

THE FUTURE NORMAL OF THE MEETINGS & EVENTS INDUSTRY

Data & Insight Report

Co-created live with 80 ideas | IMEX Frankfurt | May 2026

Prompt: "Sketch the AI tool or solution you wish existed."

Theme	% of Ideas	Strategic Significance
Concept-to-Delivery Orchestration	28.7%	The whole planning pipeline as one keystroke — concept becomes execution without the inbox.
Attendee Matchmaking & Networking	20.0%	The wrong handshake is the silent cost of every event — AI gets to the right one first.
Vendor Sourcing & Procurement	16.2%	RFPs in seconds, not days — and the rate negotiation never sleeps.
Post-Event Lead Capture & Follow-Up	15.0%	Bridge the canyon between 'event energy' and 'next-day execution.'
Live Audience Engagement & Sentiment	13.8%	The room becomes a sensor — speakers get a live dashboard, not a post-event survey.
Personalized Attendee Journey	12.5%	One agenda per attendee — wayfinding, sessions, hotel, all at the elbow.
Safety, Security & Compliance	8.8%	Risk shifts left — from incident response to predictive prevention and privacy-by-default.
Borderless Access & Translation	7.5%	The hallway track goes global — every conversation, every language, every venue.
RSVP & No-Show Intelligence	5.0%	End the empty seat — attendance becomes a forecast, not a hope.
Spatial Design & Crowd Flow	3.8%	Floor plans get smart — sightlines, queues, and pinch points solved by sensors.

Total coverage exceeds 100% — most ideas spanned multiple themes, reflecting the integrated, systems-level thinking of participants.

What the data is telling us

The pipeline is the product.

The biggest cluster in the Frankfurt room — **28.7%** — wasn't about a single feature. It was about collapsing the entire planning chain into one orchestration layer. ConceptCore, ConceptFlow, CharterCore, EventRapid, EventEngine, EventSphere, EventBlueprint, VentureFlow, GuestQuest. Read together, these aren't separate products — they're the same product, drawn nine different ways. The room is implicitly redefining the event planner's role: from chief logistician to chief orchestrator, with AI doing the work in between.

Matchmaking is the unsolved problem of every event.

20% of the room sketched some variation of "help me find the right person." Synapse, Cultra, SynchroMesh, SynapseConnect, EchoWave, NexusLink, BrewNetwork, EventNexus. The detail that matters: nearly half explicitly rejected the LinkedIn model. They didn't want to match by job title. They wanted to match by ambition, by project, by what someone is trying to build. The "dating app for ideas, not designations" pattern showed up three independent times in the dataset. That's not a coincidence — it's an industry telling itself what the next evolution of networking should look like.

The "hallway track" wants to be measurable.

Two themes that look unrelated — Post-Event Follow-Up (**15.0%**) and Live Engagement (**13.8%**) — are actually the same wish from different timestamps. Both are about catching the value that today silently leaks out of every event. EchoAction captures the verbal commitment in the moment. FairRecall salvages the business cards on the train home. VibePulse measures whether the room is "loving it" while the speaker is still on stage. SyncSense ranks the day's meetings before anyone has slept on them. The implication: event ROI is shifting from gut-feel debrief to instrumented signal — and the AI tools to make it instrumented are now within reach.

Procurement wants to be on the inside lane.

16.2% of submissions imagined collapsing the RFP, the contract, the rate negotiation, the rooming list. EventRapid asks for "quotations in seconds." ContractStay automates rate negotiation with hotel reps. StayGenie runs room blocks 24/7. LucidOps tackles flight disruption maps and budget authorizations. The pattern: the parts of event planning that are most procedural — vendor selection, contracts, hotel logistics, finance approvals — are the parts the room wants AI to take first. Not because they're glamorous. Because they're where the planner's calendar bleeds.

The next evolution of networking is title-blind.

Three of the most distinctive ideas in the dataset — Synapse, Cultra, and SynchroMesh — explicitly attacked the same assumption: that professional value can be inferred from a job title. Each proposed matching by "creative DNA," "shared frequencies," or "ambition and projects" instead. Read alongside the 8.8% who imagined badge-free recognition (SynapseID) and the privacy-conscious anonymization stack of SafePulse, the room is sketching the post-badge, post-title future of professional gatherings. It's a quiet but real challenge to how IMEX itself has historically worked.

Tensions worth sitting with

One platform vs. one agent per job.

28.7% of the room sketched a unified orchestration layer — "all the info I need for my event in one place."

16.2% imagined a specialist procurement agent. **15.0%** imagined a specialist follow-up agent. **13.8%** imagined a specialist live-engagement agent. Which model wins in 2026 — the all-in-one event ERP, or the modular stack of specialist agents talking to each other? The room hasn't decided, and the answer changes who you buy from — and who buys you.

The badge vs. the algorithm.

SynapseID wants to abolish badges entirely. OmniSight wants to layer facial recognition over the room. SynchroMesh and Cultra want algorithmic matching based on "ambition" rather than identity. The room is asking AI to do something every event has always done — figure out who's here and who they should meet — but with no clear answer to the privacy trade-off. SafePulse is the only submission that explicitly raises this; it's also the only one with anonymization at the architecture level. The design question: what does ambient recognition look like when it's not creepy?

Generative front-end vs. invisible back-end.

Two halves of the room are pulling in opposite directions. One half wants the attendee experience to become more generative — live sentiment heatmaps, real-time content adaptation, on-demand session summaries, custom agendas at the elbow. The other half wants the operational work behind the experience to disappear — RFPs in seconds, no-shows forecasted, contracts auto-negotiated, layouts auto-generated. Both bets are valid. They sit in different budgets, answer to different buyers, and prove out on different metrics. If you only have one AI investment in 2026, which side of the curtain do you fund first?

For the audience in the room — 3 provocations to take home:

What's your "one platform" bet?

Nearly 29% of the room is imagining a single orchestration layer that replaces the spreadsheet, the inbox, the Slack channel, the vendor portal. If you're a venue, a DMC, or a corporate planning team — what would it cost you to be the platform of record? And what would it cost to be just one of the tools inside someone else's?

Could your next event match for ambition, not job title?

Three independent submissions imagined matchmaking by what someone is trying to build, not what their LinkedIn says. If you ran a 200-person event tomorrow with no badges and no titles — just "what are you working on?" — what's the worst that happens? And what's the best?

Where does your "event energy" currently leak?

15% of the room is fixated on the moment between the handshake and the follow-up email — the canyon between event energy and next-day execution. Audit your last event: of the 200 conversations that happened, how many turned into anything? The gap between that number and the total is the actual ROI of your next AI investment.

Want to dive deeper? [View & explore all 80 user-generated images and ideas.](#)

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