

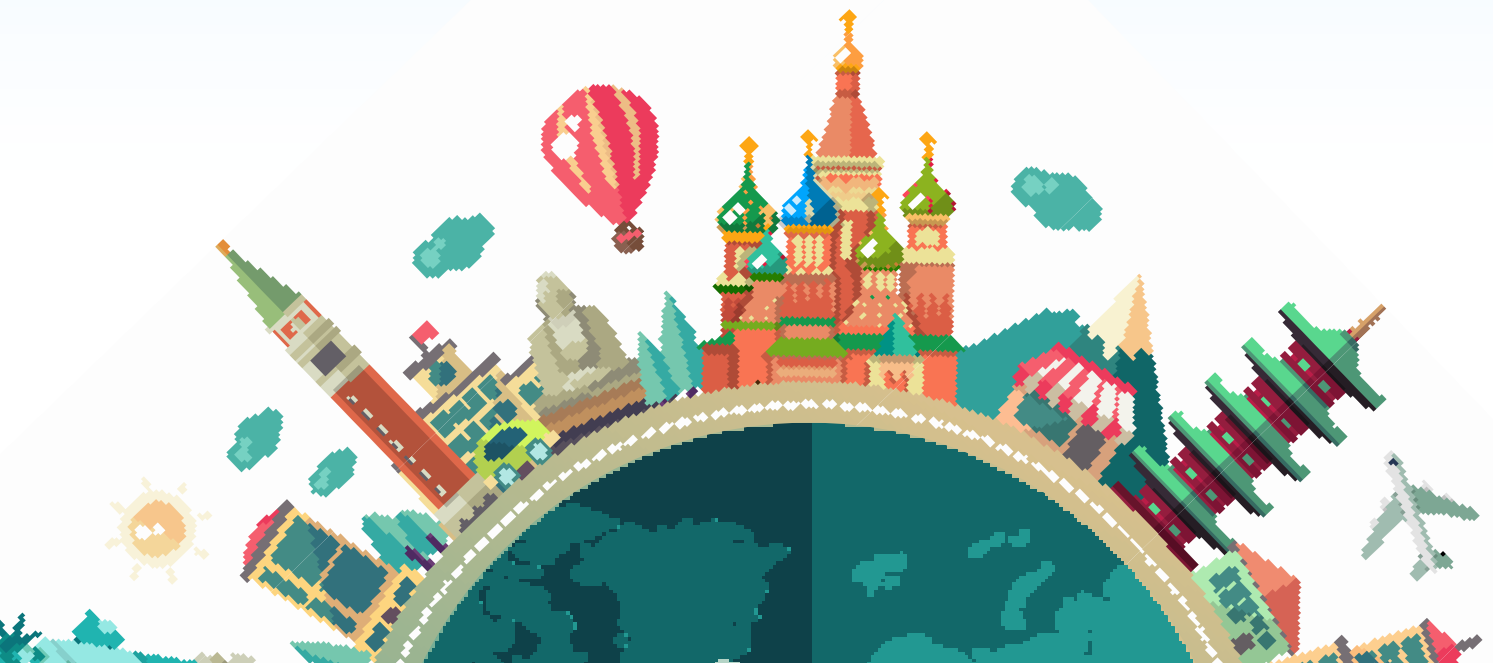


STATE OF THE INDUSTRY AGENCY REPORT 2018

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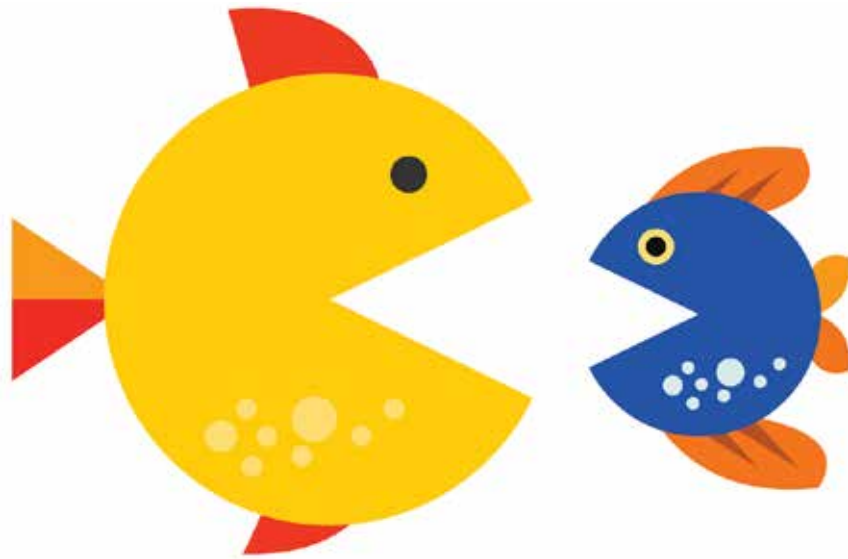


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The impact of M&A activity on the industry

A look at what the large number of acquisitions mean for event agencies.

By Mark Williams

During the past 12 months, industry acquisitions have included: NYS Corporate by Capita, Clive by FIRST, Penguins by drp, HRG and Banks Sadler by American Express GBT, and Grass Roots by BCD Meetings & Events (who also acquired Zibrant the year before).

Addressing these company consolidations, Mark Griffith, Director of Experience, says: “In a parallel to the travel industry, the events sector is seeing larger agencies being swallowed up by even larger global full-service outfits, keen to promise all things to all people.”

There are many different reasons behind these purchases. For some, the acquisitions mean a greater market share within a particular vertical or sector, for others it equates to a wider geographical reach. It was the latter reasoning that was behind the buying of HRG according to Doug Anderson, CEO of American Express GBT, who said in a statement at the time: “The complementary geographical footprints of each company will improve the global scale and reach of our business, enabling us to

achieve efficiencies across a best-in-class platform and accelerate growth.”

Meanwhile, in the case of drp, the acquisition of Penguins has resulted in the company being able to expand its offering to existing clients. CEO Dale Parmenter says: “What really interests us about Penguins is that it is strong in incentive travel. We will keep our clients but offer much more structured and bigger incentive travel programmes using Penguins’ expertise.”

It is clear that for the bigger agencies there are numerous strategic benefits for making the investment. However, Mel Atkins, Managing Director of Ex Events, thinks that the smaller agencies being acquired are selling themselves short: “Most of the smaller companies seem to be hitting brick walls and selling to bigger agencies, albeit for very little.”

But what does all this M&A activity mean for the industry as a whole? It seems opinions are mixed. Toni Griggs, Business Development & Marketing Manager at George P Johnson, focuses on the positives when she says: “It demonstrates growth within the live experience sector. Continued investment is good for our

industry and creates more opportunities for us.”

Elliot Levi, Managing Director of LRI is also in favour of continued M&A activity. “There needs to be consolidation in the industry. There are too many agencies out there fighting for the same work,” he says.

However, Liz Zutshi, Commercial Director of The Turner Agency, has a more balanced viewpoint. She explains: “Mergers and acquisitions can bring wider market access and global benefits. However, industry consolidation may result in less choice for clients and a possible trend towards more transactional relationships.”

This sentiment is further echoed by Tony Monger, Director of SomeBrightSpark, who says: “As with the merger and acquisition of car brands, we are seeing a higher level of homogeneousness in the end products. As larger agencies join forces, so their agility and potential to remain fresh can be in doubt.”

Although, according to Griffith, “this leaves a fantastic opportunity for creative, lean and passionate independents to step up, offering fresh minds and bespoke solutions, without the big fees.

“It’s a shame that a few big players are attempting to monopolise the industry. It’s reminiscent of a Machiavellian scheme to isolate and eradicate smaller competition.”

Richard Harper, Marketing Director of In2Events, disagrees. He argues that these high-profile acquisitions could actually be a bad thing for smaller agencies. “Reducing the number of competitors is not necessarily a bad thing, but it is creating stronger agencies, which will have a knock-on effect on smaller businesses.

“The likes of Zibrant, BCD and drp acquiring Penguins is creating super agencies, which could make it difficult for the rest of us to compete for the larger events.” This fear is shared by emc3’s CEO Alistair Graham, who says: “It’s a shame that a few big players are attempting to monopolise the industry. It’s reminiscent of a Machiavellian scheme to isolate and eradicate smaller competition.

“Ultimately, a monopolised market gives the consumer less freedom and can lead to a lack of imagination and innovation. I for one hope this is a trend that fizzles out sooner rather than later.”

But Jane Dibble, Director of Business at Inntel, doesn’t feel that this will be the case and supports Griffiths’ sentiment. In fact, she believes it gives smaller agencies a competitive advantage when pitching for business, especially when the acquisitions are being made by large Travel Management Companies (TMCs).

She explains: “Our clients make the carefully considered decision to work with us rather than with a large TMC with an M&E division. They feel M&E service levels change dramatically once the agency is acquired and merged with a larger TMC. They feel that their M&E business becomes treated in a transactional manner.”

From a client perspective, Kate Scully, Global Travel Manager for G4S, plays devil’s advocate and says that one of the advantages of using a TMC-events hybrid is that “it is a single throat to choke to manage two categories with a single supplier.”

Nevertheless, more M&A activity may be on the horizon as smaller agencies grow and larger agencies look to hold on to their market share. All the while, the lines between TMCs and event agencies will no doubt become more blurred as both types of business look to expand outside their traditional offering.

“It’s a shame that a few big players are attempting to monopolise the industry. It’s reminiscent of a Machiavellian scheme to isolate and eradicate smaller opposition”



Where is agency business coming from?

The top sectors and event types for revenue in the last year.
By Mark Williams

The UK MICE sector had a strong start to 2018, with meeting bookings up by 10%, according to research by the Meetings Industry Association (mia) published earlier this year.

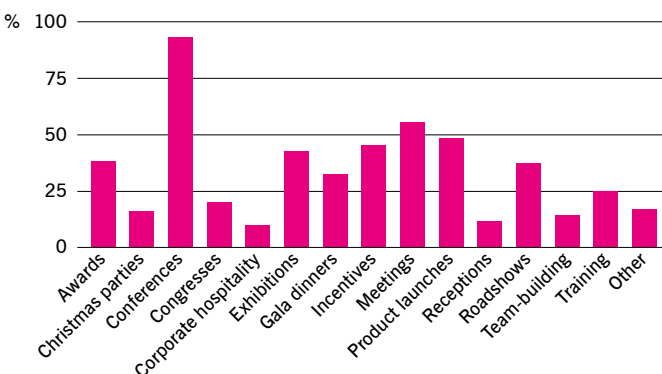
“While confidence and enquiry levels slipped in the immediate post-referendum period, there was a strong recovery in 2017, which has sustained and grown in the first half of 2018,” said Jane Longhurst, Chief Executive of mia.

But how does that translate to the kind of events agency planners have been organising over the past 12 months?

TOP SECTORS FOR TURNOVER

The financial services sector brought in the most business for UK event agencies this year, with nearly 60% of agencies saying it was one of their top three sectors for turnover. This was followed by Automotive (35.7%), IT (35.7%) and Pharmaceutical (34.2%).

Which type of events does most of your business come from?



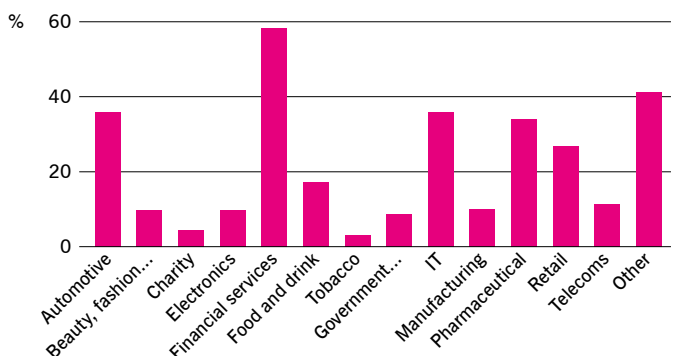
Among the ‘other’ sectors chosen, the most popular were Energy, Law and Media.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the scale, Tobacco and Charity were chosen as top revenue sectors by only 2.9% and 4.3% of agencies, respectively.

MOST POPULAR EVENT TYPES

Conferences are by far and away the most popular type of event in terms revenue generation, with almost all agencies (94.2%) picking them as one of their top five most common event-types. Next up was Meetings, followed by Product Launches, Incentives and Exhibitions. However, Corporate Hospitality, Receptions and Team-building were less popular, all chosen by fewer than 15% of agencies as top event type for bringing in business. Christmas Parties also scored low but have the disadvantage of only being able to happen once a year.

What are your top three sectors in terms of UK turnover?





Top 5 agency challenges

The most pressing concerns for event agencies in the coming year. By Charlotte Flach

Agencies were asked to name the top challenges for their business in the next 12 months as part of the latest State of the Industry: Agency survey.

LAST YEAR'S TOP 5 CHALLENGES WERE:

1. Managing maintaining growth
2. Talent/recruitment
3. Political uncertainty/Brexit
4. ROI/measurement
5. Short lead times

This year's results show that Brexit is now the number one concern for agents, compared to last year when it was third. Meanwhile, talent continues to be the second most pressing issue for another year.

Client budgets, business growth and agency competition make up the rest of this year's top five respectively. All of which indicate a competitive and growing market.

1 BREXIT

As the reality of Brexit inches ever closer, several agencies expressed concern over how it would affect their business. Nick Bender, one of the Touch Board Directors, said: "Uncertainty shrouds Brexit. From our perspective, the unknown outcome in the

short and medium terms is one of the biggest challenges we face when we are trying for top-line growth."

Other concerns highlighted were: "What if a deal can't be reached? How will Brexit affect the currency movement? Will possible border restrictions have a negative effect on Business Tourism?"

Brexit presents a complex issue for agencies, with numerous areas of the business potentially affected. "We are concerned about the possibility of client budgets being cut back, due to MICE activity being categorised as a discretionary spend category," said Bender.

Overall, "all these questions make top-line growth difficult to forecast. The fundamental challenge is that we don't know what is going to happen and therefore we must err on the side of caution," he advised.

2 ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TALENT

Attracting, recruiting and retaining talent at all levels of the business was another challenge faced by survey respondents.

Sue Gill, Director at Your Event Solutions, explained how the poaching of talented staff who had been developed by the agency was frustrating.

"We do have exceptional people, but it can be a challenge when we have taken the time to source talent, trained and invested in them, to then fall victim to event recruitment companies, direct LinkedIn messages and other backdoor approaches to our people.

“We still have the hangover from the recession and subsequent years of austerity, which forced the entire market to do more for less for several years”

Is this what the industry has become?”

However, a strong industry reputation and the ability to spread the word can help with any recruitment issues. “Recently we recruited a senior account manager in our London office through word of mouth on a FAM trip,” said Gill.

3 CLIENT BUDGETS

‘Client budgets’ are the words on everyone’s lips when it comes to event agencies’ biggest headaches. Callum Gill, Head of Insights & Innovation at drp, explained the threefold challenges these present.

“We still have the hangover from the recession and subsequent years of austerity, which has forced the entire market to do more for less for several years,” he said. “While prices from the bottom of the supply chain are increasing, stretching everyone’s budgets.”

Again, Brexit concerns abound when it comes to dedicating precious resources to an events budget. “It’s difficult to dedicate finance to an event strategy that may face upheaval depending on the outcome of the UK’s negotiations,” Gill said.

“And finally, events professionals are being challenged to do new, unusual and exciting things – often driven by technology. If you’re implementing large-scale digital innovations in the live space, there is a price tag, and sometimes it’s difficult to justify the increased budget – despite the need to remain relevant to the ever-growing, tech-savvy audience of millennials.”

4 BUSINESS GROWTH

Charlotte Gentry, Director of Pure Events, spoke about how growing a business, especially a small one, is difficult in such a competitive landscape. “We are endeavouring to grow by 20% year on year, but in 2018 we are seeing a slow-down in the market,” she explained. Once again, Gentry pointed towards Brexit and the uncertainty about the future it creates.

In general, this doesn’t mean a decrease in business, however. “None of our clients are cancelling events. It’s just generally taking people longer to confirm events and the lead times are extremely short. We do expect to have a very fruitful year, but it is tougher than last year,” said Gentry.

5 AGENCY COMPETITION

Competing with a rapidly growing number of other agencies in the market, including larger ones that have increased their M&A activity, means investment in numerous areas of the business is needed to maintain a competitive edge, according to Dan Bardgett, Managing Director at XSEM.

These areas include business development, marketing and creative teams. He says: “We recognise that increased time and investment are needed at pitch stage to make us stand out from the crowd and demonstrate our creativity, not just a safe pair of hands.”

Referrals are also no longer going to cut it. “We have moved from winning the majority of our business through referrals to following a defined and structured sales and marketing strategy within our target markets,” explains Bardgett.



What will Brexit mean for events?

The industry's perception of the ongoing negotiations. By Andrew McCorkell

When asked about the biggest challenge facing agency businesses in the coming year, the most common response was the uncertainty surrounding the dreaded B-word – Brexit.

“We work with large public sector bodies and overseas agencies that are concerned about Brexit,” says Alex Bright, Managing Director of Audience. “While there’s uncertainty, decisions are not being made.”

Bright’s comments were echoed by numerous others, including Steve Gaskin of Right Angle Events, who says his biggest concern is “Brexit and the implications for our European business.”

But every day seems to bring a new development in the UK’s negotiation of Brexit – some good, some bad, some expected, some unexpected. And it is this “lack of clarity over Brexit” and the

“loss of European business as companies move out of London” that are respective concerns for Maurice Fleming-Gale, Managing Director of Shelton Fleming Group, and Sam Robson of The Appointment Group.

OPTIMISM AND AGILITY

And while there appears to be growing uncertainty about what Brexit will mean for the UK and its European neighbours, business leaders in the MICE industry appear equally split over what the future holds. Many say they remain resolute and confident about the robustness of their business strategies, but others have expressed their doubts over the negotiations with Brussels.

The results of the C&IT State of the Industry: Agency survey reveal that more than two thirds (70%) of respondents feel the same about the outcome of Brexit for the industry, compared to

this time last year. Some 13% said they were less or much less optimistic, while 16% said they were more or much more optimistic.

When asked about the impact of Brexit on business, agencies and the MICE sector, Penguins' Managing Director Mark Buist said that whatever the final implications of Brexit were, businesses would continue to trade, despite the uncertainties. "I'd like to say there will be no impact, but clearly that isn't true. I think that the media has a big impact on the perception and, ultimately, on people's confidence.

"Currently we are seeing ups and downs of uncertainty in various sectors, but overall we are seeing strong growth. Ultimately, life goes on and the UK will continue to trade with different markets and therefore we will see areas that grow and areas that decline."

He said that the key to success was to remain as agile to navigate any choppy waters. "We are continually looking at the markets that we serve and look carefully at what sectors will succeed in changing markets. Again this is something that we have always done and continue to do," he added.

"What we don't do is put all our eggs in one market basket or offer a narrow range of services. Be flexible, be bold and be innovative. That's the plan."

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Meanwhile Jack Morton, London Managing Director, Mike Kunheim said that, as an international agency, the company has not felt any impact from Brexit. "Anecdotally, we are aware of the frustrations and challenges some businesses are facing in the context of the Brexit uncertainty in making longer-term strategic,

talent and investment plans in the UK. However, as an international agency with a global outlook and client base, we have yet to feel or see any direct Brexit consequence to our London business.

"The true impact of Brexit will of course not be clear until it actually takes place, but with the way our business is structured, we currently do not feel cause for concern."

CWT Meetings & Events, UK, Ireland & Benelux Managing Director, Paul Stoddart, also benefits from being part of a global business model. "CWT is preparing for all possible outcomes for Brexit, but it's not a critical issue as we are a global company and especially with many of our services becoming increasingly digital. So our overall strategy remains extremely robust whatever the outcomes of Brexit.

"However, we are already seeing the 'Brexit effect' with impacts on travel patterns such as increased business traffic to Frankfurt, Amsterdam and Dublin, away from London, especially London City airport." Nevertheless, he believes there is still business to be done, no matter what the outcome. "When it comes to Brexit in relation to business travel there are obvious concerns such as Open Skies, freedom of movement and visa issues - and bear in mind that tickets are now being sold for departures after Brexit.

"Anything that reduces business people's ability or motivation to move around is bad for business," Stoddart adds.

Nevertheless, Stoddart remains optimistic as a whole: "Despite the outcome of Brexit, we believe business will continue to be done, if not in the UK then elsewhere – people will always travel. The overall sector remains on an upward trend and CWT can see an exciting future with innovations in many areas of technology. The future looks bright."

“Despite the outcome of Brexit, we believe business will continue to be done, if not in the UK then elsewhere – people will always travel”

The challenges of GDPR compliance

A look at the difficulties agencies have faced when trying to comply with the new legislation. By Mark Williams

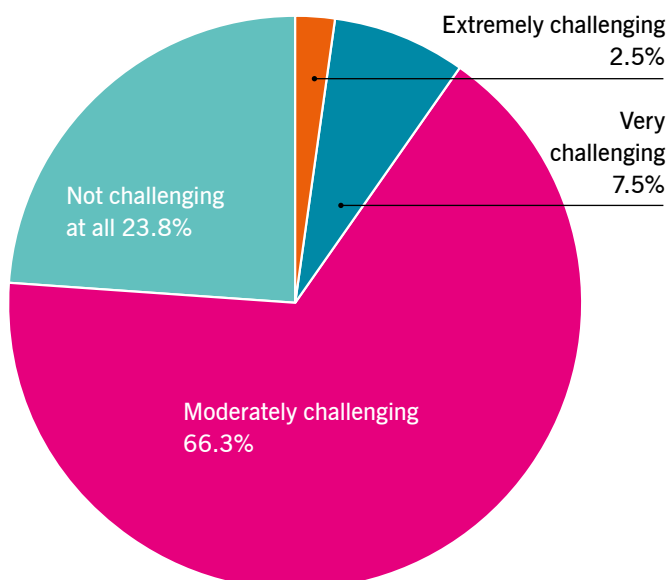
The new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that came into effect in May this year has been widely talked about across Europe. But luckily the majority of agencies (66%) found it only moderately challenging to be GDPR-compliant, while a very relaxed 24% said they didn't find it challenging at all.

Nevertheless, a smaller percentage found complying with the new legislation 'very challenging' (7.5%) or even, in some cases, 'extremely challenging' (2.5%).

One of the greatest difficulties presented by the need for GDPR compliance was the time and effort involved in understanding the new legislation and how it applies to the industry. "The most significant challenge has been the interpretation of the regulations in the events industry," says Emma Waite, Marketing & Communications Manager at Touch Associates.

Sophie Jordan, PR at Chillisauce agrees. She says the agency's biggest GDPR challenge had been "understanding legislation that had not been finalised or put into practice. In particular, being bombarded with lots of conflicting, often contradictory, advice."

"Contacting more than 7,000 contractors and asking them to re-accept the terms of business," was time consuming for Julia Charles, Managing Director of Julia Charles Event Management. She continues: "A client list in MailChimp went from 21,000 to



420 overnight. We had to purchase new IT equipment and we felt that the information came too late."

Making sure clients were aware of the changes and gently encouraging them to also be GDPR-compliant was a challenge for some. Richard Harper, Brand Communications Manager of In2Events, explains: "The biggest change for us is how we handle data from clients in relation to events.

"In the past, it has been on Excel spreadsheets across email, and the challenge has been educating our clients that this isn't the most secure way of sharing data and pushing them to use other methods."

However, the new legislation has had some advantages for those operating within events. Toni Griggs, Business Development & Marketing Manager at George P Johnson, says it has led to some clients viewing them as clued-up, GDPR-compliant data guardians. "We've found a number of clients who previously managed their data in-house requesting that we take on the responsibility, safe in the knowledge that we have the infrastructure and processes in place to manage their data in an efficient and compliant manner."

And then there were some agencies that turned the challenge into an opportunity by using it to improve their processes and their databases. Fiona Geeson, Marketing Communications Manager at Ashfield Meetings & Events says: "We've cleansed our existing database, which has enabled us to retain genuine 'quality' leads rather than 'quantity' and we've created and launched a brand new website, which is already generating leads."

Alex Hewitt, CEO of AOK Events, echoes a similar mentality: "We have used it as an opportunity to improve our processes, clean up our inboxes, rely less on email and properly value information."

Why recruitment is so difficult for agencies

The reasons behind the ongoing challenge of attracting talent in the industry.
By Calum Di Lieto

For two years in a row the second biggest challenge for event agencies has been around talent, according to the annual State of the Industry survey.

John Kelly, Senior Marketing Manager – EMEA at BCD Meetings & Events, says: “Attracting the right calibre of new recruits is a challenge across the industry right now.”

And it seems that agency leaders agree. Mike Leeson, General Manager of Event Travel Management, says: “Recruiting the right people is proving tricky currently.” While Mike Kunheim, Managing Director of Jack Morton, says it’s not just about recruitment: “The biggest challenge we face is to ‘win’ in the attraction, retention and development of the best talent in the industry.”

These results were echoed in a separate survey conducted earlier this year as part of the annual C&IT A-List – the top 35 agency planners under 35. The findings show that 56% of

agencies find it difficult (38%) or very difficult (18%) to recruit young talent.

The diversity of candidates (18%), attracting applicants (13%) and agency competition (11%) were some of the top reasons why recruitment is so difficult for agencies. However, the number one challenge was attributed to a skills shortage, according to nearly half (47%) of respondents.

A recent panel discussion held at C&IT Agency Forum 2018 addressed the issues around recruitment and specifically the skills gap of job applicants that are just starting their careers in event management.

One of the panellists, Rob Roffey, Managing Director of Hampton Medical, believes that there is no shortage of candidates as there is a growing number of people graduating from event management degrees. “However, the event management degree can only teach you the technical aspects of the job.” He says: “Event management is a very personal experience – you’re either an event manager or you’re not. It’s about the attitude that someone brings to the job.”

Ben Cole, Head of Event Development at Inside Track, also sat on the panel and supports this claim: “My experiences of hiring graduates from event management degrees is that the degree gives them a platform for three or four years but it’s very broad.

“You can’t expect them to gain the right level of skills and experience to drop straight into our business and make a difference from day one.”

This may be why a number of agencies are embracing apprenticeships, a practical work-based route for entry-level candidates. David Preston, CEO of Realise (a training company set up specifically to deliver the event assistant training programme), explains that it is “a combination of workplace, online and workshop learning - called blended learning - that has been designed by event professionals for the events industry.”

He goes on to say that it is advantageous for the apprentices, because they don’t accrue the long-term debt that comes with a degree, and for employers because “the apprentices gain skills and knowledge that match the individual employer to enable them to hit the ground running.”

What’s more, he says, it “enables employers to grow their own talent and promote from within. Which is a useful thing to be able to do in this increasingly competitive world.”



What does the future hold for hotel commissions?

As global hotel chains slash their commissions in the US, agency concerns spread worldwide. By Mark Williams

In January 2018, international hotel group Marriott announced it would be cutting the commission it pays to agencies on all hotels in the US and Canada from 10% to 7%. Then, a few months later, Hilton followed suit with an identical cut of its own.

At the time, reactions among event planners were mixed, with some expressing concern that an important revenue source was being hit.

As part of C&IT's survey for the State of the Industry: Agency Report, agency owners and senior event planners were asked what they thought the future held for hotel commission. To which Mel Atkins, Managing Director of Ex Events, responds: "Clients are squeezing budgets and everyone wants to protect their margins. Something will have to give."

However, plenty predict no major changes in the immediate future, such as Alex Morrisroe, Commercial Director of Make Events, who says: "Hotels and venues, more often than not, understand the value agencies offer."

AIRLINE COMPARISONS

Others look to the demise of airline commission payments as a point of comparison. "I think it will go the same way as airlines," says Sue Gill, Managing Director of Your Event Solutions. "Maybe the major buyers will get the commissions and the smaller agencies without the same spending power will get ousted from commissions."

Jane Dibble, Director of Business Development at Inntel, agrees that airline commission is a good indicator of what's to come. "While Marriott remove commissions, their competitors may jump at the opportunity to increase their commissions. However, as we saw in the late 1990s when British Airways first reduced flight commissions, it set the precedent with this and all airlines took away commissions. We are fairly certain this will happen with hotel and venue commissions."

Chris Wells, Head of Events at Gray Dawes Group, says he



hopes it does not go the way of airline commission and that hotels appreciate the value agencies bring. "Complete removal would mean agencies increasing management fees, which will have a negative effect on the end customer."

FULL TRANSPARENCY

Matt Grey, Director of Business Development at INVNT, believes that current commission structures are "opaque and non-transparent," and that their future will "depend on how the agency handles true transparency."

However, Helen Seaman, Managing Director of Rapiergroup, goes one step further to say: "Hotel commissions will become a thing of the past as clients demand full transparency."

And this demand is likely to rise because, as Tony Monger, Director of SomeBrightSpark, puts it: "With the movement of employees between agency and client, this information is not an

industry secret.

“As clients become more aware of the availability of commissions it might be down to properties to genuinely offer the best rate available. It will also be incumbent upon agencies to be more transparent with their fee structures – charging for the time and services that demonstrate fair and best value.”

What’s more, clients are wanting “venue options that are not affected by commission on offer,” according to Liz Zutshi, Commercial Director, The Turner Agency. And so, “it will be ever more important that clients see the value of venue finding as a service and pay a fair market value.”

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

It is also predicted that there will be regional differences when it comes to commission structures. “It’s likely that where the US leads, the UK and Europe will follow, meaning that we will see more resistance from suppliers towards paying commission,” says Alice Tew, Content Manager at ATPi. “Currently in the UK commission is still key for venue-finding agencies, in particular those offering their services for free in return for commission. So there are likely to be negotiations and challenges on any suggested commission cuts.”

However, in regions where the market is more competitive, it is likely commissions will stay intact, according to Kim Collins, Chief

Operating Officer at Venues & Events International. For example, she says: “The Middle East and Far East will still pay standard rates because there is a positive supply-versus-demand advantage for agents in these emerging and growing markets.”

FUTURE FORECAST

The industry is still in the early stages of this new hotel commission journey, with the other large global hotel chains being watched anxiously to see if they will follow suit. Some have remained silent, probably waiting for the results of the two existing case studies, while others, such as Accor – which explicitly said it wouldn’t follow in Marriott’s footsteps when questioned about it at the 2018 Accor Global Meetings Exchange in March – has been more vocal about its intentions.

However, the present impact and future implications may be less tangible than just money, and in fact the real repercussions will be around relationships. As Alistair Graham, CEO of emc3, puts it: “The hotelier-agent relationship has traditionally been a positive one, and this threatens to damage that.”

Lidia Sakarapani, Head of Sales & Marketing at Principal Global Events, expresses a similar concern. “This is certainly creating a lot of tension in the industry between hotels, venues and agencies. It will continue to affect how we work together in the future but will not necessarily be beneficial for all.”

“As clients become more aware of the availability of commissions it might be down to properties to genuinely offer the best rate available. It will also be incumbent upon agencies to be more transparent with their fee structures”



The one key thing corporates want from agencies

Regardless of sector or type of event, corporate event planners want just one thing from their agency partners. By Calum Di Lieto

Over the past year C&IT has been interviewing corporate event planners, asking them what they want from their agency partners and what they believe is best practice for a successful relationship.

Sarah Lawrence, Commercial Planning Manager at Kingfisher, the home improvement company that owns the likes of B&Q and Screwfix, has worked as an event planner on both sides - agency and corporate. She says: "I would certainly advocate anyone in the event industry to work in both fields if given the opportunity, because both experiences offer very different prospects and value for the individual and the business."

Lawrence adds that one of the challenges of being on the corporate side of things is that "you are working in an environment

where events are not the main focus of the business, so you have to have a greater understanding and be prepared to explain event challenges and solutions at a deeper level."

This is a useful insight for agencies to empathise with when working with their clients and is something that is echoed by Victoria Morrison, Head of Field Marketing, Content & Events, EMIA at the communications company Cision, who has also worked on both sides. She says: "The key thing I have learned across both of those roles is just having an understanding of what success looks like for whoever you're working with.

"I've worked with a number of different people in leadership roles from within the business and their objectives are very different at different times. If you can understand what success looks like to them, you can work back to a strategy and a tactic

that's really going to represent what they are looking for from you. And I would say that to any agency; if you can understand what a corporate needs in terms of that it's going to be invaluable to you when building a relationship."

"Relationship is the word," says Karin Weaver, Head of Internal Communications at Virgin Media Business. "In this day and age it's very easy to get hung-up on budget - we always want more for less. With every event we do, the next time we try and do even better and for about half the cost. Therefore, it's about making sure that we have really strong relationships with the agencies that we use so that we can be really creative and produce fantastic events, even if the budget might be a bit less."

And it is having a truly connected relationship that every corporate desires when working with agencies. They don't want a transactional exchange or a one-dimensional partnership. Jane Pettman, Senior Events Manager at Salesforce, says event agencies "are an extension and an expansion of our team."

"We have just a few agencies that we work with and we go through a very rigorous tender process to bring them on board. We want to make sure that we're working with agencies that mirror our values as a company - our culture, our 'ohana', is really important to us at Salesforce so I want to make sure that we're working with event agencies that really understand that and are really showing our values as well with what they are doing."

"But also it's coming to sit in our office and getting the vibe from us, really soaking up that Salesforce atmosphere to make sure they are on board with our objectives and are really invested in the business."

But the key to any relationship is trust. Kate Scully, Group Travel Manager (Global) at G4S, makes this point very clear: "I don't like to be hoodwinked. The worst part of this industry is that it is not transparent enough. I know that everyone has got to make their money, but when it comes to agencies, the lack of transparency can make it look as though they are hiding things."

"I'd much rather have an open and frank conversation where commissions and preferred-supplier relationships are explained up front rather than agencies trying to hoodwink or cover up intentions."

"There are efficiencies in using an agency - their buying power, their negotiation power, their knowledge - but they have to be open and transparent about these things. I don't like smoke and mirrors."

And transparency is becoming even more important in the wake of all the hotel commission changes. As hotels put pressure on agencies by lowering their rates, corporates are becoming more savvy as to how they make their money and are wanting more open and honest conversations about the payments agencies receive.

Joe O'Connell, Director of Events & Client Services at OrangeDoor, gives an agency perspective by saying: "Transparency is a challenging, yet beneficial attribute of an events agency for a number of reasons. For starters, to build and maintain a trustworthy relationship with a client, both honesty and openness are essential from the offset. Like any relationship, whether personal or professional, if it is built on dishonesty and a lack of clarity, it will more than likely fail."

"It's also important to remember that the more transparent you are with your clients, the more transparent they'll become with you. This means that anything deterring a client from staying loyal to your agency will more than likely be mentioned so that you have a chance to resolve it, before the client looks elsewhere."

"I don't like to be hoodwinked. The worst part of this industry is that it is not transparent enough. I know that everyone has got to make money, but when it comes to agencies the lack of transparency can make it look as though they are hiding things"



5 ways event technology is changing

A collection of ways innovation is retiring gimmicks and redesigning the industry.

By Calum Di Lieto

// **T**echnological disruption is probably the biggest game-changer for the MICE industry," says Jeannie Lim, Executive Director, Conventions, Meetings & Incentive Travel, Singapore Tourism Board. "Some, like artificial intelligence [AI], robotics, virtual and augmented reality [VR and AR], have immense potential to radically change the way we work.

"For example, AI could make event management more efficient and strengthen participant engagement. Perfect price differentiation is now possible through data analytics and venues could even dynamically price per square metre sale depending on hall location, customer profile and real-time demand."

However, technology by its very nature is the fastest changing

variable in the world of business - across all sectors. So how can event professionals stay on top and decide what is best for them to adopt? Here are five changes our research has highlighted to be the most important to consider...

1 VIRTUAL REALITY (VR)

For a few years now VR has been dubbed the new piece of event tech. It's the most futuristic in terms of look and feel, and provides a very tangible impression. However, the gimmick has lost its shine according to an expert panel at this year's C&IT Agency Forum.

"If you use VR, you've immediately isolated someone into using a VR headset," says Alexander Bright, MD at Audience. And, he continues: "It's extremely expensive for 500 people."

Rob Brazier, Director at Rapiergroup, agrees and thinks that VR just isn't "exciting any more" and points to the negatives of creating an individual experience. "Everyone knows what it is, but then you can't see your content, so it's alienating your biggest audience really."

However, James Maclay, MD at AOK Events, doesn't dismiss the technology entirely and says: "It's an awesome bit of kit. It's a great way for brands to share content." But he agrees its place is outside of the plenary hall: "It is a one-on-one individual experience; probably not good for a live event but maybe at an exhibition stand if you want to get a key bit of content across."

2 BLOCKCHAIN

Of those that have heard the term 'blockchain', very few can define it. Beyond this, even fewer can foresee its impact on the event industry. However, Maciej Rynarzewski, Chief Product Officer at Geon, is one of the few who ticks both boxes.

He explains the technology using the example of the Yap tribe: "It is said that this Micronesian tribe used a type of blockchain process more than 1,000 years ago. This society used Fei stones as a currency and it was difficult to move them around. So the people of Yap developed a way to record their transactions. When a villager made a trade with someone else, he or she would go to the village center and publicly announce their request and every family in the village checked their own record to add the transaction. Rather than recording it in a centralised way, they distributed the knowledge of Fei stone ownership across all the people of their village.

"The Yap tribe did not have a centralised entity or individual that controlled and stored 'money', but instead they relied on every single family of the tribe to keep track of who owned which stone. This helped avoid errors. If one family made a mistake in their records, the rest of the tribe could check and correct it. This is a perfect example of how blockchains work, but these transactions are validated between computers instead of people."

The same can be said for data in the modern world, according to Rynarzewski. He explains: "Event organisers need to monitor and track data for every occasion they plan, but it typically sits in silos. From event lists on Airtable to attendance in Eventbrite to social media activity on Buzzsumo, it's hard to harness the exchange of data each event generates. With blockchain technology, this data can be used to improve attendee experience such as: registration process, ticketing, accommodation, meet-ups and, most importantly, engagement."

3 FACIAL RECOGNITION

Particularly in the context of large-scale events, where thousands of delegates are pouring into a venue, facial recognition will be a game-changer. Danny Stevens, Founder & CEO of Fielddrive, a company that is at the forefront of implementing the technology at events, says: "Our core focus is always getting people and attendees through as quickly as possible. Some of the events we have already worked on have had to get up to 30,000 into the event within an hour because there were very expensive keynote speakers - you don't want people to be queuing outside. So with every element within the process, wherever we could squeeze off a fraction of a second, we went for it."

And in analysing where time could be saved, Stevens has identified both the problem and the solution. "We have seen that technology is not the 'slow-down factor' - it's not the time it takes

to print a badge, because that takes six seconds. We identified one major element, which is the social contact.

"It's actually the delegates themselves that slow down the process. It could be that they need to check their emails or look for barcodes for their registration while they are at the kiosk. That's where it happens." And it is this very issue that facial recognition can solve, instantly.

4 WEARABLE TECH

Wearable tech that gathers data and has location intelligence capabilities can offer real-time insight, which Chris Elmitt, MD at Crystal Interactive, believes is invaluable for event planners and conference organisers.

However, he argues that too many event planners are still relying on traditional methods to prove the ROI of what is often the largest portion of a marketing budget. "Because of a lack of data, event professionals don't have a seat at the marketing top table," explains Elmitt. "Harnessed correctly, event data will provide them with the ammunition to properly participate in marketing strategy decision-making."

The solution for Elmitt is in wearable technology. These devices can react with their environment, providing a much more detailed picture of delegate behaviour. In fact, he says: "We have reached a point where the data collected is akin to Google Analytics, but for offline events. We can see where people are sticking, how long they are there for and where they are bouncing."

He continues: "The more we know about the attendee, the more we can personalise the experience for them, during the event and after, and continue the cycle of engagement. We can take these deeper insights and feed them back into our marketing strategies, design a far better event, improve the effectiveness of sponsorships and do a much better job of exceeding everyone's expectations."

5 INVESTMENT

But beyond what is present, is the future. And this is something that cannot be known for certain. However, it can be encouraged. So it is the industry's responsibility to encourage innovation wherever possible.

"Over the years, Singapore Tourism Board (STB) has been working with the industry to gear up for technological innovations," says Lim. "For instance, STB co-organised MICE coLAB back in 2014, a hackathon aimed at creating solutions to enhance connectivity and improve visitor experience through technology."

The tourism board also offers a Business Improvement Fund (BIF) Scheme to encourage technology innovation and adoption. Lim says: "For instance, one of our grant recipients, MICEApps by Ace: Daytons Direct (International) Pte Ltd, offers a mobile solution that incorporates innovative technologies that cut across MICE events' value chain to enhance visitor experience and operational efficiencies at both conferences and exhibitions."

It is examples like this that show a clear return for the entire industry. So those organisations in the events industry that can support small technology start-ups to innovate and grow should do all that they can. Lim also highlights another aspect of investment that can often be overlooked: adoption. "STB also offers the Training Industry Professionals in Tourism [TIP-iT] scheme, which supports companies in employee upgrading and talent development to ensure their employees are trained in new and specialised skills, as well as multiskilling in the new environment."



Which destinations are the most popular?

We asked agencies where most of their meetings and events are taking place.

By Charlotte Flach

London was the most used UK destination by far over the past year, with 84% of respondents naming this their top event location for 2017/18.

The most popular destination overseas was Barcelona with 21% of the vote. "Barcelona has always been one of the most popular European destinations for our clients," explained Louise Goalen, head of venues at Top Banana.

"With its rich history, great accessibility and impressive venue offering, we can definitely see why clients keep on returning. The thing about Barcelona is that clients know it works as a meeting and event destination and, as they say, 'if ain't broke, don't fix it'."

Goalen also cited the city's continued investment, especially in terms of hotel refurbishments, meaning a range of stand-out five star properties including W Barcelona, Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos and Sofia Barcelona.

In second place was Germany at 16% of the vote, with half of this business being in Berlin. "Berlin offers a really nice alternative to other European cities such as Paris and Barcelona. It has some seriously impressive hotels that offer a touch of luxury, such as the Ritz Carlton, Grand Hyatt and Hotel Adlon Kempinski, and the city is also home to some really awesome quirky industrial spaces," said Goalen.

“North Africa is still a no-go zone, with the exception of Morocco, which is showing really encouraging signs and incentive enquiries are on the increase”

The USA was in third place, with 9% of agencies naming it their most popular overseas destination. Paris came in at 8%, while Spain and Lisbon were the top locations for 5% of respondents.

Europe in general seems to be very popular, according to Lidia Sakarapani, head of sales and marketing at Principal Global, who listed Greece, France, Portugal and Spain, and the UK as destinations that had been frequently booked. In addition to this, Sakarapani said: “This past couple of years we have seen a lot of interest for Scotland, which is worth noting.”

EMERGING DESTINATIONS FOR 2018/19

Asian destinations including China, Tokyo, Thailand, Beijing and Taipei were named by 13% of respondents as places where new bookings had been made for 2019 and beyond.

David Heron, head of agency at Black Tomato, commented that he had seen new bookings in Nepal and Japan. In particular “Japan has increased in profile due to upcoming global events such as the Rugby World Cup and the 2020 Olympics,” he said.

Numerous eastern European locations were cited by 9% of agencies, including Tallinn, Serbia and Croatia.

Other locations mentioned included Scandinavian countries and the UAE. Jennifer Davidson, director at Sleek Events, explained: “I think people are drawn to growing markets, those enjoying large investment in luxury and/or environmentally-friendly infrastructure.”

Second-tier cities and less obvious locations are also seeing an upturn. “People still want value for money, making them open to locations outside of those normally seen as the favourite. For example, Barcelona used to be the Spanish favourite for incentive travel but now they are turning to Madrid or smaller coastal towns,” added Davidson.

DESTINATIONS IN DECLINE

Interestingly, the majority (43%) said they had not noticed a decline in any specific destinations.

However, Turkey was named by 17% of respondents as a destination for which demand is declining. According to Sakarapani, Turkey is suffering because “clients have been deterred for a long time by the political unrest.”

Istanbul, which enjoyed popularity previously due to its location, infrastructure and venues, is seeing a downturn, said Goalen. “Due to the ongoing security issues, we have definitely seen a decline in demand and Istanbul is no longer a destination our clients are selecting for their international meeting and events.”

North Africa and Paris were also identified in the survey as destinations with declining interest, by 12% and 5% respectively. This is mainly for security reasons.

“North Africa is still a no-go zone, with the exception of Morocco, which is showing really encouraging signs and incentive enquiries are on the increase,” explained David Heron.

Perceived risk as well as actual terror attack risks play a part in destination popularity, explained Natalie Allen, client services manager at Small Planet Group. This meant Paris has seen a decline. “Although this is not an immediate threat at the moment, the history and perception of the risk means others destinations are considered first,” she said.

Political tensions have also seen bookings with Russia remain low. “Despite the effect of the World Cup, Russia does not seem to be showing signs of increased activity because political tensions still affect popular opinions,” said Heron.

How events in Europe compare with the UK

A look at the latest industry trends and comparisons from mainland Europe.

By Mark Williams

To get an idea of what the MICE market is looking like for event planners on the continent, C&IT interviewed Marie Coupteau, Country Director at BCD Meetings & Events France, to get a French perspective, and Alex James, Senior Director EMEA at BCD Meetings & Events, for the latest on Germany.

What industry trends are you currently noticing?

Coupteau: The market is a lot more stable than last year. The uncertainty last year meant that clients were getting multiple agencies to pitch for the same piece of work to ensure their spend went further, and it's not a surprise that this trend is continuing. On a smaller scale we're seeing more outbound business on our books, which is great because we can tap into the local expertise provided from offices in those countries.

James: For events, digital content is still the key. We need to create and distribute content that aims to create impact, stimulate discussions, spread knowledge and evoke emotional retention. At the end, it's all about turning an amazing experience into an even more amazing memory.

And what changes have you noticed compared with last year?

James: The choice of destinations for events has changed. Last year was difficult for a number of reasons and the political situation in some countries was fragile, making clients feel insecure about where to travel. 2018 has definitely felt safer and more stable, and we're seeing an increase in incentive trips. Excitingly, clients are being more daring and willing to travel to less common countries like Rwanda or Zambia.

What are the main differences between your countries and the UK?

Coupteau: In France we probably see a

greater focus on meetings that include elements of teambuilding or incentives. We're also finding clients are not just asking for venue sourcing but also for global logistics management.

Furthermore, The French government focuses on the promotion of tourism and works on tax reductions. Agencies can recover VAT on certain services and also promote this for their clients, which of course helps a lot.

James: The main difference is the size of Germany – it can take a lot longer to travel between cities, which means that physical venue research is more complex and time-consuming than perhaps it would be in the UK.

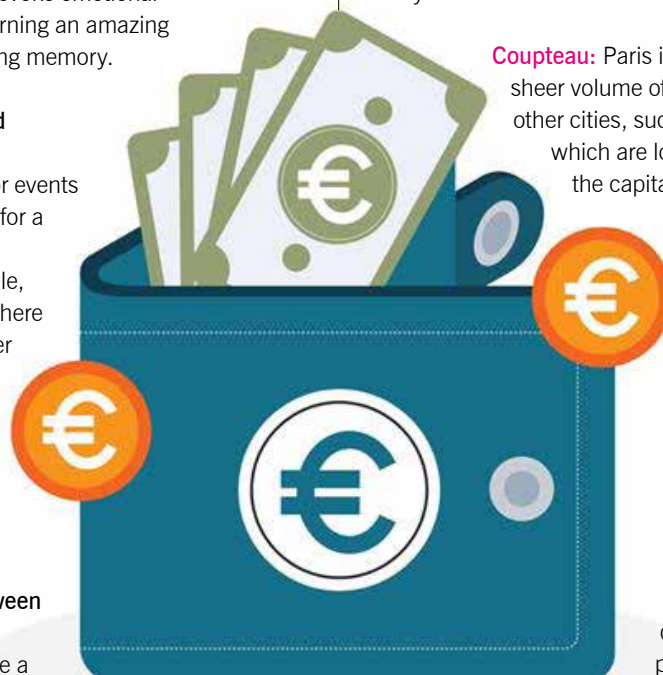
Aside from the obvious cities, which local destinations are becoming popular for MICE business?

James: Though it remains far less well known or understood by outsiders than some of its neighbours, since reunification Germany has at last gained a higher profile as a place to visit. Cities such as Leipzig, Hamburg or Heidelberg are on the fast track to becoming key destinations.

Coupteau: Paris is one of the most important cities for sheer volume of events in France, but there are also other cities, such as Lyon, Cannes and Marseille, which are located just three hours by train from the capital. Bordeaux has also increased in MICE business thanks to the TGV train and very high quality hotels.

What's your view of Brexit and its impact on the UK as a destination?

Coupteau: It's too early to do any solid analysis, but we're keeping an eye on the situation and speaking regularly with our teams across mainland Europe and the UK to ensure we're in a good position. From a French perspective, a lot will depend on the impact of costs and paperwork to bring groups to the UK.



How events in America compare with the UK

Brand names, contracts and security are on US planners' agendas, while trends include experiences and farm-to-table food. By Charlotte Flach



US event agencies and UK event agencies with US offices were asked to comment on trends across the North American market.

The events market in the US differs from that of the UK and Europe in numerous ways. In general the scale of events tends to be much larger than in the UK or Europe, with a love of brand-name hotels such as the Hilton rather than independent or boutique properties.

Americans are also big on contracts, which can cause friction when working with European hotels or venues, particularly as it is informed by a more litigious culture.

CONSUMER TRENDS

There is an increased awareness and desire to respond to how general consumer trends are feeding into elements of the events industry. This comes in the form of companies putting the customer first. Clients “expect the same level of responsiveness as a consumer,” explains a business development manager at Enterprise Events. “So as a provider we need to do things faster and better quality.”

Companies such as Amazon and Uber have reset consumer expectations, which has bled into the events and meeting spheres. There is an increasing expectation that things have to be instant and digitally available.

There is also an increasing importance to look at general consumer trends and translate them into what that means for the events industry. “People are just exposed to more things now and brands can no longer not look at opportunities to engage with them,” explained a VP at Jack Morton US. “You need to think of even B2B delegates as consumers – people are much more likely to disengage or not attend if they are bored.”

LIFESTYLES

There is increased demand for attendees' lifestyles to be incorporated into events and any activities surrounding them. This is most obviously seen in the specific dietary requirements (eg vegan, gluten-free) that clients expect to be catered for, but also spans wellness, social justice, environmental or ethical concerns.

“More and more delegates are requesting vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, paleo, food allergies and other dietary needs,” said the president of Pacific World.

The ‘farm-to-table’ food movement has been largely adopted by the industry and this type of thinking is spilling into other areas of events - authenticity, experiences and relevance.

The business development manager at Enterprise Events Group highlighted the idea of “community impact” in how customers approach events. “Looking at our customers, they are looking to do something for the community. If you host a conference for thousands of people in Sydney, you want to be able to talk about how that supports the community.”

MEASUREMENT

ROI continues to be a concern for both UK and European planners as well as our counterparts across the pond. Live events are always more expensive and less measurable than digital efforts, so trying to measure effectiveness is a key focus.

“Unless you are conscientious in setting up measurements for an event, you can end up with no data on how that event went to use afterwards,” said the Group Strategy Director for Jack Morton.

Most CMOs are under budgetary constraints and, even though they know events are effective, they are under huge pressure to prove measurement and predictive measures.

“That thinking needs to be applied across both operations and creative,” said an SVP at George P. Johnson. “We need to adopt agile methods and design thinking.”

EXPERIENCES

With business travel taking its cues from leisure, and the idea of transformational travel gaining traction, there is a move away from plain meeting rooms or off-the-shelf packages.

As consumers become more demanding in terms of experiences, corporate clients are following suit. The US market is seeing a move from a location sell – for example, ‘Visit Paris’ – to an experience sell, such as ‘learn to cook with famous chef’ or ‘swim with elephants’.

“One of the key challenges is creating experiences, and that cultural relevance has spilled over into the B2B market. After all we are all humans, and what we are looking for is global human relevance,” said an SVP at George P Johnson.

(The names of people quoted in this article have been left out to comply with US data-protection laws.)

“More and more delegates are requesting vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, paleo, food allergies and other dietary needs”



Top 50 UK event agencies of 2018

The UK agency rankings by event-based turnover for 2018 have been revealed in the annual C&IT Top 50 listing. By Mark Williams

The annual C&IT Top 50 ranks UK agencies by event-based turnover. While the table also provides information on overall annual turnover and pre-tax profit, the list is ranked by event-based turnover to eliminate any other means of income when creating the Top 50. It also means that those agencies with higher staff costs aren't penalised for having smaller profits than their peers. Jack Morton Worldwide remain top, but this year's top five has had a bit of a reshuffle since 2017. New entrant George P

Johnson come in at number two, Banks Sadler is down two places to fourth and BCD M&E (including Grass Roots) rises from seventh to fifth.

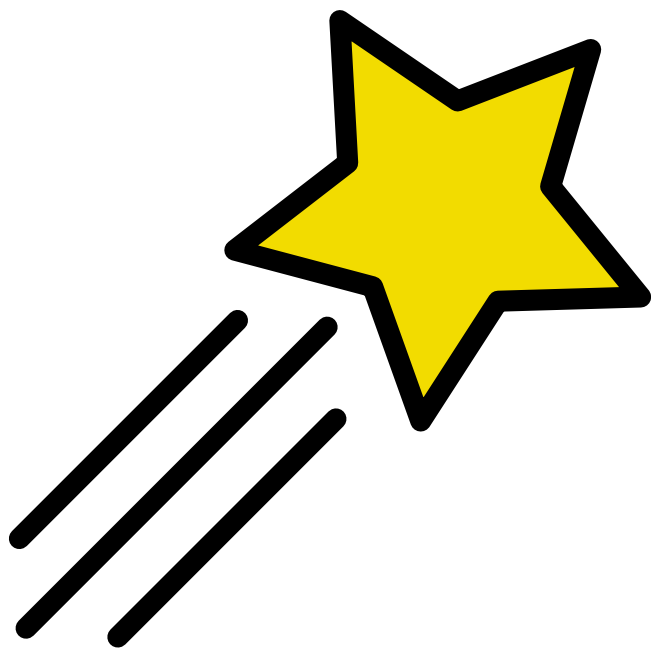
Other new entries into the top 50 this year include Clarity at 10, Your Event Solutions (YES) at 22 and Shelton Fleming Group at 26.

However, this list of agencies isn't the only one C&IT will be publishing this year. For the first time, C&IT will be recognising The Top Challenger Agencies - those that didn't quite make the Top 50 but may well be the ones to watch in the future.

Rank	Agency	Event-based turnover for most recent financial year in £m	Overall annual turnover for most recent financial year in £m	UK pre-tax profit for the most recent financial year in £m	Date of financial year end	UK staff
1	Jack Morton Worldwide	70*	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Dec 17	72
2	George P. Johnson	53*	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Dec 17	108
3	CWT Meetings & Events	51.3	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Dec 17	92
4	Banks Sadler	36.4	36.4	Undisclosed	Dec 17	257
5	BCD Meetings & Events (inc. Grass Roots M&E UK)	32.3	32.3	4.5	Dec 17	350
6	Touch Associates	30	37	2.5	Dec 17	98
7	Smyle	28	28	2	Mar 18	75
8	Ashfield Meetings & Events and SPARK THINKING	27.5	61.8	1.7	Sep 17	200
9	Inntel Ltd	23.5	£75	0.7	May 18	145
10	Clarity	21.9	433.5	2.4	Dec 17	542
11	Chillisauce	21.3	21.3	0.4	Oct 17	74
12	TBA	21.2	21.2	Undisclosed	Dec 17	42
13	The fresh Group	17.4	18.2	Undisclosed	Dec 17	77
14	ATPI	17.3	335	Undisclosed	Dec 17	320
15	cievents	16.7	16.6	Undisclosed	Jun 18	30
16	Rapiergroup	15.6	15.6	0.8	Dec 17	56
17	Fisher Productions Holdings	15.5	15.5	Undisclosed	Dec 17	115
18	drp	15.3	21.3	1	Dec 17	249
19	BI WORLDWIDE	14.6	55.1	3.2	Jun 18	217
20	FIRST	11.6	11.6	0.6	Sep 17	77
21	Clive	11.1	11.1	0.8	Feb 17	45
22	YES (Your Event Solutions)	10.8	10.8	1.3	Mar 17	24
23	Taylor Bennett Partners	10.42	10.44	0.6	Mar 17	17
24	Event Travel Management	10.4	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Jun 17	25
25	Gray Dawes Group	9.6	101	Undisclosed	Mar-18	171
26	Shelton Fleming Group	9	9	0.5	Dec 17	30
=27	Production Bureau	8.8	8.8	Undisclosed	Dec 17	75
=27	The Appointment Group	8.8	89	Undisclosed	Dec 17	190
29	AOK Events	8.3	8.3	0.3	Dec 17	38
30	arrangeMY	8	20	0.6	Mar 17	50
31	First Event	7.3	7.3	0.3	Jul 17	26
32	TTA (The Turner Agency)	7	7	0.4	Mar 17	30
33	C2events	6.9	6.9	Undisclosed	Dec 17	21
34	Sleek Events	6.6	6.6	1	Jul 17	4
35	Principal. Global Events	6.4	6.4	0.8	Dec 17	20
=36	Small Planet Group	6.3	7.8	0.6	Sep 17	35
=36	Worldspan	6.3	6.3	0.2	Jun 17	38
38	Firebird Events	6.1	6.1	0.7	Jun 17	21
39	Top Banana	6	7.2	0.4	Mar 17	53
40	Collider	5.2	8.6	0.3	Jun 17	45
41	emc3	5.1	5.1	0.3	Mar 17	31
42	In2Events	4.9	4.9	Undisclosed	Apr 17	18
43	XSEM	4.5	4.5	Undisclosed	Dec 17	25
44	Corporate Events	4.3	4.3	0.25	Dec 17	45
45	Absolute Corporate Events	3.9	9	0.23	Dec 17	20
46	Global Event Services	3.7	4.1	Undisclosed	Dec 17	8
=47	SLEDGE	3.6	3.6	Undisclosed	Dec 17	14
=47	Aspect	3.6	3.6	0.26	Apr 17	13
49	Make Events	3.52	3.52		Mar 17	12
50	Cheerful Twentyfirst	3.5	4.2	0.24	Jun 17	18

* = C&I estimate due to Sarbanes Oxley Act

Top challenger UK event agencies of 2018



The event agencies that didn't quite make the Top 50 but are rising stars to watch out for.

By Mark Williams

As well as the Top 50 agencies ranked by event-based turnover, we have a list of 'challenger' agencies that didn't quite make the 50. There are some new names this year, including sibling-owned Julia Charles Event Management, which we profiled earlier this year, and Hyphen, which rebranded from Bee in January. The challengers in the table below are listed alphabetically.

Agency	Event-based turnover for most recent financial year in £m	Overall annual turnover for most recent financial year in £m	UK pre-tax profit for the most recent financial year in £m	Date of financial year end	UK staff
Audience	1.4	1.9	0.1	Dec 17	12
ClinkClink	1.9	1.9	0.3	Jan 19	8
Conference Care	2.9	2.9	0.9	Mar 17	52
Ex Events	2.1	2.1	0.08	Dec 17	9
Experience	2.3	2.3	0.46	Dec 17	10
Hyphen (Part of Cosine Group)	2.8	13.9	Undisclosed	Dec 18	5
INVNT	2	2	0.2	Dec 17	3
Julia Charles Event Management	0.98	0.98	0.06	Apr 17	12
LRI	1.5	1.8	0.07	Dec 17	4
Matter XP	1.5	1.5	0.46	Feb 17	8
Pure Event Management & Hospitality	3.2	3.2	0.2	Nov 17	12
Rockitfish	1.2	1.6	0.15	Dec 17	11
Seven Events	2.5	3.5	0.4	Nov 17	12
SOMEBRIGHTSPARK	1.1	1.5	0.35	Nov 17	15
The Outlook Creative Group	3.1	5.3	0.6	Mar 17	49
Venues and Events International	1.2	3.3	0.01	Mar 17	21