

eventbrite

THE PULSE REPORT

2019 EVENT INDUSTRY TRENDS



EVERY EVENT IS DIFFERENT. BUT IS YOURS DIFFERENT IN THE WRONG WAY?

In this exclusive report, you'll discover how your event compares to industry standards. Based on survey responses from more than 1,200 event creators across the United States and Canada, this data represents a wide range of event types and sizes.

Read on to better understand how your event stacks up — and get specific tips for zeroing in on ways to make your event successful. You'll be surprised by what opportunities you may have overlooked.

This report is for:

Any event professional who wants to gain a deep understanding of the current state of the events industry. Whether you're just starting out in the industry or you've been involved for years, use this report to benchmark against other professionals.

You'll learn...

- The technology and tactics event professionals consider most and least effective
- The most common challenges events face today and how to overcome them
- The industry trends you've been ignoring — but shouldn't

Contents

Methodology **05**

Industry **07**

Strategies **14**

Technologies **19**

Opportunities **21**

Stand Out **25**

Methodology

The results of the 2019 Pulse Report are based on responses from more than 1,200 event professionals in the United States and Canada. These event creators organize everything from business and networking events to performing arts and entertainment events, from classes and workshops to nonprofit events to fitness events and festivals.

1,200

More than 1,200 event professionals
in the United States and Canada

50%

Have teams of less than
5 people

60%

Run 6+ events in a year

58%

Say the purpose of their events is to
educate or to build community

These event creators wear multiple hats

When asked about their primary event-related responsibilities, these event creators do a bit of everything, including:



80%

Setting up ticketing or registrations

80%

Managing ticketing and registrations

80%

Promoting the event

75%

Branding and marketing the event

70%

Ensuring the event runs smoothly

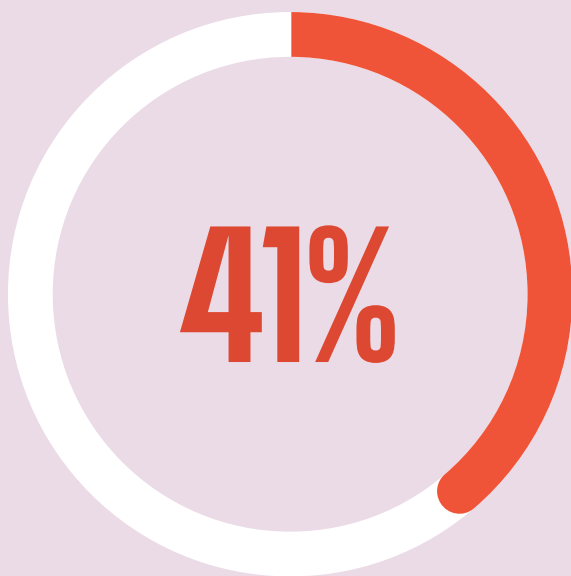
The events industry at a glance: The market for live experiences is growing

The event industry is financially healthy: Budgets are growing or staying stable; very few events report shrinking budgets.

So where is this spend going? And how are events defining success? Read on to learn more about the events landscape in 2019.

More events and bigger budgets in 2019

The events industry is thriving — nearly half of respondents (49%) said they plan to host more events in 2019; 47% plan to host the same number of events. And, 33% of survey-takers said they typically run two to five events a year.



say they will be increasing spending on marketing and promotion in 2019

While the majority of respondents (50%) believe their budgets will stay the same in 2019, 38% say budgets will grow. Very few events say they'll be reducing budgets in the months ahead: Only 6% report lowered budgets.

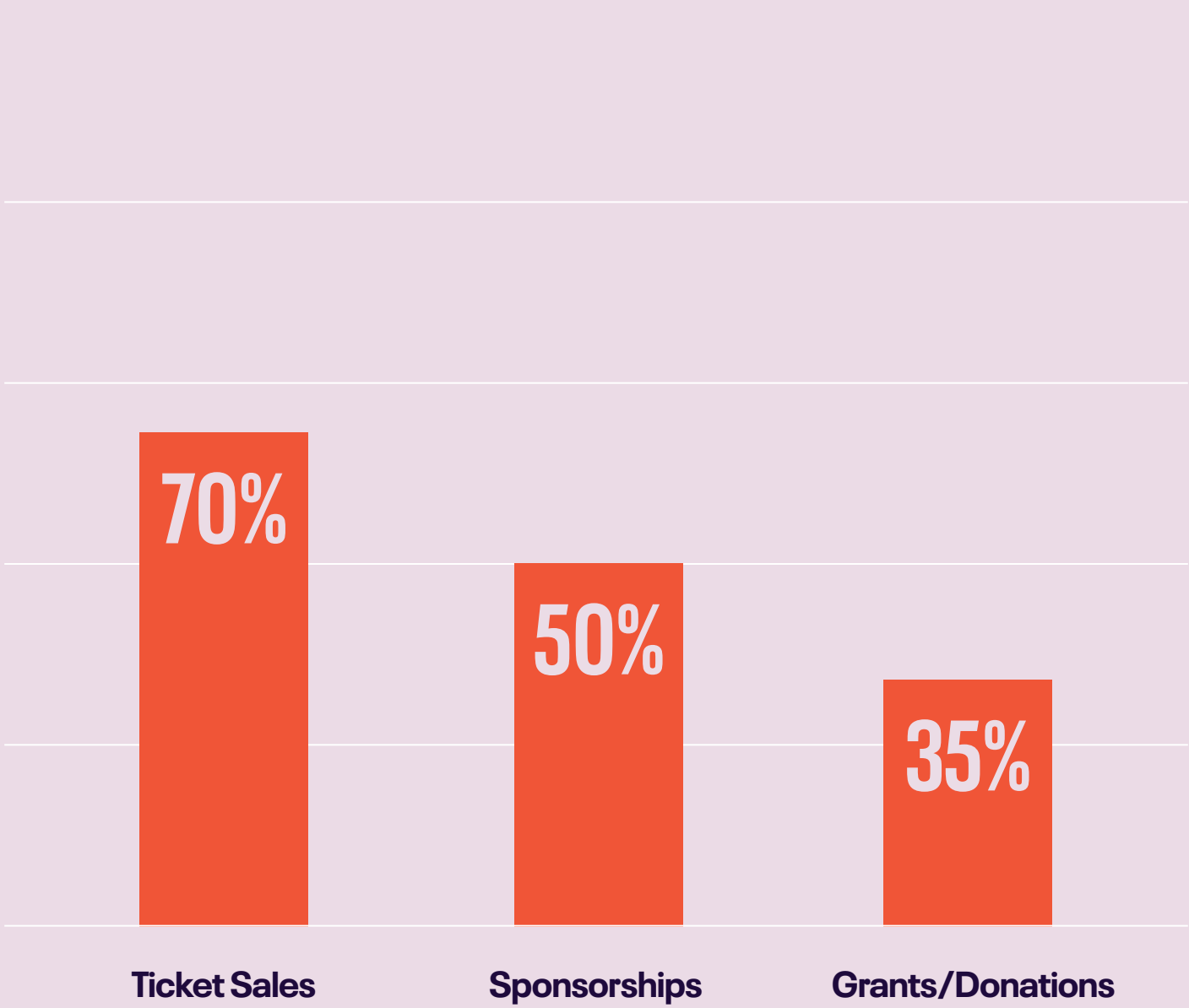
The biggest driver of budget growth is marketing and promotion. 41% say they will be increasing spending in this area — notable given that marketing and promotion is already tied for the top spend category (alongside food and beverage).

⚡ — Key Takeaway

Marketing and promotion is where events teams are increasing their budget (and staff). This [complete guide](#) to event marketing will help you get it right, whether it's your first event or your hundredth.

TOP REVENUE SOURCES AND GOALS FOR SUCCESS

Top sources of event revenue



Having the right event metrics can help you fine tune your marketing, improve sales and increase your attendance turnout. But what metrics should you, as an event organizer, be focusing on?

These are the top three metrics event creators use to measure success:



Overall Attendance Rate

83.7%



Verbal Feedback

48%



Profitability

41%

While these metrics are important, you might be surprised by how little else event creators measure to track success. Only 23% collect post-event surveys. Just 36% do any type of social media monitoring during or after their event. These are big opportunities to develop and improve.

TOP THREE CHALLENGES FOR THE INDUSTRY:

Continued struggles to expand reach — and budget



Reaching new attendees

The number one challenge for event creators in 2019 is reaching new attendees (56%). To this end, it's vital for event organizers to refine their skills in marketing, promotion, social media, and community building.



Insufficient budget

Even with 4 out of 10 respondents increasing budget for marketing, the need to make budgets stretch is still a challenge. More than a third of respondents (33%) say insufficient budget is among their top challenges in the event industry.



Securing sponsors

Given resource constraints, many event organizers choose to share costs by partnering up with sponsors. These partners can often be cheaper than carrying the cost yourself, freeing up your budget for other uses — like benefits, food and drinks, and insurance. However, securing sponsors rounds out the top challenges for event creators, with 29% saying that getting these sponsors is a struggle.

Most events have a small tiger team that's doing the heavy lifting. In fact, 50% of respondents said their events team consists of less than five people.

Thankfully, some of these teams will be adding new team members in 2019. While more than half (54%) said their team is going to stay the same size in 2019, 30% said they plan to increase their staffing. For those that are hiring, 44% said they're looking for marketing and communications professionals.

The good news is that once you hire an event professional, they're likely to stick around. Although events are named as one of the world's most stressful jobs, more than half of respondents (53%) said they're satisfied with their job in event management. And according to Glassdoor, the national average salary for an Event Marketing Manager is \$93,125 in United States.

¹ Salary estimate based on 39,804 salaries submitted anonymously to Glassdoor by Event Marketing Manager employees (October 2018)



of respondents said their event team consists of less than five people

⚡ — Key Takeaway

If you're one of the lucky 30% who gets to grow their events team next year, lean into marketing. No one will come to your event if they don't know about it. That's why events are growing their marketing and communications team. If you haven't invested in a strong marketing team, and put effort into how you're conveying why your event is worth attending, now's the time to do so.

Looking to hire the best event marketer you can?

Check out Eventbrite's [Event Marketing Course](#) to get up to speed

Strategies to drive attendance: The highs and lows of event marketing in 2019

More than half of respondents (53%) said marketing and promotion was a top expense in 2018. And this trend shows no sign of slowing: More than 40% say their budget for marketing and promotion will increase in 2019.

But even with a stable or increased budget, the push is on to get scrappy about marketing and promotion. 56% of event creators state that “reaching new attendees” is their biggest challenge, and increased competition (50%) is the biggest trend affecting them. That means event creators need to know where to invest their marketing dollars and where to cut their efforts.

The most effective marketing tactics in 2018

With seemingly infinite tools at your disposal — social media, email marketing, discovery sites, paid ads — it’s hard to know where to focus your attention. Benchmark yourself against the tactics that event professionals said were most effective in 2018.



Word of mouth (63%)

Partially thanks to the rise of social media, one of the oldest types of marketing is more powerful than ever before: word of mouth.

⚡ **Put it into action:** Find the passionate advocates within your existing customer base, and give them the tools and motivation to help sell tickets. Learn how you can identify social ringleaders — the people who attend the most events, invite the most friends, and spread the most hype about your event.



Social media marketing (49%)

In 2018, Facebook and Instagram were the top social platforms to reach event-goers. The more you post and gain followers, the more people come to your event, the more people post on social media about your event — which in turn drives more followers to your account and the cycle begins again.

⚡ **Put it into action:** Selling out your events is your top priority. And your social media strategy is how to make it happen. Make sure your social promotions have the most impact they can by selling directly on social platforms like Facebook and Instagram.

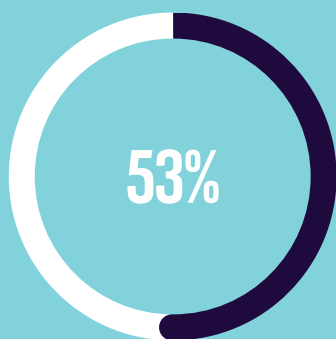


Email marketing (38%)

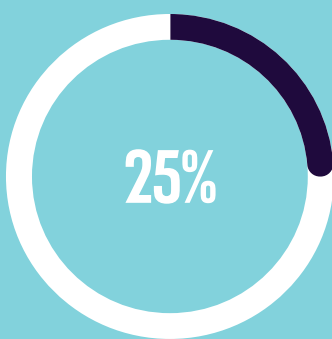
When it comes to marketing your event, you can't ignore email. And event creators agree: email rounds out the top three most effective channels for event marketing.

⚡ Put it into action: If you're resting on the email practices you instituted five years ago, you're not doing email right anymore. Not sure where your email strategy stacks up? Check out this benchmarking survey to see how your email marketing efforts compare, and where you could polish your efforts to differentiate your event emails from your competition.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA TACTICS VOTED MOST EFFECTIVE IN 2018



Organic social



Paid Facebook/Instagram ads



Video

The three most overlooked — but effective — event promotion strategies

Don't stop at the promotional tactics every event is using. Here are some tactics that event marketers aren't using to set you apart from the competition.



Experiential marketing (41%)

Nearly 60% of event creators aren't using experiential marketing. But immersive, live, and memorable, experiential campaigns can help you capture your audience's attention. In addition, experiential marketing can help you humanize your or a sponsor's brand, and create experiences that leave people with lasting, positive brand impressions.

⚡ Put it into action: While there's no one right way to approach experiential marketing, at its core it's all about immersing consumers in memorable live experiences. What to learn how brands have made experiential marketing work for them? Check out [Inside Experiential Marketing: Big-Name Brands Share Secrets to Success.](#)



SEO (56%)

Almost half (46%) of respondents said they aren't using SEO. But if you're not investing in search engine optimization (SEO) for your event pages, you're losing sales. [Research shows that 89% of attendees use search for purchase decisions.](#)

⚡ Put it into action: Set up your site to be search engine-friendly to ensure that people can find your event when they do a web search. When potential attendees are looking online for something to do, make sure your event [shows up first.](#)

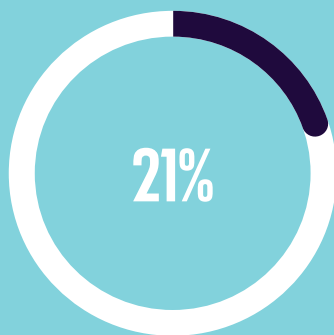


Direct mail (41%)

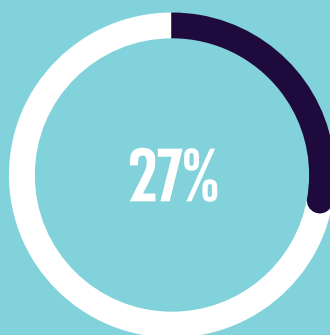
While email is one of the most effective marketing channels, direct mail is an underutilized channel. 59% of event creators said they aren't using direct mail. But even email companies are getting in on direct mail. Email marketing tool [MailChimp](#) recently released a service allowing users to easily create, personalize, and mail postcards using their technology.

⚡ Put it into action: If you didn't think direct mail was worth your time or money, technology is now making it easier (and cheaper) for you to get in front of potential attendees. Not ready to commit to direct mail? Start small: Send flyers or save the dates to part of your mailing list and measure the results. If you see positive impact, hit up the rest of your database. [Going offline](#) might just give you the extra leverage you need to get your attendance numbers up

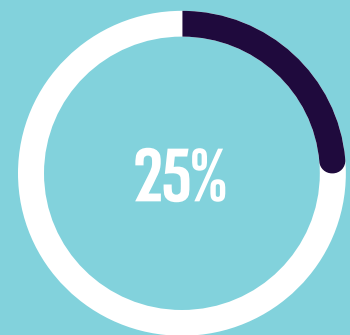
THE MARKETING TACTICS EVENT CREATORS SAID WERE LEAST EFFECTIVE IN 2018



SEO



SEM



Webinars

Cell phones, cordless headphones, smart watches. Event professionals rely on personal technology to plan events. But uptake of exciting new technologies at events is still muted (likely due to cost).

While some new technologies seem a bit more about glitz and novelty (read: robots, drones, holograms), the research shows that event creators aren't cashing in on flashy tech. Instead, they're sticking to the tools that are becoming cheaper, easier to manage, and widely used by attendees.

These are the technology that are leading the pack:



Mobile event apps (60.5%)

In 2018, 53% of respondents used mobile apps. That number will grow in 2019, with 60.5% of event creators planning to use the tech.

⚡ Put it into action: From comic cons and festivals to conferences and workshops, event organizers are turning to mobile apps to personalize the event. These interactive apps empower attendees to take control of their own experiences — and stay connected to all your event has to offer. Find the right one for your event here.



Cashless payments (40%)

Nearly half of event organizers (47%) used cashless payments in 2018, and roughly the same (48%) plan to use the technology in 2019.

⚡ Put it into action: If you aren't already taking advantage of cashless technology, you could be missing out on sales. Think about how many times you've skipped a purchase because the line was too long, or because you didn't have cash? Use mobile payments like Apple Pay or RFID wristbands so attendees can buy quickly. Many festivals have seen double-digit growth since implementing mobile payments.



Livestreaming (40%)

Investing in a live video strategy can have real impact on your bottom line. In fact, viewers spend 8X longer with live video than recorded video. And video rewards brands with a 97% increase in intent to buy.

⚡ Put it into action: As promoters compete for eyeballs in social media newsfeeds, live video is a key differentiator. That's why 40% of event creators plan to use livestreaming in 2019, compared to only 27% in 2018. Find out how to get started with livestreaming here.

What event organizers aren't thinking about — but should

Issues like event security, data privacy, and sustainability are critical factors in event management. But event organizers aren't convinced. Those big concepts are hard to prioritize when you're focused on driving attendance.

However, these are areas that could mean the difference between a long-lasting event — and declining attendance year over year. Here are two key areas you should pay attention to in 2019.

Environmental sustainability (5%)

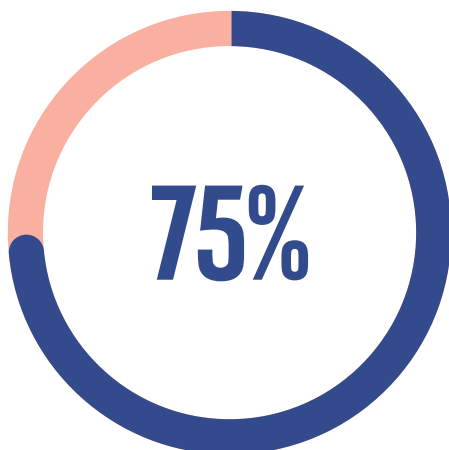
Just 5% of event creators say sustainability will have a big impact in 2019. But if your trash cans are overflowing with water bottles or your vendors waste resources, it could leave a bad impression on your green-leaning guests.



According to Skift, a media company that provides news, research, and marketing services for the travel industry, “Events with environmental certifications may have an advantage, but as expectations rise, this will soon be a minimum requirement.” In fact, consumers base purchase decisions off sustainability — 75% of consumers take corporate sustainability responsibility into account when making a purchase.

Here’s how you can boost your sustainability now:

- **Choose a sustainable event venue and location.** Choose a facility that is LEED-certified, which means the venue adheres to standards that make it energy efficient. If LEED-certified venues are in short supply in your area, ask potential venues how they can help your event reduce its carbon footprint. Venue location matters, too, since how your guests get to your event matters. Look for venues that are accessible by public transportation. You can even go a step further by incentivizing attendees to leave cars behind by offering a free shuttle, arranging car sharing, or other accommodations.
- **Offer recycling and compost at your event.** Ensure that there are clearly labeled recycling bins so that your guests know where to dispose of paper and plastic. You can go a step further and include composting bins, too. Not only will you be doing your part, but your guests will notice your brand’s commitment.



of consumers take corporate sustainability responsibility into account when making a purchase.

- **Work with a sustainable event caterer.** If you're serving meals and snacks, show that you care about the environment. Work with vendors that use only locally and responsibly sourced ingredients and recycled or eco-friendly dinnerware. You may also consider setting up water stations to reduce the number of plastic bottles. (Bonus tip: Find a local organization that will accept donations of any leftover food.)

Data privacy (7%)

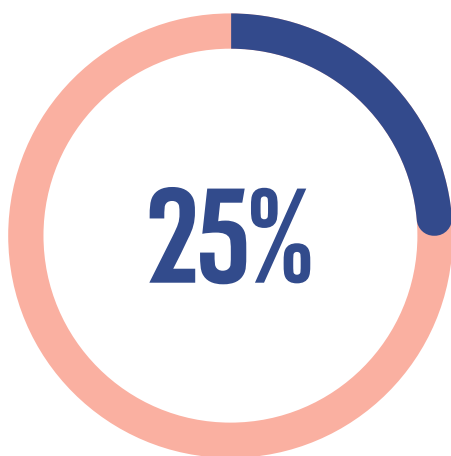
Only 7% say data privacy will have a big impact on their event in 2019. But headlines about big-name data breaches are becoming more and more frequent. In 2016, 4.2 billion records were exposed, with more than half of these caused by hackers. If data security isn't top of mind for your events team — it should be.

When attendees register for your event, they take for granted that their name, email, and credit card will be safe in your system. And potential attendees expect your team to protect them from data manipulation like ticketing fraud. As many as one in four secondhand tickets priced over \$200 is fake.



Here are three proactive steps you can take to keep your data safe and your customers free from fraud.

- **Keep your registration process simple and secure.** Attendees shouldn't even notice the measures you've taken to protect them. This means you should avoid requiring CAPTCHA fields as part of the registration process, as they act as a signal to buyers that your checkout process isn't secure.
- **Use fool-proof tech.** if you're going to rely on your technology to ensure privacy and security for your users, choose the right technology partner. Quality ticketing technology partners should take care of advanced data security for you and make their security efforts transparent.
- **Choose a trusted venue.** Work with venues that take security just as seriously as you do. If your venue is collecting data from your customers, the methods and technologies have to be highly secure. Obviously, their data-collection processes must be pristine. But you should also pay attention to things like WiFi security and how on-site staff use social media during your event.



**As many as one in four
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over \$200 is fake.**

STAND OUT IN 2019

If you don't understand your metrics — or how you compare to industry standards — you could be missing out on a huge chunk of revenue.

Take the time to evaluate your tools, technology, and resources based on what you've learned in this guide. Then rely on an event management system with built-in reports, so you can track your progress against these insights all year round.

To use this data to host your next great event, [get started now.](#)



Powered three million events in 2017.

Eventbrite brings the world together through live experiences. More than 700,000 organizers used Eventbrite in 2017 to drive ticket sales, promote and manage events, handle on-site operations, and analyze results across multiple sales channels.

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Grow your event
More than 200 million tickets were issued in 2017.



Simplify your planning
Promote, manage, and analyze your event from any device.



Impress your attendees
Delight with ease of purchase, convenient ticket access, and speedier entry.