Evolving Trends in the Event Industry

The event industry is one of the fastest evolving industries on earth, and it often leads the business world in defining and utilizing new technologies and processes. Lately, leading-edge technologies have found their way into event industry conferences right alongside tech meetups. Companies in many industries, not just technology, realize that event organizing often coincides with social media leadership and free launch PR.

It is always advantageous to recognize the up-and-coming trends in the event industry, whether one is in it or simply beside it waiting for an opportunity to use it. Here are some of the industry’s most encouraging and interesting trends.
The event industry is definitely one step ahead of the mainstream in terms of incorporating new technology into a commercial capacity. Twitch, supposedly the go-to website for video game streaming, has only this year incorporated interactive gameplay into its streams. This was a technology that was already well underway in the event industry. Exhibitors and event professionals understood the need to keep an audience engaged, and interactive games offered a cost effective and more reliable solution than booking live acts.

The event industry also incorporated virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) into many presentations. Instead of squeezing physical prototypes into over-stuffed luggage, companies now leverage the option of presenting new ideas digitally with just as much presence as the real thing. Among other advantages, AI allows event planners to be in two places — one location run traditionally, with another location interacting with participants through an almost self-aware digital substitute.
Empty time frames are all but dead in the event industry. People who attend conferences are almost in competition to see who can squeeze the most productivity out of its time frame. Event planners have taken notice and are actively scheduling leisure time in the midst of these productively-packed schedules. For example, you can schedule specific activities during breaks and downtime — like a walking tour of the host city. Event planners who are seen as adding value to a conference will tend get more business. This is an ethic that many other industries may benefit from as well.

**Events will be focused on engaging all five senses.**

Engaging attendees in unique ways is evolving. The psychology behind stimulating multiple senses is clear. People remember up to 90 percent more of a presentation when two or more senses are actively involved in interpreting the material.

The industry is constantly finding new ways to incorporate new sensory experiences in the more mundane aspects of a conference. These experiences include customized lighting, special seating, 3-D imaging, surround sound audio. Even 4-D time warping events are becoming constants for modern attendees.

**Event planners as first responders and increased security measures are on the rise.**

Event planners must be at the forefront of security — after all, they are the ones responsible for gathering individuals into a space that may otherwise be unoccupied. As such, the modern event planner is also well oriented on current news items and local politics. Many event planners have also improved their skill sets to include basic emergency and evacuation procedures, and are now in closer contact with local authorities following any recent tragic news items.

Increased security measures may actually take advantage of above mentioned technologies that are usually only associated with entertainment. VR and AI may be used to provide automated security measures in the worst-case scenarios, regardless of the placement of individuals on the event team. Government events are especially prone to this trend, and nonprofit and association events are following suit.
This new innovation corresponds quite closely to the burgeoning virtual business industry. More people than ever are working remotely and serving as independent contractors who make their own schedules. Although there are many advantages to this type of work arrangement, bloated budgets are not one of them. These people are much less likely to take on the expense of transporting themselves to a physical conference. Enter the Facebook Venue — a digital space that allows remote workers to participate in events without dealing with the cost and logistics of physically transporting themselves to a location.

Currently, Facebook Venues are marketed as technology for entertainment events such as concerts and sporting events. However, they could affect the event planning industry just as heavily as entertainment, if not more. Facebook has the content partnerships and technology to pull off some incredible events if so inclined. The result could be a complete overhaul of how the event industry defines an event. New event planners may have to contend with a full contingency of event participants who not only prefer a digital venue, but actually require it to do business. The industry has already made one evolution to a “hybrid event,” or events comprised of digital attendees alongside physical attendees. This line between physical and digital attendance will only continue to blur as the millennial generation, completely used to these options, takes its place in event planning and event attendance.

In short, the event industry is a bellwether for many other industries in terms of commercializing new technology and providing services to move business forward. Evolving trends will keep the industry on the cutting edge of the business landscape, with plenty of room for growth. We have already touched on some of the disruptive technologies, but no one can really predict the disruptive processes that will come when inventive minds in the industry really begin to play with these new innovations.