

19 Event trends for 2019

 By [Kelly McGillivray](#)

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Generally speaking event trends for 2019 are on two separate trajectories: mindfulness and technology. The most successful experiences will find ways to merge the two.



Kelly McGillivray, squad leader, theSQUAD Creative Event Management.

We're already seeing a move towards more authentic events, while it is up to us event professionals to educate our clients on what the new tech can do. We'll also be seeing less of the bog-standard PowerPoint presentations and schoolroom seating and we're heartily grateful for that.

1. Inspiration sessions

Team building is so last season; inspiration sessions are where it's at. People want informative experiences and content that feeds the soul. These inspiration sessions could include doing something in nature, a mindfulness course, meditation or yoga – anything encouraging mindfulness and perspective shifts.

2. Voice technology

There are fun things to be done with voice-activated virtual assistants, or "smart speakers". We visualise them on stage during a Q&A event or even part of a theatre piece. Creative minds in the industry will do clever things with clever Alexa and her kind. VA's can also be personal assistants to each attendee via their smartphones.



SA companies benefitting from voice technology

24 Aug 2015



3. Young speakers

As it becomes more obvious that adults don't have the answers, we'll start hearing more from the perspective of youngsters. To solve problems, we need to look at the world differently and putting young people on stage and hearing what they have to

say is a great start.

4. App interpreters

Thanks to [Event Managers Blog](#) for this one – it could be very useful indeed. When you have an expert speaker who doesn't speak the same language, an App interpreter will solve that problem and save you money on hiring a live (and not always available) interpreter.

5. Digital picture frames and filters

Instead of posing people in front of a media wall, digital frames are now in the picture. They'll be used as an event visual signature, punting the theme and company. Encouraging guests to use the digital frames on their own photos and posting social media will be a trend next year too.

6. Live video

In 2019, video will make up 80% of all internet traffic and event professionals will be on the video bandwagon too. Specifically, live video during events being broadcast to other venues or on social media. Instagram's push for video traffic (TV and Stories) will be a good place to showcase.



#BizTrends2018: Putting the 'I' in live.

Mike Shaman 11 Jan 2018



7. Pocket Spielbergs

It is time to take storytelling to the next level and become Pocket Spielbergs - thanks to [Stuff TV](#) for inspiration for this point. Events will include more guests making their own videos (which we will encourage) with amazing Smart Phone tools such as Power Director, iMovie, Clips, Lama Fusion and more. A movie shot on a phone can go far – for example, local director Jenna Bass has a movie, *High Fantasy* on the circuit – shot “selfie-style” on iPhone7.

EMBED

8. Micro influencers

There is fatigue around the big influencers and millennials are stickers for authenticity so the use of micro-influencers is on the rise. Using a micro-influencer who is an expert in their field adds credence to your event too. Plus, it is more cost effective.

9. Webinars

2018 was a webinar warm up, 2019 will see more people and businesses getting on board with webinars. They are such a great way to host people from all over the world and initiate live conversations between attendees. It's also such a budget-friendly option and the tightening of budget belts is going to be big in 2019 – it already is. Plus, don't forget to have a beautiful digital package of the webinar info to send to everyone afterwards.

10. Podcasts

While not strictly an event, the clever and strategic podcast can take the place of an event and impart the same information. There will be actions built into these podcasts, an element of follow through for the listener, directing them to an online quiz

or feedback form or even an invitation to a real event where they can discuss what they've heard. Here are [Lean Labs Best Business Podcasts of 2018](#) for some inspiration.



#FutureFit Yourself: The power of podcast in the 21st century w/ Gavin Kennedy

Carmen Murray 15 Nov 2018



11. Project Zanzibar's smart mat

"What if we could blur the divide between the physical and digital worlds? What if you could play with physical toys, cards, and blocks, and watch your actions come alive on the screen" says Microsoft's [Project Zanzibar](#) team. Project Zanzibar is a very cool Smart Mat - flexible and portable with amazing interactive capabilities. This will change the way we share stories and hold employee engagement sessions.

12. City adventures

With smaller budgets for corporate events, 2019 will see us exploring what's on our doorstep – our cities. There's a wealth of culture, excitement, beauty, food and history all around us. The things we explore will also tie into the common overall corporate event theme of a brand history or business change.

13. Local speakers

Instead of looking at international speakers, events will have more local flavour as we find the gems of extraordinary people in our own country. Take Dr Adriana Marais for instance, she spoke at an event of ours and she was riveting. Dr Adriana Marais has decided to go to Mars and be an extra-terrestrial. Guests will never forget hearing her story.



A sea of data - but not a drop to drink

Adriana Marais 27 Aug 2018



14. Community

There is a growing need for events to also give back and there will be an increase of experiences which help uplift the community in some way. Be it refurbishing a school, cooking meals for a soup kitchen, collecting books/clothes/furniture for those in need. People want to "be the change" and event professionals will help them do that. Our local Night of 1000 Drawings is a creative and easy one to become involved in.



Night of 1000 Drawings raises R100,000 for charity

6 Dec 2016



15. Digital master of ceremonies

This it is already happening. A figure projected as a hologram on screen, pre-programmed with a script will do a good job and be a talking point. This is especially suited to the techy-type client. It is quite thrilling to think you can create any type of persona, but you'd still need a scriptwriter – although by 2020 AI will probably be writing our scripts too.

16. Comedy

There is a growing need to make guests laugh. We have brilliant local comics who can lift the mood of a crowd and create a bond between attendees. Read [George Monbiot's *The Earth is in a Death Spiral*](#) and you'll understand how important a good laugh is going to be next year.

17. Unexpected venues

Why do the same events in the same venues over and over again? Especially when you can do them cheaper at offbeat and unexpected venues. There are gems to be uncovered and new venues opening up all the time. Budget restrictions mean event venues will need to be quirky over extravagant.

18. Clever with food

We're moving away from lavish, four-course catering extravaganzas to less expensive/more choice. There is also an overall trend of supporting local, small businesses instead of big corporates in 2019. This includes looking at rooftop farming suppliers as a resource and sharing a table- you work together, why not share a meal together? There's also some evidence to support social eating (eating together) makes a team more productive.

19. Sustainability

Having a sustainability strategy in 2019 is imperative. Paper-free, recycled glass, zero food waste and carbon footprint aware, these are all in the spotlight. Thinking sustainably, giving each guest a bamboo straw, for instance, will be second nature by 2020.

20. Bonus points

Other trends which continue to be on the rise are pop-up events, themes highlighting causes (there are a lot of those) as well as green gifting and vegan cuisine, to name a few. We don't know where all of this will take us but we know it will never be dull.

ABOUT KELLY MCGILLIVRAY

Putting productions of every shape and size together for over 20 years. Now CEO of TheSquad Creative Events and on a mission! Creating brilliantly planned, well executed and bodacious event experiences. Teamwork, underpinned by strategic planning with passion and expertise. That's what it's all about.

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