

**SOMERSET
HOUSE** step inside think outside

LISTEN UP!

**CONNECTION
COLLABORATION
CONTEXT**

**The impact of technology
on audience interaction
and engagement.**



According to Forbes,
it is said that our attention
span is now just...

8 seconds
DOWN FROM

12 seconds
IN THE 2000S

We are glued to our screens on average 6 hours per day*,
scrolling through social media, binge watching TV
and engaging in online retail therapy *Independent

Delve deeper and our attention spans can broadly be
divided into **selective** and **divided attention**.

Societal trends, such as ‘Taylor-gating’ and ‘raw-dogging’,
along with a new narrative of trusted source and second
screening, which are quickly becoming the new norm
and are set to impact the events sector and how we
consume information.



Associated British Ports, Embankment Galleries 2024

DEFINITIONS

Divided attention

The ability to focus on multiple tasks or
stimuli simultaneously, effectively splitting
one’s attentional resources.

Phubbing

Snubbing in a social situation by looking at
your phone and not fellow audience members.

Raw-dogging

A distraction free environment or to go without
an important element of a task or activity.

Second screening

The practice of using an additional electronic
device, like a smartphone or tablet, while
simultaneously watching television or an event.

Selective attention

Focusing on a particular task or idea while
ignoring others.

Taylor-gating

Fans gather outside concert venues to sing and
dance together, even if they don’t have tickets
to the show. Being part of a brand has never
been cooler.

Trusted source

Verified and true; a factual, accountable
source of information in a world where
everyone is a broadcaster.

While technology has a seemingly unrepentant pace on innovation and new formats of working and interaction there's a growing trend of resurgent activities, which hark back to craftsmanship and artisan skills. While we relish the immediacy of information, it's juxtaposed by the inability to tune out and step offline.

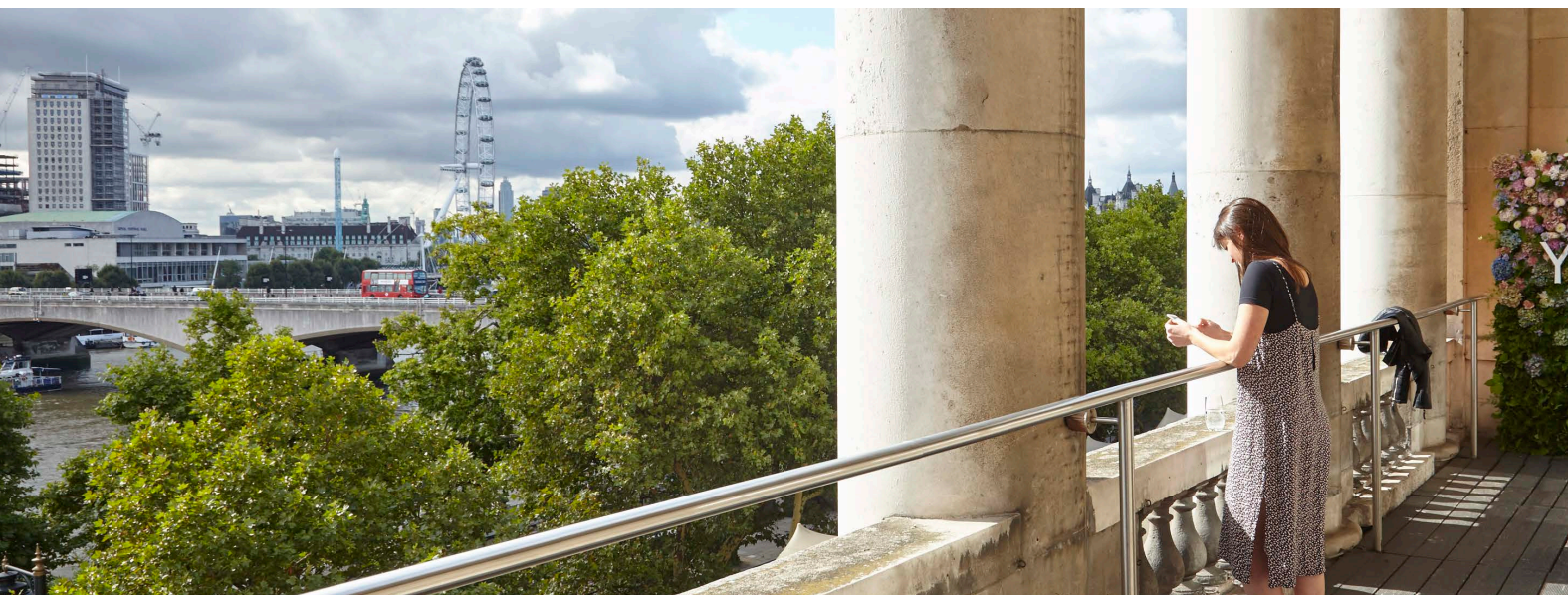
We are all facing information overload, and divided attention means that event managers need to go beyond stage and setting when planning their corporate get togethers. At Somerset House, as the home of cultural innovation, we seek to drive change and are focused on addressing emerging cultural trends and the evolving event needs of today. This has led us to look at the 'company conference' and the effect technology has on how we learn and interact with each other. We want to understand how present we are at an event today and how technology impacts event design, and whether it's either a: **disruptor or disruptive and whether hyper-connectivity drives or hinders connection.**

This paper is the result of extensive research carried out in autumn 2024. A survey was carried out and we have gathered insights from corporate event planners, event agencies and supplier partners. We heard from industry leaders from companies in customer employee and stakeholder business events – from sectors including finance, technology, legal, retail and gaming (to name a few!) with an estimated, annualised turnover in excess of £100m.

Survey questions included:

- What do you look to achieve from your business events?
- What methods do you use to ensure your in-person audience is engaged?
- Is second screening impacting engagement at events?
- How do you see the role of digital devices evolving in events over the next few years?

LISTEN UP! is the second in our series of insight papers, following the success of our brand experiences paper, [Tribe & Trusted](#).



EXPERT VIEW



Peter Mandeno, Ph.D.
Human Connectivity Specialist

Driven by a cocktail of factors, the events industry is experiencing somewhat of a renaissance. The agencies and individuals best positioned to benefit from this opportunity are those who understand and can effectively respond to the changing needs of delegates, beginning with their insatiable appetite for connection.

Satisfying delegates' ever-evolving needs requires simultaneously zooming out to understand the trends influencing the nature of work while zooming in to recognise how subtle design features contribute to the event experience. For example, continued globalisation means your delegates are increasingly diverse. One-size-fits-all is not an option. And digital technology, once hailed as the silver bullet that would connect the world, has proven to be just as distractive and divisive as it is connective. Winners will be those who leverage the power of emerging technologies as a means to a more valuable end, rather than as ends in themselves.

Valuable, meaningful and resilient connections require a solid foundation of trust and there is no better way to establish this foundation than by gathering face-to-face. Humans are a social species and events have a vital role to play in helping people get the best out of themselves and of each other in an increasingly globalised, distributed and automated world.



Somerset House’s brand is at the heart of the organisation. Its central location and heritage as a residency for the arts, together with its spirit line of **‘Step Inside, Think Outside’** has led Somerset House to position themselves as the Home of Cultural Innovators.

As an independent charity that connects creativity and the arts with wider society, they welcome 3 million visitors to the site each year and are home to the UK’s largest creative community. Somerset House backs new talent, new methods, new technologies and continually explores the unknown through their diverse cultural programme. Working globally across art, creativity, business and non-profit, they aim to bring worlds and minds together to intensify creativity and multiply opportunity.

LISTEN UP!

comprises the voice of

Corporate event planners	42%	Baby Boomers (1946-1963)	3.1%
Event agencies	36%	Generation X (1964-1980)	28.1%
Supplier partners	22%	Millennials (1981-1996)	62.5%
		Generation Z (1997-2012)	6.3%

4 generations now coexist in the workplace. While today's audience may have a common interest, they each have individual characteristics and learning styles, that are becoming broader and require greater consideration from event organisers.

It's no longer enough to consider diversity of the panel and speakers in isolation. Diversity of the audience due to generational diversity and globalisation of brands and their workforce means planners must provide an environment which appeals to and is accessible, for all.

Age is all too often overlooked yet it is an important part of event planning due to the growing breadth of age in the workplace.

For example, according to Gov UK, workers who are 50-64 have increased by 7.3% over the last two decades.

Whilst this generational diversity encourages innovation and working with new perspectives, age diversity also brings challenges beyond communication methods, including differences in tone, formality, language and terminology.

Event organisers need to go beyond content and catering to better understand how their audience wants to learn. Personalisation is key – attendees want tailored, meaningful interactions rather than generic experiences.

The job expectations of Generation Z and Millennials have changed, prioritising training and development more than any other generation. Our research suggests that they:

- Value self-improvement and personal knowledge gain over monetary incentives.
- Expect to be able to access information at any time.
- Want to work for brands that have a purpose and want regular updates from their employer on the bigger picture and impacts the company is making.

The event landscapes continue to adapt. The traditional meeting has evolved from a didactic approach where delegates are instructed and informed, to a learner-centered experience emphasising **collaboration, conversation and connection.**

Over the past 40 years this shift away from a one-way narrative has evolved dramatically:

- The traditional keynote speaker / one person address now accounts on average for just 1 hour in comparison to 3 hours.
- Sessions which require collaboration and interaction are up from 3 hours to 5 hours over the average business conference day.
- The business conference has been flipped from the sage of stage to delegates discovering and learning at their own pace.
- Sessions that engage audiences through interactive and collaborative activities now dominate, reflecting attendees' preferences for participation over passive learning.
- Not only do today's delegates assimilate information by learning, by seeing and by listening, they have unlimited access to online tutorials, study guides and a growing prevalence of company podcasts.



**LISTEN
UP!**

**WHAT'S SLANG TO
SOME IS A CONFUSING
BUSINESS ACRONYM
TO OTHERS.**



CASE IN POINT

Client: Glamour
Event: Glamour Empowerment Summit

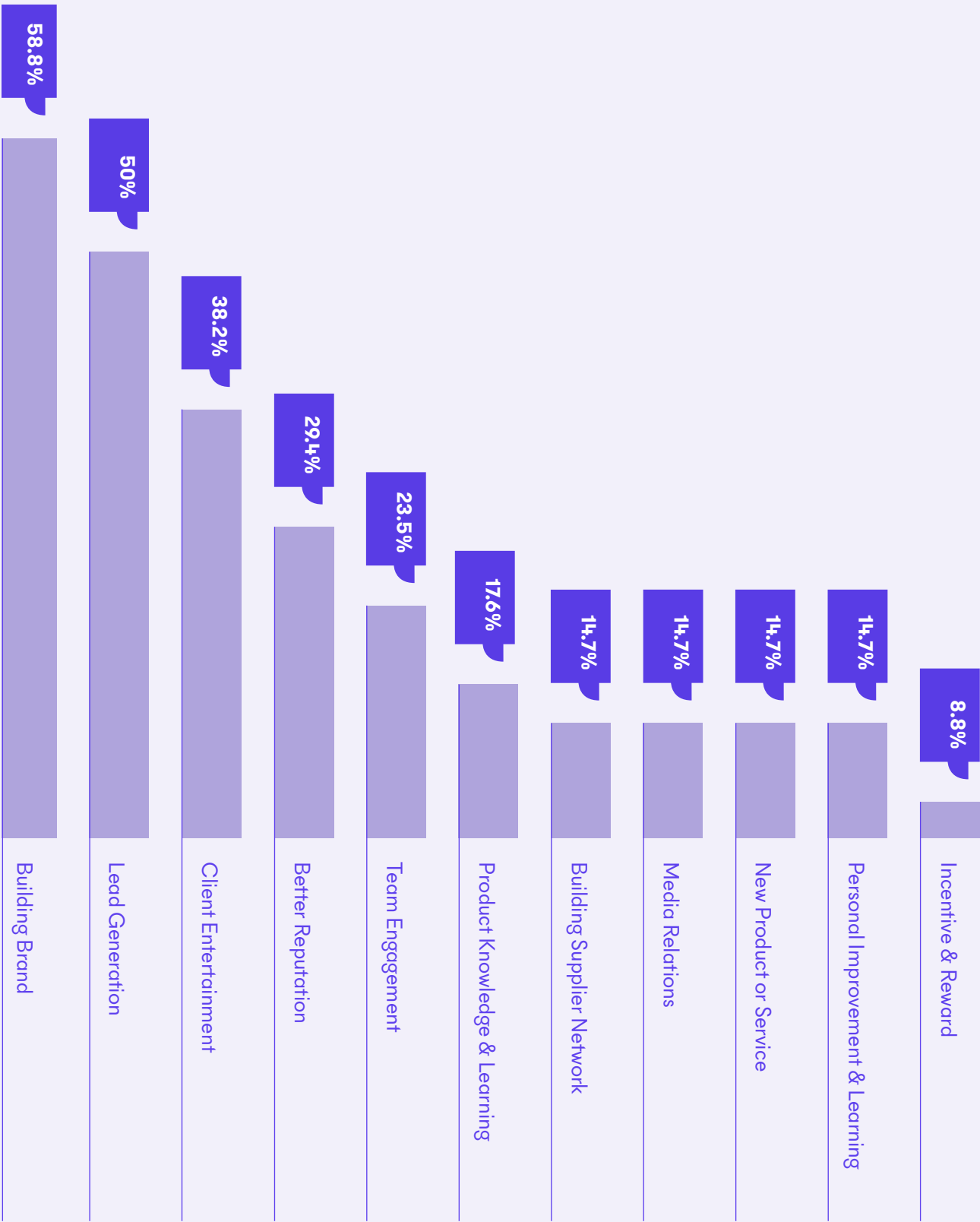
Taking place in the Embankment Galleries at Somerset House, guests to Glamour’s first-ever Empowerment Summit were treated to a morning or afternoon session (300 people per session), featuring inspiring live speakers and masterclasses with leading experts, an array of workshops, beauty treatments, and exclusive tech experiences, including:

- Photo Studio moment from Samsung
- Tinder Video Booth
- Manifestation Wall
- Hair Styling from Dyson

Attendees heard from a line-up of game-changing speakers on the main stage, who all shared their invaluable, expert insight into the issues that really matter to women, as well as providing actionable advice for all attendees to incorporate into their daily routines, while a number of separate break-out areas hosted smaller workshops and seminars.

Glamour and Somerset House worked alongside Somerset House’s accredited suppliers Light Motif (Production), KERB (Food) and Bubble (Drinks) to create the event.

What do you look to achieve when planning your business event?
Participants could answer one or more response

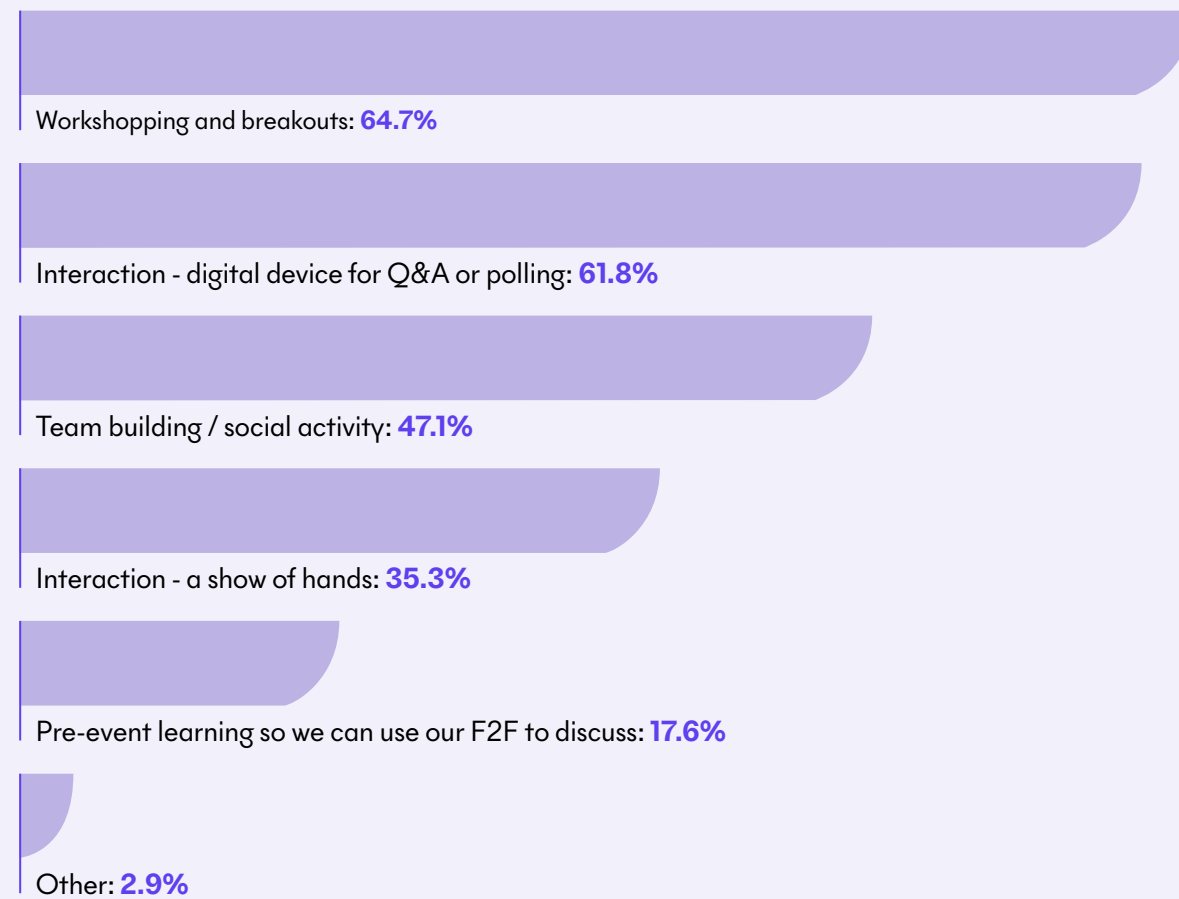


Business events are being used to drive awareness, which is unsurprising due to the current un-settled economy and weak consumer spending. Maintaining client relationships and retaining employees is more cost effective for companies as it minimises the risk of soliciting for new clients and people. Despite the rise in technology, the ability to work from home and to log in to an event from anywhere in the world, face to face business events remain crucial in building trust, relationships and brand loyalty.

When the figures are further analysed by age demographic: Generation Z cite personal improvement, product knowledge and learning as the key outcomes they want to see from their events, whereas Generation X and Millennials are all about client entertaining and conversation.

What methods do you use to ensure your in-person audience is engaged?

Participants could answer one or more response



The legacy 'company conference' has evolved from delegates being instructed and informed, to a learner-centred format that emphasises conversation, collaboration, and connection which also reflects the casualisation of today's hybrid work routines.

The use of technology to engage an audience is now expected. Generation Z, who, as digital natives who have never not known the internet, demand technology integration and purposeful, inclusive content. Conversely, it's the boomers who value structure, favouring traditional interactions such as a show of hands to prove their presence and engagement when at an in-person event.

TOP 5 TIPS ON HOW TO CREATE ENGAGING WORKSHOPS

1

Preparation: Distribute pre-workshop information to ensure people know what to expect, ideas to think about beforehand and what the workshop will involve. Ask attendees to submit potential topics, questions or pain points they would like the group to work through solutions for. The better prepared people are walking in the room, the more they will put in (and get out) of the session.

2

Kick-Off Questions: Start with why: at the beginning of the workshop, ask everyone to think about what they would like to get out of the workshop, to write it down and hopefully share with their group. This can make a big difference to engagement and participation.

3

Active Participation: A strong facilitator should directly encourage every attendee to contribute to conversation and debate, with the addition of tech such as Slido to allow for ongoing real-time feedback. We would also encourage as much movement time as possible - walking round the room, changing seating arrangements, standing up to present/speak. This keeps the blood flowing and energy levels high.

4

Thinking Time: Opportunities for independent reflection and thinking before sharing with others, to give everyone thinking time. This is also an inclusive and accessible approach for those whom constant social interaction can be overwhelming.

5

Dynamic Agendas: Set and agree your topics, but let the conversations and attendees lead the agenda. Again, a strong facilitator should be able to identify when it is valuable to remain in an exercise longer than planned, or to reconfigure a whole-group exercise to smaller breakouts, as they get to know the attendees' styles and preferences. Where possible, mix up your format throughout the workshop. If you have enough space in the room, plan exercises that utilise different set-ups - i.e. start with a round table discussion, and move to 1:1 conversation, with attendees picking up chairs and finding space to directly face a partner.

TOP 5 TIPS ON HOW TO CREATE ENGAGING WORKSHOPS

1

Create engaging and most importantly relevant content for your attendees. You can do this by utilising data and past event analytics to fine tune your material.

2

Before deciding on the room layout, determine the primary objectives of your workshop. Is it to share knowledge, foster collaboration, encourage networking, or solve a specific problem? Your goals will dictate the best approach to seating and group dynamics.

3

Make sure your activities are aligned with up-to-date event trends, such as incorporating interactive elements, hybrid and virtual components and creating accessible materials for people with disabilities.

4

Choose an environment that will foster the right atmosphere. For example, the location of the venue, size and feel of the spaces and if required, whether the room is tech equipped.

5

Keep your agenda focused and concise. Adult learners tend to have a short attention span, so it's important to break your content into digestible, focused sessions.



CASE IN POINT



Client: ScreenSkills

Event: Future Film Skills Showcase

ScreenSkills celebrated five years of its Future Film Skills programme, an initiative that has supported 123,00 individuals with a morning of talks and discussions in Somerset House's Portico and Navy Board Rooms.

The main Portico Room housed keynote presentations and panel sessions for 100 attendees, with content streamed online and additional capacity created on site by use of an overflow space with a live relay to the main stage. The Navy Board Rooms hosted the catering with Restaurant Associates offering a sustainable and locally sourced plant-based menu.

Accessibility was the cornerstone of this event and Somerset House collaborated with ScreenSkills to embed inclusivity at every stage. Clear venue accessibility information including lift and ramp access was shared in all participant communication prior to the event. The event design included a British Sign Language interpreter who was visible on the screen, closed captions on the video stream, a dedicated quiet space, multi-level poseur tables, a lower stage height with additional ramp for wheelchair users and the installation of a temporary hearing loop system.

Is second screening on a digital device impacting your events?

14.7%

We encourage delegates to switch off their devices during the session

32.4%

We bring tech into the event as we are aware people are engaged online

23.5%

We don't consider it an issue

29.4%

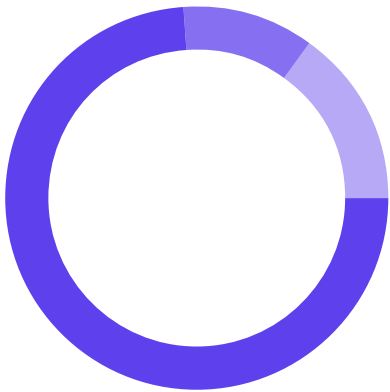
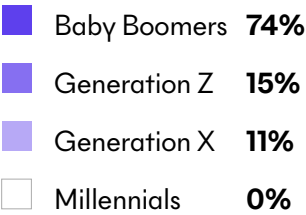
It's not something we've noticed

Second screening, the use of a secondary device while performing a primary activity, affects and divides attention and knowledge retention due to:

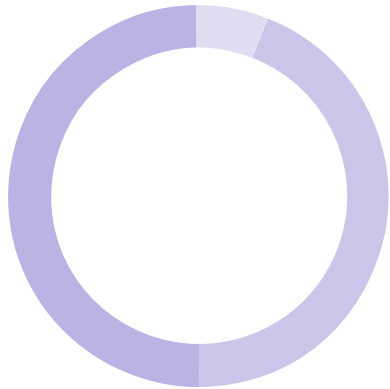
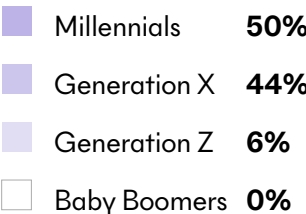
- lack of focus on the primary task leading to lower information retention and comprehension.
- cognitive overload makes it harder for the brain to process and retain information.
- mind wandering and fidgety behaviours which can decrease attention and retention.

ATTITUDES TO DIGITAL DEVICES ARE MARKED AND DECISIVE WITHIN THE AGE GROUPS:

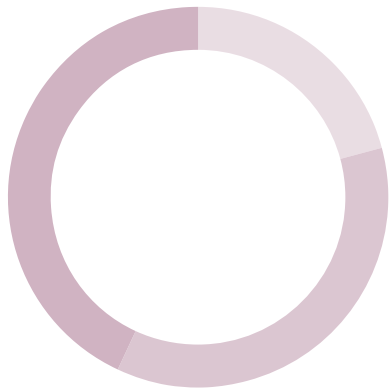
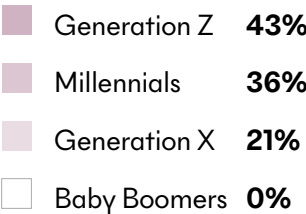
We encourage delegates to switch off their devices during the session:



We bring tech into the event as we are aware people are engaged online:



We don't consider second screening at an event an issue:



GROUND RULES – TOP 5 TIPS ON HOW TO MANAGE DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS AT EVENTS

1 Digital Downtime: Promote “device-free zones” or specific sessions to help attendees focus on the event experience. At a recent event, we created a ‘Sustainability Oasis’ in the middle of the tech-heavy showcase space, where attendees were surrounded by plants, calming audio-visual experiences and personal stories around sustainability and CSR-focused content. This was highly regarded as a great place to spend time and reflect away from the noise.

2 Creative Audience Participation: Some of the tech we have available to us for audience participation is great but it can also encourage people to look through their messages and emails when in a session if they have to keep engaging with QR codes or live survey tech. One strategy we sometimes suggest to clients is to keep tech participation to the end of the session and explore non-device based interaction methods. Something as simple as a show of hands, a “clap-ometer” or encouraging brief moments of dialogue amongst the audience can have a huge impact on engagement and still give speakers and organisers a good sense of how the session is being received.

3 Address the Elephant in the Room: One thing we have seen our clients do successfully is address the elephant in the room at the beginning of a session. This involves acknowledging our phone usage and acknowledging that some people will have urgent calls and messages to tend to, but encouraging attendees to put phones away and enjoy, just for a moment, a time of device-free connection.

4 Incorporate Tech-Free Activities: Offer hands-on workshops, phone-free scavenger hunts or mindfulness exercises that naturally discourage device usage. Another good strategy is incorporating a jog or yoga session before the event starts. You can also do mindfulness sessions during the event which is something we did throughout Reimagine where everybody disconnected from their phone and was present in that moment.

5 Provide Engaging Content: Keep attendees captivated with interactive, dynamic presentations that make looking away unnecessary. Also involve attendees in the speeches and content.

GROUND RULES – TOP 5 TIPS ON HOW TO MANAGE DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS AT EVENTS

1

Design engaging activities that encourage attendees to immerse themselves in the event. This can be done through the use of interactive workshops, games or group activities.

2

Curate content that resonates with your attendees, ensuring that you have compelling speakers who can captivate your audience.

3

Having videographers and photographers capturing the content will minimise distractions through professional documentation.

4

Offer secure, tamper-proof security pouches that attendees can store their phones in which are only accessible during designated breaks or networking hours.

5

You can set expectations in advance by putting a message in your pre-event communications to encourage the lack of mobile activity during our event.

CASE IN POINT



Client: INSEAD

Event: ‘Global INSEAD Day’ celebration

International business school INSEAD required an exceptional black-tie hospitality offering incorporating a canape reception and a three-course dinner for 150 invited alumni. Canapes and dinner service took place in Somerset House’s Embankment Galleries.

As a progressive, forward-thinking organisation that prepares graduates for the highest levels of global business and government, the hospitality offering needed to deliver similar levels of excellence in all aspects from service standards and production to menu design and delivery, as well as reflecting INSEAD’s brand values.

Caterer Clement Worrall created a menu that delivered a modern, high-end experience, reflecting what was ‘hot’ and on-trend in the contemporary London dining scene. The focus was on sustainability and seasonality teamed with paired-back elegant simplicity and ‘unfussiness’ reflective of London’s lauded restaurants.

Front of house staff were recruited and trained in-house at Clement Worrall who boast a culturally and globally diverse workforce.

DOUBLE TAKE

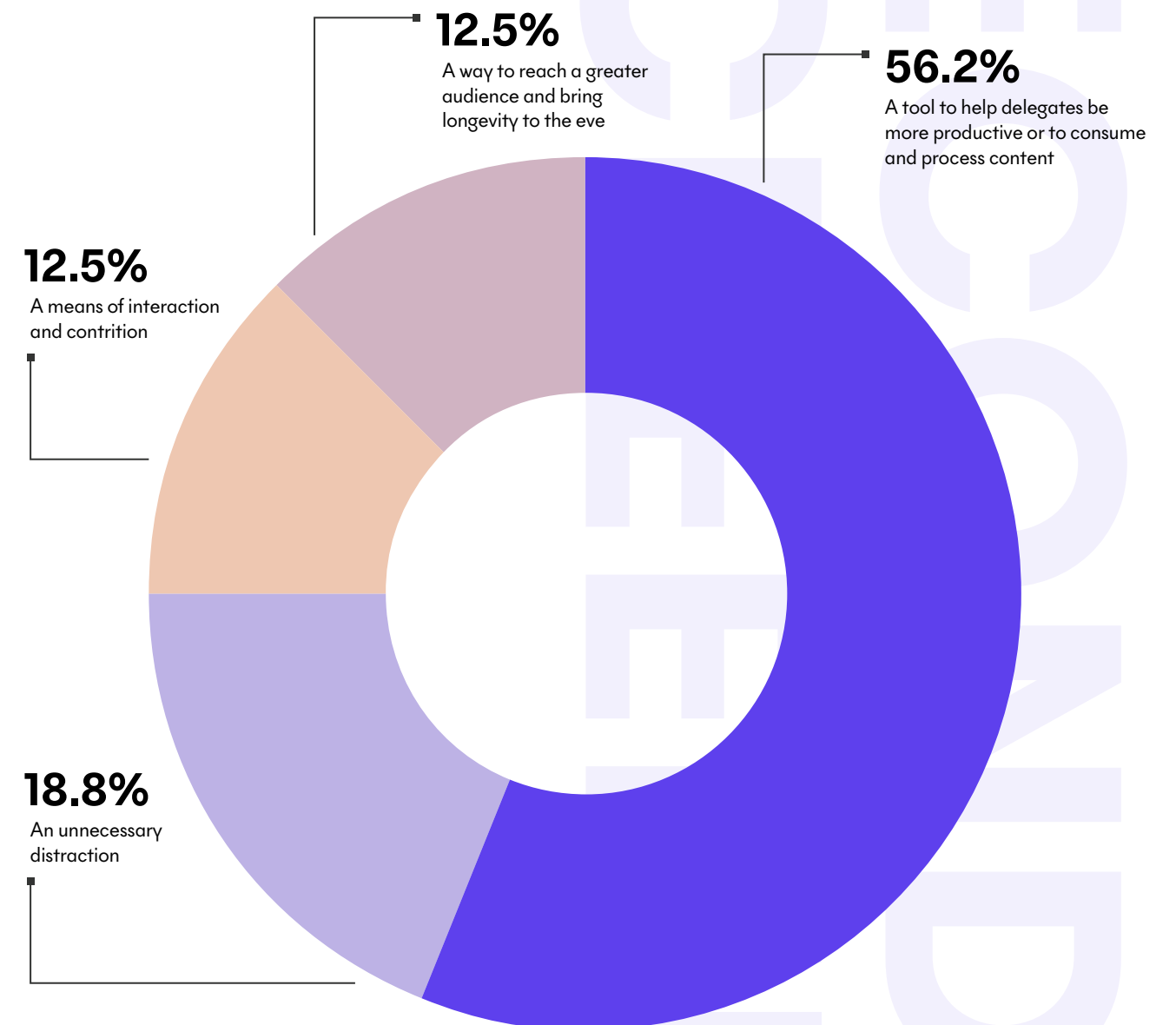
THE BEST NEW TECH FOR SECOND SCREENERS.

Live Captions and Subtitles:
PowerPoint Live

VisuAlose Futures

When it comes to AI; explore tools like ChatGPT, Co-pilot, Claude, etc for content creation. Try Perplexity for research, or Domo and TurnoutNow for tracking analytics and engagement across events.

Second screening is:



Second Screening is: a tool to help delegates be more productive or to consume and process content:

56%	27%	17%	0%
Generation Z	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers

For Generation Z it's the way of life whereas boomers take exception to second screening. Events are therefore looking to actively encourage attendees to disconnect to ensure deeper engagement whilst still accommodating technology integration – not an easy task!

HOW DO WE LEARN

Managing Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers often link work to self-worth and long-term financial security. They're often driven by titles, prestige and planning for retirement. Boomers are goal-oriented and generally comfortable with minimal feedback, assuming all is well unless told otherwise. They thrive on milestones like promotions and prestigious roles. They function best in traditional, hierarchical environments and importantly for event planners may struggle with more flexible workplace approaches.

They prefer to put their hands up at events rather than use technology.

How to motivate the Gen X audience

Gen X often had alone time due to both their baby boomer parents working, leading them to be self-sufficient and independent. Having witnessed the economic downturn in the 1980s, they're now sceptical about overworking at the expense of personal life. They value flexible schedules and hybrid working, preferring to make their own choices on project completion and workday management. Allow them freedom and flexibility to boost their morale, productivity and connection at events.

If they're second screening at an event they will be making the most of any downtime and completing work related tasks.

Millennials at meetings and conferences

Millennials are often characterised as job hoppers because they often believe that better pay and benefits can be found somewhere else. They aren't solely driven by remuneration; they relish flexibility, options and opportunity, as well as professional development.

They enjoy learning scenarios, mentorship and content that enables professional growth and advancement; podcasts and online tutorials are big on their second-screen agenda.

Gen Z and in-person event considerations

Gen Z want fulfilment and a sense of purpose from their work: they want work that matters. They expect their employer to show ESG and they expect those initiatives to be applied internally as well. Gen Z are the most diverse generation yet and inclusion efforts matter to them.

They've never not known connectivity, social shares and online conversation and hyperconnectivity. Second screening is second nature.

LISTEN UP!

How to get the room talking

While each generation has different attitudes and mindsets, it is important to remember more traditional factors when planning events.

According to the Edelman 2024 Trust Barometer, people trust in their company more than they do the news and politicians. Honesty and integrity are key characteristics that the entire delegate demographic requires.

Every generation prefers their communications personalised, and to feel like they've had an individual brand experience. Face-to-face unites people, builds collaboration, conversation and engagement.

CASE IN POINT



Client: Canon Europe

Event: World Unseen

Canon Europe, in partnership with Royal Institute of Blind People (RNIB), designed and created an accessible photograph exhibition in the East Wing Galleries of Somerset House.

Wunderman Thompson (UK) Limited facilitated the exhibition on behalf of Canon Europe and worked with accredited production supplier Event Concept to bring the exhibition to life.

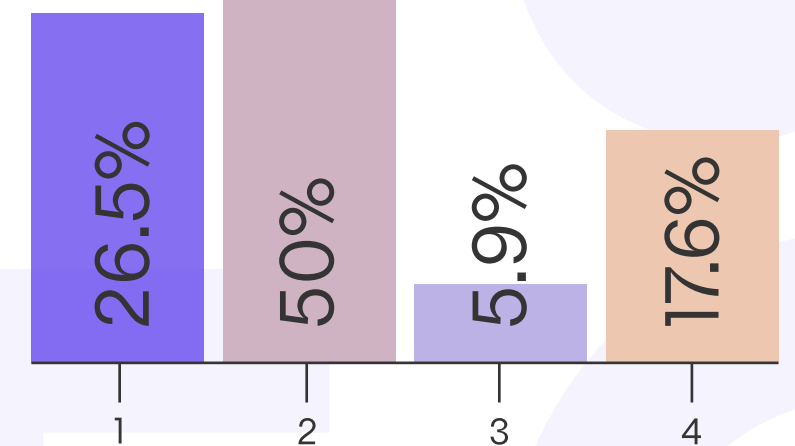
The immersive, first-of-its kind photography exhibition enabled everyone – blind, partially sighted and sighted visitors – to experience imagery in an entirely new way, using Canon elevated printing technology to bring the power of imaging to all.

The exhibition featured works from world-renowned photographers, including Sebastião Salgado, Brent Stirton, Nanna Heitmann, Muhammed Muheisen, Yagazie Emezi and Marc Aspland. Guests of the exhibition heard vivid descriptions from the photographers themselves in immersive, soundscaped audio; and read them with their fingertips, embossed in braille. They could even feel the images' textures and compositions through tactile printing.

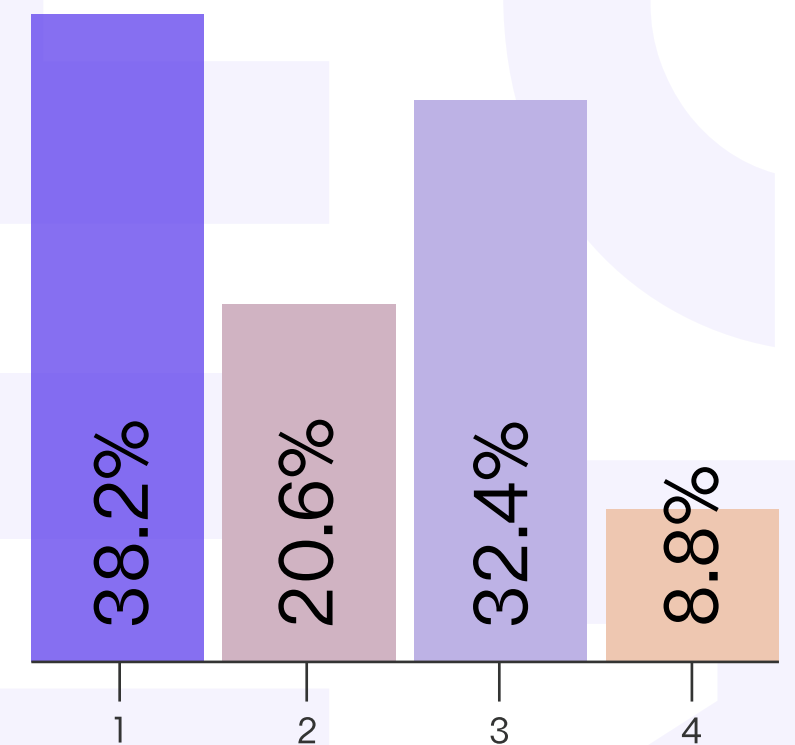
Accessibility and wayfinding were key, and all teams worked together to ensure that all public spaces around the site of Somerset House had 'NaviLens Codes', which were connected to an app that helped visually impaired users navigate their way around the building by providing contextualised directions.

Do you believe digital devices:

Add to the experience by providing a way for all delegates to contribute to the event

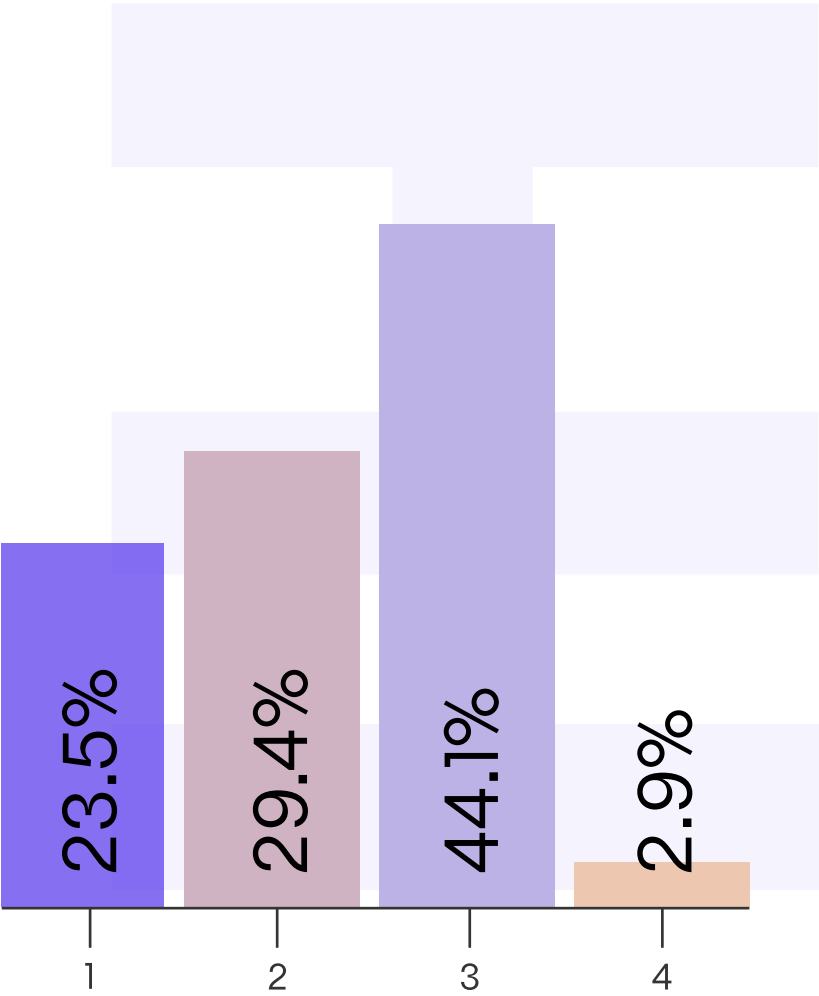


Contribute to the longevity of the event / brandawareness via social media

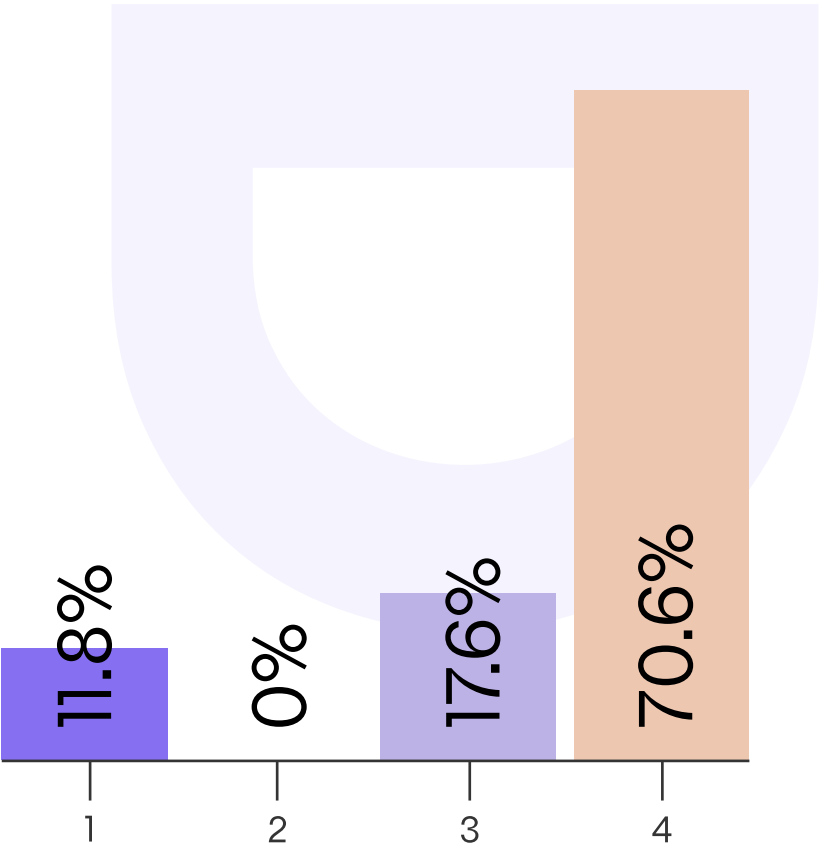


Do you believe digital devices:

Help build delegate's network and connections



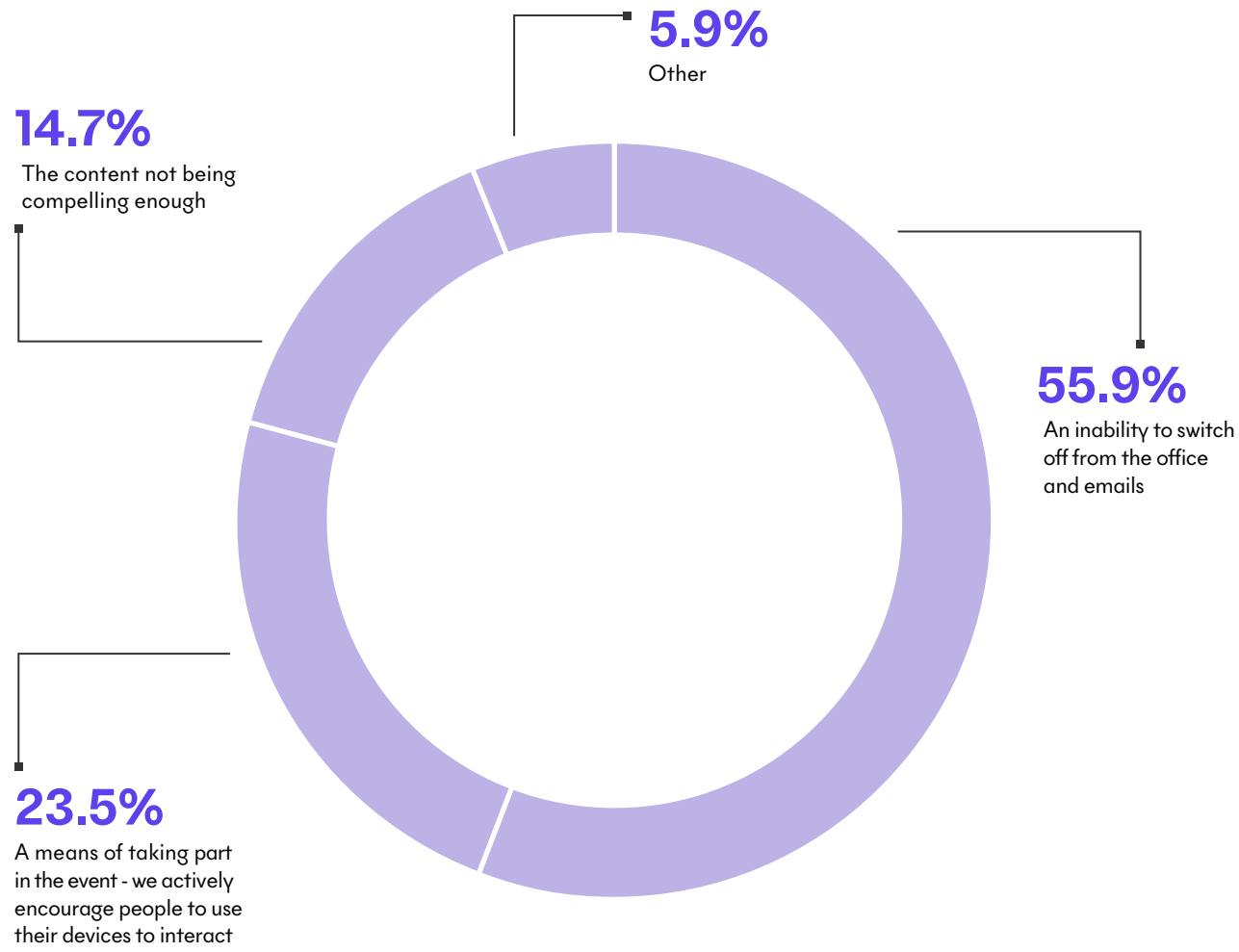
A screen to hide behind - a barrier to interaction and conversation between delegates



While events are created to impart knowledge and collaboration and to widen connections and networks, screens are, in some instances, acting as barriers to both attention and engagement.

For those who don't enjoy networking, looking at a screen by phone snubbing presents a barrier and excuse not to interact. Phubbing cuts through face-to-face interaction.

If your audience turns to using a digital device during a presentation, do you consider this due to:



73%

of people think there is non-stop competition for our attention from various media platforms.

*The Centre for Attention Studies

Excessive use of digital devices has become a major concern in all age groups as they are altering our routines, lifestyle patterns and interactions.

In the workplace, multitasking and being able to divide our attention has gained importance as we process large data sets more rapidly. Conversely, the endless stream of algorithmic content - the emergence of AI and Generative AI - means we are bombarded with information on our devices. It's also raising questions on whether this information is from a trusted source.

Distraction caused by digital devices is a real time issue that's not only affecting young people - half of us admit we cannot stop checking our devices or endlessly scrolling when we should be concentrating on other things. According to The Centre for Attention Studies, 56% of middle-aged (35 -54) delegates feel that their attention span has worsened. And when we are checking our devices between 49 and 80 times a day, it's difficult to take digital devices off the day delegate agenda.



MEETING CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS: TOP 5 TIPS FOR PLANNING FOR DIVERSITY

1

emc3: Inclusive Representation:

Ensure speakers, panelists and content reflect a diverse range of ages, races and abilities, including neurodiversity.

Word On The Street: Have easily accessible prayer rooms to create an inclusive space for attendees.

2

emc3: Accessible Venues: Choose locations that accommodate mobility needs, sensory considerations and assistive technologies. As a B Corp certified events agency, we always thoroughly research our venues and do site visits to ensure that every individual attending the event is able to have a good experience on site. This work includes the pre-event communication element too, which allows attendees to plan their event day(s), including travel, personal schedules and navigating the event space.

Word On The Street: Choose speakers who reflect the diversity of your audience e.g. from different racial, ethnic, gender, age, and sexual orientation backgrounds.

3

emc3: Cultural Sensitivity: It is important to incorporate dietary, religious and cultural preferences into planning and scheduling,

beyond just the content. There are implications for the food served, alcohol and non alcohol options, activities and more.

Word On The Street: Choose accessible venues that can provide elements such as wheelchair ramps, accessible parking spaces, wide doorways, lifts and clearly marked facilities.

4

emc3: Flexible Formats: Offer various engagement options like hybrid attendance and tailored content to meet diverse preferences. We often work with multiple event platforms such as Cvent, Hopin, Hubilo, to ensure we can accommodate all attendees. We have also previously created our own bespoke metaversal platforms for clients such as Rapid7.

Word On The Street: Ensure that you choose a venue that offers hearing loop systems.

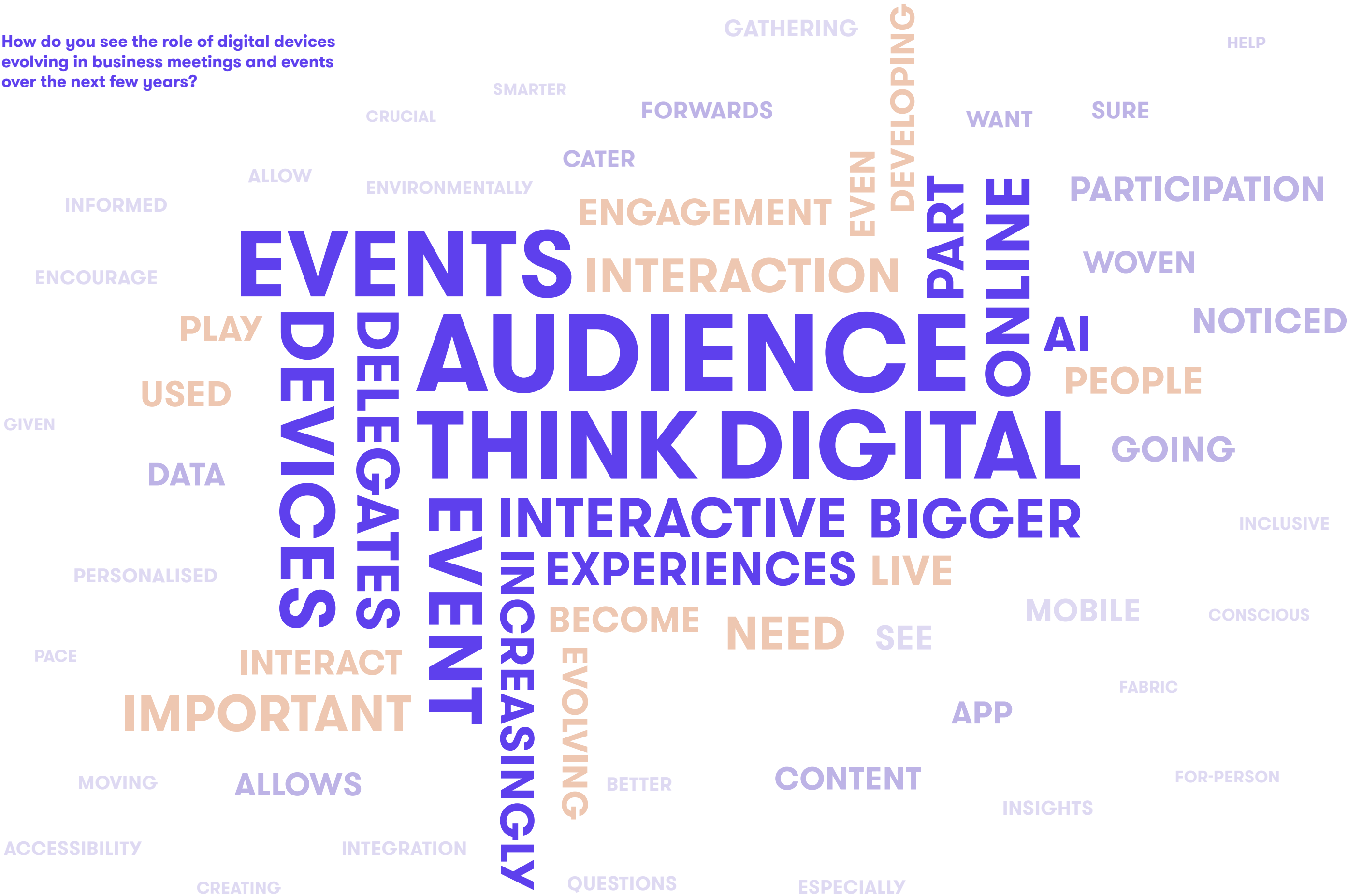
5

emc3: Seek Feedback: Engage diverse stakeholders early to identify and address gaps in inclusivity and hear from the attendees about what they would like to see or experience at the event.

Word On The Street: Ensure that your content reflects the diversity of your audience and for those with visual impairments or learning differences, provide accessible formats of the content.



How do you see the role of digital devices evolving in business meetings and events over the next few years?



CASE IN POINT



Client: Associated British Ports

Event: Gateways to Tomorrow

Associated British Ports (ABP) brought together partners, customers, and industry stakeholders to launch its new business strategy, “Gateways to Tomorrow”. Somerset House, rich in maritime heritage and artistic tradition, provided a fitting backdrop to celebrate ABP’s commitment to “Keeping Britain Trading” and “Enabling the Energy Transition.”

The event journey began with a conference in the Embankment Galleries, where ABP shared its forward-looking vision. A lunch in the Portico Rooms followed, allowing guests to network and reflect on the day’s insights.

The evening reception on the River Terrace and Seamen’s Hall embodied ABP’s themes of sustainability, community, and innovation. Guests were treated to an immersive AV experience, with underwater lighting effects and port-inspired soundscapes creating an ambiance that echoed ABP’s maritime roots. A string quartet provided a sophisticated soundtrack, while catering by Lettice Events ensured a refined culinary experience.

The event’s visual centrepiece—a lifeboat adorned with flowers—symbolized ABP’s partnership with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and was stationed in the courtyard.

Event Concept brought ABP’s vision to life with features including scenic installations and custom lighting that evoked the ocean, which immersed guests in ABP’s brand and mission.

CONCLUSION

It’s clear that event planning needs to consider demographic diversity. While today’s audience may have a common interest, they each have individual characteristics that are becoming broader and require greater consideration.

The use of technology to engage an audience is now expected. Today’s delegate also expects to have unlimited access to event content at anytime from anywhere and while second screening is becoming the new norm, opinions are divided on whether this is a positive or negative.

Whilst technology can enhance connection and provides new way of interacting, it also contributes to cognitive overload, reduced attention spans and knowledge retention. If digital devices are a distraction then engagement strategies are key for events. Organisers are now blending traditional and digital tools, incorporating live captions, interactive platforms, breakout sessions, workshops, and on-demand digital resources.

Face to face events remain crucial. People enjoy being part of the conversation and events are adapting to accommodate varied preferences.

By bridging generational and technological divides, events can become more than gatherings – they can be catalysts for creativity and collaboration.

Hyperconnectivity and disruption enable innovation, intensify creativity, multiply opportunity and drive societal change.



events@somersethouse.org.uk

+44 (0)20 7845 4618

www.somersethouse.org.uk/venue-hire

LinkedIn @Venue Hire at Somerset House

Instagram @somersethouse_venuehire



[Peter Mandeno, Better Connected](#)

www.betterconnected.world

peter@petermandeno.com



[Word on the Street](#)

+44 (0)20 3072 1921

www.wordonthestreet.uk.com



[emc3](#)

020 3468 3901

www.emc3.com

In collaboration with

TRIGGERFISH