

MAKING YOUR NEXT EVENT
UNFORGETTABLE

An Ideas Handbook

Created by:



zeetings

Eventbrite

Introduction

When it comes to creating a memorable event, there's really only one rule. It's not about spending thousands of dollars on a novelty gimmick or a fancy venue, or providing non-stop entertainment and the most famous speakers you can wrangle. Rather, it's about creating an experience that influences the way people feel... and creating an emotional connection.

In recent years, the term 'experiential marketing' has emerged to describe a new way for brands to connect and interact with their audiences — and leave long-lasting impressions. Many of these techniques are also perfectly suited for conferences and events, where they can be used to create unforgettable experiences. Large or small, here are 20-plus thought-starters to help you make your next event unforgettable.

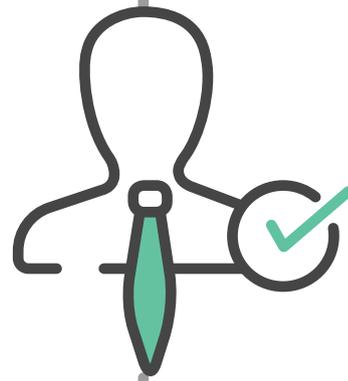


*I've learned that
people will forget
what you said,
people will forget
what you did, but
people will never
forget how you
made them feel.*

MAYA ANGELOU

Have a concierge

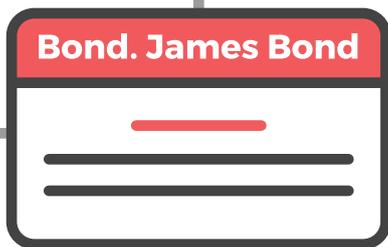
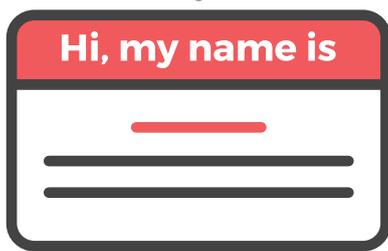
Make a good first impression from the moment your guests walk through the door. Draw inspiration from the hospitality industry by having a concierge or reception area ready to greet guests by name when they arrive, and to take their coat before they enter the event room.



Introduce gamification

A scavenger hunt at your event may sound a little crazy but it's a sure-fire way to help attendees interact with all aspects of the event. Gamification (integration of game-like thinking in regular environments to boost engagement and fun) is a great way to make even the driest topic engaging. Consider your objectives before you gamify your event, as you can then create incentives for attendees to encourage participation e.g. networking with as many people as possible, attending different checkpoints - the list goes on!





Get creative with name badges and lanyards

For instance, try including random trivia such as favourite movies or foods on delegate name tags, or even replacing traditional name badges with something more left field. [Facebook recently reworked their own conference badges](#) by combining event agendas and information booklets with name tags - giving attendees all the info they needed at a glance, no matter where the day took them.

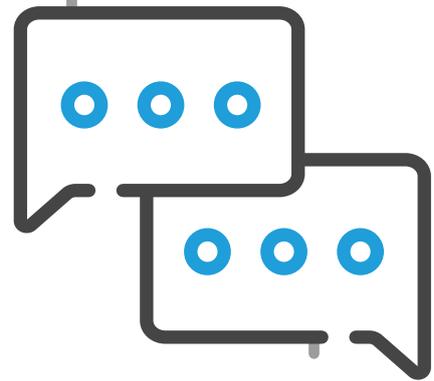
Create customised stationery

Organise flyers, business cards or stickers for your event. Better yet, online retailers such as MOO are now offering [digital business cards](#) which contain a microchip triggering any digital action you choose — simply by tapping them on a smartphone. These innovative cards can even be used as nametags or on lanyards handed out to guests on arrival, offering them access to a digital event program — no more piles of paper for your attendees to carry around with them!



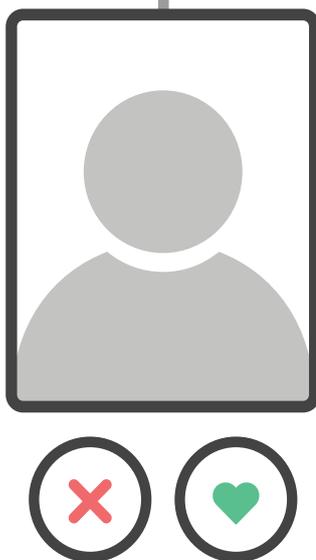
Hire event hosts to keep the conversation flowing

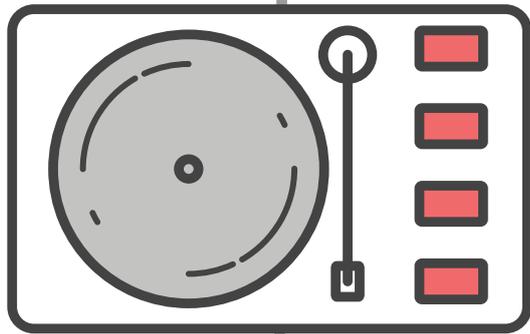
To help make introductions and ensure solo attendees get as much out of the event as possible, event hosts float around the room and facilitate conversation. If you're using name tags, be sure to include some basic information about who the guests are; this will help your hosts to spark connections between guests with common interests.



Break the ice with speed-dating

Activities and games can help spark conversations between guests who don't know one another yet. One popular idea is to hold a business 'speed-dating' session, where individuals move around the room and are given a 60-second time limit to personally introduce themselves to each attendee one by one. It works particularly well for those who feel a little shy about meeting new people; the fun and frantic pace of the exercise breaks down the barrier of social awkwardness, and creates a sense that everyone's in it together.





Swap playlists for a live band

Live music is a great way to create atmosphere and encourage people to get mingling. We've all seen how the right playlist can get the party started but why not take this one step further by swapping out that boring background elevator music with a live DJ or band? Unlike a pre-selected playlist, live performers can adjust to the audience's mood; playing more upbeat tunes whenever energy dulls, or making the soundtrack more low-key when it's time to focus.

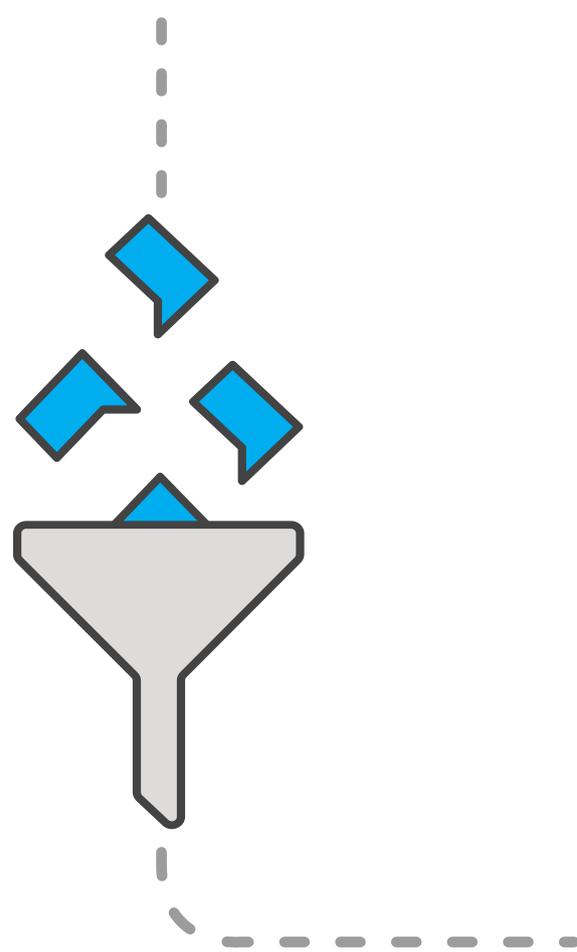
Go paperless with ticketing

Reduce queues and eliminate the need to print out tickets which are inevitably lost. Apps such as [Eventbrite Organiser app](#) allow event organisers to check guests into events by scanning barcodes or QR codes directly from their phones. The app also makes it possible to sell tickets at the door, access real-time data, and manage check-ins and total venue capacity on the fly.



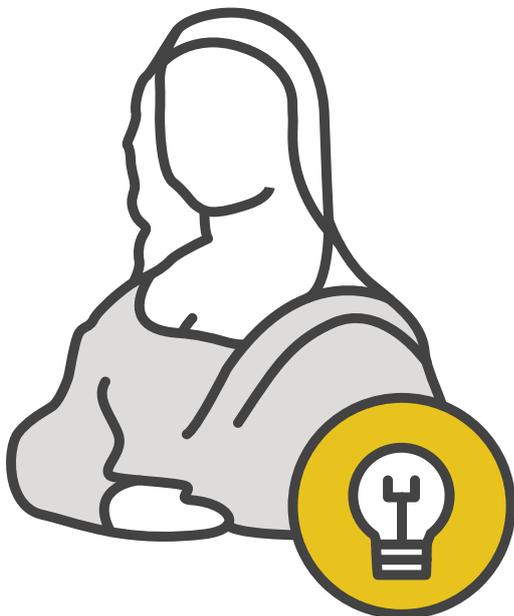
Up attendees participation

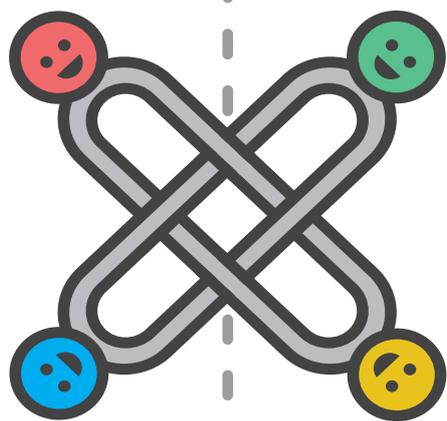
Interactive presentations allow strangers to connect and encourage attendees to use their own devices to add to event conversations. Apps such as [Zeetings](#) allow event attendees to see who else is following a presentation, add comments and questions to a presentation, and communicate directly with presenters and other attendees. The best part is that anyone can get involved with the presentation in real time — which is perfect for those who can't be there on the day.



Commission a local artist to visualise ideas

Rather than scribbling down brainstorming notes on a whiteboard, try something different. Check out [Ogilvy](#), who illustrated their cloud-sourced contributions live during keynote presentations at Austin's SXSW event. It's a smart way to create highly shareable content while delivering the brand message you seek to get across.



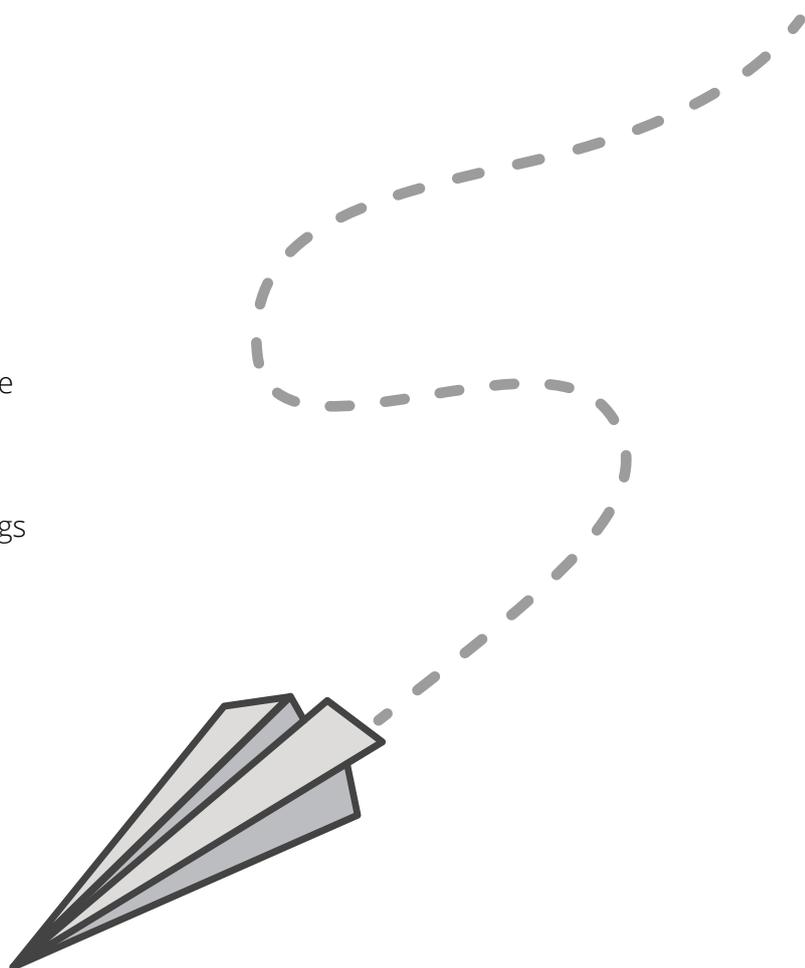


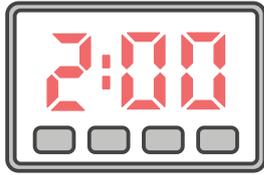
Ask for sponsorship from event partners

This is a great way to offset the cost of equipment, venue hire and entertainment — especially if you're working to a tight budget. Look for brands that are directly relevant to your event and audience, and discuss a contra deal where you'll be able to offer exposure and promote your sponsor's products.

Poll your audience prior to the event

Send out a quick poll to attendees before the event so that you know exactly what they want to see and hear. [Engaging attendees early](#) on with an online Zeetings poll or survey enables event planners to cater to what the audience wants — and guarantee a happy crowd.





Use display screens in high traffic areas

Place these throughout the venue, where guests can view [live event feeds](#) and countdown times to the next presentation. People rarely end up seeing everything they planned to at large events, as they tend to get caught up the excitement of the day. By using live visual display screens, attendees can manage their itinerary, avoid missing key presentations and better prioritise any sessions or highlights which take place simultaneously.

Encourage team bonding

Introduce some friendly team activities with a round of Rock Paper Scissors - and watch as attendees flock to join the game. Here's one that shows the power of getting behind your team. Ask every attendee to play Rock Paper Scissors against someone next to them. On losing, the attendee would team up behind the winner and cheer them on as they go on to play again against another team. Keep going until the room is left with two big opposing teams both battling it out for victory with a huge crowd cheering them on.



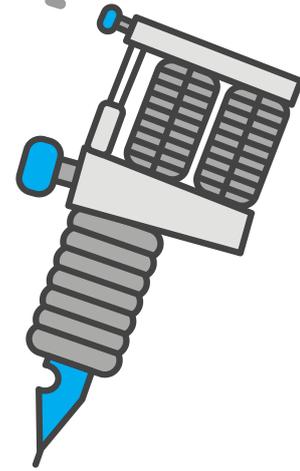
Think 'practical' with gift bags

Stuff your event gift bags with items that people actually use. Nobody pays attention to promotional brochures, and branded stress-balls will most likely end up as dog toys — so if you're going to provide gift bags to your attendees, think about [practical items](#). Electronics, trendy clothing and, oddly enough, anything for children tend to be appreciated more than heavily branded gifts that people rarely need. You can even print different designs on your gift bags and give people a choice in which bag they'd like to take (which should reduce the likelihood of it being thrown away!)



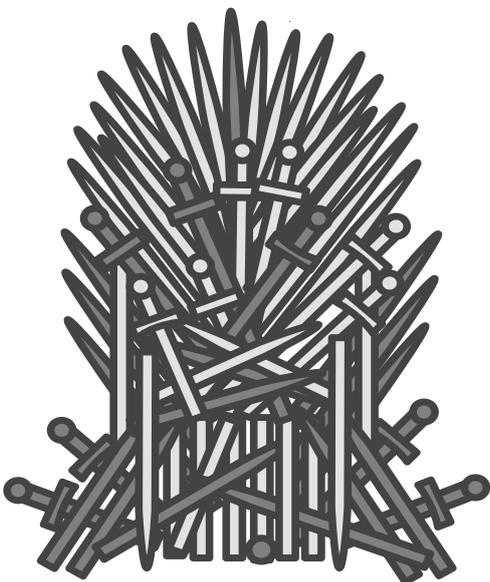
Include experiential activities

To create a memorable experience, opt for experiential activities over passive ones. Just look at the promoters of US film *Suicide Squad*, who created pre-release hype by offering attendees at this year's SXSW festival free temporary tattoos. To claim their ink, guests lined up at a pop up tattoo parlour which had been constructed to recreate the film's setting and unique characters.



Play dress up

Fancy dress parties never seem to lose their appeal and from a marketing perspective they can be powerful in pulling a crowd. Take [Game of Rhones](#) as an example; the wine-focused event, which tours across Australia and NZ, attracts large numbers of attendees with its immersive medieval theme inspired by HBO's popular *Game of Thrones*. The tongue-in-cheek theme and effort that vendors put into their costumes and characters provides a unique experience, while producing some seriously FOMO-inducing photos online.



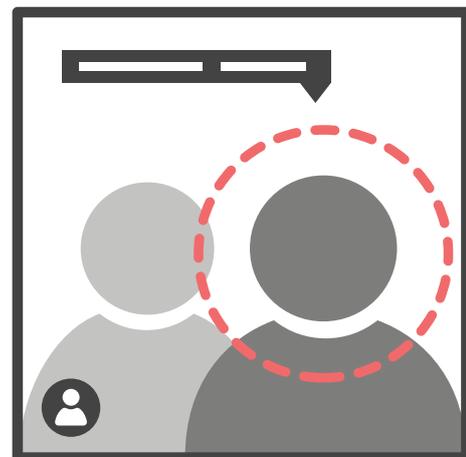
Stimulate all senses

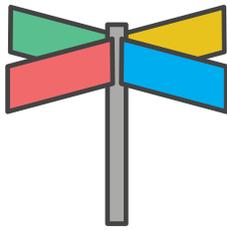


Seeing or hearing a presentation is old news; some brands are now creating multisensory events which enliven all of the senses. [‘Sensory’](#) — a dining experiment held each year at the Sugar Mountain Festival — treats guests to an interactive environment where all of the senses are stimulated. In Melbourne, [Lûmé restaurant](#) carefully matches food to perfume, music, colour and an element of theatre - the waitstaff even undergo acting lessons!

Use post-event engagement techniques

Use the data collected about your attendees at the event (such as email addresses and business cards) to deliver targeted messages to them once it’s over. Think about posting tagged photos of attendees on social media in the following weeks, distributing video recordings of the presentations they saw on the day, or sending out [surveys](#) for valuable feedback on the event. These techniques will encourage people to interact with your brand in the future.





Keep your event theme as open as possible

If you're attracting a wider audience, an open event theme will ensure that attendees will enjoy their day regardless of background or taste. If the event appeals to a particularly niche market, [TED founder Richard Saul Wurman](#) suggests incorporating a broad range of topics within the event's theme, so that everybody's preferences are catered to.



Create Snapchat stories

Create a narrative around your event using Snapchat — or even [create a geofilter](#) so that attendees can join in on the fun. Provide content from the event planner's point of view and introduce behind the scenes content; there's enormous potential for bringing attention to your event with this edgy social network.

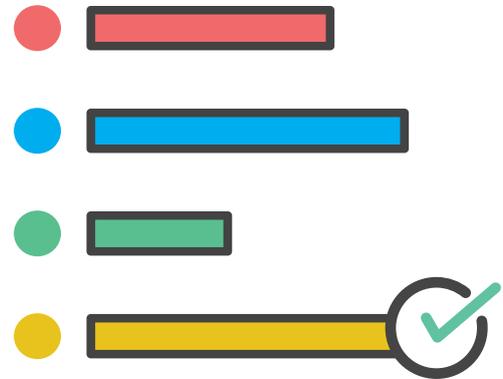
Skip the coffee queue

Let attendees order their coffees ahead of time so they can simply hop over to a designated pickup point between presentations without the long wait. This also avoids frustrating bottlenecks at peak times throughout the event programme.



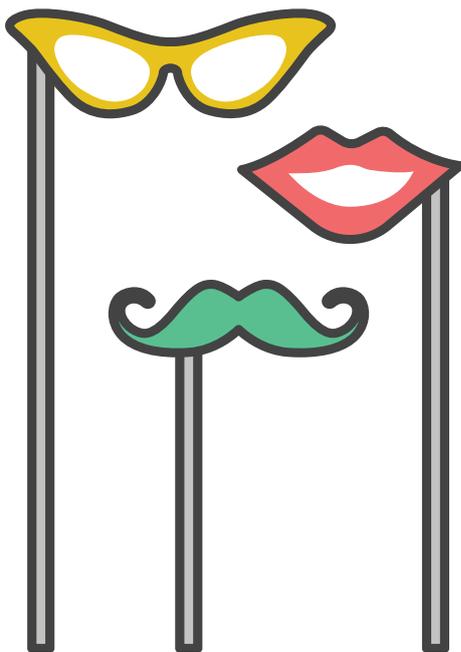
Live polling for real-time opinions

With [Zeetings Live Polling](#), event attendees can vote on a presentation slide or question right from their smartphones - and speakers can display results on the big screen as votes pour in. Not only does live polling provide great interaction with participants but it also gives you the opportunity to collect valuable data and feed the analytics-junkie inside you.



Set up pop-up photo booths

These remain a crowd favourite and work well at pretty much any event. Huddling in together for a group photo helps facilitate interaction between attendees, and gives them a takeaway memory of their time at the event. Alternatively, hire a live photographer to get candid photos throughout the event.



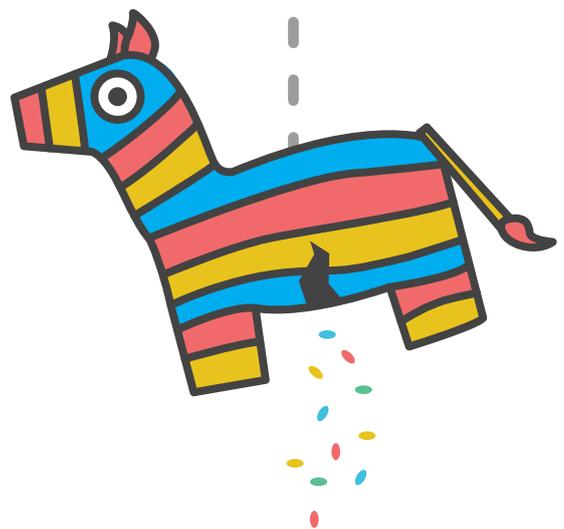


Designate time for social media

Upload photos to Twitter and Instagram throughout the event, and make sure you share the hashtag so that people can check the feed regularly or upload their own shots too. Design your event space with picture perfect moments in mind as a picture can say a thousand words — especially on social media. Don't shy away from presenting your hashtag in giant letters on the event grounds — this tends to keep the snaps flowing!

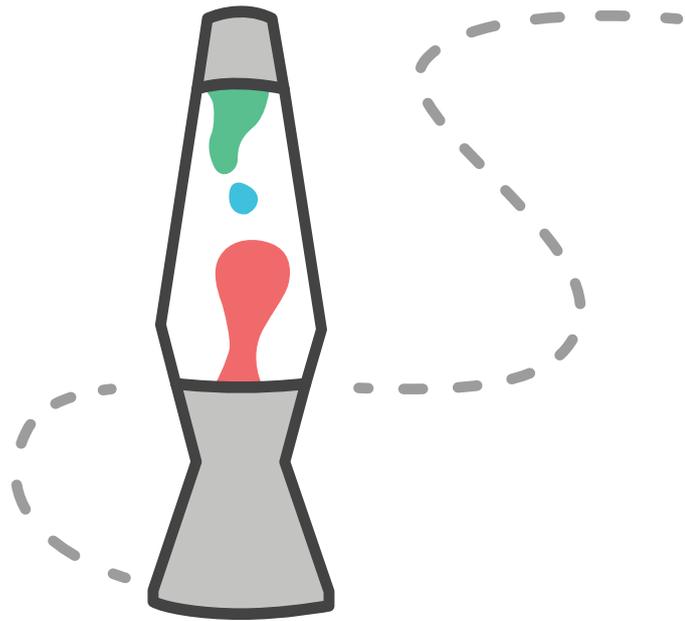
Set up refuel stations

Keep attendees going throughout the day by providing refuel stations throughout the venue, stocked with water, bowls of fruit or lollies. Even better — try bowls of M&Ms that match the theme of the event, or include branded lolly bags in the event pack guests receive when they arrive. These snacking hotspots can double up as an area for attendees to meet and mingle.



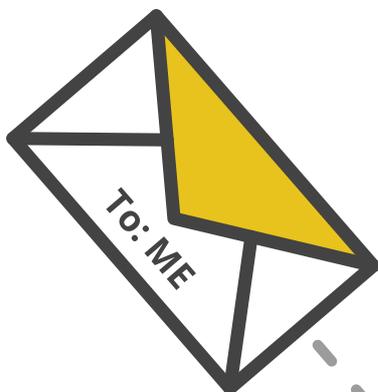
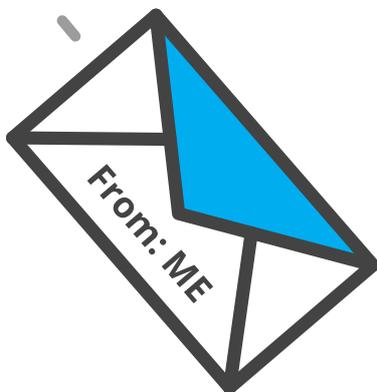
Provide a chillout area

Take inspiration from major music festivals and create a 'chillout zone' for attendees who feel like a break from a big event. Choose an area that's away from the action and equip it with couches, bean bags, relaxing music — maybe even a masseuse.



Collect user-generated content for future interaction

If your event focuses on career or personal development, ask participants to write themselves a brief letter about what they learnt at your event, how it made them feel or their future goals. Send it to them 3, 6 or 12 months afterwards to trigger their memories, and prompt them to reflect on their progress.



3 Trends To Watch In 2017

1. Virtual reality

Using VR technology, attendees can be placed in the centre of immersive experiences. VR is more affordable and accessible than ever before — thank you [Google Cardboard!](#) Just look at the New York Times who recently promoted [their new VR experience](#) by sending their print subscribers branded cardboard headsets so that they could view the content once it went live.



2. Beacon and geofencing technology

As technology leaps forward, marketers are able to communicate with specific audiences based on their geolocation and behavioural triggers. Applied to an event, it can be used to send push notifications (such as special offers, daily timetables or presentation reminders) directly to an app on an attendee's mobile device. MONA geniusly put this technology to use through their [interactive tour guide](#).



3. Live-streaming — and holograms!

Your guest speakers don't need to attend in flesh to draw a crowd. Last year, infamous life coach Anthony Robbins overcame his conflicting schedule by appearing live as a human hologram at an Australian conference despite being in Florida at the time! Of course, you don't need Star Wars-esk technology to recreate this experience, live streaming video has come a long way with high speed internet and high definition screens readily available.





Want to engage your audience better? Zeetings can help you deliver an interactive presentation, and encourage real-time participation and feedback from attendees at your next event, conference or meeting.

- Let attendees follow slides on their own devices
- Get real-time feedback with live polling
- Encourage questions and comments throughout the event
- Let attendees contribute anonymously, if they wish
- Collect valuable data about participants

Would you like to connect with your audience better, and create the event they really want to see?

[Try Zeetings for free](#)



Eventbrite

Got a great idea for your next event? Find out how Eventbrite can make it stand out from the crowd. Eventbrite's online ticketing provides a seamless solution to create compelling event pages, sell tickets, promote and manage events, and analyse results — all from the web or any mobile device.

- Sell tickets online and on mobile
- Plug event registration into your own website
- Boost sales with built-in social promotions
- Keep queues moving fast with fast entry management tools
- No setup fees, monthly fees, or contracts

[Find out more](#)

