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Vision & Intelligence

EVIDENCE BRIEF
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EVIDENCE BRIEF · ATTENDEE BEHAVIOUR

Value Breaks at the Seams

When does co-creation turn into co-destruction?

Business events bring together around 1.65 billion participants a year, each meeting staff, suppliers, exhibitors and one another. Studies of hotels, short-term rentals and events show that value is lost in the same encounters in which it is created, mostly by accident and rarely because of technology.

By Eventamin · How we work 12 November 2026 Worldwide, Nordic countries, Malta

5 studies · 3 industry sources

value co-destruction | service failure | guest experience | attendee experience | service recovery | event staff | hotel service | short-term rentals | crowding | customer misbehavior

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KEY FINDING

Value is destroyed where roles, expectations and resources do not match between the parties of a service encounter. Most cases are accidental, and staff with the time and authority to act can often recover the lost value.

Five studies, 1,252 interviews, diaries and reviews, 2010–2024; industry data 2026

Key findings

- **Value is lost in the encounter.** Value destruction occurs when one party uses resources in a way the other did not expect or accept, so the same encounter can create value for one side and destroy it for the other[1].
- **Most failures at events are accidental.** At transformative events, value was lost mainly through participants who were not prepared, facilitators without a shared approach and too little time or money[2].
- **Hotels and guests share the responsibility.** In a Nordic hotel chain, three causes of value destruction originated with the hotel and three with the guests, from broken promises to excessive expectations[3].
- **Missing basics cost more than technology.** In 850 Airbnb reviews from Malta, absent hosts, unclear directions and missing Wi-Fi or heating destroyed value; no case was caused by the platform itself[4].
- **Lost value can be recovered.** Hosts who solved problems and facilitators who restored a group's energy turned failures into recovery[2,4].

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FOR THE MARKET

Market outcomes

What the studies mean for each part of the industry.

Organisers & associations	Unprepared attendees were the most common accidental failure at events, so preparing attendees for what the event expects of them is part of the program. Organizer and facilitator roles are best kept apart on the day.
Hotels	Marketing promises that every property can keep, and chain standards visible to staff in each hotel, prevent the most common provider-side failures.
Venues & destinations	Missing basics such as Wi-Fi, heating and clear directions are value destroyers rather than minor complaints. Capacity management and space design limit crowding between visitors.

Encounters as the source of value and loss

Events and hospitality services consist of encounters. According to the Events Industry Council and Oxford Economics, around 1.65 billion people took part in business events worldwide in 2025[5]. UFI counted 318 million visitors and 4.7 million exhibiting companies at around 32,000 exhibitions[6]. Travel and tourism, which carries most of these journeys, contributed around 12 trillion U.S. dollars, or 9.9 percent of world GDP, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council[7].

If value is created jointly, it can also be destroyed jointly. Knowing where it breaks shows organizers, hotels and venues where to place staff, rules and recovery budgets.

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Where value breaks

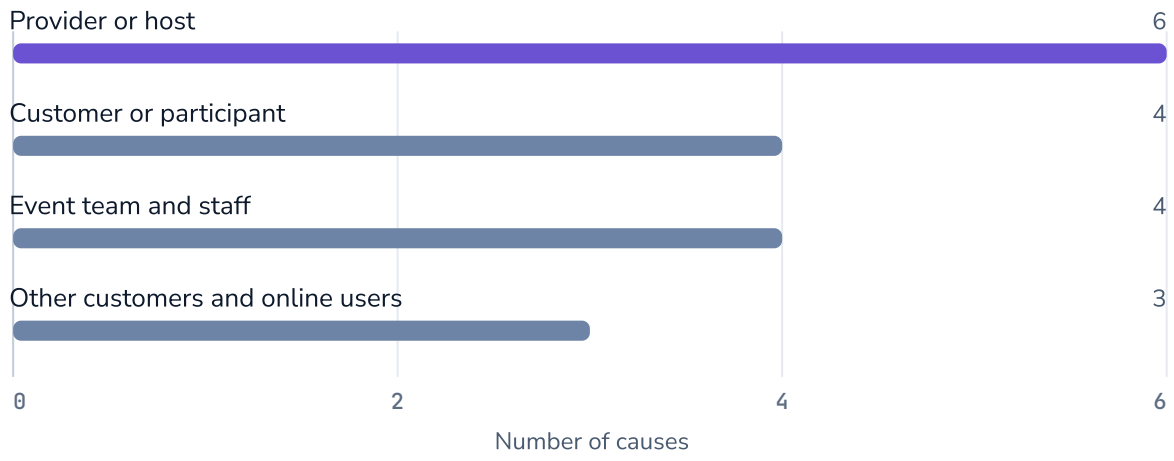
Value destruction results from a mismatch between the parties of a service encounter. It occurs when one party uses resources, such as time, information or behavior, in a way the other finds unexpected or inappropriate[1]. The mismatch can be accidental, as when customers do not understand what a new service is meant to do, or intentional, as when call center time targets cut a customer's problem short[1].

Both sides of a service follow an expected sequence of how it should run, and value breaks wherever these expectations diverge. In a Nordic hotel chain, analyzed through staff interviews, guest diaries and 344 online reviews, the hotel broke expectations by failing to deliver the service, applying rigid rules and promising more in its marketing than it could keep[3]. Guests broke them by arriving with expectations set by other services, by not saying what they needed and, in some cases, by hostile or opportunistic behavior such as searching for faults to claim refunds[3].

Short-term rentals show the same pattern. In 850 Airbnb reviews from Malta, welcoming hosts created value, while absent hosts, unclear directions and missing amenities such as Wi-Fi, heating or air conditioning destroyed it[4]. None of the cases of lost value was caused by the platform itself[4].

Reported causes of value destruction in hotels, short-term rentals and events, by origin

Number of distinct causes reported.



Sources: Plé & Chumpitaz Cáceres; Camilleri & Neuhofer; Järvi et al.; Cavagnaro et al.; Dieteren & Neuhofer · Release dates: 2010 to 2024 · Regions: Worldwide; Malta; Nordic countries · Classification: Eventamin

Value destruction inside the event team

Event teams are a source of failure that most service studies overlook. In interviews with facilitators, designers and participants of transformative events, value creation was more common than value destruction, and it was mostly intentional[2]. Value destruction was mostly accidental: participants arrived unprepared, facilitators who were also organizers reported fatigue and a lack of mental space, co-facilitators had no shared approach, and structures were too loose or budgets too small[2].

Participants were offered ways to step out of the program, while facilitators rarely were[2]. Daily briefings and debriefings of around 30 minutes were the simplest protection[2].

TYPE	EXAMPLES	TYPICAL REMEDY
Accidental	Unprepared participants, unclear directions, expectations set by other services, too little time or money [2–4]	Preparation, clear information, realistic promises, adequate resources
Intentional	Disputes and low commitment within the team, opportunistic complaints, sabotage by staff, online trolling [1,2,8]	Clear roles, team alignment, fair policies, moderation
Between customers	Crowding; visitors spoiling the authenticity of a place for each other [8]	Capacity management and space design

Recovery as part of the service

Lost value is not always final. On Airbnb, hosts who resolved problems recovered value that a missing amenity had destroyed [4]. At transformative events, facilitators restored a group's energy, drew lessons from disagreements and, in some cases, departed from instructions when following them would have cost participants value [2]. Recovery depends on staff with the time and the authority to act.

Notes on the data

The figures are based on five sources published between 2010 and 2024: a conceptual paper, an analysis of 850 Airbnb reviews, a hotel study with 12 staff interviews, 15 guest diaries and 344 online reviews, a review of six tourism studies and 31 interviews at transformative events [1–4,8]. Only one source covers events. The classification of causes by origin is Eventamin's coding of the reported findings. No study measures how often value destruction occurs or what it costs, and none covers trade fairs. The WTTC figure is taken from the publisher's summary.

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Sources

● Study ○ Industry source

1 Plé, L., & Chumpitaz Cáceres, R. (2010). Not always co-creation: Introducing interactional co-destruction of value in service-dominant logic [Journal article]. *Journal of Services Marketing, 24(6), 430–437*. https://doi.org/10.1108/08876041011072546 First-hand

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3 Järvi, H., Keränen, J., Ritala, P., & Vilko, J. (2020). Value co-destruction in hotel services: Exploring the misalignment of cognitive scripts among customers and providers [Journal article]. *Tourism Management, 77, 104030*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.104030 First-hand

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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

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7 WTTC. (2026). Economic Impact Research 2026 [Press release]. Retrieved November 7, 2026, from wttc.org Reported

8 Cavagnaro, E., Michopoulou, E., & Pappas, N. (2021). Revisiting value co-creation and co-destruction in tourism [Journal article]. First-hand

Tourism Planning & Development, 18(2), 121–124.
https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2021.1879924

The evidence

5 studies · 3 industry sources

SAMPLE

Five studies: 850 guest reviews, 371 hotel interviews, diaries and reviews, 31 event interviews; one conceptual paper and one review

YEARS

2010–2024 (studies); 2026 (industry data)

METHOD

Analysis of guest reviews and interviews in hotels, short-term rentals and transformative events

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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