

Tech insights from the recent Beam All Members Meeting – November 2024

Introduction

We recently spoke at a session at the beam All Members Meeting titled “*Shaping M&E's future with cutting-edge tech innovation.*” We had over 100 event professionals in the room and held a number of surveys during the session to capture data and understand where the sector felt it was in terms of embracing technology. This report shows some interesting findings:

This report summarises data collected to assess perceptions, competencies, and decision-making factors related to Event-Tech within the sector and combines it with the narrative discussed during the session. The data encompasses various poll types, including word clouds, ratings, single-choice quizzes, and ranking questions, offering an overview of current trends and attitudes towards the adoption of event technology.

1. Word Cloud Analysis

Question: *What words instantly spring to mind when it comes to Event-Tech within our sector?*

Total Responses: 58 from 111 participants



Key Insights:

- **Diverse Perceptions:** The responses reveal a wide range of views on Event-Tech, indicating a multifaceted perspective within the sector.
- **Positive Associations:** Terms such as *Supportive*, *Essential*, *Efficient*, *Innovative*, and *Sustainable* suggest that many view Event-Tech as a crucial and beneficial component in event management.

- **Challenges Highlighted:** Words like *Too fractured, Slow, Complex, Clunky, Risk, and Costly* indicate concerns about the current state of Event-Tech, pointing to issues with integration, usability, and financial implications.
 - **Neutral/Negative Sentiments:** Terms such as *Not human, Non-human, and Too easy* reflect apprehensions about the depersonalisation and oversimplification of event processes through technology.
 - **Operational Concerns:** Words like *Time-consuming, Inconsistent, and Hardwork* suggest that while Event-Tech offers solutions, it may also introduce new operational challenges.
-

2. Organisational Technical Competence

Question: *How Technically Competent is your Organisation? (1 = Technophobes, 5 = Cutting Edge Experts)*

Total Responses: 78

Average Rating: 3.4

Distribution:

- **1 (Technophobes):** 4 responses
- **2:** 5 responses
- **3:** 33 responses
- **4:** 30 responses
- **5 (Cutting Edge Experts):** 6 responses

Key Insights:

- **Moderate to High Competence:** The average rating of 3.4 suggests that organisations perceive themselves as moderately to highly competent in technical aspects.
 - **Positive Self-Assessment:** A significant portion (63%) rated their technical competence as 3 or above, indicating a generally positive self-view.
 - **Areas for Improvement:** A notable minority (9%) identify as lower in technical competence, highlighting opportunities for additional support and training.
-

3. Respondent Profile

Question: *Are you a hotel, agency or supplier?*

Total Responses: 79

Distribution:

- **Hotel:** 45 responses (57%)
- **Agency:** 19 responses (24%)

- **Supplier:** 15 responses (19%)

Key Insights:

- **Hotel Dominance:** The majority of respondents are from the hotel sector, followed by agencies and suppliers.
- **Sector Representation:** This distribution suggests that insights may be more reflective of hotel-centric perspectives on Event-Tech.

4. Primary Drivers for Adopting New Event Technology

Question: *What is the primary driver for adopting new event technology in your business?*

Total Responses: 81

Distribution:

- **Streamlining Operational Efficiency:** 39 responses (48%)
- **Reducing Costs and Maximising ROI:** 13 responses (16%)
- **Staying Competitive in the Market:** 13 responses (16%)
- **Meeting Client Demands for Tech Integration:** 7 responses (9%)
- **Others:** 7 responses (9%)

Key Insights:

- **Operational Efficiency:** Nearly half of the respondents prioritise *streamlining operational efficiency* as the main reason for adopting new Event-Tech solutions.
- **Financial Considerations:** *Reducing costs and maximising ROI* are significant factors for 16% of respondents, indicating a focus on financial sustainability.
- **Competitive Edge and Client Expectations:** Both *staying competitive* and *meeting client demands* are important, each accounting for 16% and 9% respectively.
- **Balanced Motivators:** These insights highlight a balance between operational improvements and strategic positioning as key motivators for technology adoption.

5. Investment Frequency in New Event Technology

Question: *How often do you currently invest in new event technology?*

Total Responses: 70

Distribution:

- **Every Year:** 30 responses (43%)
- **Only When Absolutely Necessary:** 29 responses (41%)
- **Every 2-3 Years:** 9 responses (13%)

- **As and When a Client Requests It:** 1 response (1%)
- **Every 4-5 Years:** 1 response (1%)

Key Insights:

- **Proactive and Reactive Approaches:** A majority of organisations either invest *every year* or *only when absolutely necessary*, totaling 84%.
- **Regular Investment:** 43% indicate a proactive approach by updating technology annually.
- **Reactive Investment:** 41% adopt new technology reactively, primarily driven by necessity.
- **Infrequent Updates:** Smaller segments invest less frequently, suggesting varying levels of reliance on Event-Tech.

6. Factors Influencing the Decision to Adopt New Event Technology

Question: Rank the following **FACTORS** that influence your decision to adopt new event technology from Least (1) to Most (5) important:

Total Responses: 63

Average Rankings:

1. **Cost and ROI:** 3.25
2. **Ease of Integration with Existing Systems:** 2.76
3. **Client Demand and Expectations:** 2.71
4. **Ability to Measure Outcomes and Success:** 2.57
5. **Level of Support and Training Available:** 2.41

Key Insights:

- **Cost and ROI:** *Cost and ROI* emerged as the most important factor influencing technology adoption, with an average ranking of 3.25.
- **Integration and Client Expectations:** *Ease of integration* and *client demand* are also significant, indicating the need for seamless technology incorporation and alignment with client needs.
- **Measurable Outcomes:** The ability to *measure outcomes and success* is moderately important, reflecting a focus on tangible results from technology investments.
- **Support and Training:** *Level of support and training available* is ranked lowest among the factors, suggesting that while important, it is not the primary consideration.

Narrative Insights from the Session

During the recent session, the discussion focused on the evolving landscape of event technology, highlighting both challenges and opportunities within the sector. Key points included:

- **Rise of Hybrid and Online Events Post-COVID:** The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of hybrid and online event formats, necessitating robust technological solutions to facilitate seamless experiences for both in-person and virtual attendees.
- **Shift Towards Delegate Engagement:** There is an increasing emphasis on enhancing delegate engagement through interactive technologies, personalised experiences, and real-time feedback mechanisms.
- **Integration of New Talent:** Incorporating new talent with expertise in emerging technologies is crucial for driving innovation and maintaining competitiveness in the event-tech space.
- **Importance of Efficiency:** Efficiency remains a priority, with artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics identified as pivotal for future advancements in event management and execution.
- **Integration Issues with Existing Systems:** Challenges persist in integrating new technologies with existing systems, particularly with Microsoft Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platforms, highlighting the need for more compatible and flexible solutions.
- **Continuous Investment in Technology:** The necessity for ongoing investment in event technology to stay abreast of advancements and meet evolving client expectations was emphasised.
- **Training and Support:** The importance of comprehensive training and support to ensure effective utilisation of new technologies was a key focus area.
- **Future Outlook:** The future of event technology is expected to include AI-driven proposals, automated data analysis, and enhanced personalisation in event planning, promising more streamlined and tailored event experiences.

Actionable Recommendations:

- 1. Improve Technical Competence and Expertise:**
 - Explore ways to enhance technical skills and knowledge within the organisation.
 - Provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities for staff.
- 2. Collaboration and Mentorship:**
 - Investigate opportunities for collaboration with technology partners and industry experts.
 - Implement mentorship programmes to upskill the workforce and encourage a culture of continuous learning.
- 3. Prioritise Integration Capabilities:**
 - When evaluating new event technology solutions, prioritise those that offer seamless integration with existing systems.
 - Ensure compatibility with key platforms, such as Microsoft CRMs, to minimise disruption and maximise efficiency.

4. Engage with Technology Providers:

- Work closely with technology providers to address integration challenges with legacy systems and brand-specific platforms.
- Seek customised solutions that align with the organisation's unique requirements and infrastructure.

5. Develop a Long-Term Technology Roadmap:

- Create a clear and comprehensive technology roadmap that outlines strategic goals and planned investments.
- Communicate the roadmap effectively to stakeholders, including hoteliers and other partners, to ensure alignment and support.

6. Facilitate Change in Mindset and Behaviour:

- Promote a culture that embraces technological innovation and change.
- Implement strategies to encourage the adoption of new technologies, such as incentives, recognition programmes, and clear communication of benefits.

Conclusion and Extrapolated Summary of the State of the Sector (*Caveat – small population sample)

The survey data, complemented by insights from recent discussions, paints a comprehensive picture of the current state of Event-Tech within the sector.

Diverse Perceptions and Balanced Motivations: Event-Tech is widely regarded as an essential and efficient component of modern event management, with a significant emphasis on operational efficiency and financial sustainability driving adoption. However, concerns regarding complexity, cost, and integration challenges persist, indicating a need for more user-friendly and financially viable solutions.

Moderate to High Technical Competence: Organisations generally perceive themselves as moderately to highly competent in technical aspects, though there remains a subset that requires additional support and training. Enhancing technical expertise is crucial for leveraging the full potential of Event-Tech innovations.

Proactive and Strategic Investment: The investment patterns reveal a balanced approach between regular updates and necessity-driven investments. Proactive adopters are likely to benefit more from the latest advancements, while reactive adopters may face challenges in keeping pace with technological developments.

Integration and Support as Key Factors: Seamless integration with existing systems and the ability to meet client demands are critical factors influencing technology adoption. Addressing integration issues, particularly with established platforms like Microsoft CRMs, is essential for ensuring smooth implementation and operation.



Future Outlook and Strategic Actions: The future of Event-Tech is poised for significant advancements with AI-driven proposals, automated data analysis, and enhanced personalisation. To navigate this evolving landscape, organisations must focus on improving technical competence, encouraging collaboration and mentorship, prioritising integration capabilities, engaging with technology providers, developing long-term technology roadmaps, and facilitating a cultural shift towards embracing technological innovation.

Strategic Recommendations:

- **Enhance Technical Skills:** Invest in training programmes to boost technical expertise within the organisation.
- **Encourage Collaboration:** Establish partnerships and mentorship initiatives to support workforce development.
- **Prioritise Integration:** Select technologies that integrate seamlessly with existing systems to avoid operational disruptions.
- **Engage Providers:** Collaborate with technology vendors to tailor solutions that fit specific organisational needs.
- **Long-Term Planning:** Develop and communicate a strategic technology roadmap to align stakeholders and guide future investments.
- **Cultural Shift:** Encourage a mindset that embraces change and innovation to facilitate the adoption of new technologies.

Overall Sector Health: The Event-Tech sector is dynamic and continually evolving, driven by the need for greater efficiency, enhanced delegate engagement, and the integration of advanced technologies. While challenges related to complexity and integration remain, the sector is well-positioned to leverage emerging technologies to create more personalised, efficient, and impactful event experiences. By addressing current challenges and capitalising on opportunities for innovation and collaboration, organisations can enhance their competitive edge and meet the ever-changing demands of the market.

The report was produced by:

Stuart Mitchell – Director

Company: Catch the MICE Limited

For more information and insights

Contact: stuart@catchthemice.com

Notes:

- Meeting Date: 14th November 2024
 - Event: Beam All Members Meeting
- Location: Kettering Park Hotel

Slido - Engaged participants

- **88** out of **111** Slido participants engaged with polls or Q&A.
- **8** out of **111** participants asked a question or voted in Q&A.
- **87** out of **111** Slido participants voted in a poll.