

How Events & Venues are Innovating

Event & Venue Management Innovation Studies



Michael Hughes, Managing Director Research & Consulting



About the Studies

- Two surveys were conducted by Access Intelligence Research & Consulting and the Event Marketing Institute between October 2015 and February 2016.

1.) Event Management Innovation – groups surveyed: associations with conventions, for-profit exhibition organizers and conference producers. The survey received 134 responses.

2.) Venue Management Innovation – groups surveyed: leading convention centers and exhibition halls. The survey received 61 responses, including half of the top 50 North American convention centers by exhibit space.



Definition of Innovation & Key Issues for Major Events & Venues

Definition: Innovation is a new idea, or more-effective device or process. Innovation can be viewed as the application of better solutions that meet new requirements, unarticulated needs, or existing market needs. This is accomplished through more effective products, processes, services, technologies, or business models that are readily available to markets, governments and society. – Source: Wikipedia

Key Issues:

- **Events need to raise the bar each year and upgrade the experience. There's considerable competition from other media and for attendees' time.**
- **Major conventions and exhibitions usually do not have a direct, head-to-head event competitor – so they have to compete with themselves, and innovate!**
- **In contrast, convention centers are extremely competitive.**

| Event Management Innovation Study

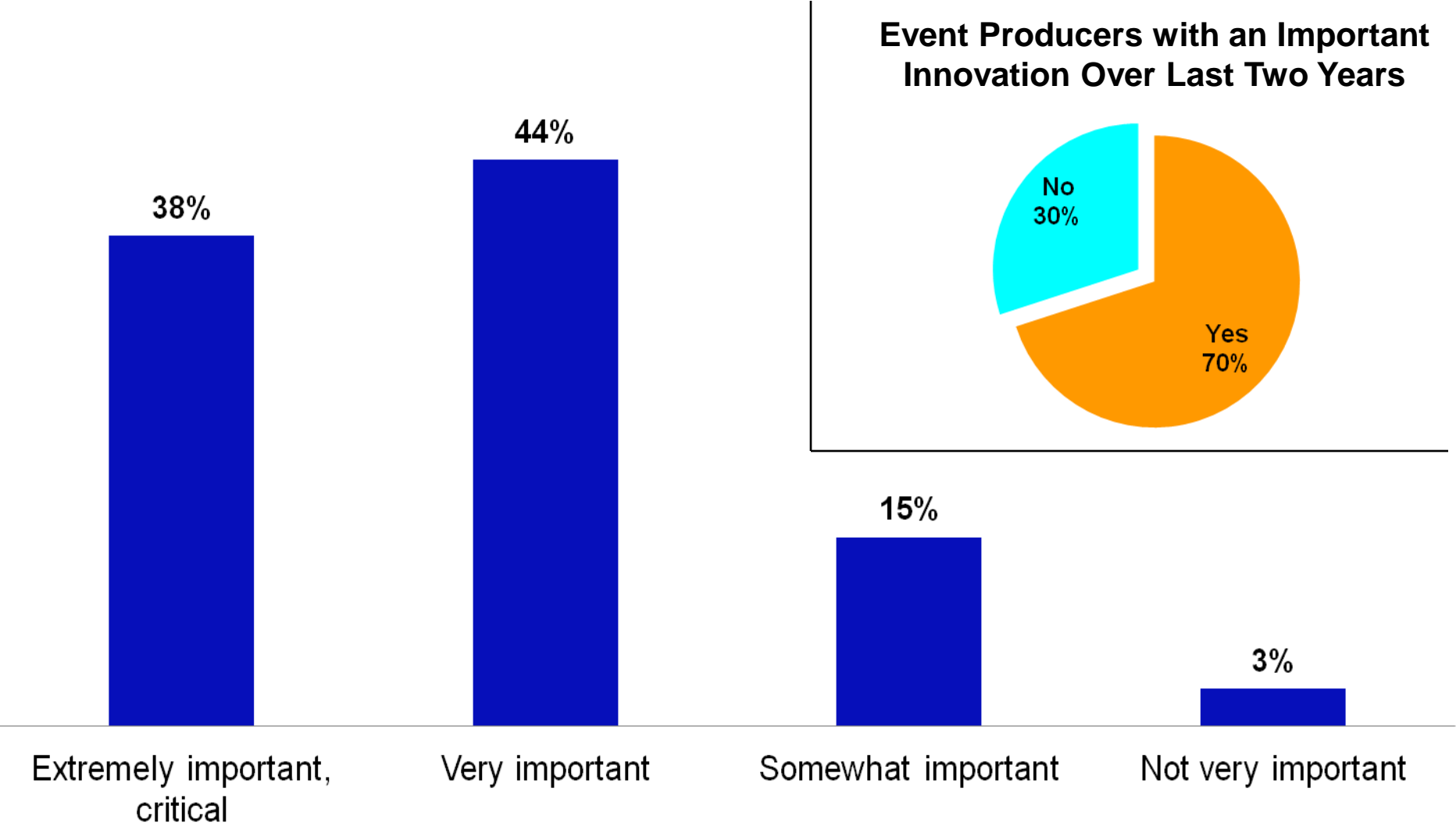


Key Insights

- The main focus is enhancing the on-site attendee experience.
- The second: attendee marketing and communications, to drive attendance.
- The top three sources of new ideas are:
 - 1.) Staff discussions
 - 2.) Event industry media
 - 3.) Attendee surveys
- The main challenges are simply generating good ideas, setting implementation plans, costs, and getting support from various stakeholders.

Importance of Innovation to Event Producers

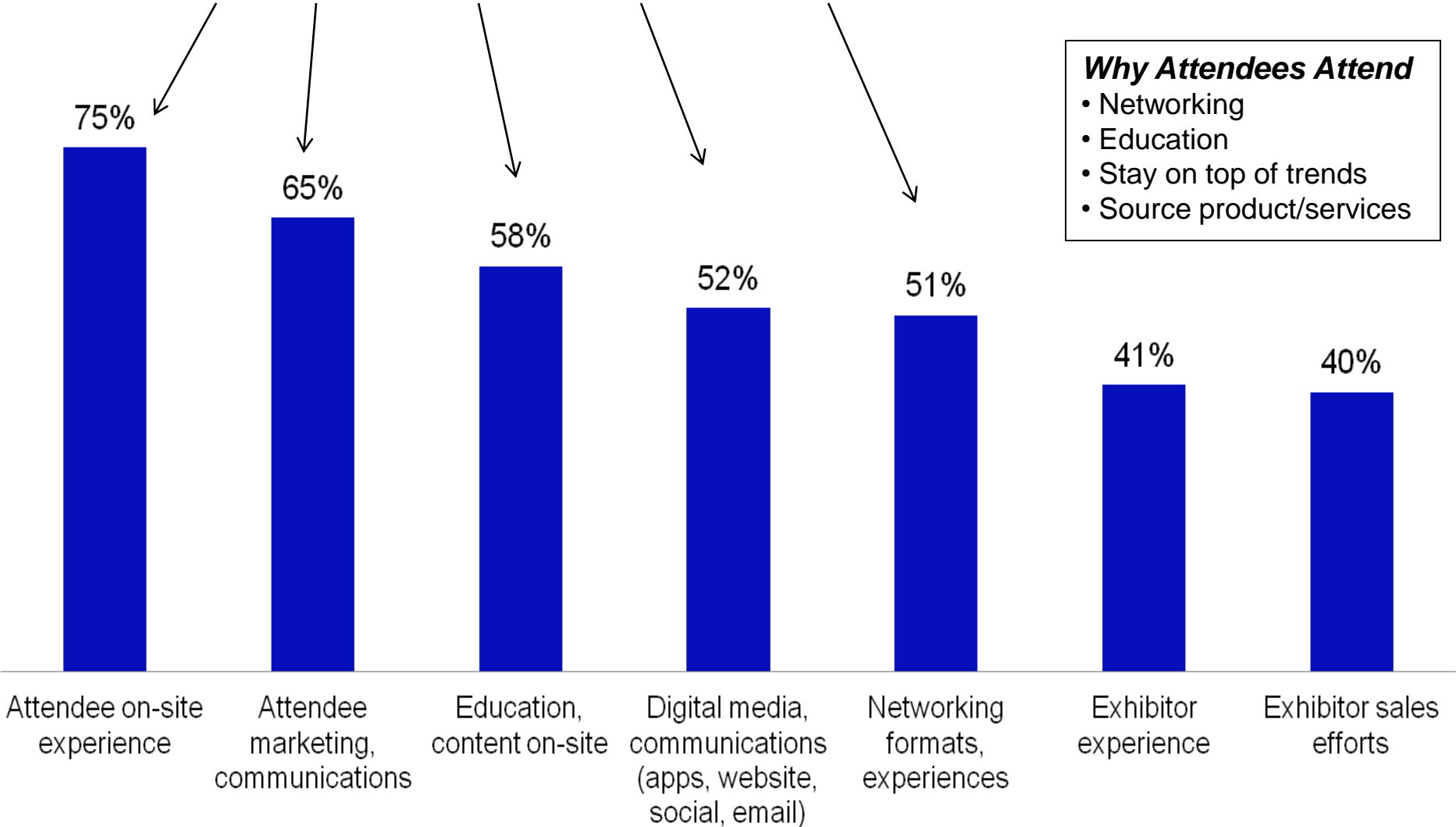
Innovation is considered *extremely or very important* to a total of **82%** of event producers.



Event Areas of Innovation & New Idea Focus

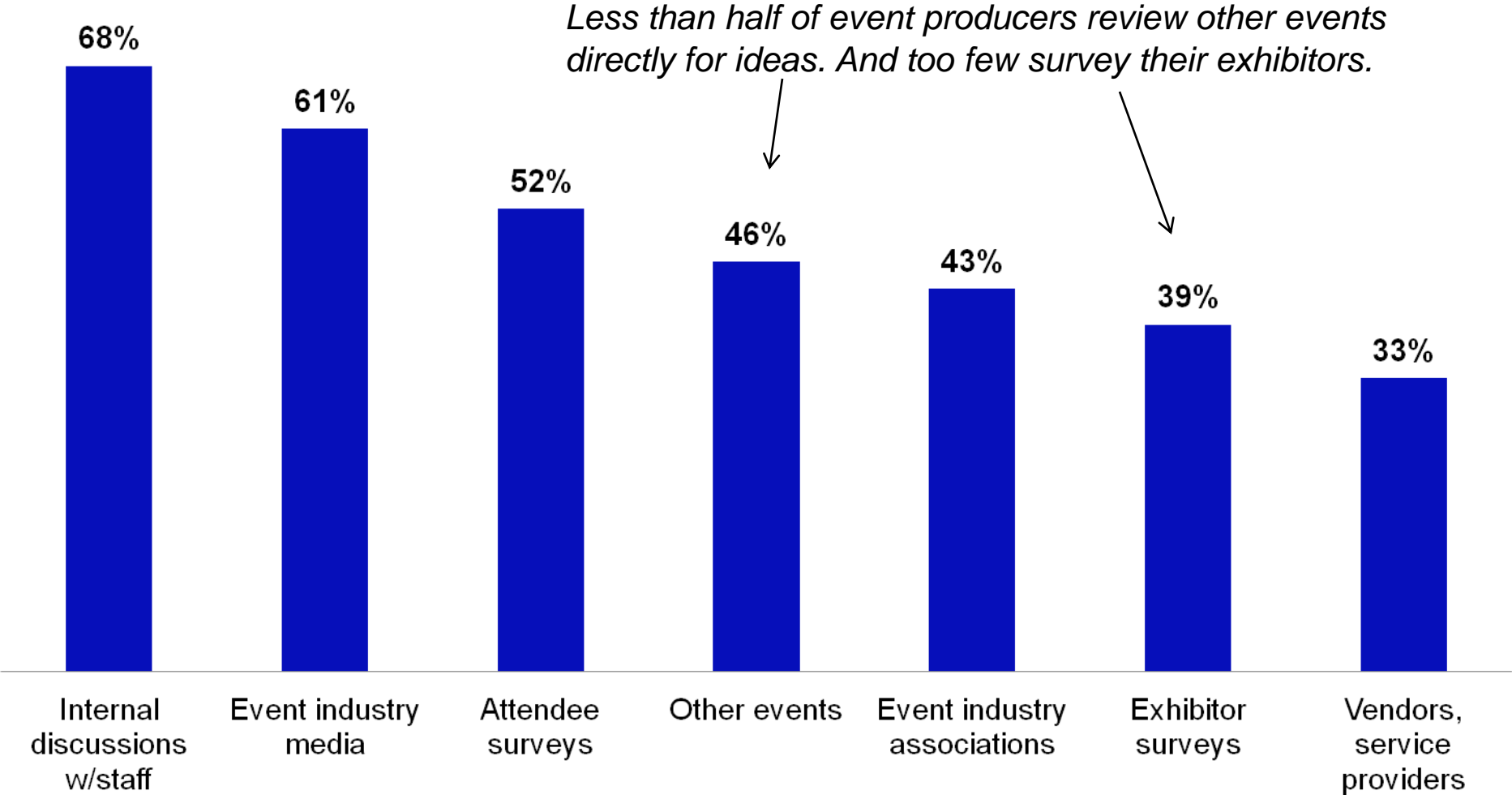
The focus is on adding value to attendees in nearly every event area.

- Why Attendees Attend**
- Networking
 - Education
 - Stay on top of trends
 - Source product/services



Sources of Innovations & New Ideas



The top three sources of new ideas are staff, event industry media, and attendee surveys.



Innovations & News Ideas, *Select Responses*

Summary




- Attendee experience
- Education & networking
- Digital

- “Attendee networking (rest and learn) in lounge area.”
- “Innovation stage demo style platform within trade show floor.” 
- “Concierge matchmaking for sellers to meet prospective buyers.”
- “Conference App.”
- “Digital Photography that auto sends to attendees social media via RFID capture of data.”
- “iBeacons.”
- “Instead of a keynote or panelist general session, we did a full-scale live emergency response drill that engaged our participants.”
- “Pre-arranged one-to-one meetings, education on the tradeshow floor.” 




Challenges, *Select Responses*

Summary

- Cost
- Meaningful ideas
- Staffing

- “Budget and **measurement** of ROI.”
- “Budget, **ownership of the innovation** (champion/implementer).”
- “Cost and time for **implementation**.”
- “**Ending legacy programs to make room** and resources available for new and innovative.” 
- “Creating the time to try, test and implement a new concept. Then **letting it run its course** before killing it if the concept does not produce expected revenue or results.”
- “**Failing to ask the necessary probing questions** to get on track with client needs and goals; financial resources to implement innovative ideas as well as prioritization of which ones to implement now vs. next time.” 
- “Finding the right idea\interactive element that **really resonates with attendees**.” 
- “**Getting stakeholders on board**. Creating value for new idea before it has proven successful.”

Industry Areas that Need More Innovation, *Select Responses*

- “Accessing other attendees; **more ways to market successfully.**” 
- “Attendee and exhibitor **experience.**”
- “Attendee/Exhibitor **engagement.**” 
- “**Content delivery** to large format audiences.”
- “**Digital lead generation** and onsite input of event measurement data points.”
- “Event experience for the attendee; Exhibitor ROI metrics.”
- “How to better manage and **lower costs of exhibiting:** material handling, labor, etc.”
- “**More excitement** on the tradeshow floor.” 
- “More focus on the result of event participation.”
- “**One-on-one appointment matching,** registration and app; one seamless solution.”

Summary

- Attendance marketing
- Engagement
- Experience

Venue Management Innovation Study



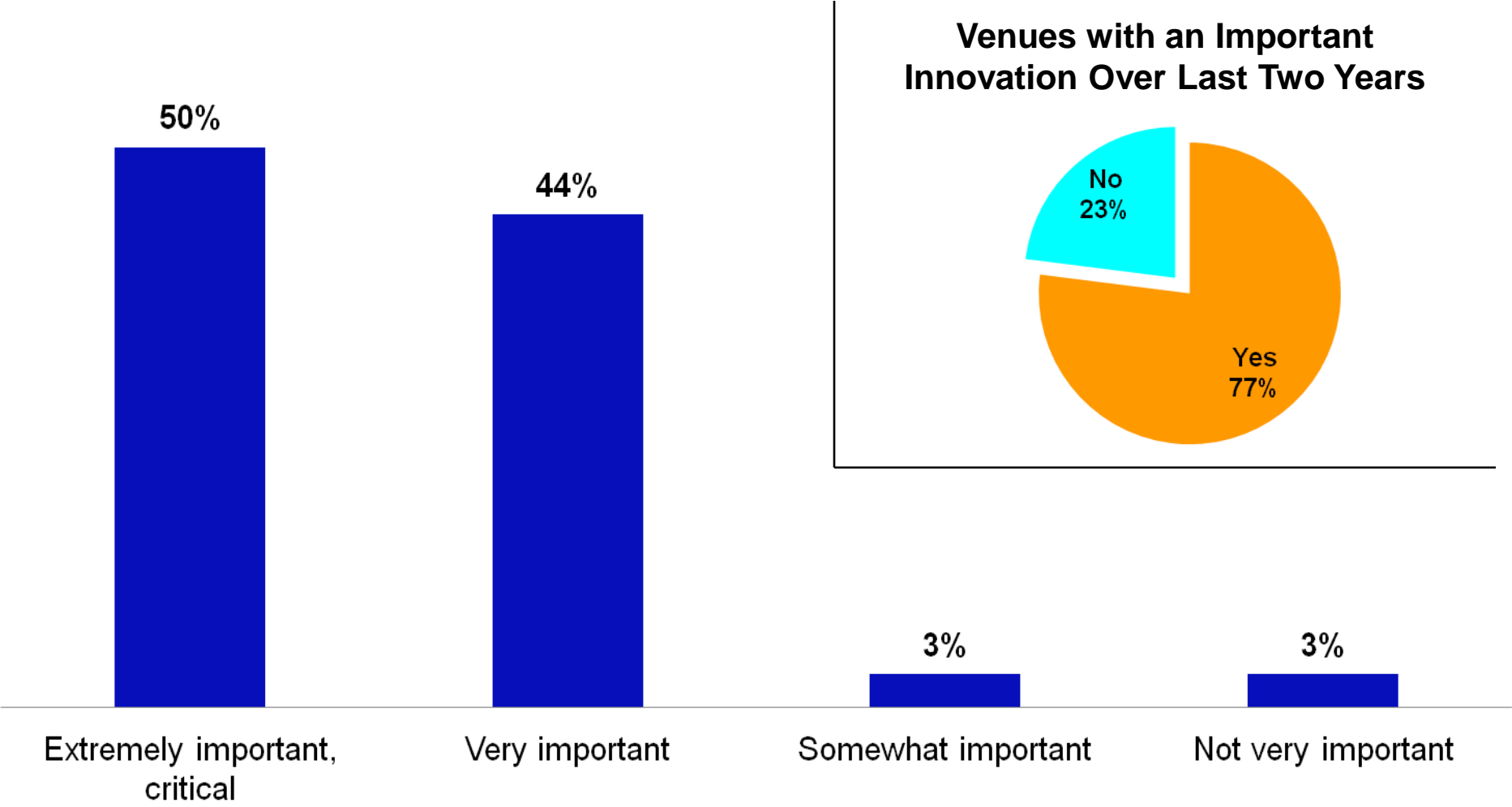
Venues: Key Insights

- Enhancing the client and attendee experience is the number one area of innovation – followed by telecom and technology services.
- Top sources of new ideas are:
 - 1.) Staff discussions
 - 2.) Other venues
 - 3.) Venue industry associations
- The main challenges to innovating are budgets/costs and implementation.



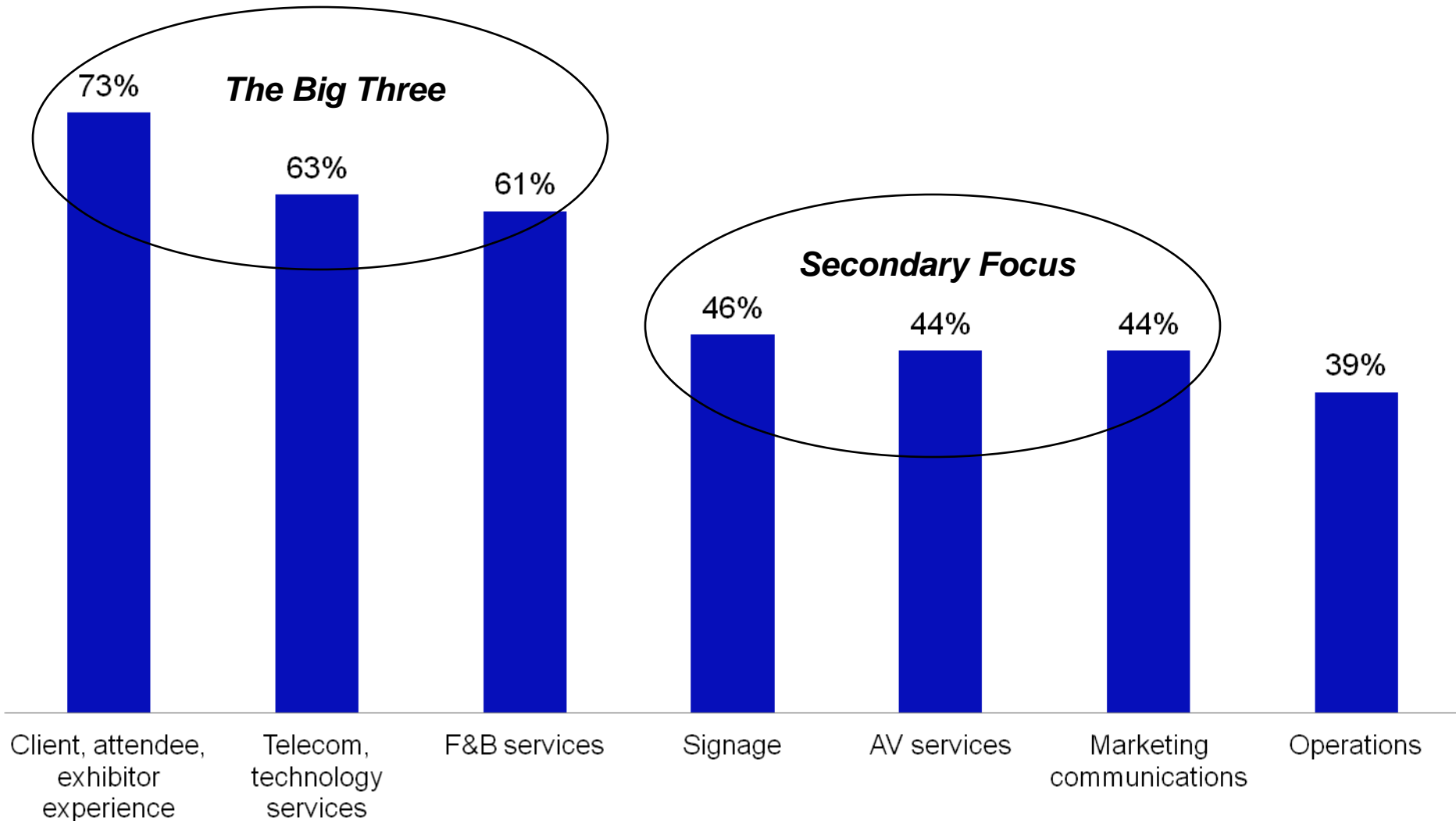
Venues: Importance of Innovation to Organization

Innovation is considered *extremely* or *very important* to a total of **94%** of venue managers.



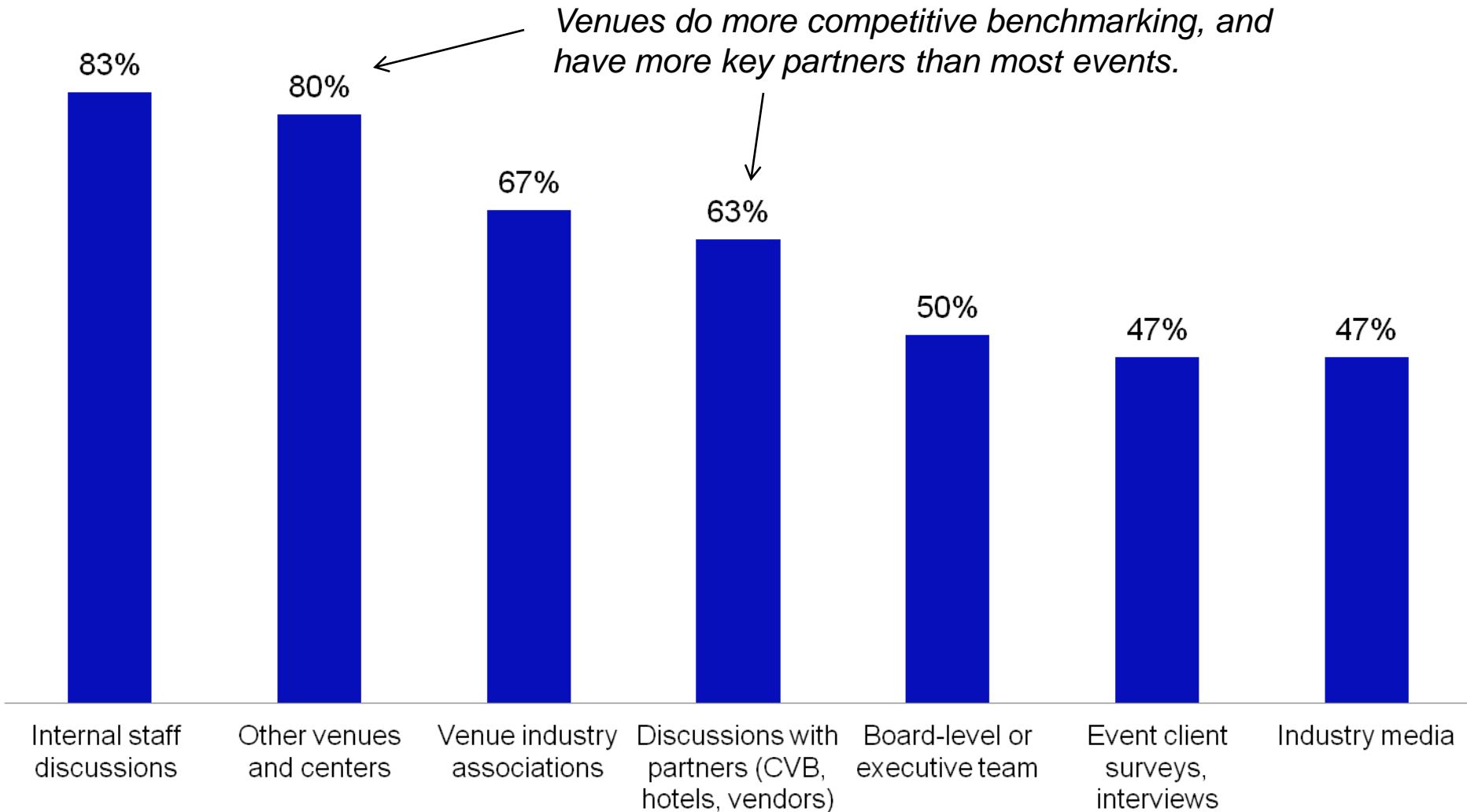
Venues: Areas of Innovation & New Idea Focus

The focus is on enhancing the client and venue-user experience, followed by telecommunications and technology, F&B, signage, AV services and enhanced marketing.






Venues: Sources of Innovations & New Ideas

The top three sources of new ideas are staff, other venues and venue industry associations.





Venues: Innovation Examples, *Select Responses*

- “Built the Meeting Room of the Future.” 
- “Charging stations, and outlets with USB ports / complimentary Wi-Fi in lobby space.”
- “Craft Bar and Lounge, welcome center, and large scoreboard like video screen.”
- “DMC / 3rd Party Incentives program.” 
- “Guest Service Ambassadors deployed in the lobby fully integrated into event management systems.”
- “Integration of event related social media feeds into our existing meeting room signs.”
- “Launched events that are owned by the center.”
- “Price policy: all-inclusive packages.” 
- “We moved the arrival process to our parking garage with our event services team now covering the parking garage. Upon arrival guests are welcomed and advised what room their event is taking place in while paying for their parking.”



Summary

- Attendee experience
- Meeting rooms
- Wi-Fi
- Pricing, business models

Venues: Biggest Challenges, *Select Responses*

- “Cost and time of **implementation**.”
- “Financing and **proving ROI**.” 
- “Implementation, and **gaining support for much-needed change**.”
- “Lack of resources, changing **staff culture**.”
- “Overcoming **internal resistance**.”
- “**Rapid change in options**.” 
- “Getting clients to accept and invest in new ideas.”
- “**Revenues** to support the innovation.”

Venues: Areas that Need More Innovation, *Select Responses*

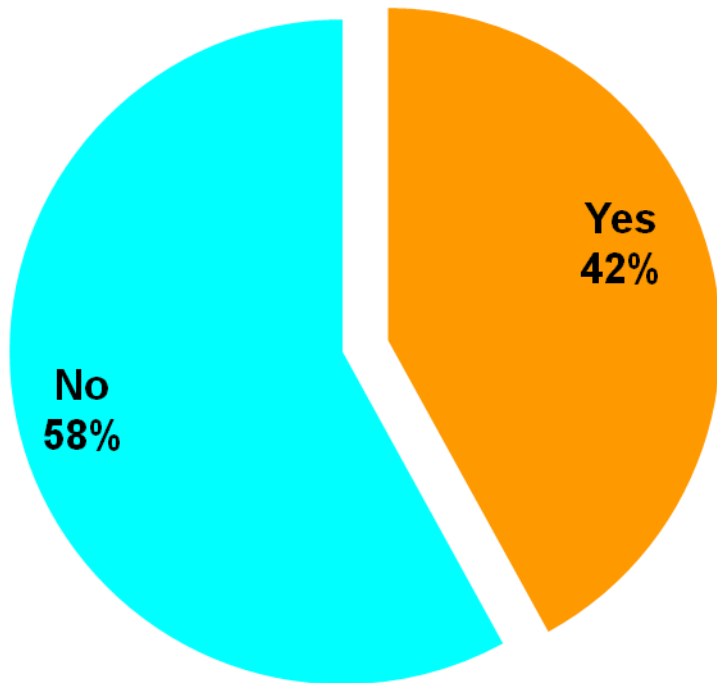
- “Enhancing the experience of the attendee from every aspect... arrival until departure.”
- “**Client experience**. Creation of an environment that promotes all of the communications, i.e., the formal meeting and the spontaneous discussion that happens in the public space.” 
- “Capturing **information related to attendee demographics and event behavior** such as exhibit floor traffic patterns.”
- “**Ideas that can lower costs for our clients** without negatively impacting our bottom line or ideas that create additional revenue sources.”
- “**Diversification of revenue streams** to reduce reliance on event-driven revenue as the sole operating revenue source.”
- “**Economic impact studies**, visitor studies, hotel room night counts and out of block dynamics.”
- “Revenue sharing.” 
- “**Business model**.”

Summary

- Quantifying value
- Enhancing experience
- Costs
- Business models
- New revenue streams

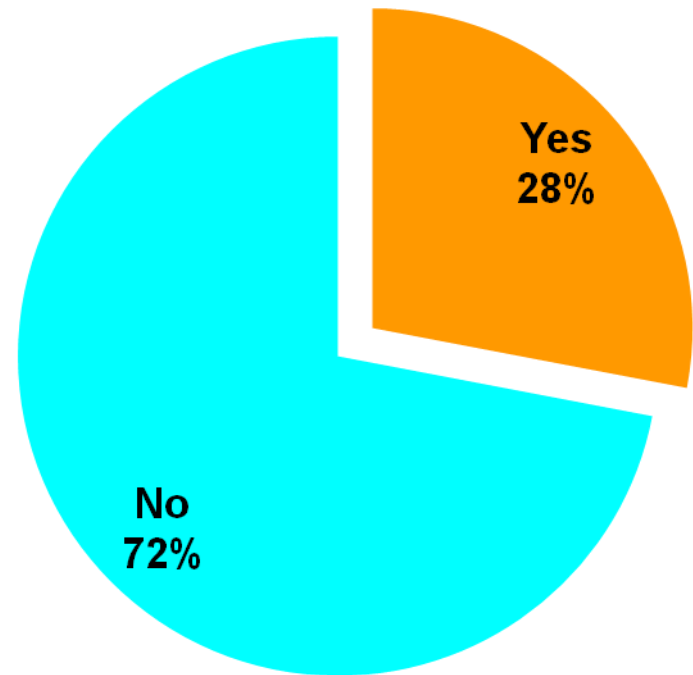
Survey Question: *Do you consider industry innovation today to be mainly technology-based?*

Event Producers



Events are more data-driven.

Venue Managers



Venues are more service focused.

Recommendations: How to Generate Impactful Ideas



- Have a **strategy**.
- Focus on getting the most out of **staff discussions**.
- Ensure you are **asking** the right attendee and exhibitor survey questions.
- Use attendee and exhibitor **advisory boards** for idea feedback.
- Pull together the **full range of internal and external sources** for ideas and data.
- **Attend two or three events in other sectors that have a reputation for innovation.**
- **Prioritize** your ideas and opportunities.
- Less is more – **focus** on implementing your highest priority opportunities.

Recommendations: Implementation



- Have a **detailed but flexible plan** for each new idea and innovation.
- Identify **what success will look like**, and how you will measure success.
- Draft the schedule to implement with key **milestones**.
- Develop a communications plan, internal and external.
- **Assign a project leader**. A team is important but an “innovation owner” is important.

Conclusion

Innovation is most often Incremental.

Event producers say generating new ideas is a little harder than venues.

At major events and venues the *Experience* is Everything.

