



what's **trending**

2026

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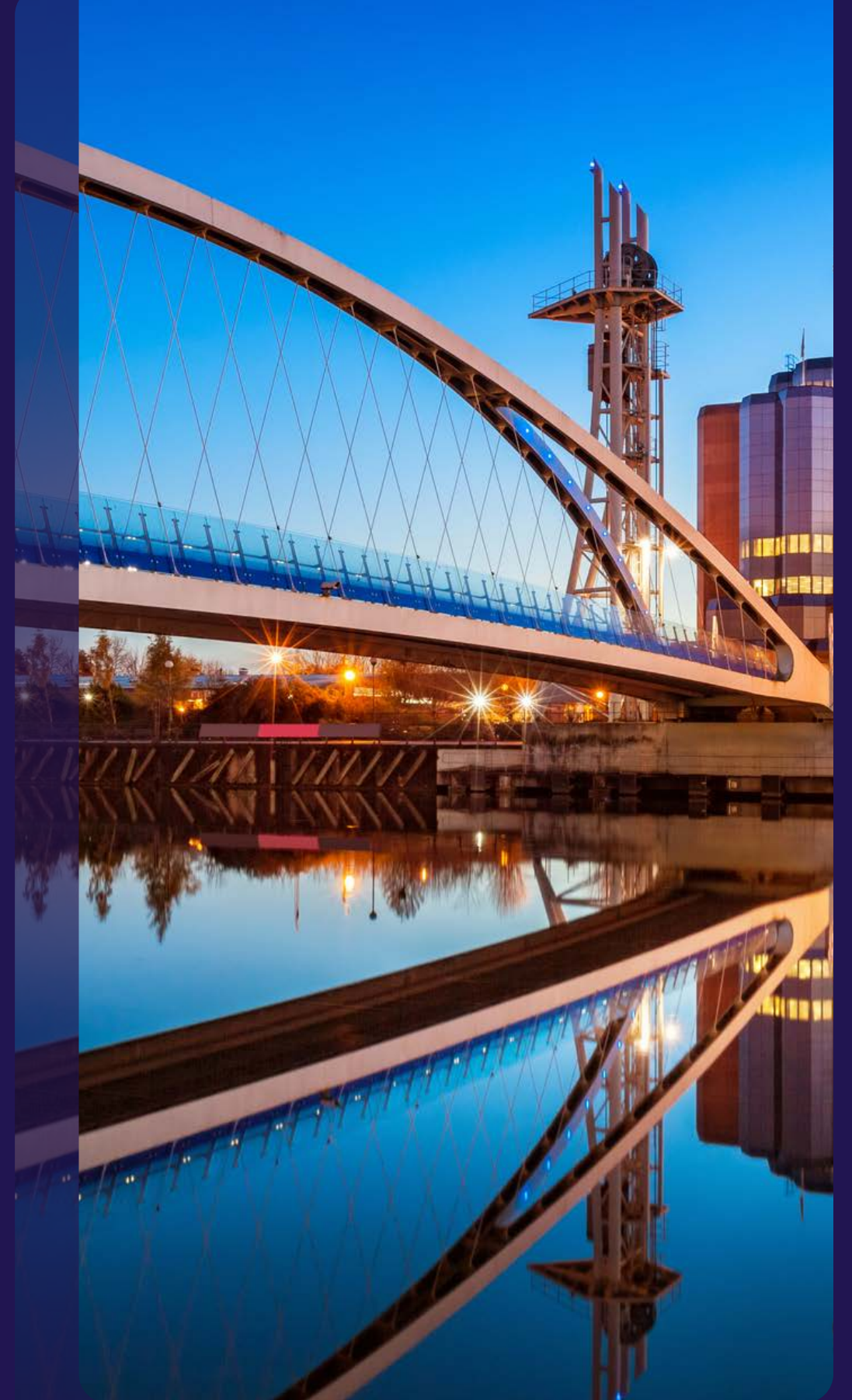
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hello

As we approach 2026 I reflect on a year marked by resilience and growth, and I feel optimistic about the future. Despite ongoing global and economic uncertainty, our ability to adapt, innovate and maintain connections has never been stronger.

Clients consistently tell us that the true value of meetings and events lies in human connection. At BCD Meetings & Events, our people have a special talent for building this connection—capturing audience attention and creating experiences that drive meaningful change.

In 2024, we launched our three-year plan, Thinking Forward, to establish a long-term strategy after two years of rapid growth. 2025 marked the second year of our journey where we've embraced the balance of our global scale with local insight—ensuring that our solutions resonate wherever they are delivered.

Next year, we will further enhance our use of technology to create efficiencies, allowing our people to concentrate on work that delivers greater value to both themselves and our customers. Additionally, we will expand our experiential offerings through our in-house creative agency, [The Collective](#), globally.

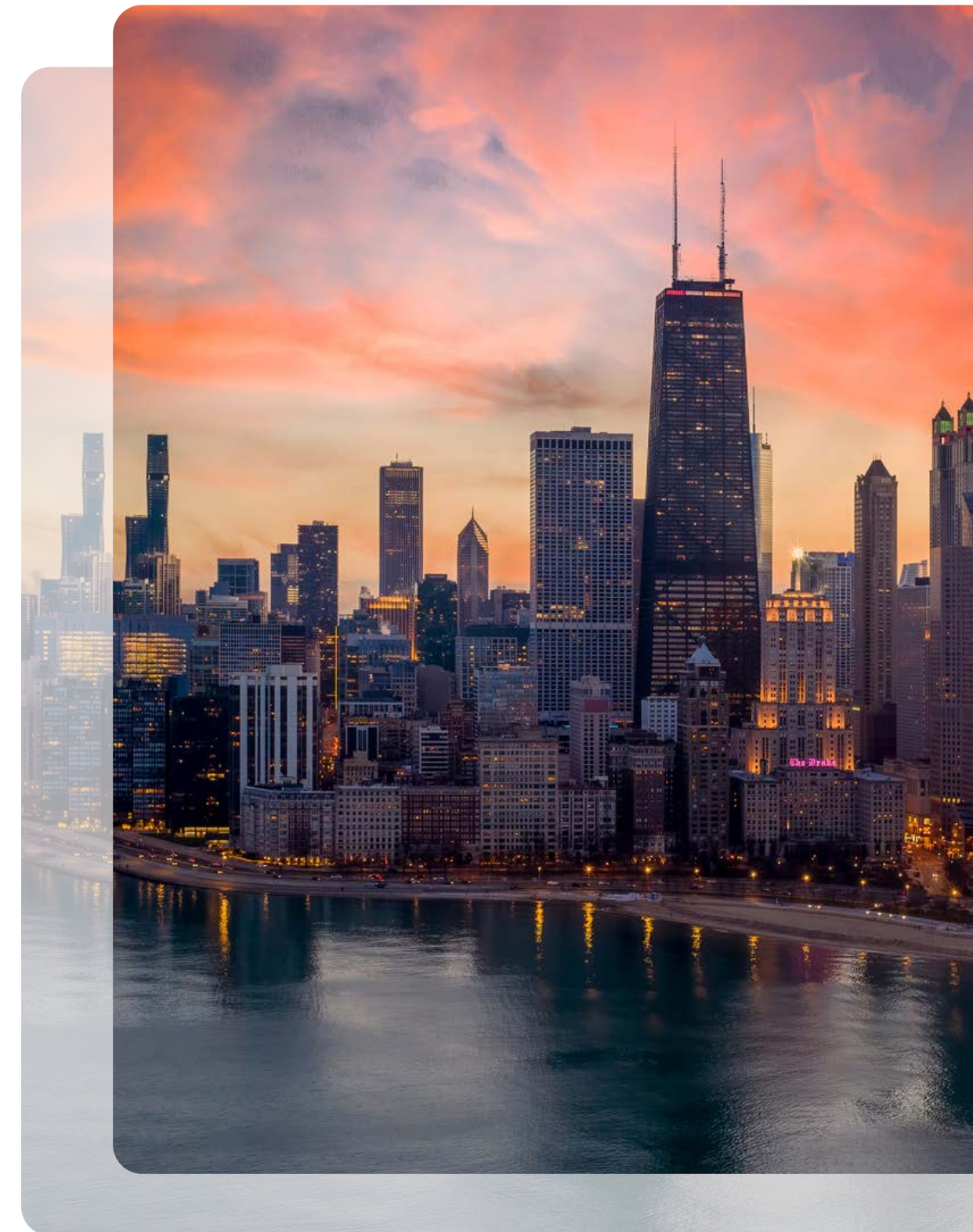
Looking ahead, meetings will increasingly be viewed as strategic assets with spending aligned more closely with business objectives. Immersive experiences and thoughtful design will set the standard, while economic pressures, sustainability and geopolitical complexities will influence decisions.

We've had a strong year, and I'm eager to build on this momentum as we head into 2026. Together, I'm confident we can turn these trends into new opportunities for our clients and our people.

I hope you enjoy reading [What's Trending](#), and I look forward to connecting with many of you in the months ahead. Happy reading!



BRUCE MORGAN
Global President, BCD M&E



reimagining the future of meetings & events at Minor Hotels

As we look toward 2026, the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE) landscape is undergoing a profound transformation—one that calls for agility, innovation and a renewed focus on human connection. At [Minor Hotels](#), we don't see this shift as a challenge, but as a powerful opportunity to redefine how people gather, collaborate and create lasting impact.

This evolution is not just about business—it's about people, purpose and the power of shared experiences. Over the past year, I've had the privilege of witnessing our teams across the region embrace change with creativity and resilience. MICE has grown from a commercial pillar into a strategic heartbeat, now representing over a quarter of our global revenue. In a world where B2C demand fluctuates, group business offers rare stability, predictability and long-term value. But that's only part of the story.

What excites me most is how we're reimagining the experience itself. We're redesigning our MICE Value Proposition and Operational Promise to make meetings more human, immersive and impactful. From AI-powered booking tools and streamlined internal processes to reimagined meeting room concepts and health-conscious F&B offerings, we're building solutions that meet people where they are—and where they want to go.

We're also doubling down on sustainability and client satisfaction, listening closely to our guests and evolving with their needs. Initiatives span from carbon-conscious planning to real-time feedback loops that ensure every event delivers on its promise.

And then there are the moments, the spark of an idea shared over coffee, the energy of a well-designed space, the sense of belonging to something bigger. These are the experiences that turn meetings into memories and events into milestones.

Looking ahead, there are three trends I think will continue to shape the future of MICE: AI-driven personalization that will transform attendee engagement; predictive analytics that will enable smarter, more effective formats; and, the continued focus on sustainability. It will become foundational—with tools to measure and offset impact. With over 560 hotels in more than 59 countries, Minor Hotels is uniquely positioned to meet the evolving needs of our clients. Our portfolio spans 12 distinct brands—from accessible lifestyle concepts to ultra-luxury experiences—allowing us to cater to a wide range of guests, preferences and event formats. Whether it's a rooftop cocktail reception, a wellness retreat or a high-level executive summit, our venues offer more than space. They offer possibility.

At Minor Hotels, we believe the future of meetings is human-centric, tech-enabled and experience-led. I'm proud of what we've built—and even more excited for what's ahead.

Let's meet the future—together.



FERNANDO VIVES

Chief Commercial Officer, Minor Hotels Europe & Americas

from around **the world**

As the global meetings and events (M&E) industry looks toward 2026, the landscape is more cautious compared to previous years since 2020. In some nation states, demand may be more fluid next year.

The global economy is now in a greater state of flux and many organizations, especially those with regional or multi-national footprints, are undergoing restructuring which will have an impact on meetings and events spend.

Geopolitics, economic pressures, technology shifts, global security concerns and changing behaviors will weigh heavily on the sector in the coming year. M&E planners and suppliers will have to react to these drivers of change by being more agile and responsive.

Costs will continue to impact decision making for planners in 2026. Doing “more with less” is the key mantra. Managing increased costs, especially for air fares and food & beverage (F&B), means budgets will continue to be stretched.

Expect more consolidated spend as travel buyers look to manage more transient travel alongside M&E budgets—all in the name of efficiency. In the short term, any softness within markets represents an opportunity for negotiations, particularly on rates, for planners sourcing meetings.



In a world of constant change, the power of human connection remains our greatest advantage.”

BRUCE MORGAN
Global President, BCD M&E



attention as a crucial resource

Businesses are increasingly realizing attention is a crucial resource, alongside labor and capital. Employees experience a barrage of information on a daily basis creating a poverty of attention in the workplace. In 2026, meetings and events will increasingly be seen as a way of helping businesses allocate attention more efficiently. When corporations invest in immersive experiences or events that “money can’t buy,” they are putting money into the one resource that is increasingly scarce and difficult to control—people’s attention. It’s worth the investment.

top trends for 2026



budgets in the spotlight

- Planners will try to do more with less
- Greater cost consciousness with internal meetings
- Focus on client events that boost the bottom line
- ROI and ROE increasingly under scrutiny

evolving event delivery

- Immersive experiences key to engagement
- More messaging across multiple events and touchpoints
- Greater personalization of meetings driven by AI
- Increase in networking and face-to-face interactions

refining operations

- More consideration of compliance and risk mitigation
- Greater use of AI and tech to deliver efficiencies
- More outsourcing of event management
- Procurement and marketing teams more involved

shifting use patterns for meetings

- Better use of internal office space for events
- Geopolitical fallout shifting where meetings are held
- Secondary city focus and consolidated hotel chain spend
- More domestic and regional, less international

regional
insights

There are positive developments and adjustments taking place in the U.S. event landscape as we look toward 2026. While there are signs of a slowdown in demand for the U.S. as a destination for international events, companies are responding by adapting their meetings and events strategies.

Global changes are encouraging U.S. companies to focus more on domestic events. This shift strengthens local partnerships and drives stronger engagement experiences. As certain sectors adapt to new economic realities, many companies may even increase M&E spending to enhance collaboration and client relationships.

Despite the challenges posed by current tariff policies and global supply chain issues, the U.S. economy remains resilient, with financial, professional and consulting services seeing growth, supported by a strong technology sector. Hotel costs are expected to rise moderately, while entertainment and AV pricing is likely to recover. This creates an opportunity for companies to consolidate production spending and maximize value. At the same time, contracting terms and deposits—especially for hotels—remain firm. Organizations that can demonstrate leverage and make enterprise-level commitments are in a stronger position to negotiate more favorable outcomes.

The introduction of the US\$250 “visa integrity fee” from October 2025 may lead some to re-evaluate their international travel plans. But domestic flagship in-person events are poised to take center stage in 2026, emphasizing the creation of exceptional experiences and engagement levels.

Strategic buying and outsourcing certain services, like logistics, can help achieve a more cost-effective approach. While some businesses may reduce smaller internal meetings to save money, the focus remains on fostering meaningful connections and creating memorable events.

“The experience and the quality of meetings is under greater scrutiny going into 2026.”



CHARLENE RABIDEAU

SVP & Managing Director, NORAM, BCD M&E

M&E spend is likely to be even more budget conscious in 2026. Supplier costs will rise due to increases in UK national insurance, taxes, labor, utilities and F&B. These should all be closely monitored by buyers. High inflation and weak economic growth will also weigh heavily on the sector.

This means that budgets and perceptions on cost among planners for 2026 are unlikely to match increases. Therefore, managing expectations will be an increasing challenge.

Something will have to give. There could be greater consolidation in 2026, resulting in fewer meetings with higher average spend per event. High-impact events with a short lead-in time will also become more prominent due to agile and flexible formats.

There is also a trend toward creating more valued and immersive experiences in the UK as opposed to formulaic, traditional events. This is because planners increasingly question the value and impact of their M&E spend. B2B corporations are also more likely to adopt an experiential approach, which has traditionally been more prevalent with B2C. Hybrid meetings are becoming a consideration for budget-conscious businesses in 2026, due to heightened safety and security concerns, and the logistics of moving personnel around the globe.

To save costs, planners will increasingly consolidate spend with single agencies to drive efficiencies, ensure quality and consistency in delivery. This is also true for multi-national companies looking for global support with local capabilities. Having a holistic overview of a program allows for cost optimization and the elimination of a siloed approach. Domestic economic concerns and wider geopolitical factors will influence corporate requests for extended payment timelines.

Expect more regionally sourced meetings in the UK and less interest in long-haul destinations such as the U.S. in 2026. Secondary cities including Manchester, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Liverpool will grow in demand, driven by rising London venue costs and increased investment in infrastructure, technology and large-capacity venues outside the capital.

“Data will increasingly drive British event needs, outputs and successes.”



HELEN MCCABE

Managing Director, UK, BCD M&E

M&E looks more positive for the EMEA region in 2026 in terms of volumes, as well as value, compared to other territories and despite global economic uncertainties. Europe could also be a hotspot next year due to security and access concerns in the U.S. and Middle East. Yet conflicts in Ukraine, Palestine and Africa remain top of mind.

Expect greater consolidation of event companies in France, Germany and the Nordics as they are acquired or absorbed into larger businesses. This is due to weak performance post-Covid or strategic investments in the sector. This may reduce competition, but market consolidation will make planning and Request For Proposal (RFPs) easier for buyers.

The defense industry will be a highlight, with the European Union (EU) earmarking up to US\$920 billion for this sector through to 2030, three times current spend. This will stimulate M&E spend and impact other industries such as infrastructure. It will have a ripple effect throughout Europe's economy and planned events. But it could also fuel inflation, which is currently under control.

The automotive sector looks promising; Europe's auto trade needs to be more proactive with M&E spend to combat the challenge of cheap EV cars from China.

The Middle East looks steady into 2026, with M&E spend helped by government initiatives from Saudi Arabia to the UAE as they diversify their economies.

Two markets that look strong in Africa going forward are South Africa and Morocco, with the latter continuing to provide value for money for European buyers. The country will also promote its sustainability and safety credentials, which is attractive to EMEA firms considering events. Sustainability remains a key issue for M&E planners in Europe, especially France.

EU directives will continue to focus minds into 2026 on supply chain and Scope 3 emissions. Aligning efforts now and up to 2030, will be crucial. ([Read BCD M&E's Sustainability Guide](#)).

It will influence decisions on venues, F&B spend, even city selections with Amsterdam and Barcelona leading the way on this issue. It is also helping European businesses develop global best practices for sustainable M&E, saving money and reducing carbon emissions.

There is also a push in 2026 for increased cash flow from suppliers, particularly hotels, through pre and urgent payment terms. This is a challenge for buyers. Those suppliers that can offer rolling credit or 30-day or longer payment terms post-event are more likely to win business next year.

“The M&E sector remains strong and for larger events, we see lead times increasing for the first time in many years.”



MIKAEL EK

SVP & Managing Director, EMEA, BCD M&E

Cautious growth is expected in the M&E sector for 2026, with some degree of uncertainty. Even if organizations are doing well, they may want to be frugal with their spend going into next year. Security concerns remain in destinations like Bangkok.

Face-to-face interactions are still valued in APAC, especially in China, where domestic in-person events will continue to be popular. In this market there will be stricter compliance processes for organizers and suppliers to promote integrity and transparency.

While there may not be a significant increase in volume across the region, this will be compensated by higher spend per event in 2026. Budgets will still be under increased scrutiny next year, M&E planners are likely to hold events in more affordable destinations from Jakarta to Kuala Lumpur, Manila to Ho Chi Minh City, as opposed to Tokyo, Hong Kong or Singapore.

More expensive cities are still expected to be popular with the financial and professional services sectors in 2026. Seoul, is also likely to remain in demand, as industries increasingly focus on delivering experience-led events for their clients.

India's strong economic growth—13% annually—will be reflected in its M&E spend next year, driven by significant infrastructure investments. Thailand will also continue to be a hot spot due to flight connectivity and reasonable costs, while Vietnam's popularity will also grow slowly next year due to its competitive pricing and record on safety.

Hotels across APAC have been upgrading their AV (audio-visual equipment) by deploying LED screens, better sound systems and video setups. However, buyers need to be prepared for higher costs as properties and providers look to claw back the investments they've made.



Suppliers will increasingly develop contingency plans and flexible contracts to address the uncertainties of the changing market conditions in APAC, this including environmental disruptions.

In 2026, the trend of “combining spaces”, using two nearby properties from one hotel chain in a city to accommodate larger meetings, will grow.

Although the sustainability agenda is still nascent compared to other regions, it will gain more momentum next year in APAC. This is influencing choices related to venues, catering and working with local communities. The lead is being taken by multi-national companies active in the region. If there is no price parity between two venues, the more sustainable one is likely to win the contract. Customers are also willing to invest a little more into their budgets to ensure certain sustainable practices are being maintained.



“Buyers should favor suppliers who are more collaborative and flexible in 2026, especially those proactive in managing unforeseen challenges.”



SANJAY SETH

SVP & Managing Director, APAC, BCD M&E

The main sentiment overall for 2026 in LATAM is one of growth and opportunity. However, Argentina and Mexico are likely to remain challenging. With greater scrutiny on budget management, the focus is on value for money in events and efficiency drives decision making.

Mexico's proximity to the U.S. will shape M&E spend in the coming year, where the volume and value of events will be in question. Seven countries in the region will have several presidential elections in 2026, including Peru, Colombia and Brazil.

This pivotal electoral cycle has the potential to reshape the political landscape and therefore the economic one, impacting the M&E sector. A shift to the right could spur on more market-led economies and fuel events. Inflation and exchange rates will also continue to play a significant role in 2026.

U.S. tariffs will weigh heavily on Brazil in 2026, with flat volumes and buyers requesting more flexible fees and payment terms. Expect rising rates at venues driven by increased demand for hotel rooms, spurred by leisure tourism.

Key national events next year across LATAM will also force corporates to hold congresses on specific dates, leading to concentrated demand. This will make availability more competitive.

The strongest economic sectors next year will be those tied to industries that continue to show resilience or growth in LATAM despite macroeconomic pressures. This includes tech and digital services, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, as well as financial services and the automotive sector, with the rise of electric vehicles.

Smaller meetings may decline as organizations opt for efficient virtual solutions, while hybrid events with strong engagement tools will continue to grow.



On sustainability, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting, local sourcing and waste reduction will be increasingly requested by clients next year. Suppliers with certifications will stand out.

Rapid advancements in data analytics, AI-driven personalization and event management software, will reshape the way meetings are planned, executed and measured. However, several LATAM countries are only starting to adopt solutions.

Medellin and Lima are likely hotspots for M&E in 2026. Demand spikes are expected around FIFA World Cup host cities—Mexico City, Monterrey and Guadalajara.

This will create opportunities for group M&E from across the region, especially from LATAM countries that have qualified. However, these events will affect room rates, venue availability and logistics in host cities—buyers must plan early.



“Buyers in the region are increasingly focusing on cost optimization, flexibility and a more personalized service.”



ANA PAULA HERNANDEZ
SVP & Managing Director, LATAM, BCD M&E

what's

trending

global insights

A number of trends look set to become more prominent in the coming year:

return on investment

Since rising costs will continue to cause concern in 2026, prioritizing meetings that drive clear outcomes with defined ROI will matter more than ever. Justification of spending internally is even more important this coming year. Optimization of costs is crucial.

global procurement on the rise

Expect more input on RFPs, negotiations and contracting from procurement teams. Scrutinizing budgets is more of a focus in 2026. The aim is to control and account for M&E spend.

greater contracting complexity

RFPs are likely to become more detailed in 2026 with highly detailed assessments, particularly to do with security, privacy and risk.

local sourcing

Not just from a sustainability perspective for F&B, but also local AV crews and other resources. This saves on transportation costs and reduces emissions. It also promotes local capacity in M&E activities.

trending: types of meeting 2026 — going UP



Client-focused events – Companies are likely to prioritize these to maintain and grow sales through enhanced customer engagement.



Focus on networking – This is key to generating revenue and business opportunities in 2026, rather than content heavy schedules. So expect more in the coming year.



Experiential-led engagement – There will be a focus on creating memorable experiences, despite cost cutting and the move toward more sustainable travel.



Marketing and sales events – These are gaining momentum as organizations shift their focus back to events that boost the bottom line.

trending: types of meeting 2026 — going DOWN



In-person events designed for information delivery – So much more can now be obtained online or through video conferencing. These events are likely to see a decline.



Global internal events – Those that focus on employee retention and engagement could suffer unless they are designed with a clear benefit for participants.



External events lacking distinctiveness – Events that don't offer unique, immersive, high-value experiences or memorable formats could struggle to capture audience attention.

a focus on meetings management: the rise of a strategic investment

2026 looks set to be the year that meetings become a strategic investment especially as people's attention becomes a scarce resource. What was once a highly emotional expenditure has fast evolved into a more strategic investment that can power the bottom line, but with this comes increased scrutiny from the c-suite downwards.

M&E spend is likely to align more closely with business objectives. Events are increasingly discussed at the executive level, seen as value drivers rather than just cost and logistics.

With more scrutiny, comes greater inventory taking of M&E portfolios this coming year. Procurement, finance and marketing departments will be more involved. At the same time, budgets will increasingly be in the spotlight. Expect consolidation in terms of what M&E takes place, how it's arranged and questioning the why. This is leading to specific trends.

The "back to the office" mandate and the need to reinvigorate corporate culture post-Covid continues to gain momentum in 2026. This is accompanied by new investments in refreshed office and internal meeting spaces. These are increasingly viewed as key assets for M&E, drawing employees and stakeholders in. Use of corporate real estate also saves money.

On the savings front, clients are also more likely to use large congresses to bolt on more ancillary meetings in 2026 as a way of managing costs. For instance, bringing together the global c-suite to meet the day after a major congress or adding on key sales meetings to a global conference.



There will also be a greater focus on creating enduring M&E assets into 2026—another cost saving measure. If people can't attend a meeting, then there is a focus on producing corporate material that can then be used for employees or stakeholders remotely, including quality videos.

Businesses are also realizing the cost of hybrid meetings, though popular in some markets. In 2026 there will be a realization that serving two masters is expensive and difficult. Everyone is compromised, unless budgets are significant, including live guests and those logging in remotely, eroding the experience.

This ties in with the move toward more purposeful events in 2026. The aim is for greater engagement across all meeting types. This focus on “purpose” means organizers will be more conscious of how meetings are managed—via personalized offerings, AI deployment, human touch and increased attention to risk and security. This also brings wellness to the fore in the year ahead and what that means beyond a 6 a.m. yoga offering. Meetings are making more time for attendees to exercise or have time on their own.

These shifts highlight the importance of a structured meetings management strategy. If organizations don't have a clear policy or tiering strategy in place for the types of meetings and events they run, then 2026 is the year to implement one. Strategic oversight ensures spend is optimized, risks are managed and that meetings deliver real value and impact to the organization.



How are we going to maximize our funds through M&E spend while maximizing revenue for our business? This will be a big question in 2026.”

SHAUNA WHITEHEAD

SVP, Sales, BCD M&E

Today's workforce is more time-pressed than ever. Planners cite time management as their biggest productivity challenge. The root of the problem: They're doing more with fewer resources.

In this business environment, it's crucial to identify outdated and inefficient processes—including the laborious back-and-forth contract negotiations for simple meetings. For planners juggling multiple roles, contract complexity isn't just frustrating; it's a barrier to getting things done.

Recognizing that lengthy master service agreement (MSA) don't fit every meeting, Hilton responded with a right-sized alternative: a simplified and streamlined MSA designed to match contract complexity to meeting scale. Traditional MSAs—often 20 to 50 pages—serve corporations and associations with large, complex events. But one size does not fit all.

"We're adding nuance to the MSA process—shortening them for simpler meetings," Michael Rogers, Director Global Contracting for Hilton, explains. This streamlined MSA targets meetings under \$50,000 within a 90-day booking window. At three to five pages, it offers tiered, scalable contracting that reduces friction without sacrificing clarity or protection because saving time is also saving money.

Another way Hilton is helping time-crunched planners save time and money is through its Multi-Year, Multi-Property initiative. As demand outpaces availability in key markets and budgets remain tight, this program streamlines planning by offering a single point of contact, simplified contracting, and customized concessions for repeat events. With more than 100 participating hotels and growing, it's a solution worth discussing at any point in the planning process.



meeting management trends

1

Gen-Z and multi-generational audiences

Planners are drilling down on how younger audiences digest information and how they interact. Formats may need to change for multi-generational appeal. Attention is key.

2

The rise of the exclusivity factor

Driven by lux-leisure, business people are time poor and expect less generic experiences going into 2026. This is challenging event designers to rethink experiences and deliver something new.

3

Integrated travel and meetings program

Companies that have visibility into spend and activity across both meetings and travel are better positioned to drive deeper savings and leverage, especially within their supply chain. While operating models may vary significantly, intersection points such as travel to meetings, policy and governance and business insights become valuable assets when combined.

4

Focus on different learning styles

Coping with introverts versus extroverts, counting for neurodiversity, or understanding the psychology of how people learn will increasingly be the event planners' job in 2026.



top advice going into 2026

1

Clear focus on business goals

Boost customers, drive brand loyalty, engage employees, increase retention and corporate culture.

2

Strategies by meeting type

Different meeting types have different purposes, a better understanding of the M&E audience is therefore crucial.

3

Shift spend from unmanaged to mandated

Greater scrutiny will drive this shift. A proactive approach is critical.

4

More effort required at planning stages

Spend money upfront on M&E design before going into operations, sourcing and negotiation with suppliers, saving money.

5

Take more calculated risk

There can be analysis-paralysis on M&E spend. Bold action is needed. Benchmarking through an M&E agency, TMC or hotel partner can help. Pivot with agility.

“In 2026, success will hinge on designing meetings with clear objectives and measurable outcomes. It’s about understanding the ‘why’ behind every event and tracking its true return on investment.”



SUE DARLASTON
VP, Sales Solutions, BCD M&E

life sciences: a perennially active sector

U.S. tariffs and new policy may loom large on the life sciences and healthcare sectors into next year. However, knowledge exchange via M&E on new drugs, equipment and services with healthcare professionals is a perennial need, globally. Still, from a global perspective there is pressure on event spend going into 2026.

Expect consolidated external meetings, with less frequency in some markets and a review on internal get togethers. With increasing pressure on drug pricing in high volume markets projected to impact revenues, big pharma companies are more inclined to look at multi-year deals with suppliers including hotel chains, particularly focused on a single destination. A venue can then be used for multiple meetings at attractive rates.

There is also a greater focus on tier two cities around the globe into next year. There has been considerable build out of properties in many markets and they can offer better value. There is also likely to be a continued uptick in ancillary meetings at 2026 congresses in order to save money by capitalizing on attendees already being gathered in a single destination.



There is increasing sensitivity into 2026 in terms of where global events are held, especially in an age when economic and business sentiment is politicized.”

ASHLEY WILLIAMS
SVP, Life Sciences Center
of Excellence, BCD M&E

time for the collective approach: experiential will reach new heights

Immersive experiences will be table stakes in the coming year. Highly creative events look set to be the gold standard. There will also be an increased focus on the data and science that drives real engagement, where Return on Experience (ROE) will be a key point of measurement.

M&E has been slower to adopt immersive events compared to other creative industries, including music, advertising and consumer marketing—cost is still the biggest barrier in 2026.

The shift to more immersive meetings in the new year involves making more space for in-person experiences. Wall-to-wall content is less important. Instead, networking, human contact and shared experiences are coming to the front.

There will also be an increasing realization that M&E is less about the occasion and more about core messaging, delivered over multiple touchpoints, events or digital platforms. This is crucial if communication and engagement are to be salient and remain relevant.

The medium and the method of delivery are therefore increasingly interchangeable. Expect more storytelling embedded in pre, live and post-event communications in 2026. Businesses are, therefore, looking at a longer runway to deliver such programs with a planning window of up to three years.

With such planning in mind, the decision makers involved in M&E programs are widening. Immersive experiences are now more of a strategic investment, involving broader event marketing teams

Leveraging behavioral science will be more prevalent next year. Corporates want to know how ideas land with attendees and how behaviors can be changed by the event itself—adjusted by meeting planners at the outset.

Organizations want to achieve more with less in 2026. The use of local service providers is becoming important, including AV crews. These will be coordinated by global M&E providers to consolidate procurement and save money, especially with rising labor costs.

“If you really want to give parity across your brand, you need to give that same experience to your employees as much as your clients, which means investing in immersive.”



TAYLOR SMITH
VP, Production & Content,
BCD M&E

Minor Hotels leads the future of meetings & events with meaning



At Minor Hotels, we believe the future of meetings and events is more than just gathering—it's about crafting meaningful experiences that spark connection, creativity and impact.

As in-person events continue to regain momentum, guests are seeking deeper engagement: authentic human connection, professional growth and memorable moments beyond the agenda. From dynamic brainstorming sessions to wellness-infused networking, today's attendees expect personalization, innovation and purpose.

To meet these evolving needs, Minor Hotels offers a suite of smart tools through **Minor PRO**. Planners benefit from **Click & Meet**, an instant booking tool for small meetings; **3D Event planning**, a visualization tool for event setups, bring convenience and creativity together; and **My Event Space**, a free, customizable website that helps organizers manage room bookings and share event details. **Virtual Site Inspections** and **Hybrid Meeting Solutions** ensure seamless integration of virtual and in-person formats, supported by robust tech infrastructure.

We're also reimagining event spaces with engagement, wellness and eco-conscious hospitality in mind. Our meeting areas are designed to foster connectivity—whether it's a quiet zone to recharge or a collaborative space to connect. Guests can also enjoy locally sourced menus and in the near future book additional event experiences within the hotel or offsite venues via our events team. Whether it's a rooftop networking event in Rome or an incentive program in the Maldives, regional customization ensures every experience feels personal and purposeful.

Our **dedicated MICE experts** play a key role in bringing these experiences to life. They provide personalized guidance, local insights and end-to-end support to ensure every event is seamless and aligned with each client's goals.

Meanwhile, **culinary excellence** remains a cornerstone of every gathering. From authentic regional flavors to dishes created by **Michelin-starred chefs**, our gastronomic offering transforms dining into an integral part of the overall experience—memorable, meaningful and reflective of each destination's culture.

At Minor Hotels, we don't just host meetings, we elevate them into transformative events that leave a lasting impression. The future of meetings is about guest-centric experiences, and we're not just ready for it—we're building it.

top trends for creative engagement - 2026

Disruptive thinking – Leaders want standout events in an age of low attention spans. This can involve agenda redesign and rethinking how events are delivered in 2026.

Sentiment tracking – Analyzing facial expressions of audiences helps planners understand how content and experiences land with attendees and adjust accordingly.

Potential for Destination Management Companies (DMCs) grows – Planners will have to use local capabilities in 2026. DMCs offer in-market knowledge and expertise that event organizers can tap into.

Greater use of new partners – Add external consultants to drive engagement. New partners in 2026 can help reinvent how content is delivered and absorbed, with a focus on personalized learning.

Use of AI in experiences – Generative AI is reshaping event planning. Tools like ChatGPT can kickstart ideas, curate trends and analyze event data to uncover opportunities. While AI can support immersive experience design, it won't replace a creative director—the human touch remains essential.

Increased attention on addressing accessibility – What used to be add-ons will be core in 2026, whether it's the use of closed captions for video presentations, real-time translations or quiet rooms. Accounting for neurodiversity will be important.



Corporations are laser focused on how events move the dial on their business in 2026. This is a breath of fresh air for suppliers. We've wanted this outcome for decades."

MELISSA MOTEN

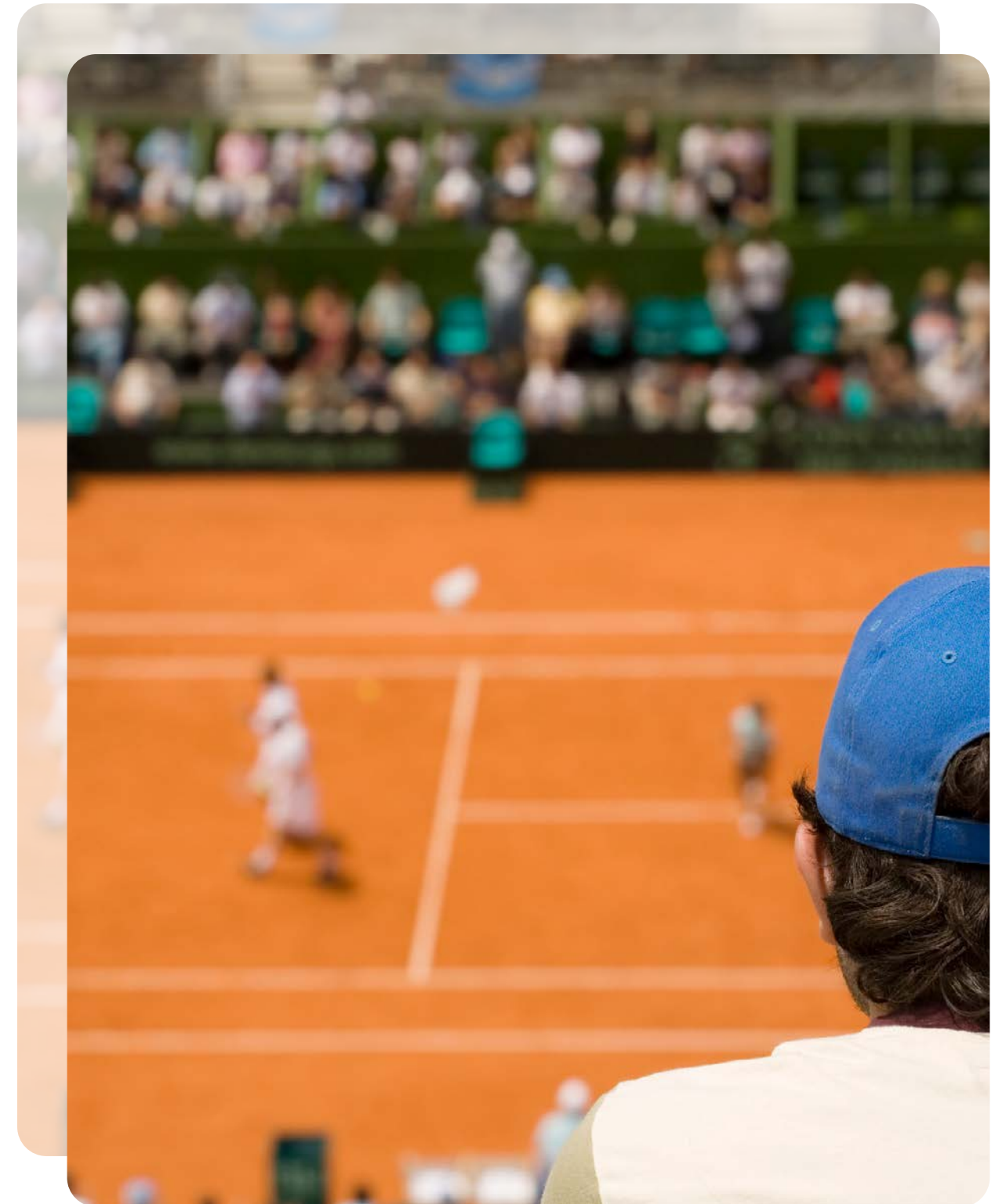
*VP, Experience & Event Solutions,
The Collective, BCD M&E*

venue search: a new focus on “money can’t buy experiences”

M&E planners are seeking more “money can’t buy” experiences in 2026 to attract and wow audiences. Hospitality is back and helped by certain sectors keen to impress—finance, banking, technology—translating into venue searches focused on exceptional experiences.

There is a transition away from event and stage focused formats to exclusive retreats and resort-style properties with a white glove approach to service and concierge. This includes a focus on sports events like tennis or Formula 1. Pitching the right venue will be even more crucial in 2026, as ROE and personalization come into focus. Planners will also want suppliers to be compliant when it comes to contracts, making payments, authorization or meeting request forms.

Greater transparency and visibility on processes will be more important in 2026 as procurement departments become more involved. Vendor risk management is top of mind. Businesses need to account for supply chain risks, including ethical sourcing, accounting for child labor or Scope 3 emissions.



time for Gen-AI enhanced venue search

In 2026 and beyond, voice activated, Generative-AI enhanced venue discovery using natural language processing has a lot of potential for M&E planners, travel management companies and suppliers. Consumers are already using AI to suggest vacations. It will soon be used to seek out new venues and experiences.

This will involve the creation of the most up-to-date database of hotels, private venues, members' bars, restaurants and bars that are utilized for the corporate space by destination, as well as accounting for future openings. An Amazon-type marketplace for venue search that can be queried using generative AI tools has a lot of potential.

The use of such a platform will still involve a blended approach where human intelligence is used hand-in-glove with generative AI, to provide a customized and personalized approach to venue search.

Large language models cannot account for a full understanding of planners' needs. What it can do though is trawl thousands of venues, preferences and touchpoints to optimize search and offer solutions.



AI will revolutionize venue discovery by not only identifying available spaces but also predicting upcoming openings that meet our specific needs. Combining generative AI with human insight will lead to truly personalized venue solutions.”

SAVVA HADJI-SAVVA

VP, Head of Venue Search, BCD M&E

the burning issue of tech adoption and AI

Technology will be even more crucial in 2026 for maximizing efficiency and productivity across the M&E lifecycle—from inquiry to sourcing, discovery to contracting, delegate management, post-event engagement and invoicing. New apps and digital solutions offer increasing opportunities. Expect more self-service, particularly for low-touch, smaller events. There will also be a growing focus on streamlining processes from inquiry to payment solutions.

Artificial Intelligence has multiple offerings within the M&E space including both Generative AI (which creates content) and Agentic AI (which takes actions or makes decisions on behalf of users) into 2026. More low-impact and process driven activities will become automated in 2026 assisted by machine learning.

Generative AI is major catalyst for change. In 2026 it could further transform the role of the meeting planner. For instance, intelligent assistants will allow the event planner to become more strategic and move away from an operational role.

Large language models trained on internal M&E data can now easily deal with a whole host of questions that used to require human interaction—from “what time does the shuttle leave for the congress?” to “what’s the dress code for the evening event?”—freeing up valuable time for teams to focus on more strategic positions.

Generative AI will be used for matching people at events and personalizing agendas, content and communications. This has the potential to drive intimacy. While agentic AI will be used widely for dealing with travel policies or reviewing contracts.



“As we move into 2026, the integration of AI into the M&E lifecycle is shifting from experimentation to strategy. It’s essential to define clear objectives and maintain the human touch, as we further leverage AI to enhance efficiency while preserving authentic event experiences.”



TED STONE

SVP, Global Technology & Products, BCD M&E

AI factors to consider in 2026



Be purposeful with AI – There needs to be clarity on what M&E planners are trying to achieve with AI. Don’t invest for the sake of it, especially with Gen-AI tools.



Consider risk tolerance on automated tasks – Define what tasks can be self-service for attendees and what must be handled by humans.



Consider an end-to-end approach – Few businesses are looking across the whole M&E lifecycle and where they can save money with AI, automation and self-service.



Don’t lose the human touch – Authentic immersive experiences can’t be automated. Creativity cannot be engineered by machine.

Minor Hotels: reimagining meetings & events through technology



Technology is no longer a supporting feature in the Meetings & Events (MICE) space—it's the engine driving transformation.

At Minor Hotels, we are strategically investing in digital innovation to redefine how planners and guests experience events across our global portfolio. By 2026, immersive and intelligent technologies will be central to delivering high-impact, personalized experiences. We are deploying AI to accelerate RFP response times and automate operational tasks, allowing event managers to better engage and support planners to focus on designing strategic, future-forward programs.

In Europe & the Americas, Minor Hotels is leading regional innovation with flexible booking tools, localized incentive travel and multi-year planning frameworks. Our mobile-first platform reinforces the entire guest journey—from seamless check-in and digital room access to real-time updates and personalized content delivery.

Behind the scenes, our approach is focused on data-analytics, optimizing session formats, tracking ROI and anticipating attendee needs. Smart agendas, AI-powered matchmaking and natural language chatbots are enhancing delegate engagement while reducing resource overhead.

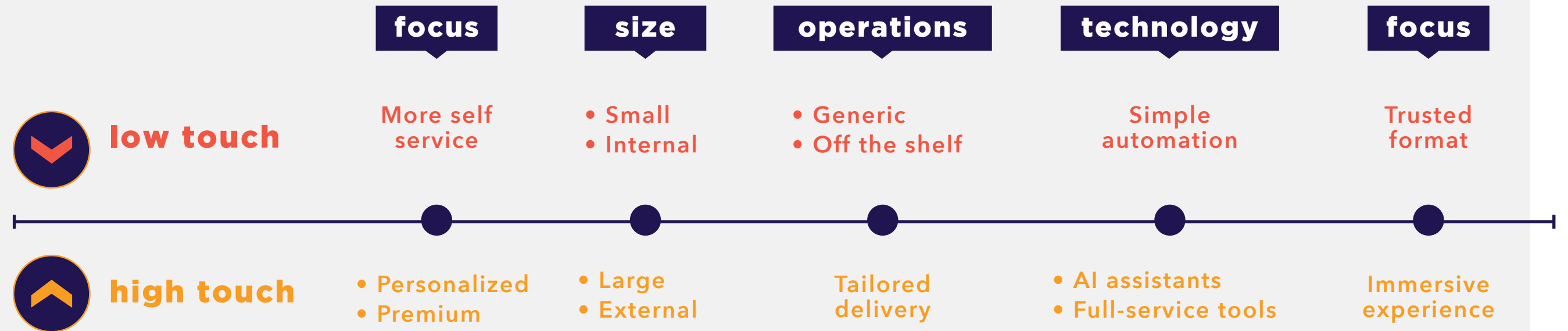
And as geopolitical and economic pressures reshape global travel, our technology-driven approach empowers planners to build resilient, cost-effective programs without compromising quality or impact. With a target of reaching 850 hotels by 2027, our unified brand strategy reflects a commitment to innovation, intelligent systems and anticipating customer needs.

In the evolving world of MICE, Minor Hotels is not just adapting—we're architecting the future of hospitality through immersive, tech-enabled service.

for your **consideration**

there are a few key takeaways from this year's trends report:

- **Agility is key in 2026** – The global economic outlook remains unpredictable. Decision-making for M&E is taking longer. As a result, lead times are shorter—requiring suppliers, especially those supporting small to mid-size meetings, to respond quicker.
- **Increased buyer collaboration** – M&E planners are learning from each other on experiences, tech adoption and sustainability initiatives. Collaboration is key to reinvention.
- **Maximizing efficiency** – As organizations look to manage meeting costs, leveraging lower-cost markets and collaborating across regional and global teams is becoming an increasingly important strategy. Their expertise and experience can bring fresh perspective, operational efficiency and high-quality outcomes.
- **Innovation is a key focus next year** – Finding unique venues that require less production can help stretch budgets and create more memorable experiences. This taps into the “doing more with less” mantra.
- **Consider new inventory options** – New hotels in secondary cities and fresh luxury properties offer better negotiation opportunities. Refreshing venue search is crucial in 2026.



when costs bite in the coming year

In tighter economic times, which may arise in 2026, new strategies will be needed. M&E planners take note:

- **Think about the final bill** – Suppliers may simplify their offering and basic rate model to be more attractive, adding hidden costs for larger events. Initial quotes may differ widely from final invoices.
- **Consider capping costs** – Advocate for committed caps on ancillary costs such as AV spend, cleaning or electricity. All-inclusive packages allow for more accurate comparisons and drive savings.
- **Consider the value of an RFP** – There will be an increase in businesses going out with RFPs in 2026. The aim will be to refresh rates. There will be a shift to smaller, more flexible contracts with more conservative proposals.
- **Sustainability can save money** – Offering plant-based options aligns with sustainability goals and reduces food costs. Ground transport can also cut emissions and save money in 2026.

destinations



manchester, england

Manchester has transformed into one of the UK's most exciting event cities. Known for its industrial heritage, vibrant arts scene and thriving sports culture, it combines history with a modern edge. New hotels and venues continue to open, offering planners more choice than ever.

The city is well connected, with Manchester Airport serving as a major international hub, and strong rail links across the UK. Within the city, an easy-to-use tram and bus network keeps delegates moving.

Manchester Central Convention Complex remains a flagship venue, while unique sites such as the Museum of Science and Industry provide creative alternatives. Sport is at the heart of the city, with the Etihad Stadium development set to welcome a new Radisson hotel, placing attendees right in the action.

With global events like the BRIT Awards heading to Manchester's new CO-OP Live arena, and the ICC Women's T20 World Cup on the horizon, the city is buzzing. Manchester offers a mix of professional infrastructure and cultural energy, making it a compelling choice for meetings and events.



mexico city, mexico

Mexico City blends ancient history with a modern business outlook, creating a dynamic backdrop for events. Built on the ruins of Tenochtitlan, it now thrives as one of Latin America's largest cultural and commercial hubs.

The city offers excellent value, with competitive rates for accommodation, venues and services, making it attractive for budget-conscious planners. Its impressive convention centers sit alongside unique cultural venues, giving events flexibility in scale and style.

Attendees can explore world-class museums, historic plazas and colorful neighborhoods. The food scene is equally unforgettable, from traditional markets to Michelin-starred restaurants, reflecting the city's role as a global culinary capital.

Mexico City is also a major business hub, providing strong networking opportunities across industries. With its mix of affordability, culture and modern infrastructure, it is well positioned to deliver high-impact events that inspire and connect.



berlin, germany

Berlin is a city where history and innovation meet, creating a distinctive setting for meetings and events. From the Brandenburg Gate to the remains of the Berlin Wall, the city's landmarks provide a striking backdrop, while its creative energy keeps it firmly future-facing.

The city offers a wide range of venues, from state-of-the-art convention centers to historic buildings full of character. Sustainability is a strong focus, with many venues operating eco-friendly practices that align with corporate responsibility goals.

Berlin is highly accessible, with efficient transport links. Once on the ground, the city is easy to navigate, making it ideal for international delegates.

As Europe's leading startup hub, Berlin offers opportunities to tap into cutting-edge ideas and industries. Its packed calendar of trade fairs and cultural events also makes it a lively and inspiring place to gather. With world-class dining, nightlife and culture, Berlin is a destination where business and creativity connect seamlessly.



kuala lumpur, malaysia

Kuala Lumpur is one of Asia's rising stars for meetings and events. Centrally located in Southeast Asia, it offers easy international access through a well-connected airport and transport system.

The city combines modern infrastructure with rich cultural diversity. Convention centers and hotels are equipped with advanced technology, while the city's diverse heritage adds character and authenticity to events. Warm Malaysian hospitality ensures delegates feel welcome throughout their stay.

Affordability is another strength, with competitive rates across venues, hotels and services. This makes Kuala Lumpur a cost-effective option without compromising quality. Sustainability is increasingly prioritized, with many venues adopting eco-friendly practices.

Beyond business, Kuala Lumpur offers plenty to explore—from the iconic Petronas Towers to bustling food markets. Its culinary scene reflects a mix of Malaysian, Chinese and Indian influences, making it a highlight for visitors.

Kuala Lumpur is a destination that balances modernity, tradition and value, making it an excellent choice for memorable and impactful events.



scottsdale, arizona

Scottsdale offers a unique mix of desert landscapes, resort luxury and modern event infrastructure, making it a standout U.S. destination for meetings and incentives.

Just 20 minutes from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, the city is highly accessible while maintaining a relaxed, resort-style feel. It boasts world-class hotels and conference resorts, many with expansive outdoor spaces that take advantage of the region's year-round sunshine.

Scottsdale's venues range from high-tech convention facilities to scenic outdoor settings framed by the Sonoran Desert. This makes it well suited to both large conferences and more intimate gatherings. The city is also known for wellness—from spa resorts to outdoor activities like hiking and golf, giving delegates opportunities to recharge.

Dining and cultural experiences are plentiful, with a lively Old Town, renowned art scene and restaurants showcasing Southwestern cuisine. With its combination of natural beauty, modern amenities and exceptional hospitality, Scottsdale is an inspiring choice for meetings and events in North America.



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