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Vision & Intelligence

EVIDENCE BRIEF
NOVEMBER 2026

EVIDENCE BRIEF · EVENT MANAGEMENT

Success Without a Scorecard

How do organisers judge event success?

Organizations report that in-person events raise awareness by a typical 37 percent, yet the people who run events rarely measure success the same way twice. Studies of corporate planners, sport federations, a Swiss destination and North American convention bureaus show why event results are hard to compare.

By Eventamin · How we work 12 November 2026

Worldwide, South Africa, Europe, Switzerland, U.S., Canada

4 studies · 2 industry sources

event success | event KPIs | event ROI | critical success factors | event evaluation | corporate events | sport events | event performance index | convention bureaus | event measurement

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KEY FINDING

Most organizers judge success by experience, client feedback and budgets rather than formal frameworks. Measurement tools exist, from event performance indexes to destination KPIs, but they differ by event type and compare events only within their own portfolio.

Four studies, 2008–2021; industry data 2026

Key findings

- **Most planners work without a framework.** 77 percent of senior corporate event planners interviewed in South Africa used no formal event management framework and relied on experience instead[1].
- **Success is judged in feedback and money.** Corporate planners measured effectiveness by client feedback, satisfaction, monetary value, a healthy budget and return business; around half distrusted post-event surveys[1].
- **Sport events share six success factors.** TV coverage, stakeholders, spectators, safety, finances and athletes mattered at all five international and local sport events studied in Europe[2].
- **Rankings depend on the measure.** Rankings of convention destinations in the U.S. and Canada changed considerably with the performance indicator used, because bureaus defined periods and spending differently[3].
- **Scoring tools compare events only within a portfolio.** A Swiss destination scored its events on seven indicators, from value added to ecology, to allocate subsidies; major events scored 43.5 to 113 points and intermediate events 10 to 32[4].

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FOR THE MARKET

Market outcomes

What the studies mean for each part of the industry.

Organisers & associations	Success measures work when they are set per event type and agreed with the client before the event. Conversations with clients carry more weight with corporate planners than survey scores, and safety and media exposure dominate at sport events.
Venues & destinations	Destinations that fund events can score them on a shared index, as in Switzerland, and tie support to the score. Comparisons with other destinations require shared definitions of attendance, periods and spending.

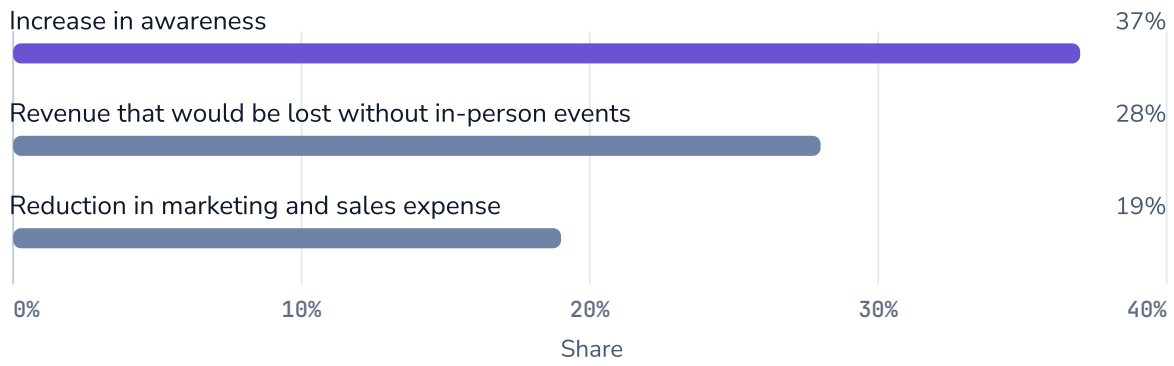
How the industry measures event returns

Organizations see clear returns from events but measure them in different ways. In 2026, organizations surveyed by the Events Industry Council and Oxford Economics reported that taking part in in-person events typically raised awareness by 37 percent, that 28 percent of revenue would be lost without in-person events, and that marketing and sales expenses were 19 percent lower[5]. Relationship management was the most common measure of event success, named by 53 percent of respondents[5].

Planners name engagement as their main measure: 63 percent did so in Cvent's 2026 Planner Sourcing Report[6]. Studies of how organizers actually judge their events show how far practice is from a shared scorecard.

Typical returns from taking part in in-person events according to organizations worldwide in 2026

Share, as reported by respondents.



Source: Events Industry Council; Oxford Economics · Release date: May 2026 · Region: Worldwide · Survey period: March to April 2026 · Number of respondents: 1,605

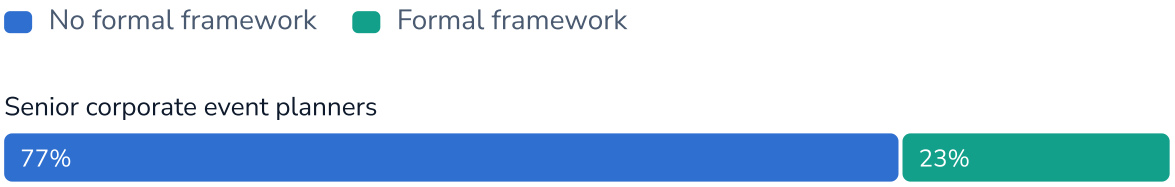
Experience over frameworks

Senior planners mostly trust their own experience. Of 13 senior corporate event planners interviewed in Gauteng, South Africa, 77 percent used no formal event management framework and relied on processes built up over years[1]. They judged effectiveness by client feedback and recognition, high satisfaction, monetary value, a healthy budget and return business[1].

Surveys were not the preferred tool. Around half of the planners viewed post-event surveys skeptically and preferred direct conversations with clients[1]. Marketing was not seen as a success factor, because delegates at corporate events are invited guests rather than buyers to be won[1].

Use of a formal event management framework among senior corporate event planners in South Africa

Share of interviewees.



Source: Govender (North-West University) · Release date: 2021 · Region: South Africa (Gauteng) · Number of interviewees: 13

What success means by event type

Each type of event has its own definition of success. Across five sport events, from FIBA, FINA and UEFA competitions to the Lausanne Triathlon and the Aphrodite Half Marathon, organizers shared six success factors: TV coverage, stakeholders, spectators, safety, finances and athletes[2]. Volunteers, public support, media interest and credibility mattered at some events and not at others[2].

The same study concluded that no single detailed framework fits all events, because each event and each stakeholder weighs success differently[2]. Shared areas of success can be identified, but the indicators behind them have to be set event by event and reviewed across the whole event cycle[2].

Dimensions of event success measured in four settings

Classification of each study's findings.



Sources: Govender; Kokolakis; Bandi Tanner et al.; Pearlman · Release dates: 2008 to 2021 · Regions: South Africa; Europe; Switzerland; U.S. and Canada · Classification: Eventamin

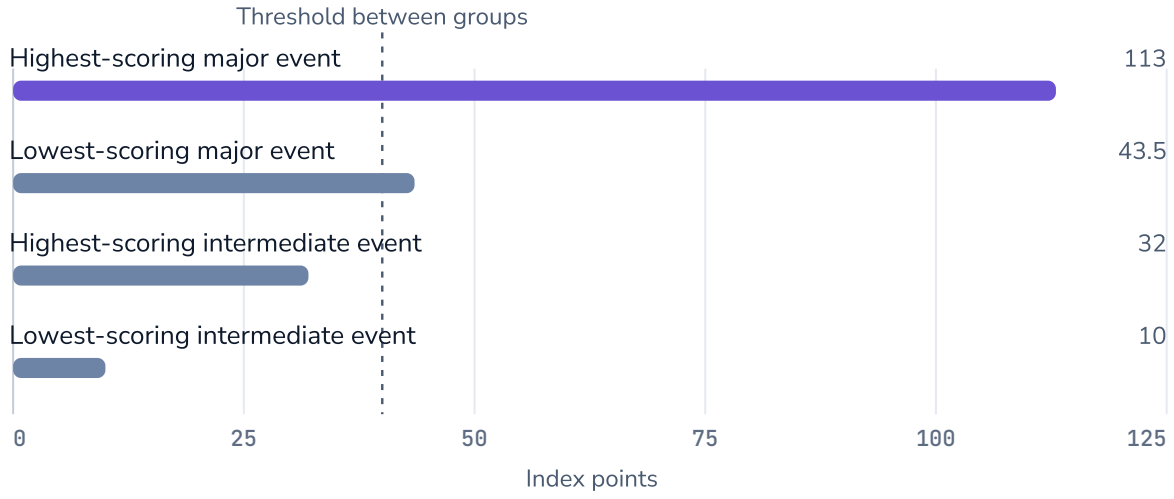
Scoring events for public funding

Destinations that fund events need a common yardstick. The municipality of Saanen, home to the Gstaad resort in Switzerland, rates its events on an event performance index with seven indicators: size, value added, tourism, innovation, networking, social and ecological effects[4]. The score sets the level of public support, with start-up bonuses of 25 to 50 percent for new events[4].

Applied to six major and eight intermediate events, the index separated the two groups clearly: major events scored between 43.5 and 113 points and intermediate events between 10 and 32, with a threshold near 40 points[4]. The index compares events within one portfolio only and does not give an absolute value[4].

Event performance index scores of major and intermediate events in Gstaad-Saanenland, Switzerland

Index points; the highest and lowest score in each group.



Source: Bandi Tanner et al. · Release date: 2018 · Region: Switzerland (Saanen) · Number of events scored: 14 (six major, eight intermediate)

Destination performance indicators

Destinations compete on numbers that are not measured the same way. A benchmarking survey of 111 convention and visitors bureaus in the U.S. and Canada, answered by 60, collected attendance, delegate spending, meeting and exhibition space, hotel rates and labor costs[3]. Many bureaus could not supply key figures: attendance data came from 42 of the 60 and spending data from 37[3].

Because bureaus defined reporting periods and spending calculations differently, the ranking of destinations changed considerably depending on the indicator used[3]. The industry had no single method for calculating its key performance indicators[3].

Notes on the data

The figures are based on four studies published between 2008 and 2021: interviews with 13 senior corporate event planners in South Africa, 22 interviews in five sport event organizations in Europe, a case study of a destination's event portfolio in Switzerland and a survey of 60 convention bureaus in the U.S. and Canada [1–4]. Two of the studies are graduate theses. All studies take the organizer's or destination's view; none measures how clients or attendees judge success. The classification of success dimensions is Eventamin's coding of the reported findings. The Cvent figure is taken from the publisher's summary.

Sources

● Study ○ Industry source

1 Govender, V. (2021). Assessing the key success factors for the strategic management of corporate events: a supply-side perspective [Master's thesis]. *North-West University*. First-hand

2 Kokolakis, S. (2018). Critical Success Factors and Their Implementation in Sports Events Organisation and Management [Doctoral thesis]. *University of Stirling*. Retrieved November 7, 2026, from hdl.handle.net First-hand

3 Pearlman, D. (2008). Key Performance Indicators of the MICE Industry and the Top 25 United States and Canadian CVBs [Journal article]. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism, 9(2), 95–118*. https://doi.org/10.1080/15470140802195019 First-hand

4 Bandi Tanner, M., Künzi, A., Lehmann Friedli, T., & Müller, H. (2018). Event performance index: a holistic valuation tool [Journal article]. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management, 9(2), 166–182*. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEFM-09-2017-0047 First-hand

5 Events Industry Council and Oxford Economics. (2026, May). 2026 Global Economic Significance of Business Events [Report]. Retrieved November 9, 2026, from news.eventscouncil.org — First-hand

6 Cvent. (2026). 2026 Planner Sourcing Report [Survey report]. Retrieved November 7, 2026, from cvent.com — Reported

The evidence

4 studies · 2 industry sources

SAMPLE

Four studies: 13 planner interviews, 22 organizer interviews, a destination case study and a survey of 60 convention bureaus; two industry surveys

YEARS

2008–2021 (studies); 2026 (industry data)

METHOD

Interviews with corporate planners in South Africa and sport event organizers in Europe, a destination portfolio in Switzerland, a convention bureau survey in the U.S. and Canada

About Eventamin

Eventamin reads the peer-reviewed research on events, exhibitions and hospitality, sets it against industry data and states what it means for the market. Every brief is published by Eventamin as an organisation: its sources, method and corrections are open.

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