


LOMA LIST



How to connect audiences with sustainable,
inclusive, and engaging events

THE END OF AN ERA





The last decade has been a transformative one. Our use of language, our interactions with one another, and attitudes towards societal “norms” (specifically as it relates to race, gender, the environment, and the economy) have all shifted, and all of this will influence how we curate events now and into the future.

As an event marketing team, these topics are always top of mind, especially as we’re planning for the year ahead. Every year is different, requiring subtle adjustments to our strategy to keep up with the ever-changing needs of our clients and audiences.

Because we believe that everyone should have the tools and knowledge to create strategic, creative, and memorable experiences, we decided to share our thoughts on the trends making the biggest impact for planners and events in 2020 and beyond.

We’re pleased to introduce the inaugural LOMA List: a snapshot of the latest industry trends, designed to shine a spotlight on key areas of our industry that are evolving and allow planners to better create sustainable, inclusive, and engaging events.

This report highlights five key areas that we're paying close attention to this year:



1 IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES



2 SUSTAINABILITY



3 PERSONALIZATION & CUSTOMIZATION



4 INCLUSIVITY



5 HEALTH & WELLNESS

A large crowd of people is seen from a low angle, looking up at a dark sky filled with falling money. The money consists of various banknotes and coins, appearing to be falling from above. The crowd is dense, with many hands raised in the air, reaching towards the falling money. The scene is illuminated by stage lights, creating a vibrant and celebratory atmosphere.

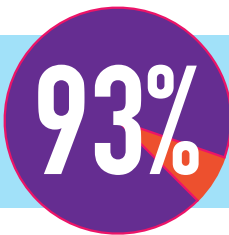
1

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

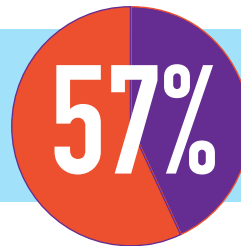
1 IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

Our day-to-day working style is becoming increasingly remote, with office spaces ranging from corporate towers to economy class flights to kitchen tables. With this shift comes working more independently with less in-person collaboration. Therefore, it's important now, more than ever, for people to have a reason and a place to meet and connect, face-to-face.

A recent study found that:



of organizations' business executives still place a **priority** on hosting events



view events or in person meetings as a **high priority**

While remote work and flexible schedules and workspaces are great for day-to-day work, events are how many of us meet that human need for community and connection.

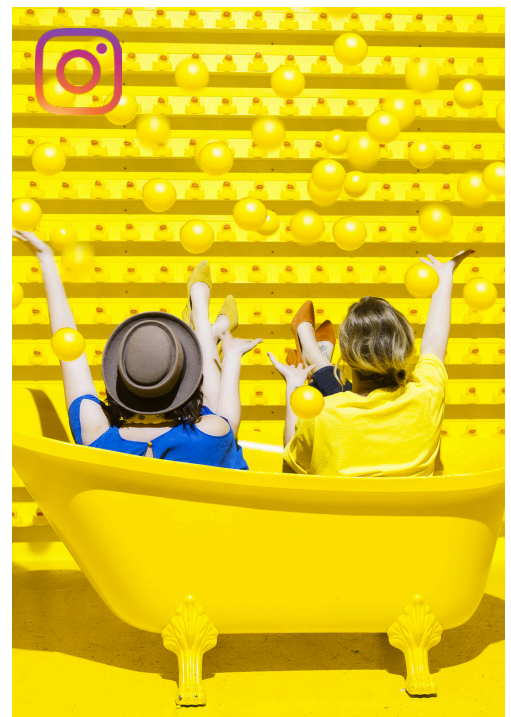
A successful event requires more than gathering everyone in the same space—once you have your attendees together, that space needs to be functional, interesting and ideally picture perfect.

Doing it for the 'Gram

In 2018 Instagram had an estimated [1 billion](#) users worldwide with over 500-million logging in *every* day. Additionally, we know that two-thirds of users of Instagram are between the ages of [18 and 29](#), so it's more important than ever to stay relevant.

If your audience skews older, fear not. According to the Pew Research Center, 72% of the entire public uses social media. So it's a safe bet that the majority of the people you interact with on a daily basis, no matter what their age, have a relationship with social media.

It's no surprise, then, that pop-up installations like the [Museum of Ice Cream](#), [Happy Place](#), [29 Rooms](#), or activations such as guest-generated hashtag [photo mosaic murals](#) have grown in popularity. Each of these activations provide visitors with often the only currency that matters online: engagement.



1

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

Non-Traditional Venues

If a pop-up installation isn't part of your overall event strategy, or within budget, that's okay. But don't let a modest budget prevent you from making bold decisions. A prediction from the [Global Meetings Forecast](#) outlines an uptick in the use of non-traditional meeting spaces, so the time is now to flex those creative muscles and think outside the proverbial box.

Take this example from fashion designer Nafsika Skourti: [The Invisible Room](#). Skourti hosted an exclusive dinner in the middle of the Jordan desert all within the confines of an illuminated structure that stood 8 feet high, 15 feet wide, and 20 feet long. All of the food, beverages, power, and furniture were brought in with the support of the Jordan Tourism Board and a local Bedouin tribe. Guests were able to indulge in the vast openness of the desert in a way they likely would have never experienced before.

In contrast to the emptiness of the deserts of Jordan, the overcrowded streets in the Flatiron District in Manhattan, with all of its tempting conveniences of infrastructure, can also act as a backdrop to unique meeting spaces that will engage your audience more deeply than a standard ballroom.

This partnership between [Buzzfeed and Delta](#) is a great example of, "if you build it, they will come." New Yorkers were provided with a series of cabins that were able to be booked for up to 30 minutes for various meetings and appointments this past fall, showcasing Delta's commitment to comfort and convenience for travelers.

Nafsika Skourti hosted an exclusive dinner in the middle of the Jordan desert



There's an App For That

If your physical environment refuses to cooperate, but you're committed to providing your attendees with the immersive experience they deserve, remember: the future is now.

While we may not exactly be flying cars, we can at least agree that event-focused apps have come a long way. These advances enable even the most austere meeting format to feel immersive and interactive.

[BizBash](#) put together a comprehensive list of event technology solutions which vary in capability from logistical support to promotion and awareness to on-site engagement.

Here are just two examples you can consider for your next event:



Braindates: A Braindate is essentially your conference's version of matchmaking, allowing attendees to search and connect with fellow attendees with similar interests at a pre-designated space at the event. It's a great way to take some of the awkwardness out of networking by narrowing in on a topic of interest before you meet.



Glisser: Another great app for consideration is Glisser. Live polling and audience feedback aren't exactly new or groundbreaking, but they're also not often as reliable. Enabling your audience with the opportunity to interact with your speakers and their content is not only beneficial to the on-site experience, but it also informs your post-event debrief.

Whether you've re-created Alice's Wonderland, braved the elements to bring your attendees into unexpected environments, or simply engrossed them into a conversation on a digital platform, the point is that you've executed the greatest transformation of all: you've turned a passive attendee into an engaged one and that is what every planner's memes are made of.





2

SUSTAINABILITY

Did you know that, as planners, we're responsible for approximately 4lbs of waste per day, per person at an average conference? 2.5lbs of which will go directly to a landfill? Multiply that by your average attendance at your last conference and we're in trouble. We at LOMA Marketing Agency have previously discussed the topic of sustainability and green events on our [Blog](#), as well as ways to [incorporate more environmentally-friendly practices](#) into your events.

If you missed it, or just need a recap, here are a couple highlights with ways to immediately be more climate-conscious at your next event:

Plan(e)t Based Food & Beverage

A 2019 [Forbes](#) article outlined the increase in consumer demand for Plant-Based food with 17% of the US population and 23% of the Canadian consumers considering themselves 'plant-forward' meaning that approximately 70% of their meals would contain plant-based clean ingredients. This growing movement has and will continue to result in planners ensuring that our favourite caterers are matching the movement and are excited for the opportunity to flex creative muscles on your next menu.



If you're struggling to understand which foods have the lowest carbon footprint or require the least amount of water to produce, this [Water Footprint article](#) great start. However, at the end of the day, it comes down to five simple steps:



Rely on, and buy locally grown and produced food



Incorporate more plant-based proteins (e.g. lentils, beans)



Reduce waste by partnering with companies willing to donate uneaten/unserved food to shelters and underserved populations



Offer tap water and water stations instead of bottled water



Use recyclable and/or compostable materials and ensure properly labelled receptacles are available

Spend Green to Go Green

So, if it's so easy, why isn't everyone doing it? The unfortunate reality is that sometimes, the more socially conscious approach isn't the most cost-conscious one. Not all budgets are created equal.

If you're wondering where you'll find the money, well you're in luck. It turns out that, according to a study conducted by [Socialtables](#), 86% of consumers not only expect companies to act on social and environmental issues they're happy to pay more for the service.

The question really isn't how we'll reduce our impact on the planet, but when? Challenge yourself and your vendors to incorporate more sustainable efforts into your event plan and be an advocate for the planet. The next time someone at the table says you can't afford it—speak up and highlight that you can't afford not to.



3

PERSONALIZATION
& CUSTOMIZATION

If there's one thing that attendees have come to expect (and look forward to) at events, it's the swag—especially if it's tailor-made just for them. A recent study conducted by [Evergage](#) found that 98% of digital marketers surveyed favored personalisation as a way to deepen customer relationships, with 88% agreeing that it delivers on their objective to provide a better customer experience.

There are countless ways to make your guests feel appreciated and special, ranging from the tangible to the intangible. Below are some examples that we think attendees will be talking about the most this year.

3D Printing

It's unlikely that you won't see a photo booth at an event. From galas to user conferences to product launches, everyone loves the chance to get a little silly in front of the camera. As we enter a new decade, however, those photos are literally jumping off the page thanks to 3D printing. Companies like [Selftraits](#) are taking the selfie photo experience to the next level bringing you to 3D life! While this activation can be more cost-intensive and, at times, requires more lead time to deliver the final product, it certainly impresses and will be an experience your attendees will never forget.



Companies like Selftraits are taking the selfie photo experience to the next level bringing you to 3D life!

Photo Credit: Selftraits

Edible SWAG

Branded food and beverage are always a hit with attendees. Latte art, for example, has become more sophisticated over the years, impressing us early on with a simple leaf designs and now blowing us away with brands creating selfies, logos, illustrations and text in seconds.

The future of customization, however, will go much deeper than surface-level likeness and connection. Take California start-up Vinome for example. The company combines [DNA analyses](#) with the taste preferences of a user, matching them to wines they're genetically designed to love.

If you're doubtful that guests would go for this, you might be surprised by recent research from Salesforce that found [57% of consumers](#) are willing to share personal information if it means they'll get something personalized in return.

If genetically compatible wine isn't your cup of tea, how about a virtual cocktail tailor-made to your preferences that isn't a cocktail at all? A researcher at the National University of Singapore has created the [vocktail](#): a virtual experience that uses sights, scents and a trick of your taste buds to turn water into any beverage you'd like. Just think, all of the flavour and none of the guilt! What could go wrong?



If genetically compatible wine isn't your cup of tea, how about a virtual cocktail?

Personalized Agendas

Part of creating a great overall event experience is considering the agenda. In their 2020 trend report, [Socialtables](#) found that attendees preferred to have more control and options with event agendas.

Think of it as building your schedule at a music festival: you can't see every band, and frankly, you don't want to. But there's enough content to enjoy that you know you'll always be engaged and able to interact in your own way.

Event apps are always a great option but if budget doesn't allow, there are different ways that you can create simultaneous programming at your event while still allowing space for content, networking, and conversation to remain at the forefront:



Stay Social:

Create a social media lounge complete with a Twitter wall and encourage attendees to use a specific event hashtag(s) in order to track the conversation.



All-Day Hospitality:

Allow your guests the flexibility to build their own schedule, designating a space that is available all day to find a light snack, catch up on email and host informal networking.



Self-Serve Learning:

Take advantage of the technology at your disposal and create spaces where users can read, listen, or watch any of the material you've created on their own time or take themselves through a guided demo or tutorial.

Your attendees aren't all looking for the same thing, so they shouldn't be offered the same experience. Whether it's a personalized gift or an individually curated agenda, remember that differentiation is key.



4

INCLUSIVITY

4 INCLUSIVITY

MPI conducted a [fascinating study](#) that sought to determine the current state of inclusion in the events industry by asking planners, across multiple industries, about the different ways in which they create inclusive spaces before, during and after an event.

It turns out that the desire to create more accessible and inclusive spaces isn't just about legal compliance, but rather a direct response to audience expectations. In fact, one-third of planners cited this as their main objective for ensuring diversity and inclusion were at the forefront of their planning practices.

The good news is that there are a variety of standard behaviours for planning an event, including: selecting a venue that has or can provide accessibility ramps and obstacle-free pathways, being mindful of religious holidays and offering alternative menus for a variety of dietary restrictions.

However, there's still a great deal of opportunity to improve processes both on and off-site. If you're one of the 40% of planners interviewed by MPI who shared that they often don't have all of the knowledge and resources they need to build inclusive spaces, we've got some great examples for you to consider before your next event.

At the 2019 Great Place to Work® For All™ Summit,
they provided a Mamava Pod for new mothers.



4 INCLUSIVITY

Events for All

Here are just a few ways you can make your next event a welcoming space for everyone. Challenge yourself to discover more and be an advocate for your growing audience.



Restrooms:

Provide genderless restrooms for all events. A genderless restroom is also far more efficient and can reduce wait times.



Inclusivity for Families:

At the **Great Place to Work® For ALL™ Summit**, an event all about inclusivity, they work with **Mamava** to provide a designated area for mothers who are breastfeeding/pumping. Taking it one step further, their partner **Milk Stork** will ship the milk to the attendee's home in a refrigerated package so they do not have to worry about storing it in their room or lugging it home.



Identity & Expression:

Salesforce's resource group for sexual orientation and gender identity equality works with planners to ensure gender pronouns are properly addressed in all communications (e.g. invitations, RSVPs, speaker presentations) and gender-neutral terms are used when addressing a large group.



Diversify Content:

Invite speakers who represent different groups and backgrounds to allow for varying points of view and a diverse conversation.



Translation Services:

If you have international attendees or a large enough delegation from a certain country, providing translation services for your general session will likely be appreciated.



Closed Captioning:

Similarly, if you have attendees who are hard of hearing, closed captioning may be something you'd like to explore.



5

HEALTH & WELLNESS

It's no secret that mindfulness and meditation have lasting, positive psychological and physical effects on an individual. From reducing anxiety, strengthening focus, and improving mood, planners are noticing the benefits of incorporating these practices into their events. Attendees will have varying degrees of physical fitness and interest, so the key to success is variety.

Mindfulness

One way to introduce mindfulness and meditation practises to your attendees is by gamifying the experience for a chance to win prizes. It may sound like a strange tactic, but there's actually a great deal of science to back up the [benefits of gamifying](#) learning new skills, which mindfulness and meditation are for many.

For example, the [MUSE](#) headband challenges users to monitor their breathing habits, which in turn impacts their brain's activity and ability to clear thoughts. As with any other form of physical wellness, this practice takes time, but the results are significant, including reducing stress and providing better rest at night.

Other tools may be used more casually, making them suitable for having on-site at events to allow attendees a chance to regroup and unwind between sessions or after a long day of meetings.

A woman with long dark hair is sitting on a light-colored sofa in a modern, bright room with large indoor plants. She is wearing a white MUSE headband and looking down at a smartphone in her hands. The room has a clean, minimalist aesthetic with a wooden chair and table visible in the background.

The MUSE headband challenges users to monitor their breathing habits.

Photo Credit: MUSE

Self-Care

As mentioned, wellness comes in all forms and means something different to everyone.

To shake things up, here are some examples of ways you can incorporate a little self-care into your events:



Incorporate energy-boosting super foods into all meals

Include group exercise (such as yoga) in your agenda



Cuddle with puppies from a puppy therapy group or shelter such as [4Paws Social Therapy](#) or [Alliance of Therapy Dogs](#).

Create a “wellness lounge” complete with massage therapists or aromatherapy treatments



Provide ample break time throughout the day

CONCLUSION

A landscape photograph capturing a sunset or sunrise. The sun is a bright, glowing orb on the horizon, partially obscured by the silhouettes of distant hills. The sky is a mix of deep teal at the top and warm orange near the horizon, with wispy clouds catching the low light. A thin, white contrail streaks across the upper right portion of the sky. The foreground consists of dark, rolling hills, with some vegetation in the lower right corner appearing as out-of-focus, glowing orange and yellow patches, possibly reflecting the sun's light or being illuminated by it. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.



To New Beginnings

The last decade has certainly been one of great change; as with any great change, there are great responsibilities—obstacles to maneuver and opportunities for growth.

Our hope is that the 2020 LOMA List will challenge you to think differently, keep these changes top of mind and provide you with an opportunity to create great changes in your own way for the benefit of your stakeholders, your attendees, and our industry.

Agree or disagree with anything on our list or have ideas to add? We'd love to hear from you! Join the conversation by using **#lomaagency** **#LOMAList2020**.

About LOMA Marketing Agency

Whether your goal is to engage with current customers, drive net new leads, increase brand awareness, celebrate your team or launch a new product or service, we'd love to be your partner.

As a full-service agency, we can manage your event from end to end starting with strategic planning all the way through to onsite execution.

Additionally we can pilot in, acting as an extension of your internal team providing extra pairs of hands where you need us most, like registration or an off-site gala or social event.

[Contact us](#) today and let's work together to make your 2020 events strategic, creative experiences!

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