

Experience Intelligence

by GPJ

May 2022

As environmental and experiential pressures mount, event planners and designers are feeling the pinch of supply and demand.



1 For events and experiences, the supply chain struggle is real



2 Higher demand for travel yields more volatility



3 Return-to-in-person challenges impact attendee experiences



4 Events and experiences strive for sustainability

MAY

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Event Radar

May 9 - 11

IBM Think 2022

May 25 - 26

ServiceNow Knowledge Sydney

May 9 - 13

Australian Fashion Week

May 25 - 27

Semi Permanent Sydney

May 10 - 11

Red Hat Summit

May 27 - June 18

Vivid Sydney

For events and experiences, the **supply chain struggle is real**

Demand for in-person is back, but supply is coming up short.

The return of live events has come with a new set of hurdles brought on by the supply chain bottleneck. From shortages in labour, trucks and microchips, to increases in food and transportation costs, [every aspect](#) of the events industry [has been affected](#) in the midst of an epic return.

Locally in Australia, pain from price increases is now being compounded by a [rise in the interest rate](#). With an election looming in May, Australia may face [further economic challenges as energy costs soar and there are calls for higher wages](#). Whoever prevails in May will need to act quickly to implement strategies for addressing supply chain challenges.

What it Means

There are implications across the board, and **alternative solutions are emerging from necessity**. Suppliers are getting serious about advanced deadlines, planners are padding their budgets, designers are seeking more sustainable approaches, and builders are flipping the concept of value engineering on its head.

Key Takeaway

While there is no relief in sight for global supply chain woes, there are ways to mitigate the situation. Preparation is key, and every stakeholder at every stage of the experience development lifecycle has to think differently about how they operate and work together.



Higher demand for travel yields more volatility

An increasing appetite for travel is colliding with real-world realities to set the stage for winter chaos.

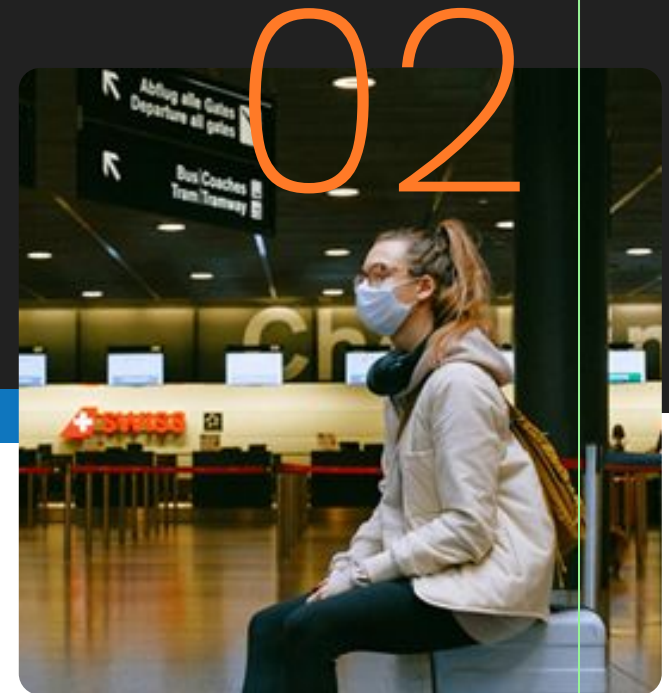
Travel demand is back around the world, with places like the United States [close to pre-pandemic levels](#). However, this increase in demand is putting pressure on an industry that is behind the 8-ball in a number of ways as we've witnessed at [airports across Australia](#). Global challenges such as inflation, supply chain issues and staffing shortages are prompting experts to [predict months](#) of unprecedented travel volatility marked by [sky-high prices](#), [cancellations](#) and [disruption](#).

What It Means

While the increase in travel demand can be viewed as a leading indicator for a return to pre-pandemic event attendance levels, the **volatility of the industry will likely cause variability in physical attendee numbers**, and may even serve as an inhibitor to attending in the first place.

Key Takeaway

Accurately predicting and planning for attendee totals will likely remain challenging for brands and organisers. To deal with this uncertainty, event organisers must continue to embrace hybrid models and adopt flexibility throughout the planning and production process.



Return-to-in-person challenges **impact attendee experiences**

The initial glow of in-person is already wearing off for some attendees, who are becoming less tolerant of experiential shortcomings.

As event demand continues to rise, some attendees are becoming disgruntled by issues that are negatively impacting their experiences, including logistical failures, [unprecedented fees](#) and poor planning. Attendees expressed extreme frustration with concerts [selling out in seconds](#) and long wait times at events like [Coachella](#) and [COP26](#), while smaller events like a 25-year-old, DC-based [fundraiser](#) oversold and turned away long-time participants. Some are even “[voicing disenchantment](#)” over price hikes and fees on services that were once free at Disney parks.

What it Means

Despite real-world issues like pandemic uncertainty, supply chain challenges and travel volatility, **attendees still expect organisers to deliver acceptable levels of care, thoughtfulness and convenience** throughout an experience.

Key Takeaway

Many attendees are moving into the next phase of their return to in-person, where the joy of simply being able to attend an event is no longer enough to satisfy expectations. Shifting perspectives and solving for journeys from the attendees' POV can help pinpoint potential pitfalls and shortcomings before they manifest IRL.



Events and experiences **strive for sustainability**

Pressure to plan and execute green events is increasing for experience marketers.

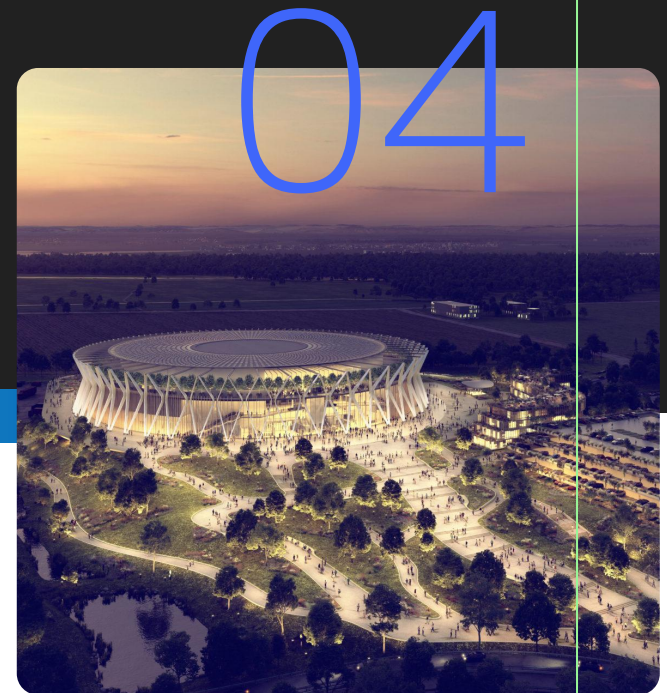
On the heels of Earth Month and the bombshell [UN Climate Report](#), sustainability has never been such a hot topic. And in the world of experience marketing, brands, organisers and marketers are beginning to take measures to spark meaningful change that is long overdue. Germany is designing its first [climate-neutral event arena](#), the 2022 FIFA World Cup hopes to be a [benchmark](#) in sustainable event execution, and GPJ North America-supported coalitions like [ISLA](#) are creating resources for event sustainability such as [Trace](#), a platform that helps measure event emissions and waste.

What it Means

As expectations for brands and industries to embrace real sustainability intensify, events and experiences will need to **rethink and reframe their approaches** to achieve true carbon neutrality.

Key Takeaway

The time for greenwashing has passed. As brands and organisers look to build greener events, sustainability measures and tactics must be authentic. Globally at GPJ we leverage resources like [ISLA](#), the [EIC Sustainable Event Standards](#) and [ISO](#), and can help guide your event teams towards more sustainable practices.



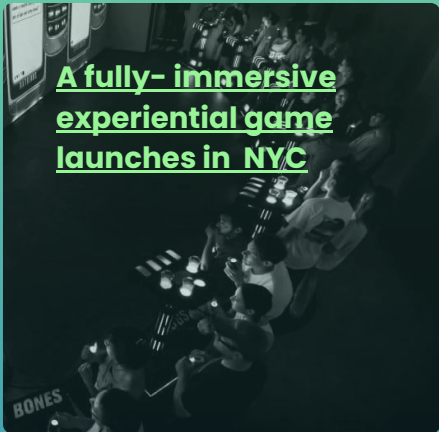
Out-There Experiences

Brands and marketers continue to push the boundaries of physical and digital experiences, with new and creative executions popping up across the globe.



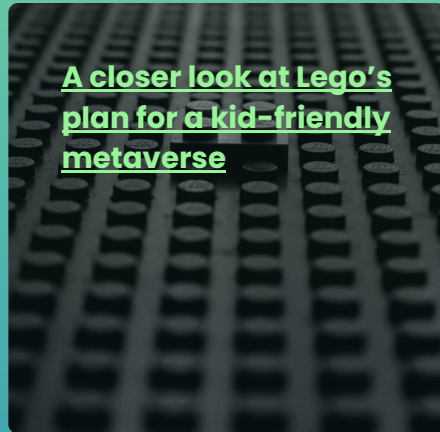
The NFL Draft takes over Las Vegas

Vegas' massive infrastructure made it easy for the NFL to go big and enable 300,000 attendees to access myriad experiences across the city.



A fully- immersive experiential game launches in NYC

Game of 1,000 Boxes is a unique, immersive, content-driven experiential game in the middle of NYC.



A closer look at Lego's plan for a kid-friendly metaverse

Lego is partnering with Epic games to develop a child-friendly metaverse in the form of a multiplayer creative space.



Absolut deploys a hybrid Metaverse Party activation at Coachella

Merged in the virtual world platform Decentraland, digital visitors participated in 10 different cocktail-focused experiences remotely and via on-site kiosks.

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