

augeo

2025

Experiential Trends Report

➤ Augeo's annual trends guide



02

**State of
the industry**

05

**2025
trends**

11

**Content &
production**

16

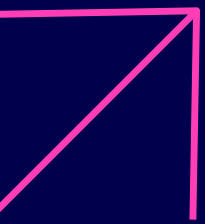
Technology

19

**What's hot
in gifting?**

23

**Event travel's
next chapter**

A pink line graphic consisting of a diagonal line segment and a vertical line segment meeting at a right angle.

01

State of the industry

Understanding the industry landscape

Are you familiar with the concept of holding multiple truths? With this mindset, you acknowledge that opposing ideas can simultaneously exist. If you need an example, look no further than the state of the experiential industry:

01

Attendee and stakeholder expectations are constantly changing, requiring an unprecedented degree of responsiveness and flexibility.

02

At the same time, more clients are navigating economic uncertainty, which requires deeper long-term strategies and investment prioritization.

Add experiential's industry-wide shift from scarcity to abundance and it's enough to make any sort of strategic experience planning and execution seem impossible.

Yet it's on that precipice of perceived futility where the experience industry thrives. We collectively love a challenge, don't we? And for so many of us, we've found purpose not only in this work, but also in the philosophy that drives it: that change, action and growth happen when people gather.

Even amid challenges like tight budgets and diminished attention spans, experiences remain one of the most effective places in which companies can invest to create measurable impact. People crave connection — to feel like they belong, that they're seen and heard. That's where so many brands have an exciting opportunity to delve into a person's core, understand what's there and relinquish a degree of control to the individual, empowering them to customize their experience. The results are deep loyalty and engagement that can be measured in stats and anecdotes, from employee retention to social media-based sharing.

Speaking of data collection and analysis: are you feeling more pressure to source and analyze engagement data? A recent study revealed that 72% of marketing leaders identify this as the biggest shift in their roles. Marketing leaders aren't only building connections among attendees; they're also using data-powered insights to dismantle internal silos and equip employees and other stakeholders for shared success.

The long-lasting value created by intentional experiences also helps solve challenges, turning roadblocks into opportunities. That's often what sparks our imaginations at Augeo:

- What can we do in spite of these limits?
- How can we help solve the issues you face?
- How can we cut through the noise to keep attendees engaged and excited?

Because here's the kicker: the experience industry evolves quickly. A limitation now may become a non-issue in six months, not to mention the lightning-fast pace at which technology and industry tactics evolve.

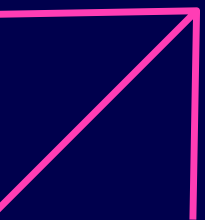
As 2025 begins, consider this a level-set: a chance for you to get ahead of the curve. In the following pages, you'll learn more about the top trends shaping the experiential industry. Take a deeper dive into key focus areas that just might be keeping you awake at night, along with suggestions to make these seismic shifts work for you. A round-up of gifting trends is sure to give you some inspiration. And as you consider locations for upcoming experiences, we've got the scoop on the domestic and international destinations that have people talking. There's never been a better time to be in this line of work, and we're excited to show you why.



Joan Wells

President, Experience | Augeo Marketing





02

2025 trends

Embracing change: Top 10 trends
that are reshaping our industry
landscape



01

Experience as an essential business strategy

Experience is becoming an increasingly vital business strategy that organizations are prioritizing to drive sales, enhance employee retention, and build brand loyalty, surpassing traditional marketing efforts. In a landscape where hybrid work environments have intensified the desire for face-to-face interactions, audiences are craving deeper connections more than ever. Marketing and sales are looking to experience divisions as the hub of data, engagement and impact. Companies that are prioritizing meaningful experiences backed by data-driven strategies are staying ahead of the curve, building stronger relationships with stakeholders, and differentiating themselves in a competitive marketplace.

02

The boomerang effect of mass marketing

The impact of one-size-fits-all messaging is greatly diminishing as audiences become increasingly desensitized to an overwhelming volume of digital communications. The average person receives more than 12,000 messages a day. The natural response to such an avalanche of communications is to ignore them. And that's why more personalized strategies are needed to cut through the noise and engage prospective attendees. Furthermore, by elevating personalization, companies can leverage event participants to extend their roles as brand ambassadors beyond the event, allowing for a continuation of those personalized messages to foster meaningful connections that resonate long after the experience concludes.

03

The shrinking attention economy

As mass marketing becomes less effective, capturing the attention of stakeholders for even short periods is increasingly difficult. With shrinking attention spans, event communication and brand messaging must be more concise, clear, and direct. Moreover, attendees now expect to see their values and stories represented on stage, which fosters a deeper connection to the content and creates transformative moments. Companies that prioritize these strategies in content creation and design will see a higher return on investment as competition for attention intensifies. This shift is also evident in experience design, where attendees demand more interactive and immersive experiences. Technologies like AR, VR, and AI enable personalized engagement, allowing participants to tailor their experiences and engage in conversations and solutions that resonate with their unique perspectives.

04

AI as a business imperative

What was once considered a "nice-to-have" is now an essential: AI has evolved from broad, generalized applications to personalized, collaborative partnerships between human experts and AI. This shift is driving greater efficiency and effectiveness in pushing the boundaries of experience delivery. As demand for personalized experiences and deeper insights from post-event data grows, leading brands are implementing both internal AI strategies for operational efficiency and external AI strategies to enhance attendee experiences. When viewed as an everyday teammate, AI has the power to elevate individual capabilities and transform the entire industry.

05

Data-driven experiences: Strategy to action

Organizations are gathering more impactful data than ever before. Moving forward, the focus is shifting from merely collecting information to effectively translating data into actionable insights that will drive engagement and improve event outcomes. Collecting data is no longer enough—leading companies have mastered the art of using it both to enhance experiences and demonstrate measurable impact to internal stakeholders. This transition allows event planners to tailor experiences based on real-time feedback and trends, creating more meaningful connections with attendees while allowing experience leaders to form stronger narratives internally to assist with investment and prioritization.

06

Hyper-personalized expectations with customization at scale

While personalization isn't a new concept and has been highlighted in earlier trends, it's crucial to recognize that audiences now expect a tailored experience, regardless of event size. Organizations leveraging technology and automation can deliver personalized attention at scale, applying the same strategies to a group of 10,000 as they do to a smaller audience of 10. This shift reflects a rising demand for customized engagement that meets the unique needs of every participant, while also allowing individuals to see themselves in the experience and feel a sense of control over it.

07

Recognition fully integrated in experience design

Recognition is no longer confined to the stage or limited to awards ceremonies. Instead, events are embracing a more personalized approach, weaving meaningful moments of recognition throughout the entire attendee journey. From the very first touchpoint in the pre-event communication to the arrival experience, decor, programming, mobile app, and beyond, recognition is integrated at every stage. By incorporating these small yet impactful moments of acknowledgment, event organizers create a culture of appreciation that enhances engagement and elevates the overall experience for all attendees.

08

Building meaningful relationships, not just networks

There is a shift toward fostering deep, meaningful connections while moving away from traditional networking practices. This emphasizes a new importance of blending personal and professional relationships as participants seek more meaningful interactions that can strengthen business ties. By prioritizing purposeful relationship-building through more organic connection opportunities instead of prescriptive networking activities, events create a more engaged and unified community.

09

A focus on strategic spend to maximize budgets

Amid rising costs and limited financial growth, there's a heightened emphasis on strategic spending to maximize budgets. As experience budgets struggle to keep pace with inflation, corporate leaders expect events to deliver more return on time and investment. In response, companies are embracing flexible budget strategies and finding innovative ways to stretch resources while enhancing the overall value of their experiences. Key strategies include cross-department budget sharing, prioritizing high-impact investments, leveraging technology to drive efficiency, forming strategic partnerships, and making data-driven decisions when shaping event agendas.

10

Aligning experience design with core values

Values-based programming continues to be a central focus in experience design, reflecting the belief that every company wants to make an impact. Organizations are eager to integrate core values—such as corporate social responsibility (CSR), diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and sustainability—into their events and gifting in ways that allow attendees to connect with and actively contribute to these principles. While there was once a broader, one-size-fits-all approach, values-based experience design is now embracing the trend of customization. Companies are prioritizing values that align most closely with their own mission, creating experiences that resonate deeply with attendees and reflect a genuine commitment to shared principles.

03

Content & production



Two must-have experience elements

Understanding the critical roles of content and production is a new non-negotiable

We talked earlier in this report about the importance of delivering on continually changing attendee expectations, including customization that resonates. One of the most effective ways to achieve that goal is to envelop attendees in an immersive experience that stimulates their senses and inspires engaged thinking. And for that, you need two tactics: **content and production**.

content &
production



Production: Moving beyond the stage

William Shakespeare did say that “all the world’s a stage.”

In the experiential industry, **the stage is no longer the sole focal point of an experience** — and that evolution has opened up a world of possibilities. Now, we have the technology and expertise to make intentional use of every part of an event space — hallways, breakout rooms and communal areas, to start.

To bring this vision to life, think about your space, the layout and the intentions of the experience. Understanding how you want people to feel and act can help create an environment that sparks those connections.

We already know that attention spans are shrinking and people are bombarded with content and messaging from all directions. Elevating both your experience content and production are the keys to solving this challenge. Rather than rely on the formula of stage presentations and didactic slide decks, embrace new opportunities to reinvigorate what you say, how you say it and how attendees receive that information. Fireside chats, lounge-style learning spaces, topic-focused field trips or excursions — these are just a starting point to keep attendees curious, engaged and connected.

Content's momentum continues

If you counted the number of times you encountered the word “content” in a typical day, you’d probably lose track pretty quickly.

Yet just because content is among the marketing buzzwords du jour doesn’t make it less important. In fact, the significance of thoughtful, strategic content continues to grow as a resource for learning, connection and advocacy.



This is a particularly exciting time for content strategists as the experience lifecycle expands. The experience itself is no longer the end point; in fact, it’s the midpoint. It’s as important to consider what you say and how you say it before and after the experience, not just during. So much energy and momentum ignites when people are together. How can you use content and standard event tactics like registration to build excitement and connection within your audience? How can you keep that energy and engagement going leading up to and throughout the experience? Can you offer post-event check-ins, learning opportunities, discovery sessions or incentives to keep people connected and working toward larger goals?

It also helps to give attendees a voice and a stake in both the content and production. This is part of what’s pushed the “stand and deliver” presentation model into the past. People don’t want to be talked to or at; instead, they crave conversation, exchange, validation. Offer in-the-moment polls that give attendees an opportunity to share their input as a session unfolds and allow the speaker to react to the real-time data capture. Ensure that post-event surveys ask about content delivery, frequency and methodology. How do attendees want to hear from and talk with you? Where can you meet them to foster higher engagement? When they see that they have a role in the experiential journey, they’re instantly elevated from attendees to stakeholders. And few sales or marketing tools are as effective as authentic advocacy.

The evolution of recognition

Recognition — a common element of many live experiences — is becoming a more integral part of the holistic experience plan, thanks to content and production.

You're less likely to see recognition as a fleeting moment on a program agenda as the act of recognizing and celebrating employees, clients and stakeholders takes on more importance. From technology-enhanced pre-event touchpoints like a congratulatory video from a supervisor or mentor to an on-site program infused with recognition moments, the act and art of recognition are now woven throughout experience design.

The increased importance of recognition also ties directly to two additional trends we discussed earlier: hyper-personalization and the boomerang effect of mass marketing. AI-powered highlight reels, memorable photo moments like a personalized digital welcome billboard — these are just two ways that you can help attendees feel truly appreciated and valued. A custom message, gift or experiential element will leave a stronger and more lasting impression than simply lumping someone in with a larger group. And with the rapid growth in AI-powered production tools and platforms, delivering personalized moments and encounters is easier to scale, whether you're recognizing 10 people or 10,000.

LEGENDS
OF POSSIBLE

Annavi Ramirez

04

Technology



How did we work before AI?

Artificial intelligence, or AI, undoubtedly wins for hottest industry topic.

New technology trends tend to inspire a lot of noise and chatter. The trick is to cut through that noise to understand what a particular technology brings to the table and how it can be thoughtfully applied to your brand experiences.

At Augeo, we're all in on AI. But like any other tool, effective use of AI requires planning, strategy, and a thorough understanding of what a particular AI platform can do and the problems it can solve, as well as the inherent risks of using AI-powered tools and how to protect your brand.

We view AI not as a novelty, but instead as a teammate. Do we make active use of every AI-powered tool available? Of course not. But we have found significant success in using AI to help us work smarter and more efficiently. Here are three top ways we're using AI:

Three key ways we use AI

1 Introduce hyper-personalization

AI is elevating the concept of personalization to a whole new level. Leveraging AI and real-time data enables the delivery of personalized, tailored experiences for each attendee at each step of the journey, including customized registration, personalized digital signage and individualized recognition. And when individuals feel seen and celebrated, that results in a stronger, more impactful attendee experience.

2 Better data

Another benefit of hyper-personalized experiences? You'll get better, richer data, empowering you to learn more about the individuals that attend your experiences. That insight also informs experience design, empowering you to make better predictions of attendee response to your programming and introducing informed intentionality in each step of your attendee's journey. Because the data is a mix of qualitative and quantitative, you get a deeper dive into how an individual attendee sees and assesses value, their expectations of the experience and how those expectations were met.

3 Work smarter, not harder

So many AI tools — Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini, CoPilot— have become indispensable parts of how we work. Who doesn't love the chance to offload a dreaded task like notetaking and focus more brainpower on creativity, strategy and innovation? Our toolbox has become more robust because of AI — and at the same time, we never lose sight of the unmatched value and importance of what our people can and do produce.

05

**What's hot
in gifting?**



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The power of intention

Redefining corporate gifting

The landscape of corporate gifting is transforming as businesses adopt an enterprise-wide approach to appreciation and recognition. This strategic shift moves beyond traditional, siloed gifting practices toward a unified vision that connects and amplifies gifting strategies across the organization.

Three key directions are driving this enterprise transformation:

1

Intentional Gifting

A move toward meaningful selections that reflect company values and foster deeper connections.

2

Evolving Experiences

Integration of thoughtful gifting experiences that promote engagement and team-building.

3

Technology-Driven Solutions

Leveraging innovative platforms to enable personalization in digital gifting programs to enhance impact at scale.

Intentional gifting

A new approach to meaningful gifts

Corporate gifting is no longer just about the item itself; it's about the thought, intention and impact behind each choice. Organizations now prioritize unified gifting strategies that resonate on a deeper level, reflecting a company-wide shift toward meaningful expressions of appreciation, relationship-building and storytelling.

Diversity in sourcing

Collaborating with minority-owned suppliers to celebrate various cultures through gifting.

Story behind the gift

Highlighting the makers and origin stories to communicate brand values and social commitments.

Ripple effect gifts

Choosing items that positively impact communities, focusing on sustainability and long-term benefits.



Evolving experiences

Unity through shared moments

Emerging and continuing gifting trends lean toward experiences that promote work-life balance and team bonding. By integrating these trends across all gifting moments, businesses can enhance corporate culture and forge meaningful connections that resonate across all occasions.

Unplugging together

Vintage-inspired items like instant cameras and vinyl record players encourage teams to disconnect from technology, fostering genuine connections during retreats.

Wellness and mindfulness

Items such as sleep accessories, mindfulness journals, and mocktail kits cater to self-care and relaxation—ideal for employee appreciation events.

Experiential gifts

Team-building workshops or outdoor adventure excursions promote collaboration while creating lasting memories during incentive trips.

For more insights on 2025 trends, [visit our blog!](#)

Technology-driven solutions

Personalizing impact at scale

Innovative technologies are unifying and elevating the corporate gifting experience. By leveraging these platforms across the organization, companies can deliver deeper customization and sophisticated, personalized interactions for every recipient, every time.

AI-powered personalization

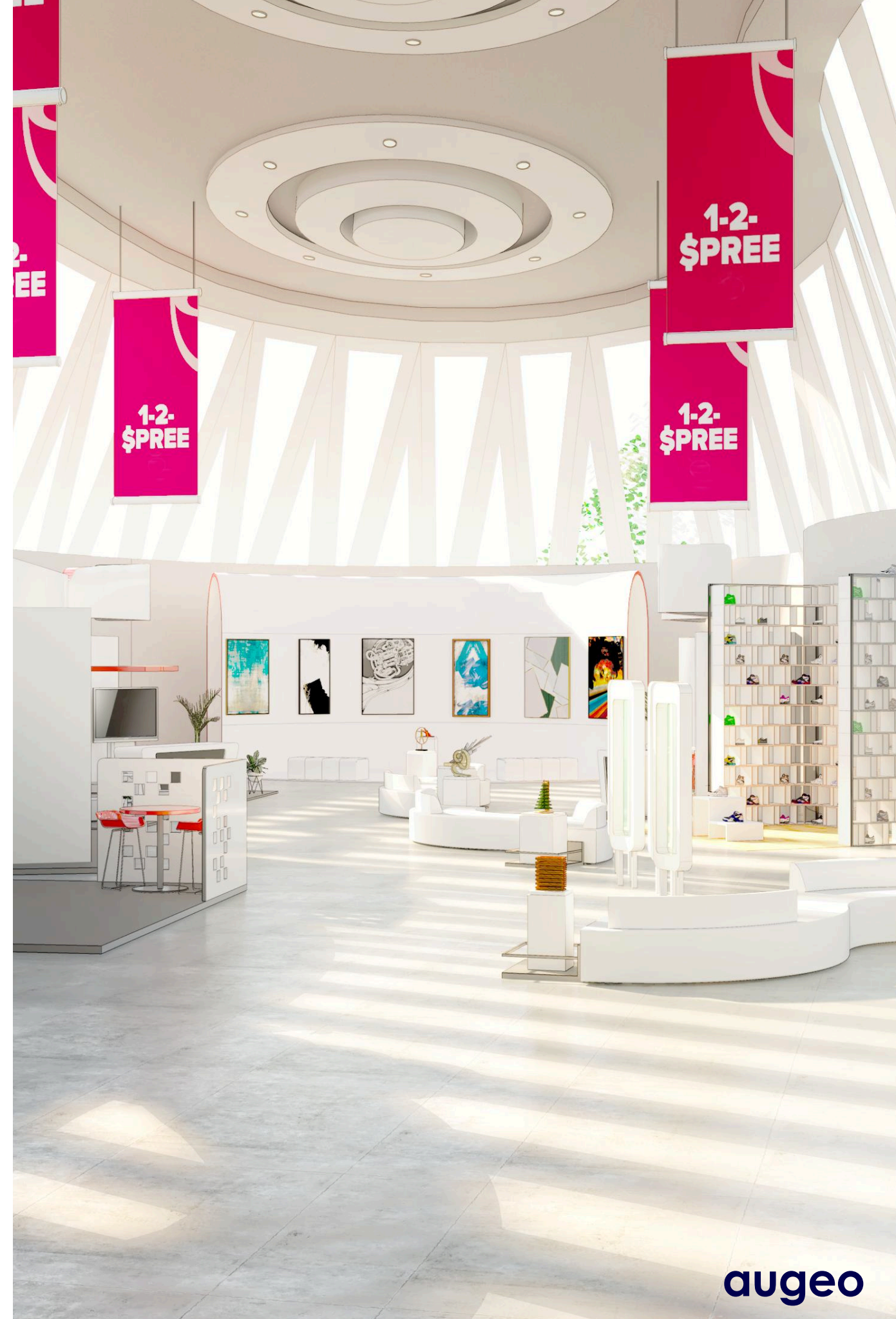
AI platforms enhance the gifting experience with tailored recommendations based on recipient preferences, ensuring thoughtful choices.

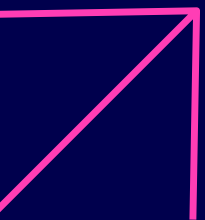
Virtual gifting suites

3D virtual gifting suites allow users to explore gifts in an interactive environment, leading to a 30% increase in satisfaction rates—ideal for remote and hybrid events.

Augmented reality experiences

Anticipated to gain momentum in early 2025, AR-enabled gifting experiences will enable recipients to visualize and interact with gifts in their space before selection.





06

Event travel's next chapter

Hot destinations and
new properties



Hot destinations and new properties

By 2025, the global MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) industry is projected to reach \$1.3 billion, with luxury and unique destinations driving significant growth. As the lines between leisure and business travel blur, organizations are increasingly drawn to remarkable venues that host successful business events while delivering top-tier experiences.

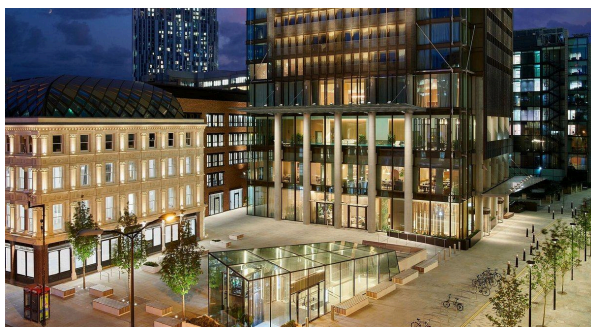
This year's hottest event travel trends showcase a blend of timeless elegance and cutting-edge luxury across both established and emerging destinations.

The new & the renewed

Exciting developments in event spaces are emerging both at home and abroad, with a focus on sustainability and post-pandemic adaptations. Let's explore destinations and properties setting new standards for corporate events.

The renaissance of European luxury

Europe continues to captivate with a resurgence in both classic destinations and emerging hotspots offering fresh experiences for your attendees.



Pan Pacific London

Features a dedicated events floor with cutting-edge technology and sophisticated design for seamless gatherings.



The Dorchester

Reopened in London after extensive renovations created updated event spaces that blend timeless elegance with modern amenities.



Four Seasons Hotel London at Ten Trinity Square

Offers historical charm to corporate gatherings set against a rich cultural backdrop.

Croatia and Portugal

Europe's rising stars

Croatia and Portugal are emerging as the continent's new sought-after destinations, experiencing a 15% and 22% increase in bookings respectively over the past year. These countries blend rich history, stunning landscapes, and vibrant cultures, ideal for both leisure travelers and incentive groups seeking a rewarding experience.



Transformations on the bay

Set to become one of the West Coast's most significant meeting destinations, the Gaylord Pacific opens spring 2025 with an impressive combination of scale and seaside setting. Just minutes from downtown San Diego, this 1,600-room resort offers your events over 477,000 square feet of flexible space with waterfront views, perfect for organizations seeking a fresh destination for large-scale corporate gatherings.



Redefining luxury in the Pacific

As luxury evolves globally, the Pacific region is witnessing a transformation in high-end offerings, with Hawaii at the forefront.

Hawaii's new wave of opulence



Ritz-Carlton Oahu at Turtle Bay

Newly opened property offers breathtaking views of the North Shore with access to stunning beaches for a premium getaway.



1 Hotel Hanalei Bay

Following a \$300 million transformation, this sustainability-focused luxury resort brings cutting-edge wellness facilities and nature-integrated event spaces to Kauai's North Shore.

Heartland & highland horizons

As organizations seek distinctive environments for their events, mountain resorts and emerging Midwest destinations are attracting attention with their blend of accessibility and memorable settings.

Big Sky's premium arrivals



Montage Big Sky

Framed by Montana's Spanish Peaks mountain range, this resort offers ski-in/ski-out access.



One&Only Moonlight Basin

Amid the fragrant pines and snow-dusted peaks of Big Sky, this alpine resort promises epic adventure and off-piste glamour. Opening spring 2025.

Texas raises the bar

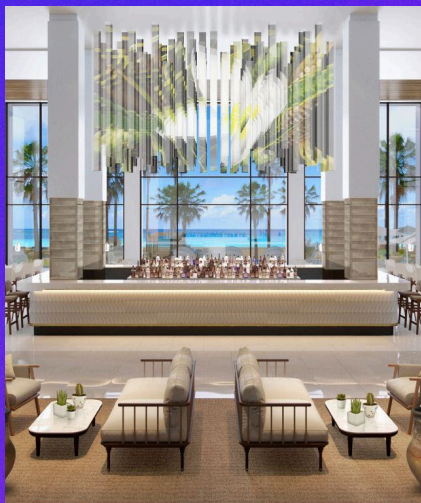
Arlington emerges as a compelling meetings destination with the debut of Loews Arlington. Connected directly to the city's new convention center and situated between Globe Life Field and AT&T Stadium, this property offers your events both premium facilities and unique entertainment options for attendee downtime.



Two Caribbean gems

St. Regis brings its distinctive luxury to two compelling island destinations in 2025. The brand debuts on Aruba's Palm Beach in January, followed by a spring opening in the Dominican Republic. Each property promises a blend of elegance, exceptional service and stunning beachfront views, making either an ideal choice for discerning travelers and corporate events alike.

The fusion of luxury and functionality in these destinations sets a new standard for corporate events. As the industry evolves, we remain committed to identifying and offering the most inspiring and rewarding options for your corporate events.



The new Atlantic way

From Florida's coast to the Caribbean shores, landmark openings are setting new expectations for luxury gatherings, with established brands expanding their footprint in sought-after destinations.



The Dunlin

A contemporary coastal retreat featuring modern design with prime waterfront positioning in Johns Island, South Carolina.



Omni Fort Lauderdale

A sophisticated waterfront addition connecting to the Broward County Convention Center with oceanfront views.

dugeo

Thank you for exploring what's ahead for our industry in 2025 and beyond with us! Let's make a full circle back to the multiple truths we mentioned in the report's opening. Our intent is that you now hold multiple truths yourself: your creative spark is ignited, you feel more knowledgeable, and you may have some challenges ahead. We're right there with you! Let's roll up our sleeves, leverage these pivotal tipping points and introduce a new caliber of experiential-powered community building.

Most importantly? Let's keep the conversation going as we work to meet these trends and also actively monitor what's on the horizon. Connect with us:

