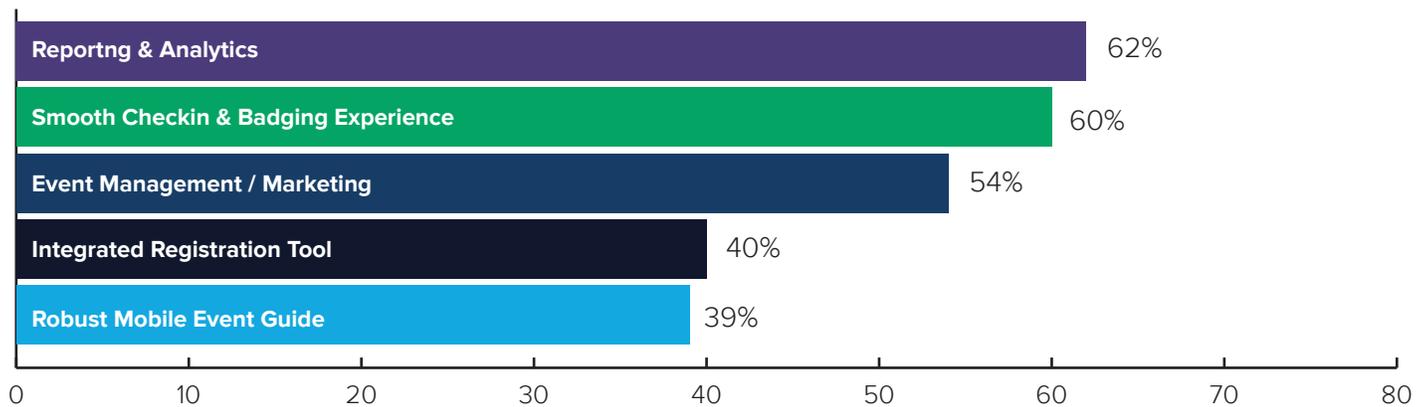
“We need to use technology as a component of a better attendee-engaged experience.”

- Event producer with one of the largest association conventions in the U.S.



The Most Important Event Technologies

The most important use of event technology for event producers, meeting planners, and event marketers is reporting and analytics. This is closely followed by using technology to ensure a smooth check-in experience for attendees and for the marketing and management of their events. This emphasis on data can be seen as a major shift from recent years: event technology is no longer optional, now the data generated from event technology is equally, or even more important, than the processes enabled by the technology.



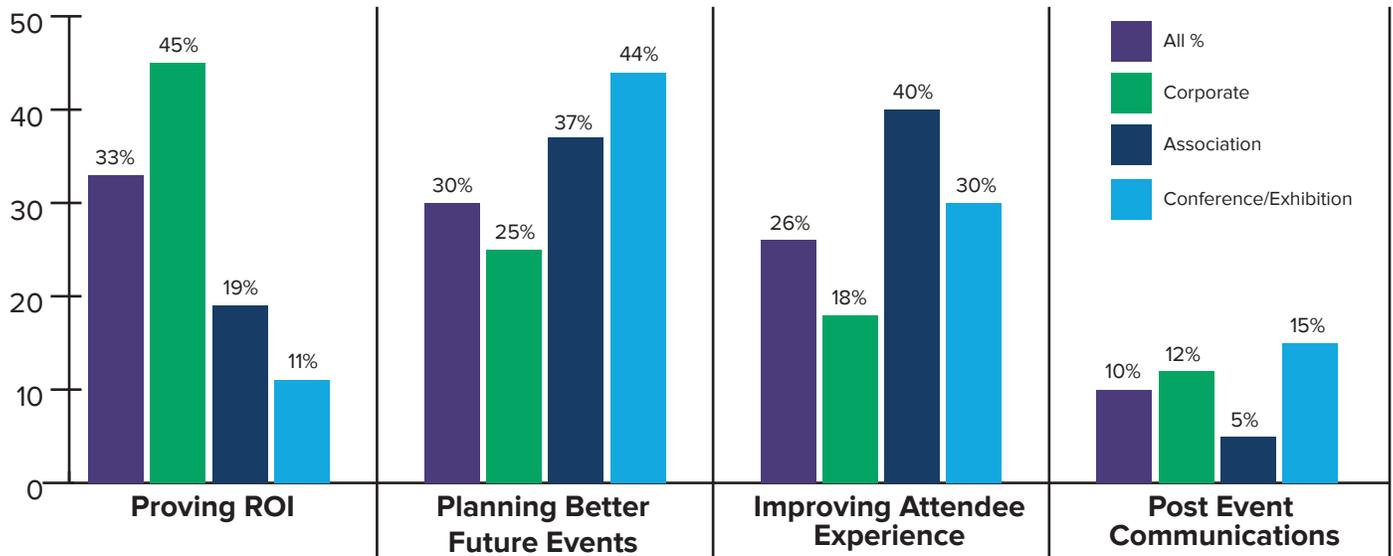
62% of event professionals say Reporting and Analytics are their most important event technology function.

"We get an increasing number of ROI requests from exhibitors so we are aggressively retooling our software in both membership and registration to gain a better understanding of just who is actually coming to our events, i.e., title, buying power, etc."

- Mid-sized association with events

How Event Data is Used

While one-third of the respondents indicate that the primary way they utilize data is to prove ROI, this is a greater focus specifically for corporations. In comparison, associations and conference/exhibition producers more often use their event data to plan better events and improve the attendee experience. Overall, best-in-class event professionals are capturing more data to better understand their attendees, members, exhibitors, and sponsors.



"We are implementing technologies to assist in data tracking for registrations, B2B meetings, conference participation and more."

- Director with for-profit event organizer

The Top Two Ways Event Professional Segments are Using Event Data

	CORPORATE	ASSOCIATION	CONFERENCE/ EXHIBITION
#1	Proving ROI	Improving attendee experience	Planning better future events
#2	Planning better future events	Planning better future events	Improving attendee experience

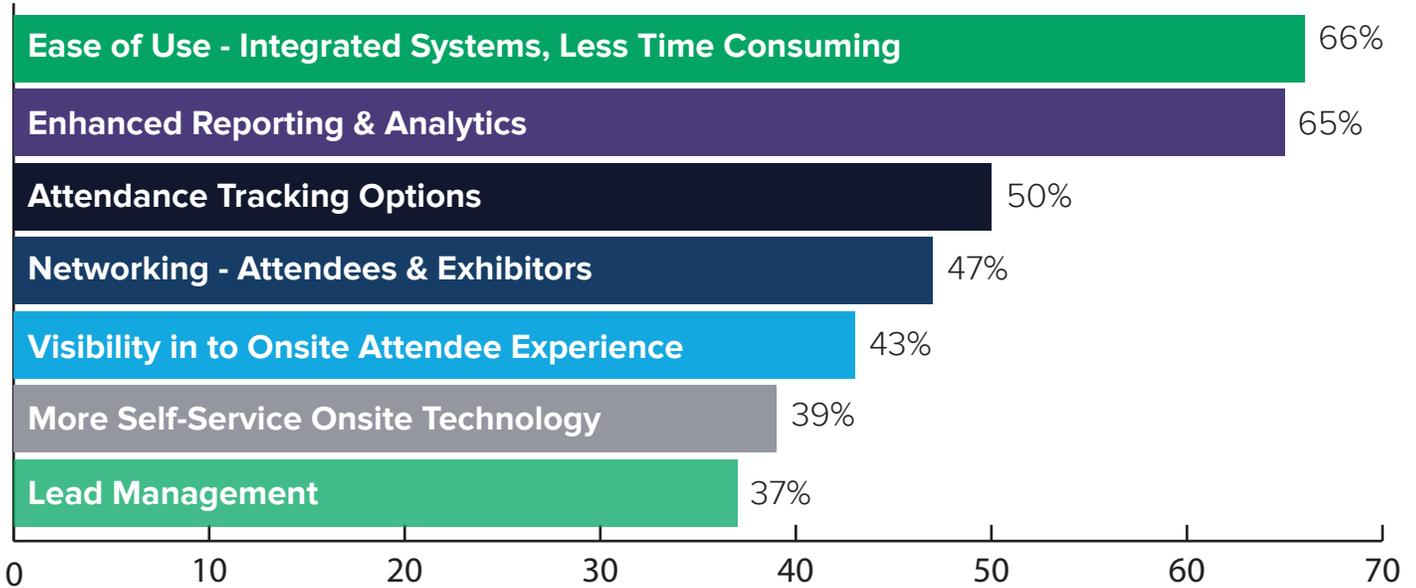


"One big innovation from the attendee perspective is the interactive conference apps at our educational conferences."

- Event producer with a major association convention and exhibition

Where Event Professionals Want to See More Innovation

The top two areas where the survey respondents want to see more technology innovation are related to ease of use and enhanced reporting and analytics. These survey findings further indicate that event professionals are prioritizing the need to collect data throughout the event lifecycle (pre, during, and post event), as well as desire the data gathered to be digestible and actionable. The survey findings show that enhancing the on-site attendee experience and using technology to access more information and insights are the key innovation opportunity areas.



Event management wants technology that is even easier to use and enables better data analysis and insight to improve their event experience and businesses.

About the Respondents

Thirty-two percent of the respondents work for corporations with event and meeting programs and 29% are with associations. Together, conferences and exhibition producers represent 30% of the respondents. The number of attendees at the respondents' largest events is split about evenly with 56% of the events drawing over 2,500 attendees and 44% with less than 2,500 participants. Most of the respondents work for organizations that run dozens of events annually. Some of the top industry sectors served by the event producers are medical, IT, building and construction, consumer electronics, and education.

Complete Survey Findings

The Most Important Event Technologies

Survey Question: Which of the following event technologies are the most important to your organization?

The top two most important uses of event technology to the full set of respondents are reporting and analytics and a smooth check-in and badging experience for attendees. These areas are followed by event management and marketing systems. These findings show that event professionals are focused on capturing more event data to help with their strategic planning, marketing, and operations as well as providing technology service to improve the attendee experience.

	All %	Corporate	Association	Conference/Exhibition
Reporting and analytics	62%	66%	56%	77%
Smooth check-in and badging experience	60%	51%	67%	77%
Event Management/ Marketing	54%	61%	41%	50%
Integrated Registration Tool	40%	44%	39%	41%
Robust mobile event guide	39%	32%	54%	46%
Session survey data	36%	39%	44%	32%
Attendee journey data insights	30%	32%	15%	50%

The breakouts by type of organization show a number of interesting differences:

- Corporations with events focus on reporting and analysis as well as event management and marketing tools.
- Most important to associations are a smooth attendee check-in, reporting and analytics as well as robust mobile event apps.
- Conference and exhibition organizers by far say reporting and analytics along with a smooth registration process are the most important technology uses.
- Robust mobile event guides and session survey data are comparatively the most important to associations.
- Attendee journey data insights are important to exactly half of conference and exhibition producers, which is a larger percentage than the other industry sectors.

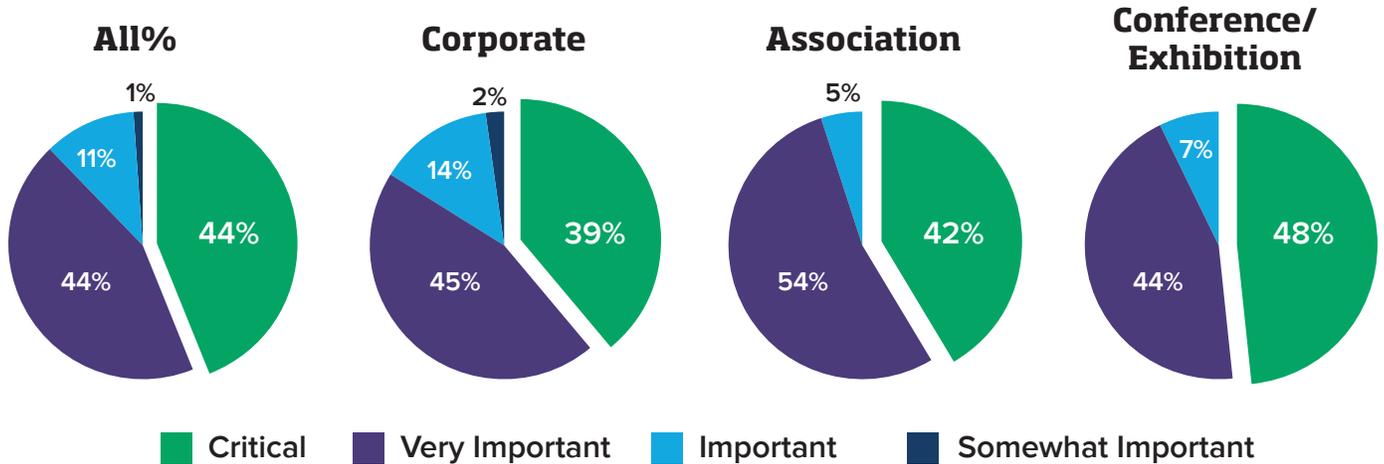
"Attendees are more comfortable with technology, which makes it easier for us to communicate program information."

- Marketing executive with leading association and event management company

Importance of Capturing Event Data

Survey Question: How important is capturing event related data?

Forty-four percent of event professionals say capturing event data is *critical* and the same percentage (44%) say this data and information capture is *very important*. As a marketing executive with a leading manufacturing association with large conventions said in a separate study, “Event data helps clarify our marketing efforts and helps personalize our communication.” Conference and exhibition producers are most likely to consider capturing event data as *critical* to their events.



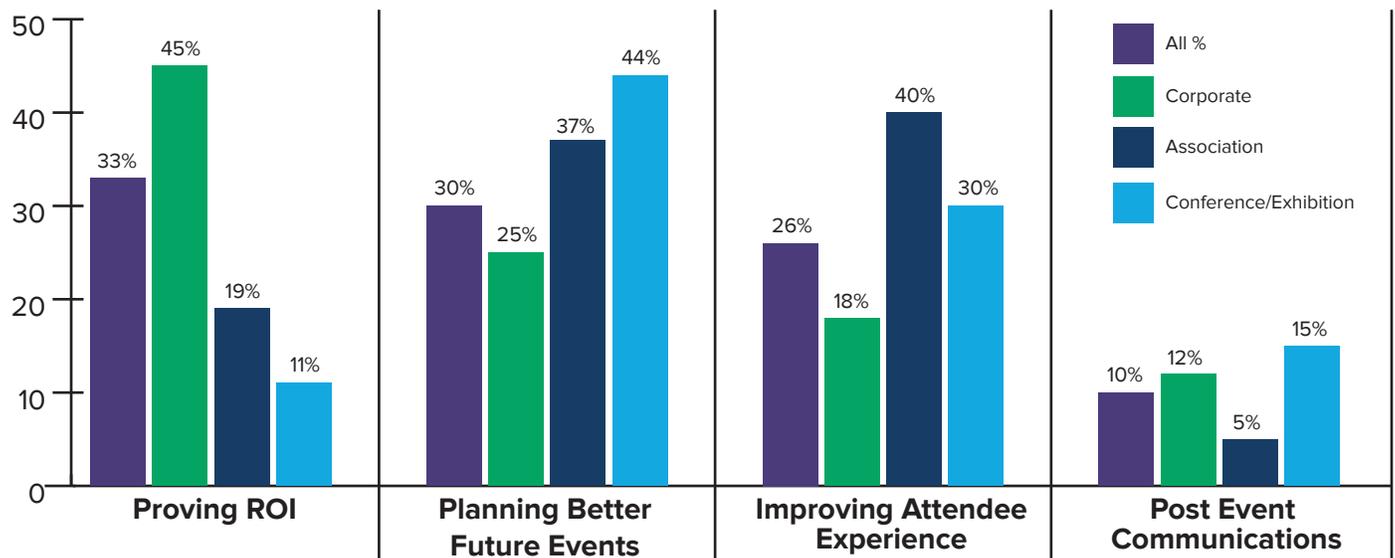
“We use event data to identify patterns to develop new messaging.”

- Executive Director with medical association with convention and conferences

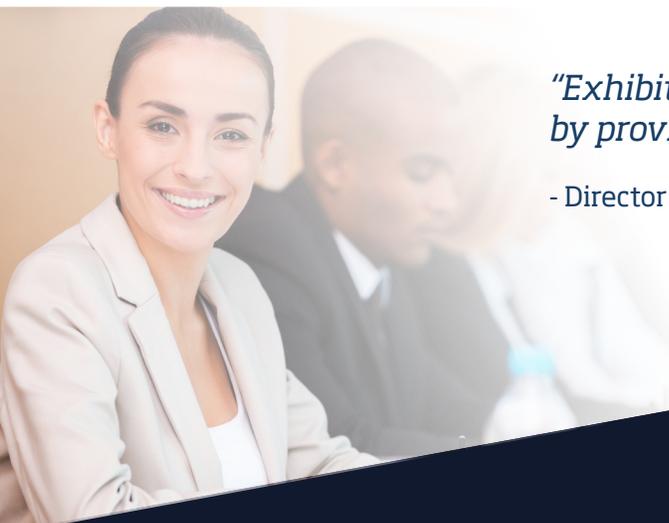
How Event Data is Used

Survey Question: What is the primary way you are utilizing data and information generated from your event technology systems?

While one-third of the respondents indicate that the primary way they utilize data is to prove ROI, this is a greater focus specifically for corporations. In comparison, associations and conference/exhibition producers more often use their event data to plan better events and improve the attendee experience. Overall, best-in-class event producers and meeting planners are capturing more data to better understand their attendees, members, exhibitors, and sponsors.



Bottom line: corporations are mainly focused on increasing brand awareness and driving sales via events and meetings, while associations and exhibition organizers are looking to serve their member and attendee communities, and provide an efficient marketplace for buyers and exhibitors.



“Exhibitors are requesting data for their spend, and we respond by providing more analytics in their post event recaps.”

- Director at medical association with a large convention and exhibition

Where Event Professionals Want to See More Innovation

Survey Question: Where would you like to see more innovation and enhancements in event technology?

The top two areas where the survey respondents want to see more technology innovation are related to ease of use and enhanced reporting and analytics. These are followed by attendance tracking options. Overall, the findings show event professionals want to see more services and innovation around nearly all areas of their events.

	All %	Corporate	Association	Conference/Exhibition
Ease of use – integrated systems, less time consuming	66%	71%	62%	68%
Enhanced reporting and analytics	65%	78%	67%	55%
Attendance Tracking options	50%	42%	62%	50%
Networking – attendee, exhibitors	47%	29%	69%	59%
Visibility in to onsite attendee experience	43%	42%	44%	46%
More self-service onsite technology	39%	39%	46%	36%
Lead management	37%	46%	15%	50%
Exhibitor management	22%	12%	26%	36%
Speaker/abstract management	19%	17%	23%	14%

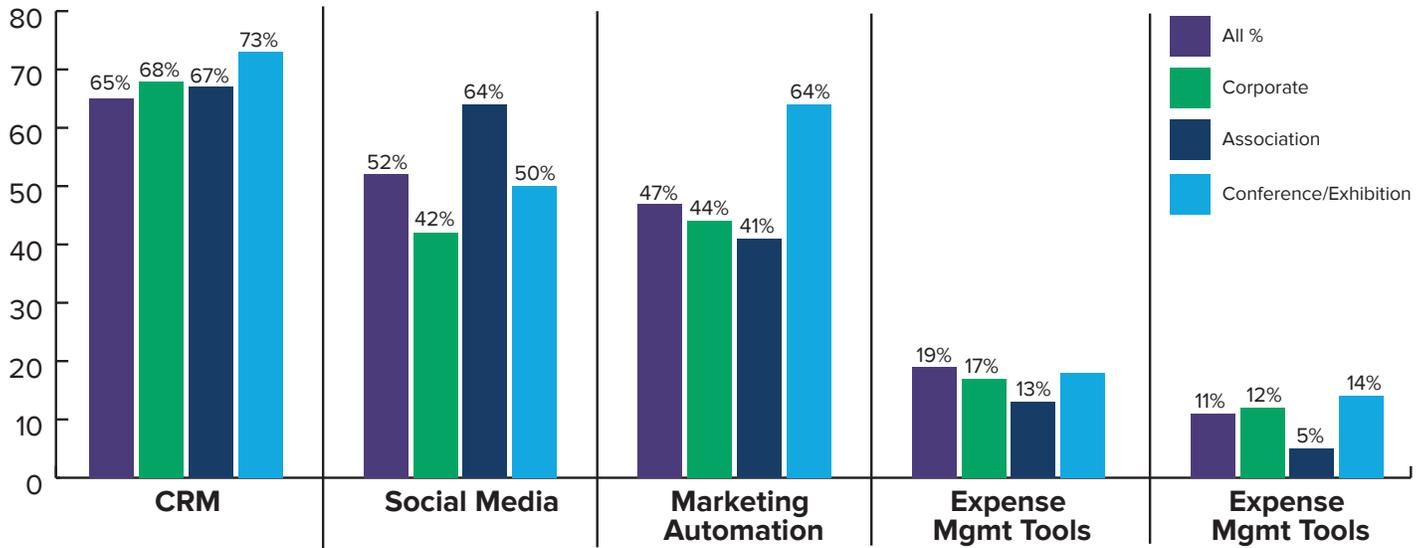
Based on the data breakouts, corporate planners and their event marketing groups are most interested in seeing innovation around reporting and analytics, ease of use, and lead management. Exactly half of for-profit conference and exhibition organizers are also particularly interested in seeing innovation around lead management for their exhibitors. Associations are most focused on innovation around improving attendee networking, using technology to track attendance on-site, and more self-service technology availability.

The top innovation area for corporate planners and event marketers is enhanced reporting and analytics. For associations it's using technology to foster and improve audience networking.

Important Systems for Event Data Integration

Survey Question: What systems is it important for your data to integrate with?

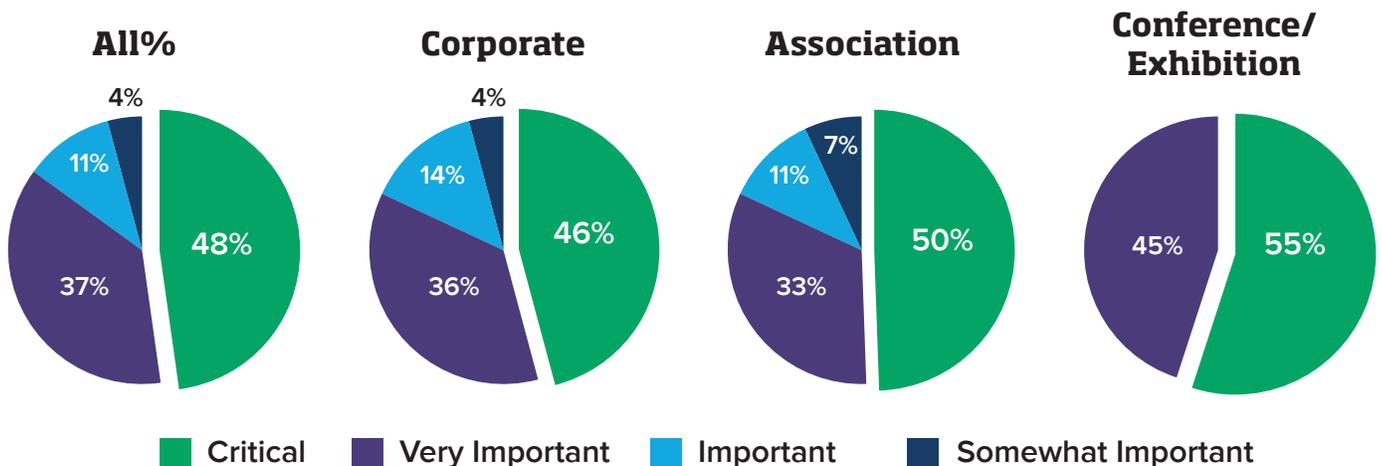
Event professionals say it is most important for event data to integrate with their CRM systems. Fifty-two percent of all respondents and 64% of associations say it is important for their data to integrate with social media content. Conference and exhibition producers say marketing automation data integration is also particularly important.



Importance of Face-to-Face Events in Accelerating Sales and Driving Revenue

Survey Question: How important are face-to-face events in accelerating the sales pipeline and contributing to generating revenue?

A total of eighty-five percent of the respondents say face-to-face events are *critical* or *very important* in accelerating the sales pipeline and contributing to generating revenue. For-profit conference and exhibition producers in particular see the importance of event impact on sales and revenue. It is assumed the conference and exhibition organizers are also responding with their exhibitors in mind.



Most Important Criteria When Selecting Event Technology Providers

Survey Question: What are the most important criteria(s) when selecting an event technology service provider?

Data capture, integration, and customer service are the top three technology provider criteria event professionals require when selecting vendors.

	All %	Corporate	Association	Conference/Exhibition
Ability to capture data	60%	60%	63%	61%
Complete integrated platform	49%	47%	45%	52%
Customer service	41%	47%	40%	39%
Design and branding control	34%	38%	30%	30%
Marketing automation functionality	22%	22%	28%	13%
Out-of-the-box CRM integration	20%	18%	20%	30%

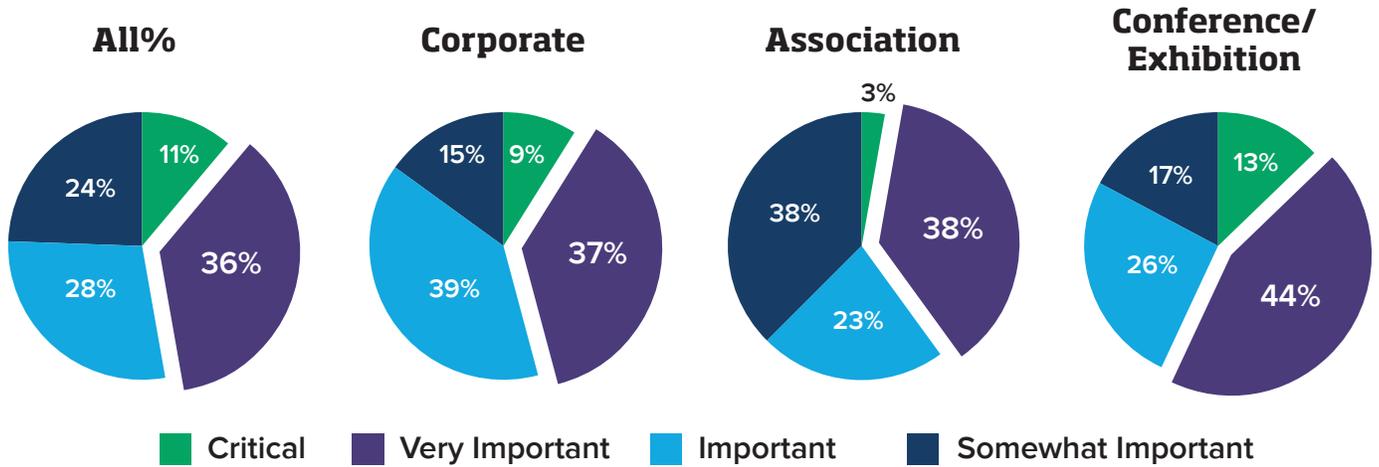
Key findings by organization type include:

- Data capture is important to all types of event professionals, but most important comparatively to associations.
- Complete integrated platforms and out-of-the-box CRM integration are most important to conference and exhibition organizers.
- Customer service levels by technology providers are considered most important to corporate event planners.
- Design and branding control is comparatively most important to corporate event planners.

Importance of Limiting Event Technology Vendors to Allow for More Systems Integration

Survey Question: How important is it to limit the number of vendors for your event technology needs, allowing for more integrated systems?

More than one-third of event professionals say limiting the number of technology vendors is *very important*, and 28% indicate this is an *important* goal to allow for more integrated systems. Conference and exhibition organizers in particular see the value in consolidating their key technology providers when possible.



Conclusion

Events and meetings were once a qualitative industry. But the industry has fast become focused on quantitative data, analytics, highly specialized software, and digital media. Technology and the ability to generate and measure data is significantly impacting the events and meetings industry. The focus is on capturing data and insights to improve the attendee experience, better market the event, and assist with overall strategy and event planning.

The findings from the **Event Technology Engagement Study** show that technology is critical to event producers and meeting planners. Still, even more innovation is desired by event professionals especially to manage the ever increasing amount of event data being captured, to provide real insights, and enhance the complete cycle of the attendee experience from registration to post-event reporting and communications. In addition, digital media is allowing for explosive growth in the amount of content being developed by events, exhibitors, and attendees. Many of the trends impacting event technology are being driven by the increased usage of mobile devices by attendees.

Based on this study, as well as other research conducted the Event Marketing Institute, event professionals will continue to look to technology to provide and add value to the following key industry areas:

- Attendee marketing and communications with a focus on growing attendance.
- Attendee registration and on-site activity tracking.
- Improving social media content and analytics.
- Increasing attendee and exhibitor engagement on-site and post-event.
- Delivering and managing content for large audiences.
- Lead generation, management, and measurement.
- Better managing vendors and partners.
- Accessing data and insights to make better strategic and tactical business decisions.
- Providing a seamless experience for attendees, exhibitors, and other participants.

The unique and powerful relationship between events and technology has many avenues of future growth and innovation ahead. In the first half of this decade the focus was on using technology to connect event producers with their audiences. Today, with the connections mostly made or at least the technology in place, the focus is shifting to analyze the resulting data with the goal (and challenge) of understanding what the information means, and how event professionals can use the data to improve their event business and participant experience.

Methodology & About the Respondents

In July to September 2016, the Event Marketing Institute conducted a survey of leading associations, corporations with event programs, and exhibition producers. A total of 159 responded to the survey. The response is from an elite group of leading associations, corporations with major event and meeting programs, and conference and exhibition producers representing many of the largest event management organizations and corporations in North America.

Type of Organization	%
Corporation with Events and Meetings	32%
Association	29%
Conference Producer	17%
Exhibition/Trade Show Producer	13%
Other	9%

Industry Sector Served by Largest, Most Important Event	%
Apparel	1%
Automotive and Trucking	6%
Aviation and Aerospace	1%
Building and Construction	8%
Consumer Electronics and Mobile Technology/Telecom	8%
Consumer Products	2%
Education	7%
Government	2%
Entertainment and Media	5%
Financial Services	4%
Food and Beverage	3%
Information Technology	9%
Manufacturing and Industrial	5%
Medical, Healthcare and Pharmaceutical	20%
Natural Resources, Energy	2%
Professional Business Services	2%
Retail	2%
Sports and Recreation	2%
Transportation	1%
Other	10%

Number of Attendees at Largest, Most Important Event	%
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Under 500	18%
501 to 1,000	11%
1,001 to 2,500	15%
2,501 to 5,000	15%
More than 5,001	41%

Number of Events Produced by Organization	%
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1	12%
2 to 24	46%
25 to 50	16%
50 to 100	7%
100 to 200	6%
Over 200	12%

Cvent: Transforming Meetings & Events

Cvent is a leading event management technology company. Cvent offers software solutions to event planners for online event registration, venue selection, event management, mobile apps for events, e-mail marketing and web surveys. Cvent provides hoteliers with an integrated platform, enabling properties to increase group business demand through targeted advertising and improve conversion through proprietary demand management and business intelligence solutions. Cvent solutions optimize the entire event management value chain and have enabled clients around the world to manage hundreds of thousands of meetings and events.

About Us

- Founded in 1999
- Headquartered in Tysons Corner, VA
- More than 1,900 employees worldwide
- More than 15,800 customers worldwide

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Contact Us

If you have a media inquiry or general question, please contact us at corporatecommunications@cvent.com

www.cvent.com

About the Event Marketing Institute

The mission of the Event Marketing Institute is to help our members enhance their professional performance by providing comprehensive education, research and analysis related to emerging trends and insights into event marketing strategy, as well as creating a growing list of productivity tools and professional networking opportunities to foster information exchange.



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