



# **APAC 2026** **Event Industry** **Intelligence Report**

Findings from the Listening First 2026 APAC Survey - Asia Pacific

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Prepared for event planners and decision-makers across APAC  
Sponsor: Encore  
Date: 30 January 2026



# Executive Summary

## APAC Event Industry Outlook 2026

Event planners across Asia Pacific enter 2026 with strong confidence and steady demand, even as cost pressure and complexity increase.

Confidence remains high, with the vast majority of planners expecting to maintain or increase event activity this year. Budgets are largely stable rather than expanding, meaning teams are being asked to deliver more impact without proportional funding growth. This is shaping decisions around format, technology, partners and priorities.

In person events continue to dominate across APAC, reflecting the region's earlier return to live experiences and the importance placed on connection, culture and customer engagement. Hybrid is no longer a fallback, but a deliberate strategic tool used selectively for reach, content value and data capture. Virtual-only formats continue to decline, now primarily serving training and education use cases.

The research identifies four distinct event planner personas across the region, from high-volume,

experienced event owners to multi-hat planners managing events alongside other roles. This diversity reinforces a critical APAC reality: many events are planned by non-specialists, increasing the need for clarity, guidance and dependable partners.

Technology adoption is advancing, but unevenly. Over half of planners are already using or experimenting with AI, particularly for content creation, planning support and data analysis. However, skills gaps, integration challenges and uncertainty around ROI are slowing deeper adoption. Measurement practices are improving, but proving value remains an ongoing pressure point for many teams.

There is an evident gap when it comes to putting sustainability into practice. While most planners acknowledge its importance - 75% rate it 4 or more out of 7 on an importance scale - only 14% actually track their carbon footprint, and just 32% work toward formal sustainability targets. Most organisations care about sustainability, but 69%

do not monitor their carbon output, and 44% lack set sustainability objectives. Practical, low-friction steps such as setting targets, simple reporting, energy-efficient production, smarter supplier choices are emerging as the most realistic starting points.

Across regions and roles, what planners want from partners is remarkably consistent: reliability under pressure, faster response times, transparent pricing, strong technical execution and proactive guidance.

The strongest signal in the data is a desire for partners who think ahead and help planners feel confident, not just supported.

## What this means for 2026

- Demand for events is resilient, but success will depend on efficiency and smart design.
- Experience quality matters more than scale.
- Technology and AI are becoming core planning tools, not future considerations.
- Planners value partners who bring insight, not just equipment.

For event planners and suppliers alike, 2026 is less about recovery and more about refinement: delivering confident, high-impact experiences in a tighter, faster, more demanding environment.

## Methodology & Limitations

This report is based on findings from the Listening First 2026 APAC Event Industry Survey, conducted by Encore Event Technologies.

The survey captured responses from 250 event professionals across the Asia-Pacific region, including in-house event teams, agencies, professional conference organisers (PCOs), venues and suppliers. Respondents represented a broad mix of industries, roles and experience levels, reflecting the diverse reality of event planning across APAC.

The survey was conducted online in late 2025 and included a mix of quantitative questions alongside open-text feedback. This combination provides both statistical direction and real-world insight into the challenges, priorities and expectations shaping events in 2026.

### Limitations

As with all industry research, the findings should be interpreted as directional rather than definitive. A proportion of respondents are existing or prospective Encore clients, which may introduce some bias toward professionally produced events. Results are self-reported and reflect individual and organisational perspectives at a specific point in time. Sample sizes within some industries and regions are smaller, so insights for niche sectors should be read with appropriate context.

Despite these limitations, the dataset provides a robust and current snapshot of planner sentiment across APAC, offering meaningful guidance for decision-making as the industry moves into 2026.

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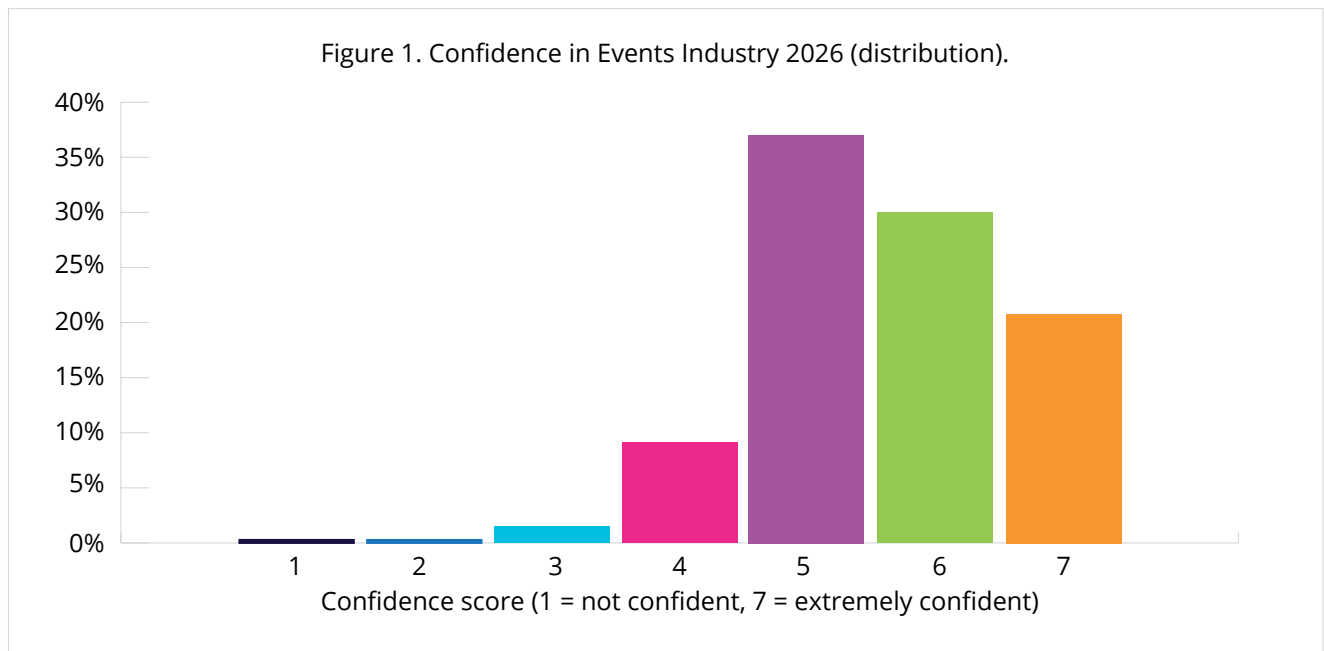
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# The APAC Event Landscape

## Event planners across Asia-Pacific are entering 2026 with confidence, momentum and pressure in equal measure.

Demand for events remains resilient, with most planners expecting to maintain event activity (47.6%) or increase event activity (36.0%) compared to the previous year. Budgets, however, are largely stable rather than growing, reinforcing an industry reality where teams are being asked to deliver greater impact without proportional increases in funding.



### Event formats in 2026

In person events continue to dominate across APAC, reflecting the region's strong preference for live connection, stakeholder engagement and culture-building.

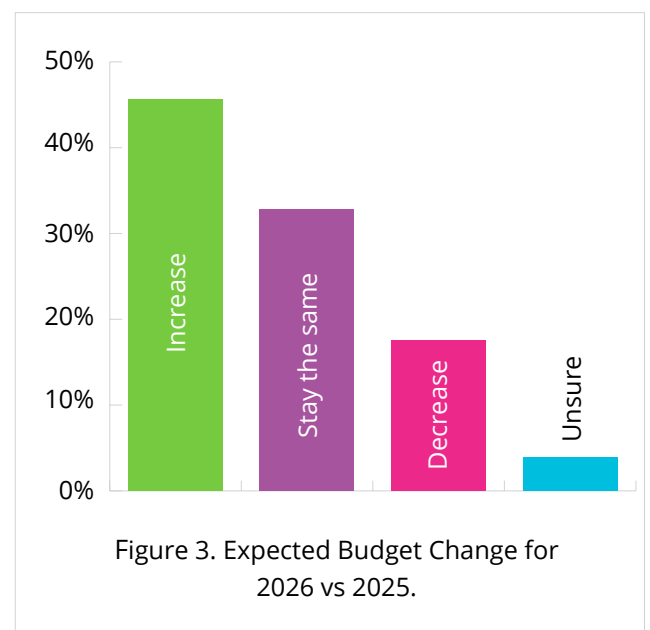
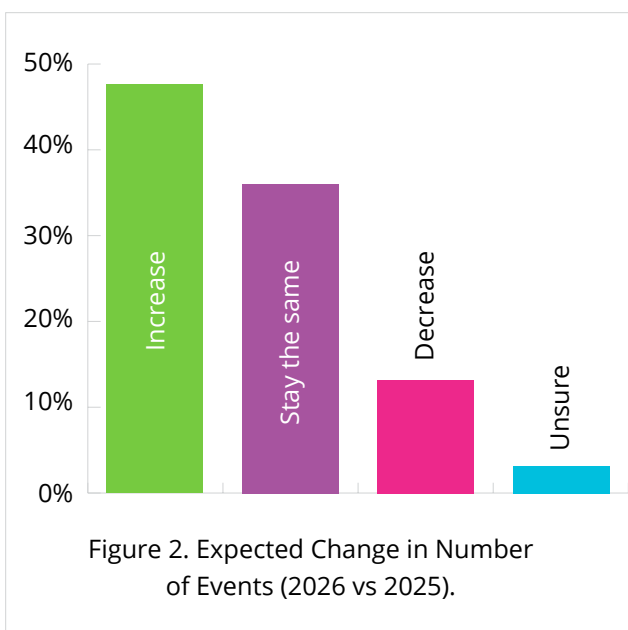
Hybrid events have settled into a deliberate, strategic role, used selectively to extend reach, enable content reuse and support data capture rather than as a fallback solution. Virtual-only formats continue to decline and are now primarily used for training, education and internal communications.

The shift is clear: frequency matters less than quality, and format decisions are increasingly driven by purpose, audience and value.

## Volume and budget pressure

More than four-fifths of planners (83.6%) expect event volumes to remain stable or increase in 2026 compared to the previous year; 47.6% of respondents reported event volumes will stay the same and 36% expect to run more events. At the same time, budgets are more likely to stay flat than expand as expected increases in event volume outstrips expected budget increases (36.0% vs 32.8%), suggesting that cost-efficiency and value-optimisation will be critical themes in 2026.

The analysis highlights a strong emphasis on controlling costs due to tightening budgets. According to the data, 41.2% of respondents are combining events to reduce expenses. For 2026, “Budget optimisation” emerged as the highest priority, followed by enhancing the “Attendee Experience” and driving “Innovation.” Nearly every industry identified “Reducing Budgets” as the main challenge, with “short lead times” and “limited resources” also noted as significant concerns.



This tension is shaping sharper decisions around event design, partner selection and production efficiency. The defining challenge for many teams is not whether events will happen, but how to deliver stronger, more engaging experiences within tighter constraints.



## A diverse planner landscape

Event planning across APAC spans an unusually broad mix of industries and roles. Events are frequently managed by non-specialists alongside marketing, communications, HR or operational responsibilities.

As a result, experience levels, technical confidence and internal support structures vary widely. This diversity increases the need for clear frameworks, dependable delivery and partners who reduce complexity rather than add to it.

## Regional confidence signals

Confidence is strongest in NSW, VIC, QLD and Singapore, where event demand remains robust across multiple industries.

More mixed or constrained conditions are evident in New Zealand, South Australia, Western Australia, the ACT and Fiji, where planners report tighter budgets, resource limitations or uneven demand. Despite these regional differences, the overarching signal remains consistent: events continue to be prioritised and expectations around experience quality continue to rise.

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# Planner Personas



# Planner Personas in APAC

## High-Volume Event Owners

Experienced, strategic planners managing large event portfolios across corporates, associations and government.

Key traits:

- Manage the highest event volumes
- High confidence but constant cost and ROI pressure
- Expect partners to anticipate issues and scale reliably

What they value: Reliability, predictable pricing, strong pre-production, measurable outcomes

Why they matter: They drive the majority of event spend and set expectations for quality across APAC.

## Emerging Multi-Hat Planners

Planners juggling events alongside marketing, HR or operations responsibilities.

Key traits:

- Lower confidence and high workload
- Limited technical knowledge
- Seeking structure and reassurance

What they value: Clear guidance, simple explanations, templates and responsive support

Why they matter: A fast-growing group as organisations decentralise event delivery.

## Hybrid-Forward Strategists

Digitally fluent planners focused on engagement, content and hybrid delivery.

Key traits:

- Comfortable with complexity
- Strong interest in AI, data and personalisation
- Engagement-led mindset

What they value: Innovation, hybrid expertise, analytics and content capability

Why they matter: They influence where event strategy is heading across APAC.

## Specialist Executors

Production-focused professionals responsible for flawless delivery.

Key traits:

- Detail- and process-driven
- Deep technical knowledge
- Low tolerance for risk

What they value: Technical excellence, consistency, fast troubleshooting and disciplined execution

Why they matter: They strongly influence satisfaction and repeat partnership behaviour.



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# Buyer Expectations & Partner Selection

# Buyer Expectations & Partner Selection

## Event planners across APAC are increasingly selective about who they work with.

As expectations rise and resources tighten, partner choice is less about price alone and more about confidence, reliability and the ability to reduce complexity under pressure.

The research shows strong consistency across regions, industries and experience levels in what planners value from event partners.

### What planners expect from partners

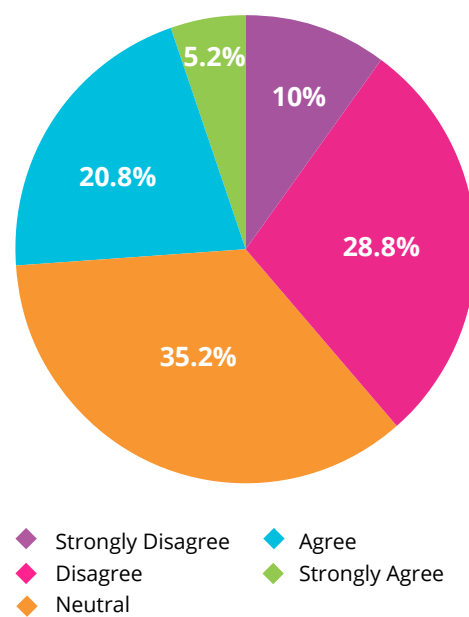
- Reliability and technical excellence, especially under pressure
- Fast response times and clear communication throughout the event lifecycle
- Transparent, predictable pricing with clear options
- Teams that understand the event purpose, not just the technical brief
- Proactive problem solving rather than reactive delivery

### Where planners want improvement

- Faster quoting and turnaround times
- Clearer scoping and fewer last-minute surprises
- Better alignment between creative intent and execution
- More guidance and reassurance for less-experienced planners
- Greater consistency across venues, markets and delivery teams

Figure 1: Planner sentiment on technology, engagement and ROI (Agree / Neutral / Disagree).

"I find it difficult to demonstrate the outcomes of my event (e.g. ROI) to senior leaders"



## Key themes shaping partner selection in 2026

### Confidence under pressure

Planners value partners who bring certainty to complex environments through anticipation, communication and consistent delivery.

### Speed and clarity

Shorter lead times mean planners prioritise suppliers who respond quickly and keep processes simple.

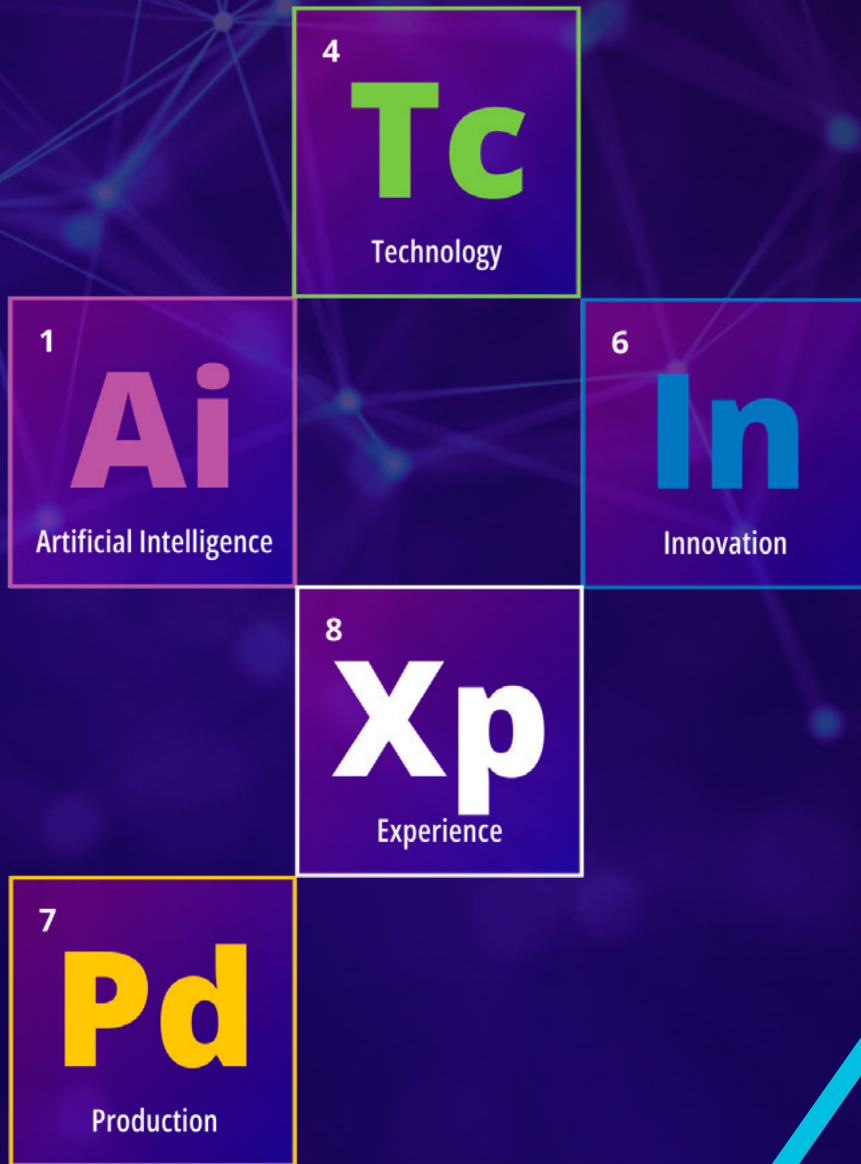
### Partnership mindset

Planners increasingly seek partners who take accountability for outcomes, not just execution.

## What this means for event partners

- Trust and responsiveness are as important as capability
- Reducing complexity is a competitive advantage
- Insight-led partners earn loyalty
- Consistency across markets builds confidence





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# Technology, AI & Measurement Maturity

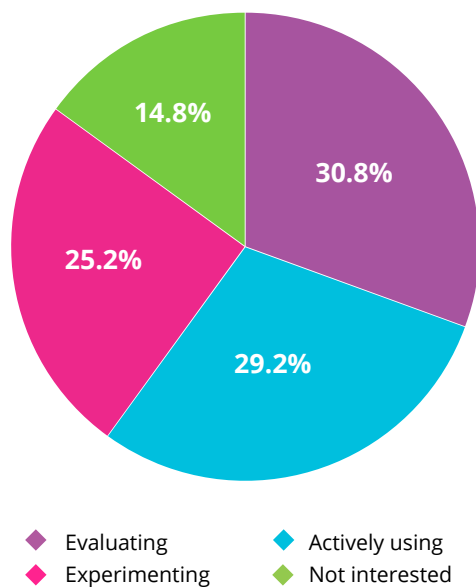
# Technology, AI & Measurement Maturity

Technology adoption across APAC events is moving from experimentation to everyday practice, with AI now playing a growing role in planning, content creation and analysis.

More than half of all respondents (55.2%) reported either actively using or experimenting with AI in their meetings and events. This finding is consistent with a recent PCMA Convening leaders study which said that 62% of meeting planners are using generative AI tools to assist with their jobs. However, adoption remains uneven, and measurement maturity varies significantly across organisations.

The findings highlight a clear opportunity: planners who adopt technology deliberately and with purpose are more confident, more efficient and better positioned to demonstrate value.

Figure 1. AI adoption across event planning workflows (Evaluating, Experimenting, Using, Not interested).



## AI is becoming part of everyday event workflows

- More than half of planners are already using or experimenting with AI tools
- Common use cases include content creation, agenda development, translation and analysis
- AI is most often applied to productivity and time-saving activities

## Barriers to deeper adoption

- Limited training and confidence using AI tools
- Concerns around governance, data and accuracy
- Unclear ROI and integration with existing systems

## Measurement and ROI maturity

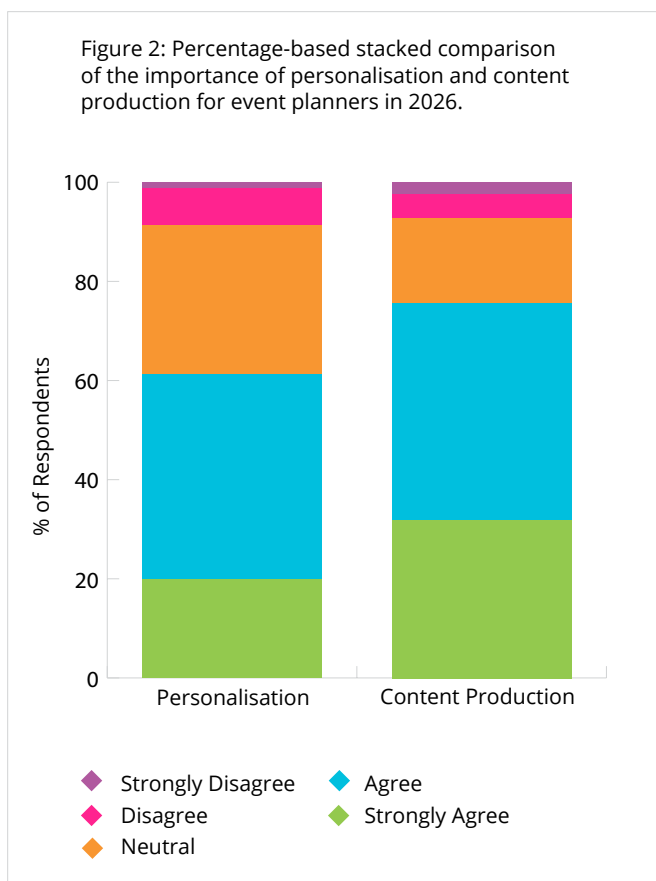
- Measurement practices are improving, but remain inconsistent
- Many planners rely on attendance and satisfaction metrics rather than behavioural data
- Clearer frameworks are needed to link event outcomes to business impact

## The impact of technology on confidence and growth

- Higher AI adoption correlates with higher confidence in delivery
- Planners using technology strategically expect stronger event growth
- Technology acts as both an efficiency enabler and a confidence signal

As AI and technology become more prevalent in events, most planners agree that content production and personalization will be crucial in 2026. According to the data, 61.2% of planners are focusing on personalization this year, while 75.6% believe content production is vital. These findings show that, although personalization matters, content production is a higher priority for event planners.

Figure 2: Percentage-based stacked comparison of the importance of personalisation and content production for event planners in 2026.



## What this means for 2026

- AI will increasingly be a baseline expectation, not a differentiator
- Simple, well-integrated tools will outperform complex systems
- Measurement capability will influence budget and stakeholder trust
- Partners who help planners adopt technology confidently will gain long-term advantage
- Content production and personalization are essential for delivering engaging events; leveraging AI and technology can streamline these processes, ultimately enabling the creation of more impactful and interactive experiences.

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# Sustainability

**A notable gap exists in the implementation of sustainability initiatives.**

- Although a majority of planners acknowledge its significance - 75% rate its importance as 4 or higher on a 7-point scale—only 14% actively measure their carbon footprint, and just 32% pursue formal sustainability targets.
- While most organizations express concern for sustainability, the vast majority (69.2%) do not monitor their carbon emissions and 44% lack established sustainability objectives.
- The fact that most organizations do not evaluate their impact, suggests there's a substantial need and opportunity for education, tools, and services that facilitate carbon measurement.
- Uncertainty persists, with 16.8% unsure whether their organisations have a sustainability targets for 2026; this may reflect inadequate communication regarding sustainability processes or limited operational transparency.
- Some organisations demonstrate intentions toward sustainability but lack defined procedures, often due to insufficient internal communication and operational clarity.

Practical, low-friction steps such as simple reporting, energy-efficient production, smarter supplier choices are emerging as the most realistic starting points.



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# Voice of the Market: What Planners Are Saying



## What Planners Are Saying

Open-text responses from event planners across APAC reveal a clear and consistent set of themes shaping how the industry is approaching 2026. While contexts differ by region and role, the sentiment is remarkably aligned: planners feel capable and confident, but increasingly stretched.

### Confidence, with pressure underneath

Planners across almost all industries consistently describe high confidence in their ability to deliver events – with 91.6% reporting they are optimistic about delivering their schedule of events in 2026. Most industries sit at 90–100% agreement, indicating strong confidence regardless of sector. This confidence and optimism is grounded in experience rather than excess capacity. Many report that confidence has been earned through recent years of disruption, adaptation and constraint.

Representative planner voice:

***“Don’t slow us down - help us move faster with confidence.”***

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### Budget pressure and market constraints

Rising venue costs, production pricing and shorter lead times are recurring sources of frustration. Planners describe making constant trade-offs between ambition and affordability, while still being expected to deliver high-quality experiences.

Representative planner voice:

***“We know what great looks like - the challenge is delivering it within tighter limits.”***

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## Supplier experience matters as much as capability

Feedback highlights that how partners show up is as important as what they deliver. Planners value teams who understand context, communicate clearly and anticipate issues, rather than reacting once problems arise.

Representative planner voice:

***“Quality and reliability are what earn loyalty.”***

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## Clarity, guidance and shared accountability

Many planners - particularly those managing events alongside other roles - express a strong desire for clearer frameworks, better guidance and partners who help them navigate complexity. The need is not for more options, but for clearer direction and shared accountability.

Representative planner voice:

***“Help me understand what I don’t know.”***

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## What this sentiment signals for 2026

Taken together, these voices point to an industry that is confident but cautious, ambitious but constrained. The strongest opportunity for partners lies not in adding complexity, but in reducing it - bringing clarity, certainty and confidence to an increasingly demanding event environment.

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# Practical Actions by Stakeholder Type



## Practical Actions by Stakeholder Type

The research highlights clear, practical opportunities for different stakeholders across the APAC event ecosystem.

While priorities vary, the strongest opportunities sit in improving clarity, efficiency, experience quality and confidence for event planners under increasing pressure.

### Event planners

Focus area	Recommended actions
Event design & formats	Use hybrid intentionally for reach, accessibility and content reuse rather than as a default.
Measurement & ROI	Define success metrics early and use simple, repeatable frameworks to track outcomes.
Technology adoption	Start small with AI for planning, content and reporting before scaling more complex tools.
Supplier collaboration	Align early with partners, share clear briefs and agree roles, timelines and risks.
Sustainability	Embed practical sustainability choices into standard planning rather than treating them as add-ons.

### Venues

Focus area	Recommended actions
Pricing transparency	Provide clear, predictable pricing and outline inclusions and trade-offs upfront.
Hybrid readiness	Ensure reliable connectivity, power, rigging and technical infrastructure as standard.
Speed & clarity	Support faster decision-making through clear availability, options and technical documentation.
Sustainability	Offer simple sustainability switches such as energy-efficient options and waste reduction.

## Agencies

Focus area	Recommended actions
Strategic leadership	Lead with brief framing, experience design and success measurement.
Guidance & structure	Provide templates, checklists and frameworks to support less-experienced planners.
Risk management	Surface risks early and communicate mitigation plans clearly.
Hybrid & content	Prototype experiences and content journeys rather than listing production elements.

## Corporate in-house teams

Focus area	Recommended actions
Goal alignment	Clarify objectives and success measures upfront with internal stakeholders.
Audience experience	Invest in technologies and formats that directly support engagement goals.
AI adoption	Pilot AI tools for summaries, copy, translation and reporting to improve efficiency.
Sustainability governance	Embed sustainability expectations into procurement and partner briefs.

## Production & technology supplier

Focus area	Recommended actions
Reliability & speed	Make responsiveness, technical excellence and delivery consistency visible.
Quoting & options	Quote faster with transparent pricing and clearly articulated options.
Advisory mindset	Provide proactive guidance, walkthroughs and planning support.
Consistency at scale	Standardise execution playbooks to deliver consistent experiences across markets.

## Why this matters

Across all stakeholder groups, the strongest opportunities lie in reducing friction for planners. Those who simplify decision-making, improve clarity and deliver confidence will be best positioned to succeed as event demand remains strong but resources stay constrained



# Concluding remarks

The purpose of this research is to share a clear, data-led view of the event landscape and contribute practical insight to industry conversations. The findings are intended to support planners, partners and stakeholders as events continue to play a critical role in engagement, culture and connection.

As the APAC events industry moves through 2026, one signal is unmistakably clear: demand remains strong, but expectations have never been higher. Event planners across the region enter the year with confidence grounded in experience, not excess capacity - a confidence earned through years of adaptation, constraint and rapid reinvention. Yet beneath this optimism sits mounting pressure: stable budgets against rising

costs, increasing volume without proportional resourcing, and the unrelenting need to deliver exceptional experiences in less time and with fewer margins for error.

Technology and AI are becoming essential tools, with many planners adopting them for efficiency, though challenges like skills gaps and uncertain ROI persist. Partners who can integrate technology and improve measurement are increasingly valued.

Sustainability is important but not yet widely practiced, presenting opportunities for better education and easy-to-use solutions. Planners want partners who simplify processes and share responsibility for outcomes.

Above all, the voices of planners across APAC paint a consistent picture: they are ambitious but stretched, confident yet constrained, deeply committed to delivering exceptional experiences but increasingly reliant on partners who bring clarity, efficiency and assurance. They want partners who reduce complexity - not add to it - and who share accountability for outcomes, not just execution.

Success in 2026 will depend on smart design, meaningful experiences, purposeful tech, and strong partnerships.

As you navigate the fast evolving landscape of 2026, know that your resilience, creativity and commitment continue to shape the future of events across APAC. You're delivering more with less, balancing rising expectations with tightening resources, and still finding ways to create experiences that inspire, connect and move people. That's no small feat.

In a year defined by pressure and possibility, your greatest advantage lies in clarity, collaboration and the confidence to make bold, purposeful decisions. Lean into partners who simplify complexity, bring insights that help you move faster and stand with you when the stakes are high. The path forward isn't about doing everything - it's about doing the right things, thoughtfully and intentionally.

You are the driving force of this industry's momentum. Keep designing with intention, measuring what matters, embracing technology that elevates your craft and championing experiences that leave lasting impact. When you lead with purpose, the entire industry follows.

**Here's to a year of smarter design, stronger partnerships and experiences that resonate long after the lights go down.** Let's shape what exceptional looks like - together.





# About the Sponsor (Encore)

This report is based on the Listening First 2026 study, conducted by Encore Event Technologies (APAC) to better understand the evolving needs, pressures and priorities of event planners across the Asia-Pacific region.

Encore works closely with in-house event teams, agencies, venues and partners across APAC, supporting a wide range of live, hybrid and digital events. These insights are informed by that day-to-day proximity to planners navigating increasing complexity, rising expectations and tighter constraints.

At Encore, we see every event as a chance to create meaningful moments that inspire and unite people. As the events industry grows more complex and fast-paced, our role as a trusted partner is more important than ever. We help APAC event professionals turn ideas into

exceptional experiences with creativity, technical skill, and collaboration.

This year's APAC Event Industry Intelligence Report highlights planners' resilience and adaptability despite tighter budgets and higher expectations. Planners want partners who foresee their needs and simplify the process. Our experienced teams support hybrid strategies, flawless production, and guidance through uncertainty, always focusing on problem-solving and partnership.

The report goes beyond data - it sheds light on the industry's future needs: smarter design, better collaboration, trusted expertise, and tools that streamline planning. As demands increase, Encore remains committed to the APAC events community, helping shape outstanding experiences now and for years to come.

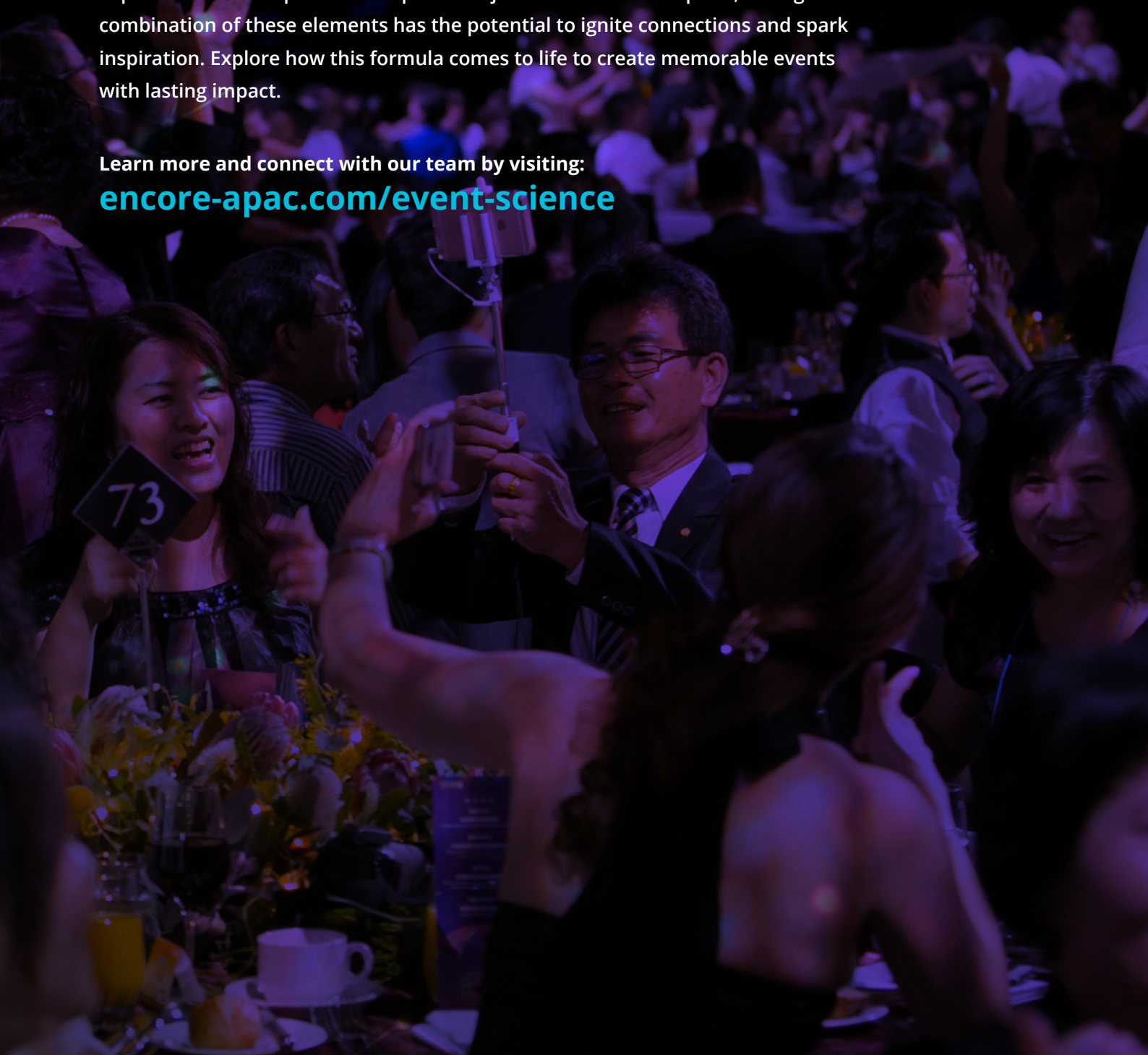
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# The winning formula for successful events

Every successful event starts with the right formula. At Encore, we mix technology, full-service production support, creative design, and custom fabrication to create experiences with exponential impact. Not just the sum of their parts, the right combination of these elements has the potential to ignite connections and spark inspiration. Explore how this formula comes to life to create memorable events with lasting impact.

Learn more and connect with our team by visiting:  
[encore-apac.com/event-science](https://encore-apac.com/event-science)



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