

Up-and-coming corporate event trends

 By [Terry Sutherland](#)

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As brands scramble to make an impact in a fiercely competitive market, corporate events provide an invaluable opportunity to leverage your brand and engage audiences.

Gone are the days where the most exciting part of attending a conference was an after-dinner mint served alongside a cup of instant coffee.

Brands are stepping up their game in the form of interactive, innovative events that provide guests with an experience to remember. We've rounded up a few corporate event trends that have caught our eye lately.

Food is no longer an afterthought

Brands are opting to use interactive catering where guests can determine what they'd like to eat. Old-fashioned buffet stations are being done away with in favour of more inventive ways of serving. Menu options have evolved too - with wheat and gluten-free options being increasingly catered for.

As well as dietary requirements, there's a marked shift towards providing locally-sourced, seasonal food that's both carbon-friendly and sustainable. Traditional desserts are now being replaced with options like frozen yoghurt stations or bowls filled with an array of mini chocolate bars or mixed sweets.

Influenced by world-renowned TED talks, conferences are becoming increasingly conversational

Brands are doing away with lecture-style line-ups and are moving towards slick, entertaining presentations. As far as corporate events trends go, a drive towards interactive speeches may well be one of the most well received innovations. In a culture that's heavily influenced by social media, it's wise to present talks in a way that makes your guests feel as included as possible.

Keynote presentations are becoming more visually based too - a smart move in an age of ever-shortening attention spans. Speakers are shunning plain old power-point for auto-cue screens positioned at the back of the room, making for a slick, professional presentation as presenters are able to focus their attention on the audience instead of on their notes or a laptop.

Budgetary restrictions have resulted in a focus on internal events

As companies become ever careful of how their money is spent, many brands are opting to hold fewer events in favour of several larger events aimed at employees and existing clients.

Roadshows are a popular option too - as they enable companies to further their reach, without having to hold numerous events nationwide. Even though the number of events being held is decreasing, the ones that are held are generally much larger gatherings, which means their budgets are slightly bigger too.

Corporate event trends are making events more user-friendly, thanks to the use of technological capabilities

Events that provide their guests with a media room complete with charging stations and free Wi-Fi are becoming more and

more popular. Displaying a live Twitter feed, often with a dedicated hashtag (as seen at Design Indaba) is a great way of keeping your guests informed and involved.

Event planners who conduct a survey via SMS immediately after the event are able to gather crucial information, and receive a far better response than sending them out the next day.

As corporate event trends become increasingly influenced by the needs and wants of guests, brands are able to provide a personalised experience.

The events that leave a lasting impression on guests are ones that serve to excite audiences - either through the use of an interactive line-up of speakers or via the provision of ground-breaking innovations in technology that encourage participation and engagement.

ABOUT TERRY SUTHERLAND

Terry Sutherland is the founder of The RSVP Agency (<http://www.rsvpagency.co.za>) and has extensive experience in the development of RSVP solutions for clients across industries. Terry started her career in 1979 in the motor industry selling BMWs. In 1981 she joined Lindsay Saker where she won the top sales award for 5 consecutive years.

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