



# Now/Next: Experiential Marketing Trends 2019



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experience marketing

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# Overview

**This is the age of experience.** Credit card companies compete with each other to provide the most exclusive access to the most rarefied cultural events. Sports teams lift best practices from the world of music festivals to engage fans both inside and outside their moments and places of play. Retailers are transforming their former shelf-and-display marts into interactive mashups that are a cross between digitally enabled museums, play spaces, and hospitality venues. And brands everywhere are cutting through the clutter to engage stakeholders in person in everything from pop-ups to brand pavilions in Olympic games surround platforms. Everywhere you look, experience is the ultimate competitive contest.

Experience marketing provides the power to engage all the senses: sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch—more human interaction than any other media. When it comes to marketing investments that move the needle, experiential is the new given. Now the question isn't whether to engage stakeholders experientially but how to do it in ways that are more compelling, engaging, memorable, and activating than what your competitors are doing.

This is the question we continuously examine at GPJ as we anticipate and respond to how the spheres of culture, business, and stakeholder behavior continue to evolve right in front of our eyes. We've been winning awards for it for more than 100 years.

By including only 10 trends we are just scratching the surface. Some are gaining steam now. Others are coming next. We're ready to go deep with you on any of these ideas and on more that we're already implementing. So, let's use this together to reinvigorate our conversation about how we can help you grow your business. Let's look at what we should be doing together to keep your brand ahead of all others in this, the age of experience.





# Trends Snapshot

**The power of experience:**

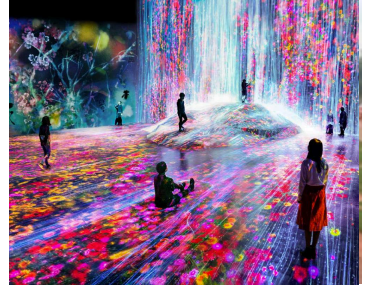
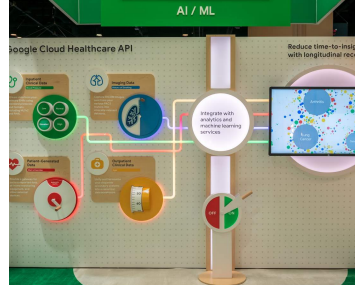
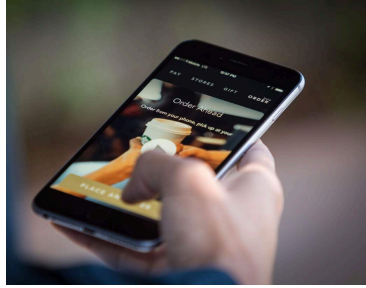
“62% increase in feelings of connection  
+ 50% lift in brand favorability”

*Immersion*



# Trends Snapshot

## The Latest and Greatest



### 1. CSR Integrity

Corporations are deepening the integration of corporate social responsibility efforts into their events—going beyond the staging of one-off activities—to drive greater brand authenticity and activate more productive stakeholder affiliation with employees, customers, partners, and influencers.

### 2. Depersonalized Personalization

It's readily accepted that we're living in the age of personalization—of tailoring interaction and experience toward the desires of segments of one for greater appeal, engagement, and affinity. However, "personalization" doesn't have to be "delivered by persons." Experiences can be automated via AI and other technologies. When they are, they can be delivered with greater efficiency, speed, and satisfaction.

### 3. Physical Digital Hybrid Experience

To give audiences easy and inviting access to the level of content that interests them, information is tiered and presented in hybrid formats. Dimensional, human-scaled assets attract attention, grabbing eyes and inviting exploration through physical interaction. The physical actions activate digital experiences, which draw participants deeper into individualized levels of content satisfying to them.

### 4. Sensorial Immersion

We experience the world through all of our senses. To create memorable impact and differentiate themselves, innovative brands are moving beyond mere "show and tell" to build interactive marketing experiences that appeal to all of the senses. Experiences that wow audiences by appealing to and pleasing the senses hold the power to deepen engagement, fuel advocacy, and amplify the brand socially.

### 5. Story-Living

Story-living is an evolution of storytelling in which the participant co-creates the experience with the brand in ways small and large. Enabled by evermore powerful experience technology, data-driven personalization, consumer demand for interaction versus passive observation, and the innately human desire to create and be seen, this approach produces shareworthy moments that increase marketing ROI.





# Trends Snapshot

## The Latest and Greatest



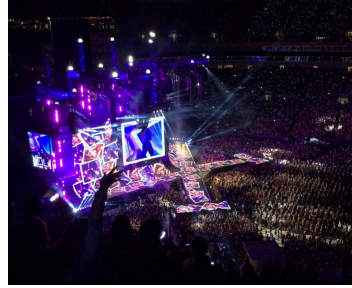
### 6. Documentary Storytelling

We're in a golden age of documentary film in which audiences are thirsting to know what's beneath the surface to make sense of the world we live in and understand what's behind our most important stories. Event content producers are using documentary and AR techniques to combine fact-based narratives with data for storytelling that engages audiences in highly compelling experiences.



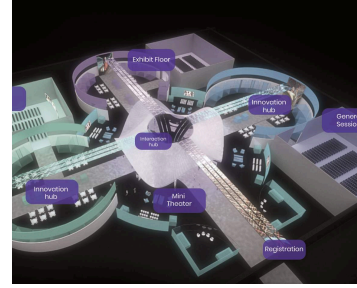
### 7. Large-Scale Content Environments

LED video screen technology innovations empower experience designers to create branded environments that are alive with wall-to-wall, immersive, ever-changing media, combining information with spectacle. Advanced show control tools optimize the ability to simultaneously manage multiple video files across the platform, enabling brands to attract attention, engage audiences, and convey stories by choreographing content in a highly dynamic experience at enormous scale.



### 8. Staging as Messaging

Concert, theater, and public event staging is in an upward spiral of creativity, animation, and spectacle. Production elements like stage sets and lighting now are often both dynamic parts of the message and platforms for more saturated conveyance of that content. Branded events are taking their cues from these advances in order to keep up with participants' expectations.



### 9. Seamless Content Experience

Breaking down walls between event components and making content seamless across event activities puts participant needs at the center of experiences. Purposeful holistic content planning, contiguous space planning, and AI-enhanced wayfinding enable effortless transitions across environments in which different learning objectives and styles are served. This allows participants to deepen understanding and better internalize and synthesize information.



### 10. Innovation at the Content/Environment/Experience Intersection

Experience innovators are breaking the standard models of exhibitions and conferences by reinventing how content is structured, shared, synthesized, and situated. Taking cues from influences as diverse as ideas conferences like TED to cultural festivals like Coachella, experience design disrupters are applying the principles of communication, learning, attention management, and ergonomics in an explosion of invention rich with variety, animation, and interaction



# Trends: In Depth





## Trend One

### CSR Integrity

#### Why this matters

In this age of hyper-competition and skepticism exacerbated by “fake news,” the currency of business—trust—has become ever harder to earn and maintain. Event marketing is the communication medium that best helps stakeholders “look the brand in the eye” and judge its authenticity. So, organizations have to rigorously align their experiences with their professed values to be taken seriously.

#### Application

Innovative organizations are going beyond a pasting in of one-off corporate social responsibility activities at their events and thoroughly examining every facet of their experiences for alignment with their values and intentions. This helps them extend beyond surface-level feel-good moments with their participants to deepen integrity-generating stakeholder relationships that feel right at their core and that can be sustained.





## Trend One CSR Integrity

Example:  
(RED) at Dreamforce



Salesforce often leads the way in integrating their CSR goals into their annual signature event, Dreamforce. In one example, their main focus was (RED), the global charity co-founded by U2's Bono to end AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa. The organization's presence, content, and interactions were integrated into dozens of the event components, and beyond that, into the work of Salesforce itself, setting a new standard for CSR integrity.



Deb Dugan, CEO of Project (RED), was part of Salesforce co-CEO Marc Benioff's keynote address at their annual Dreamforce event, their signature proprietary experience bringing the company together with its customers, partners, and community. The prominence of the subject was a powerful statement of the company's support.



Dreamforce presented high profile leaders from (RED) partner organizations like Melinda Gates of the Gates Foundation on panels and other event components to deepen understanding of the importance of this multi-faceted effort.



## Trend One CSR Integrity

### Examples:

(RED) at Dreamforce

Carbon neutral solutions



Dreamforest is the outdoor mall at Dreamforce featuring a remote keynote viewing theater, places to network, and the CSR area at the event. It included the (RED) Experience where attendees could engage for information on (RED)'s mission and purchase hot Salesforce + (RED) partner products that generated money to fund their work in the fight for an AIDS-free generation.



Dreamfest, a regular feature of Dreamforce, is an evening concert which raises money for Salesforce CSR initiatives. Here the company not only provided high profile entertainment for 45,000 customer and partner attendees, it also further demonstrated the organization's commitment to its core values through key messages from the stage and the funds raised by the event.



Fly-in events create significant impact on the environment. Innovative professionals are adding reduction of carbon production and carbon offset purchase to the longer-standing eco-friendly materials management solutions adopted over the past 20 years. The goal is to make events carbon neutral. Two of the growing number of providers of these services are South Pole and Carbonfund. There is a renewed interest in going deeper than ever with sustainability efforts at events. Carbon offset is just one component.





## Trend Two

### Depersonalized Personalization

#### Why this matters

Consumers will continue to seek out ever-more automated speed and convenience across certain service experiences, focusing their desires for personalized touchpoints on areas of higher value. As these expectations are increasingly met in our personal lives—think Starbucks mobile orders—if event experiences fail to measure up, we risk aggravating participants right at the time we need to delight them.

#### Application

Looking at the cost/benefit equation of automating the many interactions at events that attendees are least likely to require human interaction for reveals opportunities for surprising and delighting that we might not otherwise see. From drink dispensing and on-site registration interactions to content sharing and networking, it's time to hack experience for optimal satisfaction.

Participants are accustomed to managing efficiency in their daily lives via their mobile devices. The level of opportunity to do this at our events has to be the same or better than in their outside lives, or we risk losing their interest.



## Trend Two

### Depersonalized Personalization

#### Examples:

Hertz

The Ratio Coffee shop

Amazon



Biometrics automates car rental checkout. Hertz teamed up with Clear to offer customers a biometric-linked car rental process in which an automated kiosk confirms the customer's identity before lifting the exit gate. That gets the customer on the road in 30 seconds or less. Can we take a "Clear" approach to event registration?



The Ratio Coffee shop offers AI-enhanced drink recipes tailored to the individual. Consumers customize their drinks via WeChat down to the smallest detail. The in-store robot then crafts the drink, while the AI remembers a customer's order for subsequent visits and uses the data for personalized drink recommendations.



Amazon continues to open its Amazon Go stores, where AI and tech allow customers to simply select their products and walk out, with the Amazon app billing them accurately later for what they take. Can merchandise and food stands at events provide the same experience?





## Trend Three

### Physical Digital Hybrid Experience

#### Why this matters

Most of us are wary of pitches, but we love play and exploration. When we uncover information at our own pace we feel confident, in control. Tiered levels of info—headlines, quick snippets, a synopsis, a case study, a full-on demo—and ways to dig in deeper or back out quickly lets us consume as much information as we wish, for as long as we feel engaged.

#### Application

In exhibitions of every type we're challenged to drive engagement with products, services, and information. Physical assets go beyond being eye candy when they invite play and interaction. Unique objects trigger emotions that invite people to explore. Once engaged, digital tools from low-fi to high tech, including personal mobile devices, can ignite deeper engagement into meaningful content.

## Google Cloud Healthcare API

Reduce time-to-insight with longitudinal records



## Trend Three Physical Digital Hybrid Experience

### Examples:

IBM Progress Bar at CES

IBM's Flip Wall

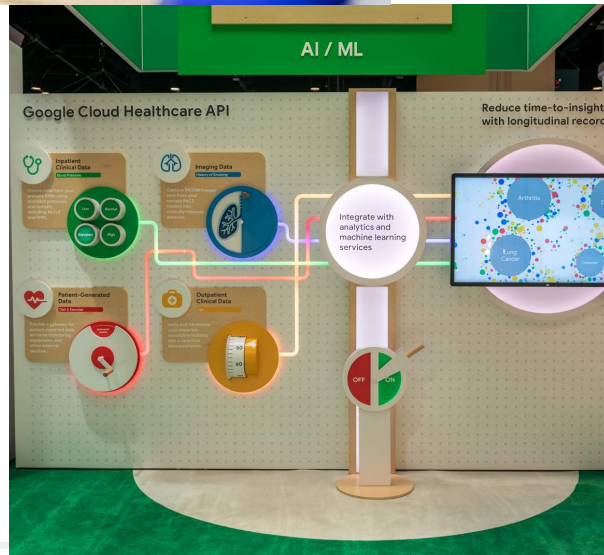
Google's Healthcare API Demo



At IBM's Progress Bar at CES, a tabletop conveyor circulates treats and customer stories in an inviting way. As the conveyor loops, plates pass by with snacks that an attendee can enjoy. Interspersed with the snacks are objects that represent customer stories. These 3D-printed objects—when grabbed from conveyor and set on a digital placemat—trigger content on digital screens embedded in the counter using NFC.



At HIMMS, IBM's "Flip Wall" stood out due to its unusual design, which was deceptively physical. It incorporated compelling stats and photography to draw people in—organized, yet playful. People spun the blocks to read more about the human stories behind the numbers. A QR code enabled them digitally to go even deeper into stories they wanted to learn more about.



Google Cloud's Healthcare API demo at HIMSS 2019 depicts an under-the-hood view of a real-time healthcare API data pipeline that's fed into a machine-learning prediction model to assist in clinical decisions. Physical inputs invite guests to update the predictive analytics with analog controls. This informs the data visualization on the screen, in real time, just like the Google solution it's showcasing.





## Trend Four

### Sensorial Immersion

#### Why this matters

As Maya Angelou famously said, “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” With so many messages vying for attention, we are constantly filtering for what impacts us most. No other medium than experiential can so fully immerse audiences in an experience using all the senses.

#### Application

Multisensory experiences help brands break through the clutter and make an impact that is felt and retained at a deeper human level and that is more likely to be shared. They work because of the way this type of interaction imprints on more of the brain. Integrating sensory elements with information in demonstrations or learning exchanges makes them more powerful.



#### 29ROOMS: INTOUCH SENSORY TUNNEL

A multisensory tunnel that guests experience blindfolded with only binaural sound, smell, and touch to guide them forces them to fill in the details with their mind's eye.

## Trend Four Sensorial Immersion

Example:  
Dolby Soho



Ingredient brands like Dolby face a unique challenge. While Dolby appears in the products we buy and the experiences we enjoy—and arguably makes those interactions more indelible—their technology is within a product or experience marketed under another brand name such as Apple, Microsoft, AMC Theaters, etc. Providing consumers with Dolby branded experiences helps drive preference for the products of other companies using their solutions.



Dolby leveraged the power of experiential to overcome this ingredient brand challenge with the creation of their Dolby SoHo experiential space. A multisensory playground, the lab immerses visitors in state-of-the-art Dolby sound and highly visual content, including film, television, gaming, music, sports, and a variety of interactive workshops and changing exhibits. It was also designed to be eye-catching—perfect for social sharing.



Dolby recently staged a large Elton John installation timed with the release of the Elton John biopic, *Rocketman*. The experience combines a physical display of artifacts with interactive exhibits and rich Dolby audio with the artist's volume of music.





## Trend Five

### Story-Living

#### Why this matters

Immersive technology, such as multisensory engagement, AI, and social media's authoring culture, is increasingly permeating our lives. This in turn increases consumers' appetite for more personalized experiences that consider their specific interests and incorporate their voice. These advances enable consumers to experience and engage with brands in multiple ways, and on their own terms, satisfying this desire in events while deepening affinity and powering success.

#### Application

Integration is key to enabling participants to cast themselves fully into the brand narrative and create their own event experience in ways most important to them. Explore every component for opportunities to go from passive to active, from content session experience to common space and exhibit area interactions. Enabling attendees to create their story about your event deepens attachment and increases social sharing.





## Trend Five Story-Living

### Examples:

Westworld at SXSW 2018

Sharingbox

Photo Mosaic



HBO's recreation of the Westworld experience at SXSW 2018 was a one-of-a-kind story-living experience that enabled fans to feel like they were in the HBO series by stepping off the train and looking down the main street, having the same feelings of curiosity and excitement as guests do in the show. They also got to interact with characters from the show, in effect becoming characters in the program themselves.



Sharingbox provides event attendees with "Inscribe," a video stand experience for event common spaces where participants create and share their own branded digital messages in a boomerang gif format they can upload to their own and the event's social media sites. Here Nike taps into their followers' desire to express themselves and to share that expression in attention-worthy ways.



Photo Mosaic: Event attendees take their photo and get a branded print of it to keep, as well as one that has a sticker with a code telling them where to place it on the wall. The photos create a brand image mosaic of which each participant is a part. The completed image is also available for download and sharing.



## Trend Six

### Documentary Storytelling

#### Why this matters

Real stories—told by real people speaking their own words instead of scripted statements—ring with authenticity and emotional relevance that is often missing in standard approaches to promotional content. In this post-truth era of “fake news” and skepticism of brands and their marketing, documentary storytelling can effectively build trust and connection between communicators and audiences wary of manipulation.

#### Application

Producers of event content are combining narrative documentary storytelling technique with data visualization to set product, service, and solution information into hyper-short-form cinematic experiences, activating them at events in everything from large-scale general session staging to immersive exhibition hall and common area theaters. Enhanced with augmented reality, they grab attention, communicate with credibility, and drive memorability.



## Trend Six

### Documentary Storytelling

#### Examples:

IBM Moonshot

Symphonologie

Augmented Reality Data Visualization



On July 20, 1969, with only 400 feet to reach the moon's surface, an alarm on the lunar module sounded, indicating the computers were about to shut down and alerting NASA to abort the mission. This mini documentary, which premiered at IBM Think, showcased how technology advances developed by IBM engineers enabled NASA to complete the nearly failed Apollo 11 landing and achieve their "moonshot."



Symphonologie: This unique symphony, the first live symphonic experience scored from business data, was created from the sentiment of today's business world and performed live at the Louvre Museum in Paris.



The convergence of design disciplines of gaming, film, AR, and VR—combined with increased processing power—enables communication far beyond the abilities of traditional slide graphics, video, or film on screens. Documentary-style storytelling merging narrative with data visualization puts brand information into a compelling context. Data visualizations overlaid onto the media or live narrative via augmented reality impress through animation at scale.





## Trend Seven

### Large-Scale Content Environments

#### Why this matters

As attendees' expectations spiral upward due to the ubiquity of video and special effects in everyday life and as competition for engaging attendees at big events continues to escalate, brands can garner attention and communicate at great distances across exhibition halls and up close, with large-scale immersive video environments choreographed to tell single or multiple stories with unprecedented impact.

#### Application

Advances in LED video technology enable brands to have large-scale environments incorporating vast numbers of discreet video screen surfaces combined with very large contiguous expanses of screen surfaces. These can be choreographed as one canvas to tell an overarching story across all surfaces and then switch to use as discreet surfaces each with its own content, enabling storytelling at unprecedented power and scale.

Companies are able to bring brand pillars to life with dynamically changing content and rich immersive audio via these large audio-visual canvases. Audiences are naturally drawn to these cinematic journeys, enabling brands to reap a larger share of the attendees' time. Choreographed content environments can take visitors to new worlds, lift emotions through colorful landscapes, and share emotional, heartwarming stories.



## Trend Seven Large-Scale Content Environments

**Example:**  
Fiat Chrysler Automobiles



The technology creates the canvas, but the real opportunity in this approach lies within the content strategy. The video configuration allows all screens to be used in a variety of ways. In this case, within the 20-minute show, one overarching animated message played across all screens unified as one canvas, and then, seven brand stories were brought to life across the screens to change mood, energy, and product focus.



Transitional media takeover on all surfaces grabs attention and draws attendees in from neighboring spaces. This builds excitement for all visitors and introduces large-scale brand stories.

The brand takeover segment in which all screen surfaces display one story arc delivers a heightened storytelling experience throughout the entire stand.





## Trend Eight

### Staging as Messaging

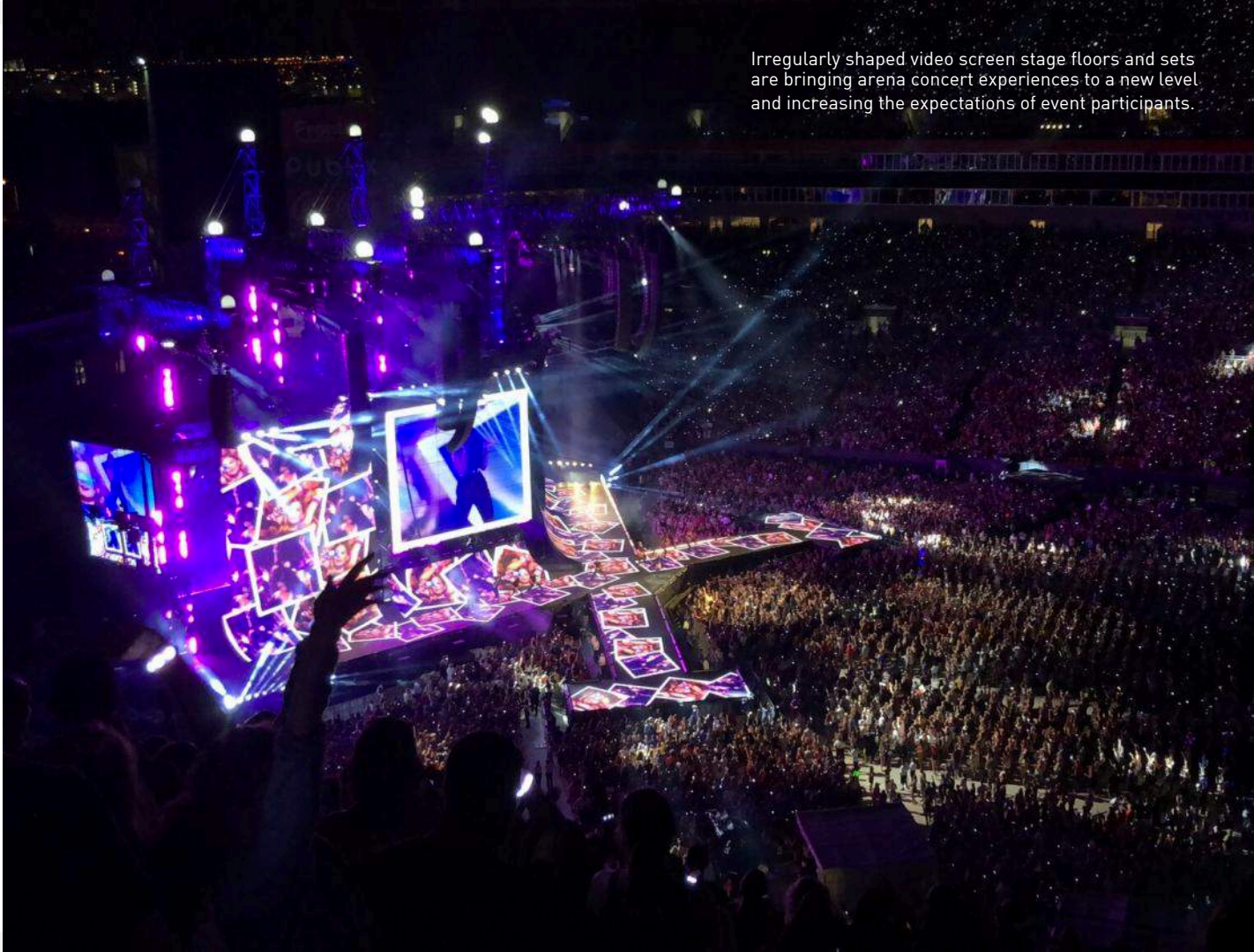
#### Why this matters

Compared to the vastly increased video screen presence in public spaces and events, keeping content confined to standard-sized screens inset into corporate stage sets fails to excite participants, is incapable of winning the distraction battle borne from always-on mobile devices, and sends cues that conflict with brand values like innovation and creativity. These techniques solve for those challenges.

#### Application

Stage sets in which the flooring and backdrop serve as a programmable video screen canvas, stage designs of irregular shapes, and kinetic stage lighting in which the fixtures take sculptural form, transform in shape, and animate and rotate in all directions frees content from mundane display and makes it a more dynamic, integral, and spectacular part of the production.

Irregularly shaped video screen stage floors and sets are bringing arena concert experiences to a new level and increasing the expectations of event participants.





## Trend Eight

### Staging as Messaging

#### Examples:

Drake concert stage

Phone-shaped stage

Kinetic lighting



Imagine product introductions where the entire stage is an animated depiction of the device.



The stage floor and backdrop from Drake's tour is edge-to-edge video screen surface, offering rich opportunities to scale and animate content and bring to life his various sung and spoken messaging.



Kinetic lighting transforms its shape in concert with the on-stage content, adding to its meaning and impact.



## Trend Nine

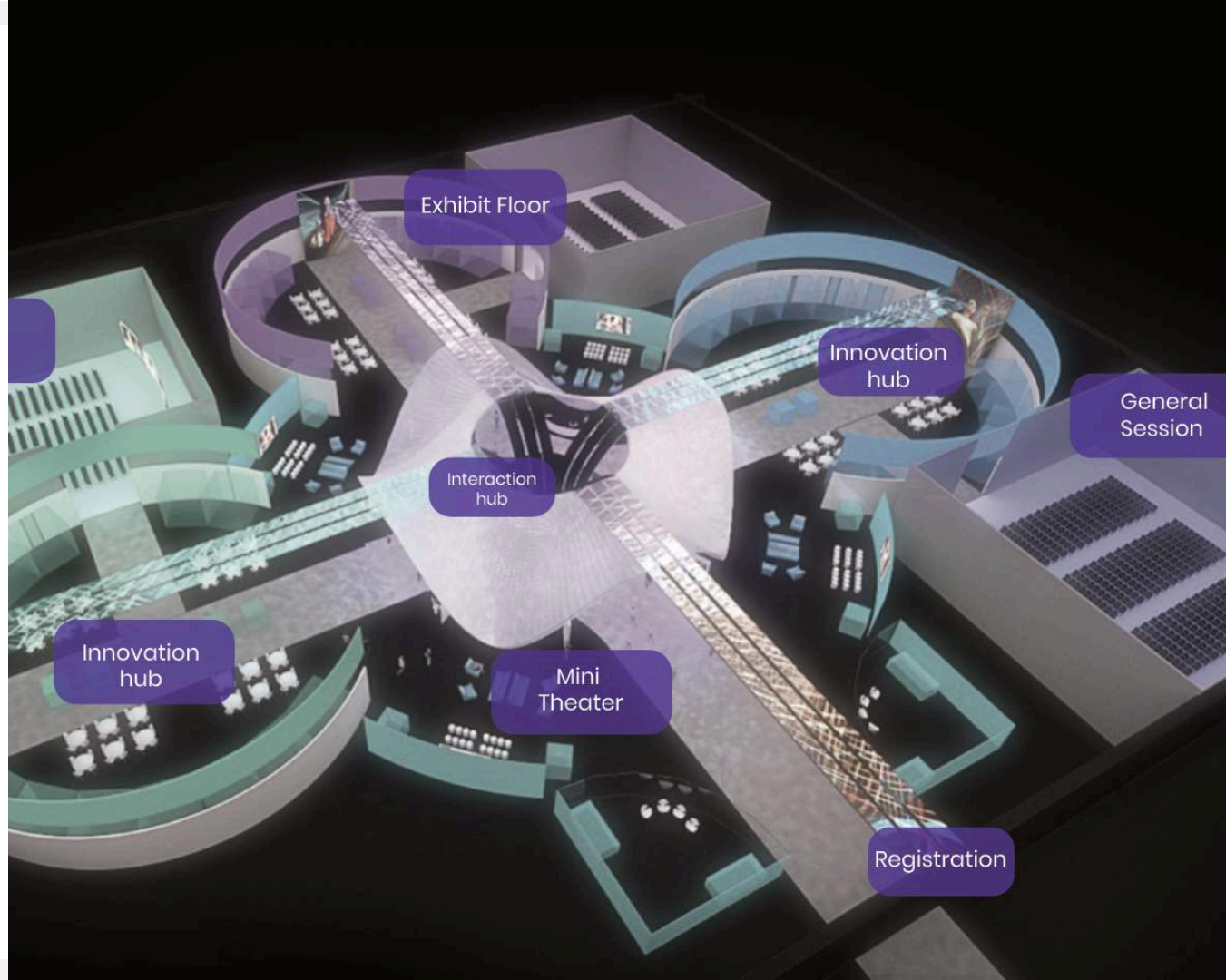
### Seamless Content Experience

#### Why this matters

Events keep getting bigger and more complex, requiring larger content development teams that are frequently structured into disconnected silos. What's more, attendees are physically drained by hiking through vast event environments and are overwhelmed by the complexity, when they would respond best to simplicity and convenience. Building for increased understanding via holistic content and improved path making makes experiences more seamless, easier to consume, and more deeply engaging.

#### Application

A deft marriage of brand and participant-driven content objectives planning, shaped by an understanding of learning styles, physical place-making, and technology provides for the most effective menu of content variety, placement, and wayfinding across all event components.



## Trend Nine Seamless Content Experience

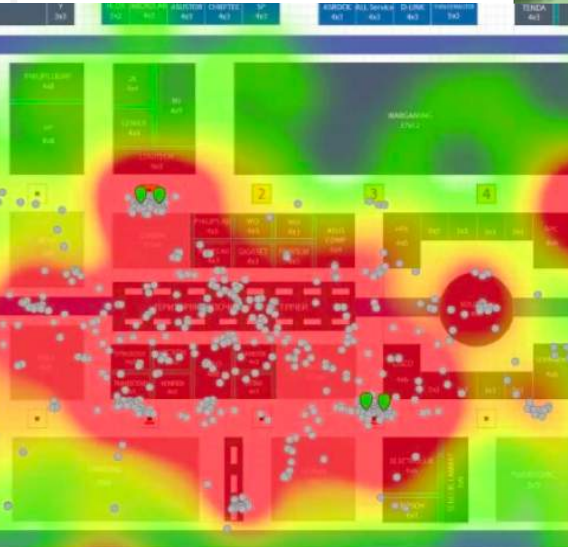
### Examples:

C2 Montreal

Cisco Global Sales Conference



Break down the content silos by placing related content in the nearest adjacent spaces. Putting “What’s Important” (to know) mini theaters right next to “How to Implement” demo sessions, next to “What’s Right for Me” consultation areas, etc., allows seamless transitions. Meet-up areas placed immediately adjacent to in-the-round general session environments are one way content, session structure, and environment intersect at C2MTL.



As attendees move throughout the space, their mindset changes based on their experience. Connecting attendees with content that matches their ongoing needs via technology tracking of the paths they’re taking through the environment dramatically increases the relevance and stickiness of that content. This dynamic connectivity makes a large, complex event feel more personal, helping attendees get the most from the experience.



At Cisco’s Global Sales Conference, every attendee has their own personal goals to achieve at the event. Cisco’s event app connects them to the places and activities that will best meet their goals so they spend less time searching and more time exploring and engaging. Such apps can be related to static directional graphics or connected to dynamic wayfinding elements.





## Trend Ten

### Innovation at the Content/Environment/ Experience Intersection

#### Why this matters

Attention and engagement are the new currencies of effective experience but are difficult to engineer when we carry the distraction of access to the world in our pocket devices. Attendees demand to be recast as participants and the more they participate, the deeper they engage, the greater the adoption of new ideas that lead to desired levels of brand affiliation and action.

#### Application

Participant-centric experiences, design-driven by diverse learning and information sharing styles, yield an ever-widening menu of content and environment formats for knowledge exchange. Labs, collaboration spaces, brain date lounges, mini-theaters, interactive galleries, and re-invented general session spaces featuring multiple in-room remote stages obliterate the dominance of the 60-minute talking head. Fast animation with dynamic exchange and hands-on experience is the rule.

At C2MTL, standard keynote formats were replaced by Agora talks, which were interviews instead of speeches held on Stage Agora, the marketplace of ideas set up in the round. Each quadrant of the seating was repurposed at other times for brain dates, experimental labs, live streaming, and a hangout.



# Trend Ten

## Innovation at the Content/Environment/Experience Intersection

### Example:

C2 Montreal

#### Structured

*A single point in time*

#### Conference Blocks

*(Inspiring Talks & Panels)*  
Stories pertaining to the larger theme (Tomorrow) as told by innovators from all walks of life

#### Labs

Experimental ideation sessions in atypical environments designed to throw participants off-guard and create the ideal conditions for new patterns to emerge

#### Collaborative Sessions

*(Workshops & Masterclasses)*  
Creative playgrounds where you get your hands dirty, immerse yourself in a new process and ponder solutions to real-world problems

#### Agora Talks

Taking the place of a 'traditional keynote' Agora Talks wrap up each day with a fireside chat or interview with speakers

#### Unstructured

*Engage on your own terms*

#### "Plug in" activities

Includes braindates, speed coaching and certain sponsored talks

#### "Time off" activities

Activities that encourage attendees to recharge and reflect including BMW test drives, Goat Yoga, morning meditation sessions and VR experiences

#### Arts & Celebration

A variety of announced and unannounced live performances from music to acrobatics

#### Braindates

A platform for attendees post topics, book meetings with peers through Kik and set up small group or 1:1 discussions

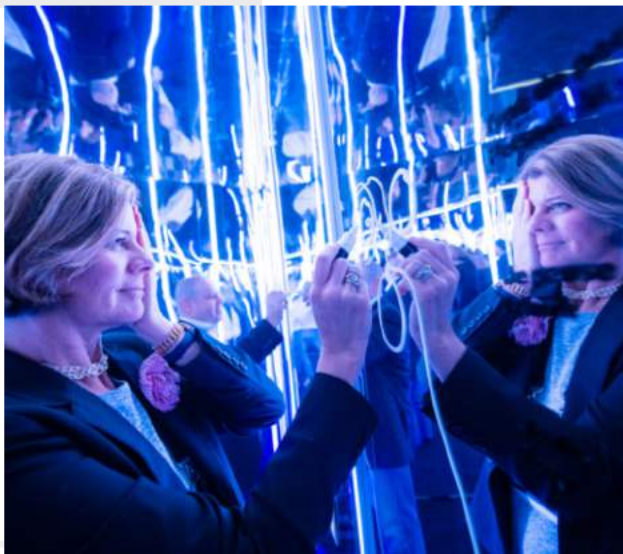
Our analysis of experience modes reveals that C2MTL provides participants with two categories of format—structured and unstructured—and invites attendees to choose options from each menu to structure their days.



#### Conference Forum Blocks

*Structured Experience*

Innovators from all walks of life give inspiring talks and panel stories pertaining to the larger theme.



#### Labs

*Structured Experience*

Experimental ideation sessions in atypical environments are designed to throw participants off-guard and create the ideal conditions for new patterns to emerge. These highly interactive opportunities allow attendees to experience different human vulnerabilities in safe environments.





## Trend Ten

### Innovation at the Content/Environment/ Experience Intersection

#### Example:

C2 Montreal



#### Collaborative Sessions Workshops and Master Classes

*Structured Experience*

Creative playgrounds allow you to get your hands dirty, immerse yourself in a new process, and ponder solutions to real-world problems. Seating at tables for four encourages small-group collaboration catalyzed by on-stage topic leads.



#### Collaborative Sessions Workshops and Master Classes

*Structured Experience*

Panels break the “four-behind-a-straight-table” model to create more of a TV roundtable format with overhead screens capturing each panelist. Audience is seated around small tables to enable group discussion of panel-led topics.



#### Collaborative Sessions Studio Environment

*Structured Experience*

Group collaboration is facilitated by intimate “studios” featuring work tables set with materials to ideate, based on the subjects under discussion and supported by content on the screens.



## Trend Ten

Innovation at the  
Content/Environment/  
Experience Intersection

### Example:

C2 Montreal



### Agora Talks

*Structured Experience*

Instead of a “traditional keynote,”  
Agora Talks wrap up each day with a  
fireside chat or interview with speakers  
staged in the round.



### “Time off” Activities

*Unstructured Experience*

Activities that encourage  
attendees to recharge and  
reflect include BMW test  
drives, goat yoga, morning  
meditation sessions, and  
VR experiences.



### “Plug in” Activities

*Unstructured Experience*

Includes brain dates,  
speed coaching, and  
certain sponsored talks.  
This brain dates  
environment was  
facilitated by an app  
through which  
participants arranged to  
meet with others who had  
mutual interests.







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