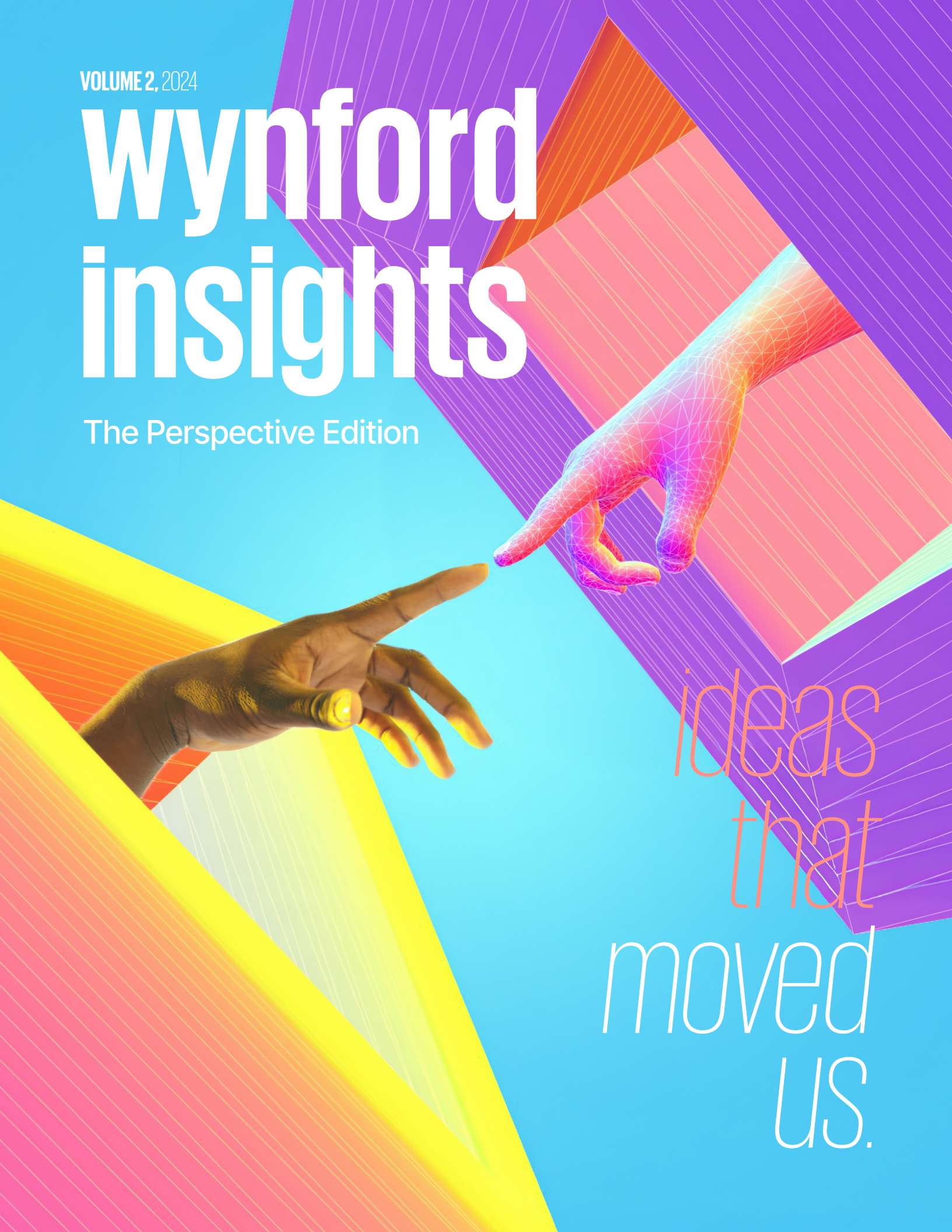


VOLUME 2, 2024

wynford insights

The Perspective Edition



*ideas
that
moved
us.*



In an industry that thrives on evolution, it's all too easy to get caught up in the next new idea—what's edgier, what's bolder, what's unexplored?

At times, we can feel like shapeshifters, always adapting, always moving forward. But every now and then, we're granted something rare: the luxury to pause and reflect. It's in these moments we rediscover the power of perspective.

This is the afterglow—the celebration of how far we've come, and the spark that fuels us to take our ideas even further. For Wynford, 2024 was more than a year of innovation; it was about redefining what's possible. We took imaginative ideas and made them real, mastering new technologies and taking risks that paid off in ways we couldn't have dreamed of. More than that, we focused on crafting experiences that fostered genuine connection and inclusivity. This year wasn't just about breaking boundaries—it was about rewriting the rules.

Welcome to The Perspective Edition. We've arrived here by thinking beyond the status quo and daring to be different. And as we reflect on the moves that shifted our ideologies and broadened our horizons, we're already setting our sights on the endless possibilities ahead.

From all of us at Wynford, keep turning heads and redefining the remarkable.

— Wynford's Experience Design Team

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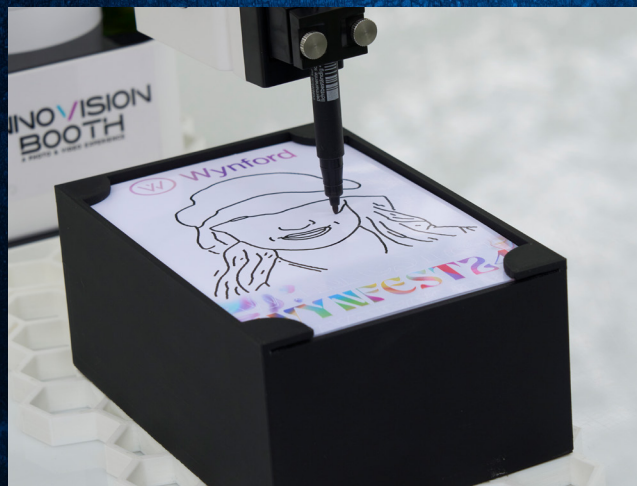


AI ISN'T JUST CHANGING THE GAME, IT'S REWRITING THE RULES]

When directed by human imagination and ingenuity, AI can smash expectations. It's quickly bringing untapped ideas to life more innovatively and efficiently than ever before, and we're just getting started with the possibilities. At Wynford, we're constantly exploring new ways to integrate AI into our events—leveling up experiences in ways that feel anything but cookie-cutter.

NEXT-GEN SELFIES

Partnering with our friends at The Idea Hunter, we're bringing the latest selfie tech to life with AI artists. These futuristic art-bots draw personalized portraits of guests using technology to create a modern twist on the standard headshot. They might not be Picasso, but they've mastered the art of efficiency and personalized creativity, making sure every guest walks away with an entirely unexpected rendition of themselves.



CUSTOM RECOGNITION

For Wynford's annual Tenure Awards, we ditched the generic and created a one-of-a-kind musical keepsake for each winner. We started by digging into personal and professional insights. Using ChatGPT, we crafted song titles that captured each winner's essence—Side A for their business persona, Side B for who they are outside the office. Custom record labels and jackets were designed using AI tools like MidJourney and Adobe Firefly. To top it off, we composed tracks in their favourite genres using UDIO, an AI music generator. Each song was accessible via a QR code on the jacket. The result? A totally rockstar, unforgettable keepsake that made each recipient feel truly seen and honoured.





Hola!



Bonjour!



Hello!



W

こんにちは



Hallo!



BREAKING BARRIERS

Thanks to AI, language barriers are a thing of the past. With AI-powered translation tools, we're serving up real-time, multi-language replays and closed captioning that break down communication walls. For global events, it's a game-changer. Now, everyone can be part of the dialogue, no matter where they're from or what language they speak. Innovative tech is helping us evolve towards true belonging, and that's something we can all get behind.

ELEVATING SUSTAINABILITY

Luxury venues like Four Seasons are leveraging AI-powered solutions, such as Winnow, to dramatically reduce food waste while maintaining their commitment to sustainability. By integrating AI in their kitchens, food waste can be cut by up to 50%, saving costs while proving that luxury and environmental responsibility can coexist. For clients seeking venues that are leading the way in sustainability, consider sourcing properties that prioritize innovative food waste management solutions.

PRODUCTION IN PROGRESS

Picture this: your CEO is in The Matrix, dodging digital bullets with AI-crafted precision. Or maybe they're not in the office at all, but attending Coachella, fully immersed as an influencer, front row at the hottest set, courtesy of a few clicks and clever algorithms. With AI, you can place anyone, anywhere, in any context—whether it's reimagining cult classic moments or creating entirely new realities. And here's the kicker: they don't even need to be filmed. AI can generate hyper-realistic scenes using just still images and short voice clips. The second win? Boundless creativity. AI unlocks a world of special effects and immersive settings, all with just a few clicks. When budget and logistics are no longer creative roadblocks, the possibilities are endless.

let's get sentimental the benefits of nuar

With costs rising and budgets tightening, every event planner is under more pressure than ever to justify spending. The per-attendee cost has skyrocketed by 25% since 2019, and another 7% hike is expected, according to GBTA and CWT. The key to winning budget battles and proving ROI lies in leveraging the right mix of data points—and when leveraged effectively, sentiment data can be your secret weapon.

It's more than knowing what your attendees do—it's also learning how they feel. By tapping into those emotions, you're not just tracking activity; you're curating memorable, personalized experiences that resonate. Easier said than done? Here's how we're putting it into practice.

Capturing participant emotions is powerful. But how do we do it?

UNDERSTANDING SENTIMENT DATA

Sentiment data focuses on understanding how your attendees feel about the event—emotional, qualitative, and deeply personal. This goes beyond numbers and gets to the heart of an experience. And here's the good news: you're likely already gathering this in some form:

- **Surveys and Feedback Forms**
- **Social Media Monitoring**
- **Net Promoter Score (NPS)**
- **Sentiment Analysis Tools**

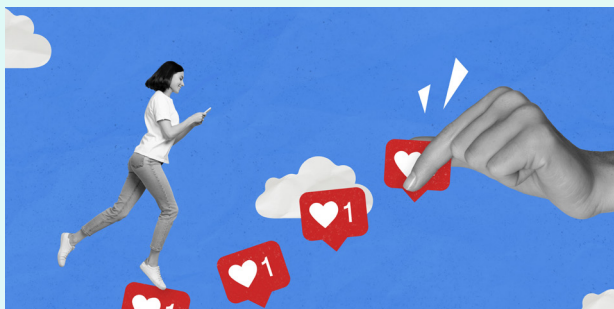
But the real magic? Knowing how to use it.

PUT THE DATA TO WORK

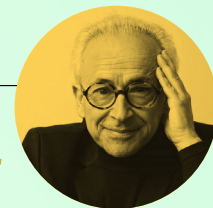
Use emotional feedback as a pulse check. Real-time sentiment feedback allows you to adapt on the fly, ensuring every attendee feels seen. Maybe the ambiance isn't landing just right, or attendees are craving more social time—get instant feedback via mobile apps or QR codes, and make adjustments in the moments that matter most.

Here's how to turn those emotions into action:

- **Enhance the experience //** Treat attendee feedback as your playbook. Adjust the lighting, music, or flow based on real-time reactions.
- **Pivot in the moment //** If one area's buzzing while another is quiet, make the switch. Live feedback ensures your event is dynamic and responsive.



!: *We are not thinking machines that feel; rather, we are feeling machines that think,*



enced data

— Antonio Damasio (Portuguese Neuroscientist)



- **Show engagement** // Match positive sentiment with attendee engagement metrics to prove people weren't just there—they were truly connected.
- **Highlight brand affinity** // Sentiment is a mirror for your brand. If your guests feel more connected to you through the experience, that loyalty runs deep.
- **Quantify the emotional ROI** // Great events leave an impression, sparking loyalty, advocacy, and long-term brand love.

Improve Through Inclusivity

Designing for inclusivity is a core driver of emotional engagement and positive sentiment data. When attendees feel included and valued, they are more likely to be deeply connected to the experience, leading to higher participation, satisfaction, and brand loyalty.

Gather feedback to prioritize belonging. Whether it's related to neurodiversity, physical accessibility, communication needs or cultural preferences, it helps us design events that are more welcoming to everyone in the audience. And in turn, sentiment soars.

Real Talk, Real Data

Sometimes, it's as simple as asking. Small focus groups before or during your event let you dive deeper into attendee needs, creating a personal connection that surveys can't always capture. Encouraging honest, open feedback ensures more accurate insights—attendees feel safe to share their true opinions. This approach allows you to build trust, tackle sensitive topics, and make adjustments that genuinely reflect the needs of your audience.



Make it Count

Sentiment data won't stand on its own. To get the most of it, make your data work for you:

- **Use multiple touchpoints** // Use apps, polls, and surveys to gather real-time emotional feedback throughout the event.
- **Track engagement continuously** // From pre-event to post, collect feedback along the entire attendee journey.
- **Unlock candid insights** // Anonymity encourages honesty. Create safe environments for attendees to give their feedback.
- **Analyze holistically** // Pair sentiment data with performance metrics for a complete picture of your event's success.

When you lean into sentiment data, you're transforming numbers and raw emotions into actionable insights. Use it to prove your event's worth, but more importantly, use it as a sounding board to positively amplify your events, making sure each attendee feels seen, connected, and part of something bigger. It's event math at its finest.

ARTICLES WE ❤️



Meetings & Incentive Travel

["How to Use Data to Win Budget Arguments in 2024"](#)



Meetinghand

[How to Maximize Your Event Success with Real-Time Data Analysis for Immediate Impact?](#)



Skift Meetings

[The Complete Guide to Event Data Strategy](#)



noteworthy perspectives

THE VOICES THAT MOVE US]

At Wynford, we seek out speakers who blaze trails and leave their mark on our memories. In this issue, we're spotlighting our 'it-list' of powerhouse perspectives—each bringing their own brand of innovation, resilience, and vision. Whether they're exploring the far reaches of the cosmos, reshaping an industry, or transforming the world of hospitality, these speakers are

challenging us to show up better, faster and stronger every day. Perfect for audiences hungry for dynamic, game-changing content, these talks will ignite creativity, challenge the status quo, and create lasting impact.

Here's a closer look at the speakers who've captured our attention:



On Success,
Failure, & Pushing
the Limits

Dr. Shawna
Pandya

PHYSICIAN | SCIENTIST | AQUANAUT | ASTRONAUT

Dr. Shawna Pandya is a force of nature, dedicated to pushing the limits of what it means to survive and thrive. After pivoting from neurosurgery, she's been at the cutting edge of technological innovation and tackling global challenges head-on. Now, she's set to become Canada's first female commercial astronaut, preparing for her upcoming flight with Virgin Galactic to conduct space-based biomedical research.

Her journey into space exploration began with completing Scientist-Astronaut training with Project PoSSUM in 2015, where she was part of the first crew to test a commercial spacesuit in zero gravity. In 2016, as the prime crew for Project Poseidon, she contributed to advancing both ocean and space exploration and earned the prestigious Global Women of Vision award for her groundbreaking work.

Dr. Pandya's drive for excellence is fierce. A black belt in taekwondo and a regular Muay Thai practitioner in Thailand, she applies the same intensity to martial arts as she does to science. In her talks, she shares powerful insights on resilience and lifelong learning, drawing from her experiences with sociopaths, Navy SEALs, martial artists, astronauts, and her father—offering lessons that are as diverse as her incredible career trajectory.



Often credited as the “Godfather of Canadian Hip-Hop,” Wes Williams (aka Maestro Fresh Wes, or simply Maestro) is a living legend in Canadian music. His iconic track “Let Your Backbone Slide” was the first Canadian hip-hop record to achieve platinum status, a milestone unmatched for two decades. With nods from heavy hitters like Drake, The Weeknd, and Nas, Maestro’s influence resonates across generations of hip-hop artists.

Williams’ accolades go well beyond music. Honoured with a star on Canada’s Walk of Fame, he also became the first hip-hop artist to have a song inducted into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame. But his story extends beyond music—he’s made his mark in film and TV, notably starring in the long-running CBC sitcom *Mr. D*, and authored the motivational book *Stick To Your Vision*.

As a speaker, Williams brings his personal stories of evolution, resilience, and triumph to life. His TED Talks on “Self Re-Vision” are dynamic, offering lessons that connect across cultures and industries, making him a powerful voice on success and transformation.



Maestro Fresh
Wes TED Talk:
Self Re-Vision

Maestro
Fresh
Wes



Will Guidara
Sizzle Real

Will
Guidara

Will Guidara knows what it means to reach the absolute pinnacle of the hospitality world. As the co-founder of Eleven Madison Park, he helped take the restaurant to new heights, ultimately earning the prestigious title of #1 in the World’s 50 Best Restaurants in 2017, along with three Michelin stars. His influence didn’t stop there—he expanded his expertise to The NoMad Hotel, where he opened venues that garnered three stars from the New York Times and another Michelin star.

In his bestselling book *Unreasonable Hospitality, The Remarkable Power of Giving People More than they Expect*, Guidara delves into the art of leadership and service, offering lessons that go far beyond the restaurant industry. He’s all about human connection—whether it’s through extraordinary dining experiences or building a thriving professional community. That’s why he founded the Welcome Conference, an annual gathering of hospitality pros designed to share ideas, inspire, and create a true sense of belonging.

A Cornell University hospitality grad, Guidara’s accolades include co-authoring four cookbooks, being named to Crain’s New York Business 40 Under 40, and receiving the Innovator Award from WSJ Magazine. With his unmatched insight, he redefines the ideology of service, believing that going the extra mile leads to unforgettable experiences. Whether he’s discussing customer service, team leadership, or personal growth, Guidara’s message resonates: elevate everything you do, and success will follow.



back to basics: reclaim the remarkable

“The most
often the

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU DID SOMETHING FOR THE *FIRST* TIME?]

Fueling the glimmer-filled micro-moments that keep attendees captivated can be a lofty goal, but as planners, it's essential in elevating experiences to core-memory levels. We plan in a world where novelty fades quickly. It's particularly true when it plays into events, travel, and content consumption.

The psychology behind it is rooted in habituation—where repeated exposure dulls our emotional response. In the world of events, this means that without deliberate planning, even extraordinary experiences can feel lackluster. That's why attendees are always on the lookout for the next big thing.

It's easy to want to feed into the need for more. But before diving into the latest trends, it's crucial to focus on **three key elements** that truly turn a moment into something remarkable.

1) CREATE MORE FIRSTS

In the world of experiences, creating those “firsts” means unlocking unforgettable memories that resonate long after the event is over. These firsts don't just happen—they're crafted with intention. Blending novelty with personalization to create memories that leave a lasting impact:

- **Locations** // Exploring new destinations can turn the ordinary into extraordinary. Even if it's within a familiar city, a fresh venue can provide a different vantage point—whether it's a rooftop, a hidden art gallery, or a reimagined industrial space. The key is creating an environment that feels new and invigorating, sparking curiosity and excitement.
- **Activities** // Introducing uncharted activities is a surefire way to surprise and delight. Whether it's an immersive virtual reality experience or an art installation where guests become the creators, these moments of discovery can shift perspectives and ignite a sense of wonder.
- **Personalization** // Personalized “firsts” resonate on an even deeper level. Tailor experiences to attendees' unique preferences—whether it's a custom cocktail (or zero-proof beverage) crafted just for them, a surprise gift waiting at their seat that elevates the experience, a curated playlist, or a breakout session designed with their input. Personalization amplifies the emotional connection, making these moments feel even more significant.





st memorable parts of any experience are
e "firsts." This could be the first view of an ocean,
able the first taste of a unique cocktail, or
the first dive into a refreshing pool.

— Tali Sharot (cognitive Neuroscientist)



2 KEEP THE BRAIN BUZZING

When attendees are engaged in learning something new, it activates the brain's reward system, making the experience more enjoyable and memorable. By weaving in elements that spark curiosity and interaction, you can elevate the attendee experience into something that resonates deeply and stays with them long after the event ends.

- **Expert speakers** // Invite thought leaders who disrupt traditional thinking, introduce new paradigms, and provoke your audience to see the world—and their industry—differently. This is where growth happens.
- **Involve your audience** // People remember what they participate in. Move beyond passive listening and engage attendees with hands-on, smaller group workshops or interactive sessions. When they get involved—whether through collaborative problem-solving, creating something tangible, or interacting directly with the content—the experience becomes more immersive and impactful.
- **Cultural immersion** // Learning isn't limited to formal sessions. The most profound and enriching insights can come from stepping out into the local culture. Seek out unexpected experiences that invite attendees to discover the authentic flavours, sounds, languages, and traditions of the destination.
- **Braindates & micro-meets** // Foster deeper connections with more intimate, focused meet-ups. Organize small group discussions in unique spaces—whether it's over coffee in a hidden garden or in a cozy lounge area. By matching attendees based on psychographics or shared interests, you create opportunities for more meaningful dialogue and relationship-building. These micro-meets turn networking into something personal, where real ideas and connections flourish.



3 ADD MEANING

The act of giving creates a profound sense of joy and satisfaction while building a bond that lasts beyond the program. When participants are involved in something that matters, the desire to engage skyrockets and the sense of community strengthens. The ripple effect? Attendees not only feel more connected to your event but also walk away knowing they left the destination better than they found it, deepening their connections to one another and your brand.

- CSR activities** // Incorporate community service or charitable events into your itinerary. Acts of giving back—whether donation programs, volunteer efforts, or support for a cause—resonate deeply with attendees. It's humbling to contribute to the greater good and creates a shared sense of purpose. Data shows that participants in CSR activities report a 60% increase in their desire to engage in future events, and companies that embrace CSR see a 20% boost in employee satisfaction.
- Rewarding recognition** // Find opportunities for attendees to reward each other. Peer-to-peer recognition boosts team morale, fosters a stronger sense of belonging, and encourages mutual respect. Peer-led recognition programs can significantly increase team performance and improve overall happiness.
- Artisanal callings** // Consider enriching your event by giving a thoughtful gift that not only supports local artisans but also contributes to meaningful social impact. By selecting locally-made products, you invest in skilled craftsmen and honour the cultural heritage of your event's location. It enhances community spirit, promotes sustainability, and preserves unique traditions, all while tying your attendees closer to the meaning of the event itself.

There's no surefire formula for perpetuating a sense of awe and wonder. What we do know is that when attendees experience something truly unique, they leave with a sense of having been part of something special—something that can't be replicated. And that, ultimately, is what turns an event into an unforgettable story.

These gestures not only resonate emotionally but also align with broader Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals, showing participants how they're part of something bigger. Combining these efforts can help boost Return on Engagement (ROE), Return on Investment (ROI), and build lasting connections to people, places and moments.



ARTICLES WE

-  [Why Employee Recognition is More Crucial Than Ever](#)
-  [Building Belonging](#)
-  [How a Tech Savvy Generation is Changing Incentive Travel Programs](#)

the power of forks:

WHY WE LOVE *THE BEAR*]



INSPIRATION FROM EVERYWHERE

We're always on the lookout for inspiration. And sometimes, it finds us in the most unexpected of places. While we're often inspired by live events or curated experiences, one of our biggest recent sparks came from an unlikely source: the hit series *The Bear*.

The Show: Bringing Hospitality to Life // For those not in the know, *The Bear* follows Carmy, a Michelin-starred chef who returns to Chicago to run his family's restaurant after his brother's death. It's gritty, real, and hits close to home for anyone in the business of creating unforgettable experiences. One episode, in particular, stopped us in our tracks: *Forks*.

Why We're Hooked // In *Forks*, Richie, one of Carmy's employees, spends a week in a top-tier Chicago restaurant. His first task? Polishing forks. Yes, you read that right—forks. At first, Richie is unimpressed. But as the week progresses, he graduates from the simple idea of shiny cutlery. He realizes it's about the meticulous care and thoughtfulness behind every tiny detail of the customer experience. Richie learns that every table's history, every spot on a glass, every interaction, matters. It's about giving people more. Whether it's sending a car for a guest or surprising diners with a Chicago deep dish twist, the philosophy is clear: Go above and beyond.

For us, *Forks* became shorthand for excellence in customer experience. It's a reminder that the magic we create doesn't happen by accident—it's built from care, focus, and a relentless commitment to making each moment unforgettable.

Learn more about *The Bear*, its origins, and its approach, via [The New Yorker](#).

the takeaways

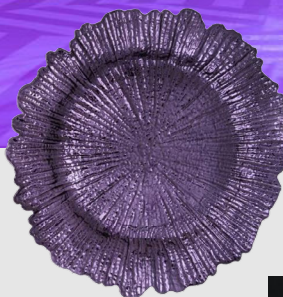
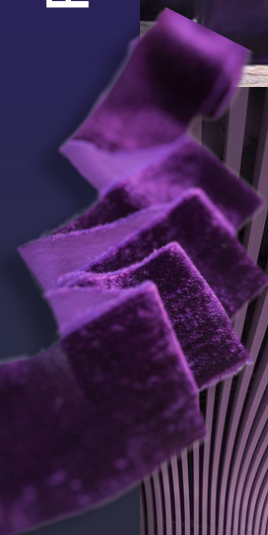
- ✓ **The sum is greater than its parts**
Each individual process and part is instrumental to the greater outcome. It may feel like minutiae, but it's part of the bigger picture.
- ✓ **Little considerations, big impact**
Details matter. A smudge on a fork isn't just a smudge; it's a sign something's being overlooked.
- ✓ **Empower everyone**
Every member of your team has the power to elevate the guest experience, equally.
- ✓ **Give more for great results**
The extra mile makes experiences extraordinary.
- ✓ **Leave room for magic**
Processes are paramount but leave wiggle room for on-the-spot brilliance.
- ✓ **Even a small day is a big day**
Just like the Super Bowl, we approach every event like it's the most important day of the year—for both our team and attendees.



Photo courtesy of FX Networks / Hulu

PANTONE

Future Dusk



colour crush

INTO THE TWILIGHT ZONE]



“I want to be the purple, that touch of brilliance which gives distinction and beauty to the rest.”

— Epictetus (Greek Philosopher)

With our sights set on 2025, the design world is abuzz with the allure of Pantone's predicted Colour of the Year. The anticipated moody fusion of deep violet and midnight blue is all the invitation we need to cast our nets into the unknown.

WGSN and Coloro have forecasted **Future Dusk** as a colour that embodies both mystery and calm—a portal to imagination and escapism in our constantly evolving world.

In our steadily-unfolding era of AI, technological breakthroughs and space exploration, this hue reflects modern cravings and contradictions. It challenges guests to journey through uncharted territories, physically and emotionally.

Think of it as the perfect intersection between light and dark, energy and tranquility. It's a combination that mirrors a time where transition and innovation dominate the conversation.

At its core, purple is a meeting of fierce red and calming blue. It creates space to spark while inviting self-reflection. Whether you're using it to conjure a celestial dreamscape or to foster a sophisticated, meditative atmosphere, Future Dusk transports attendees and blurs boundaries.

But remember: with great colour comes great responsibility. With all its depth and intrigue, this hue radiates a magnetic energy that lingers long after the moment fades.

And for us? Well, at Wynford, we've always been partial to a splash of purple—so you know this one is speaking our language.



bold

moves

PUSHING THE LIMITS WITH STRATEGIC RISK-TAKING]

When standing out is everything, risks can separate the forgotten from the unforgettable. Proposing new, thoughtful ideas can help leave a lasting impact. This year, we dared to achieve that by breaking the mould in more ways than one.

The key is to combine boldness with prudence, ensuring that each decision contributes to the overall success and memorability of the event.

WHY RISK-TAKING MATTERS

- **Differentiation** // When your event breaks the mould, it's more likely to capture attention and make attendees feel like they're part of something truly special.
- **Engagement** // Unpredictability is excitement's best friend. When risks are well-executed, they create anticipation and heighten emotional connections.
- **Innovation** // Every risk opens the door to new possibilities. Pushing past conventional expectations and boundaries is a catalyst for change.

"We can be daring without being reckless. I always encourage clients to design the event they want to attend. Be bold, push limits, but do it with care and thoughtfulness. This is where the real magic happens."



— Jessica Petrakis, Creative Director,
(Experience Design & Strategy at Wynford)

RISKS WORTH TAKING

There's a safety net in executing the tried-and-true concepts, but it's the risks that turn heads. The real value comes from striking the perfect balance between the unexpected and the meticulously planned.



CONCEPTUAL RISKS

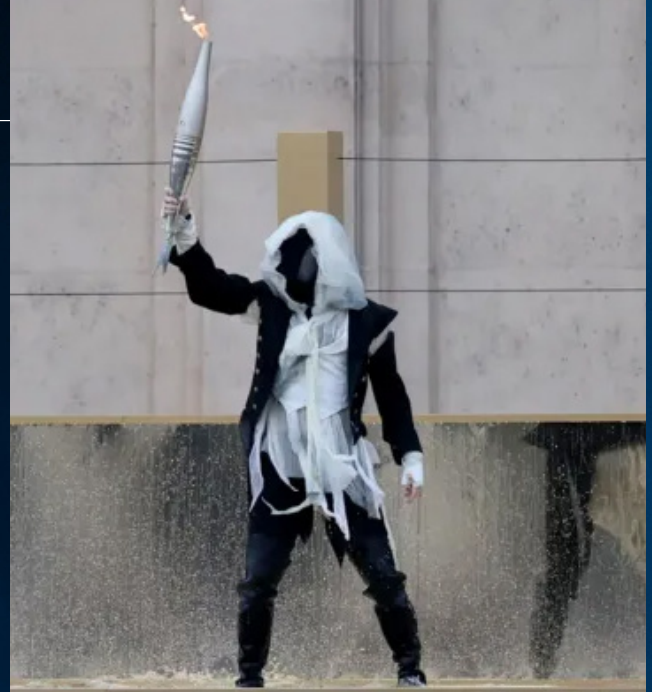
Break away from the monotony of traditional expectations and encourage people to network in a new and relaxed setting.

risk

Our teams brought a corporate event to life by transforming a predictable conference into an open, festival-style format. The space buzzed with live music, food trucks, and interactive installations, creating a dynamic, free-flowing environment. Hoping to foster deeper connections with content, pop-up tents helped deliver it in a more casual, interactive way.

reward

It was a vibrant new take on tradition. Organic networking flourished, with attendees feeling more engaged and at ease. The pop-up tent spaces added an element of surprise and invited attendees to learn in a more relaxed, spontaneous atmosphere. Feedback showed attendees felt more connected to the brand and each other.



LOGISTICAL RISKS

Assess opportunities concerning venue, timing, and event flow. While these elements can introduce surprise and intrigue, they demand operational expertise and meticulous attention to detail to guarantee accessibility and comfort.

risk

Take a cue from Paris' approach. Hosting the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games' Opening Ceremonies along the Seine, at Place de la Concorde, and on Avenue des Champs-Élysées, rather than in a conventional stadium, was a daring logistical gamble. With the potential for rain, the risk of disaster was high.

reward

This bold decision not only embraced the city's unique heritage but also engaged a broader public, creating a more inclusive and visually striking event. Despite the high risk, including potential weather challenges, the gamble paid off spectacularly. The ceremony captivated global audiences and set a new standard for large-scale events, blending cultural grandeur with innovative presentation. Sure, there were many learning opportunities, but the risk itself ultimately proved worthwhile and has set the bar high for the next.





TECHNOLOGICAL RISKS

Incorporating AI-driven activations or augmented reality comes with the potential for glitches, but when executed well, the result can be truly memorable.

risk

Using AI technology, we transformed a ballroom into an immersive oceanic experience. Guests were treated to a panoramic view of stunning, lifelike ocean visuals, creating a breathtaking underwater atmosphere. However, as efficient as AI's creative is, it can sometimes lead to hiccups (think dolphins with extra appendages). To mitigate potential mishaps, we meticulously reviewed and refined the visuals to ensure the final result was seamless.

reward

The result? A transformative, sensory-driven environment that left attendees mesmerized. The immersive visuals not only enhanced the overall theme but also created a unique experience that sparked conversation and deepened engagement. Attendees were fully transported into the underwater world, making the event truly unforgettable and raising the bar for AI-driven experiential design.

CULTURAL RISKS

Introducing meaningful and unexpected cultural risks can enrich an experience, broaden horizons, and build human connections. But it must be done with sensitivity and care to avoid missteps.

risk

During a recent client trip to Chiang Mai, renowned for its vibrant food scene and increasing focus on veganism, we took a bold step. We suggested incorporating vegan menus into two key evening experiences, allowing guests to engage with the local culture through its culinary innovation. The challenge? Many attendees were unfamiliar with vegan adaptations of traditional Thai dishes and were apprehensive about how it might impact their dining experience.

reward

To their surprise, the rich flavours and creative presentations of the vegan dishes were nothing short of extraordinary. These meals became a highlight of the trip, offering attendees a fresh and luxurious take on local cuisine while staying true to vegan principles. What started as a cultural experiment turned into a memorable revelation—attendees left with a newfound appreciation for Chiang Mai's innovative culinary scene and a deeper connection to its commitment to sustainability.





WHEN RISKS DON'T GO AS PLANNED

Risk, reflect, repeat. Not every bold idea knocks it out of the park—and that's okay. When things don't go as expected, focus on the takeaways:

- **Growth** // Analyze what went wrong and why. Debrief your team and refine your approach for next time.
- **Transparency** // When risks don't pay off, being upfront with stakeholders and attendees builds trust.
- **Resilience** // The willingness to adapt, learn, and take the next leap keeps the door wide open for fresh creativity to flow.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO TAKE IT UP A NOTCH

Strategic risks can lead to phenomenal experiences that set new trends and innovate the industry. The caveat is to balance creativity with practicality, ensuring that every new idea is grounded with a solid plan.

PREPARE TO TAKE RISKS

Risk without strategy isn't a gamble worth taking. Master the art of risk-taking by combining the bold with the practical, starting early in your ideation and planning stages:

- **Know your audience.** Not every risk is the right one. Engage with stakeholders to truly understand your audience's values and expectations. This helps you identify which boundaries to push.
- **Engage with experts** in the spaces of technology, logistics, or cultural elements. Their insights and experience can provide valuable guidance in navigating potential pitfalls.
- **Minimize and mitigate** the risk of an unexplored concept. Run smaller beta tests to gather feedback and make adjustments before rolling it out fully.
- **Always have a backup.** If a concept doesn't land as expected, having a contingency plan in place keeps the event on track without missing a beat.

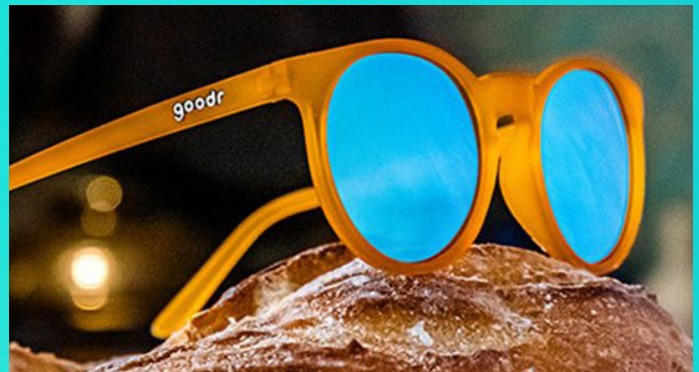




the hot roundup

event trends that are having a moment.

THESE ARE THE DROOL-WORTHY TRENDS THAT ARE HAVING A MOMENT LATELY. FROM KILLER DESIGN INSPIRATION TO MOUTHWATERING MENUS, THERE'S A LOT OF ALL THE EYE CANDY AND ENGAGEMENT HERE.



TRENDS WE'VE BEEN CRUSHING ON
IRATION TO IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES
HESE GLOBAL GEMS ARE SERVING UP
MENT YOU COULD ASK FOR.]





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1 From Screen to Scene: Channeling The Shows We Love

We're seeing events take serious cues from the pop culture universe. Bold, dramatic lighting, set designs pulled straight from your binge-worthy faves, and interactive elements that make guests feel like they're stepping into the heart of a beloved series. Picture *Bridgerton* regency meets *House of the Dragon* medieval grandeur, creating unforgettable experiences that leave guests craving binge-worthy events.

2 Homegrown: Food as Decor

Flowers are great, but what if your centerpieces went above and beyond? David Stark's creative approach swaps florals for food, and the result is both stunning and sustainable. Vibrant local greenery paired with fresh fruit—think bursts of citrus or fresh rolls of bread—are not only budget-friendly but totally unique. It's a feast for the eyes that can also reduce waste.



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Game On: Olympic Inspiration

As we just witnessed in the 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games, these events bring nations together and push the boundaries of what we know. Spectators are treated to a fresh mix of live action, entertainment, and pop culture that spark joy and imagination. For event planners and businesses, it's pure inspiration. Picture hosting an event that channels the Olympic vibe—sports-themed challenges that build team spirit, ignite healthy competition, and foster unity. Whether it's physical games or creative problem-solving, Olympic-inspired activities create a dynamic, unforgettable experience that leaves teams energized and more connected than ever.

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Scan, Savour, Discover: A Digital Dining Journey

One of our telecommunications clients threw down the gauntlet: go fully paperless for a dinner in Sydney. Challenge accepted. We created an interactive food map that guests could access via QR code. Not only did they get the menu, but they also uncovered the full story behind their meal—from the local farms that supplied the ingredients to behind-the-scenes insights from the chef. It wasn't just a menu; it was a journey. The experience was such a hit that we're bringing it back for round two!



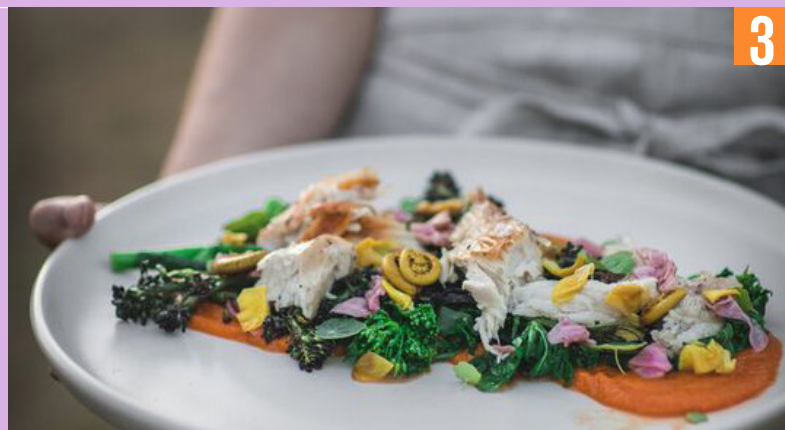
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1 The Sober-Curious Movement: Mindful Choices for Health and Inclusivity

The sober-curious movement, popularized by Gen Z, has broadened its appeal to wellness-driven individuals across all demographics. The lifestyle is about making mindful choices—cutting back or opting out of alcohol in favour of mental clarity, physical health, and social inclusivity. It's about creating space without the pressure to drink, and it's gaining momentum. To be inclusive of sober-curious and dry lifestyles, we encourage our clients to integrate zero proof experiences.

- a Mindful Sips:** Zero-proof cocktails are giving non-drinkers something to cheer about. These aren't your average mocktails available at the bar—think stand-alone bars dedicated exclusively to non-alcoholic options, all of which offer complex flavours and high-end presentation. They can be just as delightful (if not more) than their boozy counterparts. These alcohol-free options help prioritize inclusivity and ensure every guest has a spirited, tip-tier experience.
- b Mood-Lifting Alternatives:** At our recent AGM, we shook things up with a cannabis bar—equal parts fun and educational. Attendees sipped on CBD-infused mocktails, with guidance from expert “bud sommeliers” who broke down the effects and benefits of each product. The vibe? Laid-back, inviting, and full of fresh insights into responsible cannabis use.





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2 A Culinary Symphony: Chef-Led Dining Experiences

Elevate your event with an immersive, chef-led dining experience that blends culinary artistry with exclusivity. Partner with renowned chefs, sommeliers, and local artisans to create a bespoke menu tailored for your attendees. Each dish is meticulously crafted, thoughtfully plated, and accompanied by its own story, often paired with the perfect wine or spirit. Throughout the evening, invite chef to guide attendees through each course, offering a dynamic and intimate culinary journey that captivates the senses. This is more than a meal; it's an exclusive pop-up dining experience, far more personal than a traditional catered event.

3 Connecting To Place: The 100-Mile Dinner

We're all about connecting attendees to the heart of the region, and the 100-Mile Dinner does just that. This brings attendees face-to-face with the local food culture, showcasing the freshest seasonal ingredients sourced within a 100-Mile radius. Think of it as a celebration of the hands that feed us—chefs, farmers, vintners, distillers,

and more. With every bite, guests connect more deeply to the land and the people who bring its bounty to life.

4 Carbon Labeling: Food with a Footprint

Carbon labeling is the new wave in food and beverage, and it's changing the way we think about what's on our plates. By highlighting the carbon footprint of each dish, we're giving attendees the power to make eco-conscious choices. What we eat impacts the planet, and this transparency encourages sustainable sourcing while helping to drive the event industry toward greener practices. As carbon labeling gains traction, it's becoming a must-have for creating eco-friendly and responsible event experiences.



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1 For the Gram: Photo-Worthy Moments

Give your attendees more than just a snapshot—serve them photo moments that are destined for their feeds. Curate social-worthy spots where every angle is on point. Think oversized, whimsical backdrops that match your theme, or an immersive photo box with a swing or trampoline to capture that perfect action shot. The result? Shareable moments that keep the momentum and memories going.

2 Pixel Perfect: AI-Powered Photo Booth

Go next level with an AI-powered photo station that transforms selfies into personalized works of art. Guests simply snap a pic, let the AI work its magic, and walk away with a stunning, themed portrait. It's tech that turns the ordinary into extraordinary—while keeping the social feeds buzzing.

3 Be a Kid Again: Nostalgic Experiences

Remember when being a kid was all about sugary treats and oversized everything? Growing up doesn't mean leaving the fun behind. Imagine bringing that playful energy to your event with oversized gumball machines, ball pits for adults, and robotic vending machines that turn snacking into a game. It's pure joy, super-sized!

Add a bestie bracelet bar, but make it chic. This iconic accessory is making a major comeback. More than an ice-breaker, it's a hands-on experience that transcends corporate walls and brings creativity and connection front and centre.

Whether it's a playful nod to childhood nostalgia or a chic accessory to wear home, it sparks conversations and adds a personal touch that lingers throughout your entire event.



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4 Get in Touch with Your Inner Chakra: Aura Photography

Tarot readings might be hit or miss, but aura photography? A total game-changer. With a dash of tech wizardry, guests' auras are snapped in a swirl of vibrant colours onto a retro Polaroid. These cosmic bursts of colour highlight the energy your attendees are giving out and offer a glimpse of what's coming their way. It's like taking a mystical selfie but immeasurably cooler. The result? A revealing, out-of-this-world keepsake that will leave everyone talking.

5 Crowdsourcing Your Content: Collab Wall

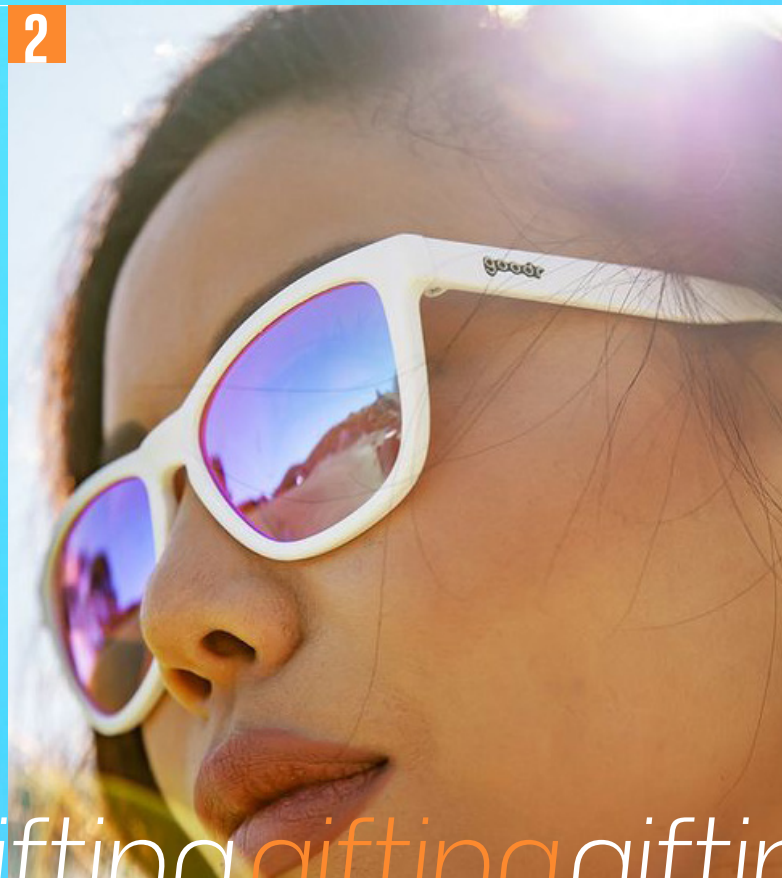
Picture this: A giant, colourful wall filled with sticky notes or postcards, where guests can pause, reflect, and contribute their thoughts. Not just a conversation starter, but a way to crowdsource content that ties directly into your event's theme or mission. It's simple but powerful—an interactive space where participants can engage, share ideas, and make a lasting connection. Perfect for sparking dialogue and giving everyone a voice.

6 Artistic Impressions: Personalization at Events

Elevate your gifting game and go a little glam. Hand-engraved pieces, custom portraits, or chic fashion illustrations can add a personalized touch that goes way beyond the usual swag. From paper to unconventional surfaces, thoughtful details add a touch of sophistication. Brands like Jo Malone and Fendi are taking a personalized approach that not only boosts brand loyalty but also creates memorable experiences that mesmerize.

7 Vibe Check: Sound Bath Experiences

Add a little zen to keep the good energy flowing. Sound baths are the ultimate way to blend relaxation with productivity. These immersive, educational sessions teach your attendees how to harness the power of sound to manage stress, spark creativity, and stay grounded in the chaos. Perfect for lunch-and-learns, wellness programs, or even as a calming coffee break during back-to-back meetings.



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1 Elevate Every Day: Intelligent Change Products

Simple, impactful, and guaranteed to nurture well-being, affirmation cards and 5-minute journals are go-to gifts for promoting daily mindfulness. These thoughtful gestures encourage self-reflection, gratitude and personal growth.

2 All The Right Shades: Goodr Sunglasses

For the movers and shakers, Goodr sunglasses are the perfect blend of style, performance, and fun. Every product they create must speak to their Fs: fun, fashionable, functional, and 'ffordable. (They like F words.) With an impressive price point, recipients enjoy sunglasses that are both stylish and high-performing, all at an affordable cost that doesn't break your event budget. Plus, they're serious about sustainability—1% for the planet with eco-friendly materials, recycled packaging, and carbon offsetting.

3 Pedal Power, Personalized: Solé Bike

Solé Bikes' Corporate Fleet Program offers a stylish, low-maintenance ride perfect for leisure. Guests can personalize their bikes by selecting from pre-determined frame and fork colours during an on-site fitting experience. After making their custom selections, the Solé team ensures that each winner's bike is shipped directly to their chosen address, arriving 90% assembled with all necessary tools for easy setup. Optional accessories like locks, bells, and bottle holders add an extra touch of personalization to the experience, making it an unforgettable way to cruise in style.

4 Sneaker Swag: Brand Your Shoes

Seen at IMEX Frankfurt, Brand Your Shoes takes event swag to the next level. Fully personalized sneakers—designed to rep your logo and colours—are made with sustainable materials and on-demand production. It's custom, but it's also Earth-conscious: reducing emissions, water waste, and plastic, while keeping your feet eco-friendly.





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Tides of Change: Got Bag

When our VP, Perri Berton, received a stunning carry-on as a pre-trip gift, we knew Four Seasons was setting a new bar for sustainability. Got Bag turns ocean plastics into sleek, durable travel bags. Their clean-up efforts in Indonesia have pulled over 2 million pounds of plastic from the ocean, and their bags are shipped worldwide using carbon-neutral methods. Want a gift with a purpose? This is it—good for your travel plans and great for the planet.

6

Look Great, Do Good: Vuori Athleisure

Move over, Lululemon—there's a new contender in town. Vuori is redefining effortlessly stylish basics, blending coastal cool with high-performance flair. Their cult-favourite DreamKnit joggers are stealing the athleisure spotlight. With a commitment to luxury and sustainability, Vuori is quickly becoming a top choice for onsite gifting.

7

Give Art, Not Waste: Wrappr Fabric Gift Wrap

Reduce waste while supporting a small business and independent artists. Wrappr fabric wrap turns the art of gift-giving into an eco-friendly experience. Designed by Toronto artists, these stunning reusable wraps bring a modern twist on Furoshiki, a Japanese traditional fabric wrap that's existed for more than 1,200 years. Available in cotton, recycled polyester, and mulberry silk, with custom designs at the ready.

curiosity sparked?

Let's take it even further.

Slide into our DMs (or email works, too) and let's make some magic happen together.



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