ONSITE INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2025

Trends, Behaviors and Real-World Organizer Insights

This report summarizes behavioral trends across 100+ global events in 2025, with an emphasis on how attendees behaved, how organizers tracked behavior, and what fielddrive learned from deploying onsite data capture and analytics across markets and event types.

Executive Summary

Global event activity in 2025 showed strong growth in attendance and engagement as in-person interactions regained momentum following hybrid experimentation in earlier years. Organizers increasingly leveraged data capture and real-time analytics technology to understand attendee journeys at a granular level, moving beyond simple registration tallies toward behavioral signals that drive ROI, retention, and activation.

> *What surprised us in 2025 wasn't the return of scale, it was how deliberate people were once they arrived. Attendees weren't trying to do everything. They were trying to do the right few things. That forced organizers to rethink what 'success' actually looks like at an event.*
> **— Abhishek Jain,**
> **CEO, fielddrive**

Across surveys of thousands of event professionals and attendees, the industry reported:

› Majority growth in event attendance and budgets, with many organizers planning more events and higher spend.

- In-person events remained the core engagement channel, but blended (hybrid) approaches continued to expand reach.
- Tech expectations were high: digital tracking, analytics dashboards, and real-time engagement tools were almost table stakes for large, mid and boutique events alike.
- Attendee expectations evolved toward personalization, immersive experiences, and sustainable practices.

fielddrive's work across major global conferences, expos, trade shows and festivals in 2025 confirmed that behavioral tracking and onsite analytics became decisive competitive differentiators for successful organizers.

Attendee Behavior Patterns in 2025

1. Rise in Active, Intentional Engagement

Across events ranging from large tech conferences to specialized B2B trade shows, attendees behaved more strategically:

Selective attendance: Rather than passive participation, attendees curated their engagement based on real-time needs and networking opportunities. For example, visitors of flagship global events spent less time in general sessions and more in targeted, micro-community meetups and workshops.

Higher mobility: Foot traffic patterns showed that attendees rotated between exhibition floors, breakout sessions, lounges, and networking nodes more fluidly than in previous years. This behavior was captured through badge scans, session check-ins, and app interactions tracked by organizers.

> *Operationally, we saw fewer people drifting and more people moving with purpose. Breaks, corridors, and informal spaces became just as important as programmed sessions, and in many cases more valuable. That changed how organizers had to think about space, staffing, and flow.*
>
> **— Denis Pilet,**
> **COO, fielddrive**

Data from industry surveys suggests attendees registered for or planned to attend more events this year than prior years, with eight in ten planning equal or greater participation compared to the previous year.

2. Social Discovery and Peer Influence Shaped Attendance

Attendees increasingly discovered events via social networks and peer recommendations, particularly among younger cohorts:

> ❯ Social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram — especially short-form content — became dominant channels for event discovery, with a significant portion of Gen Z signaling they found events through these channels.
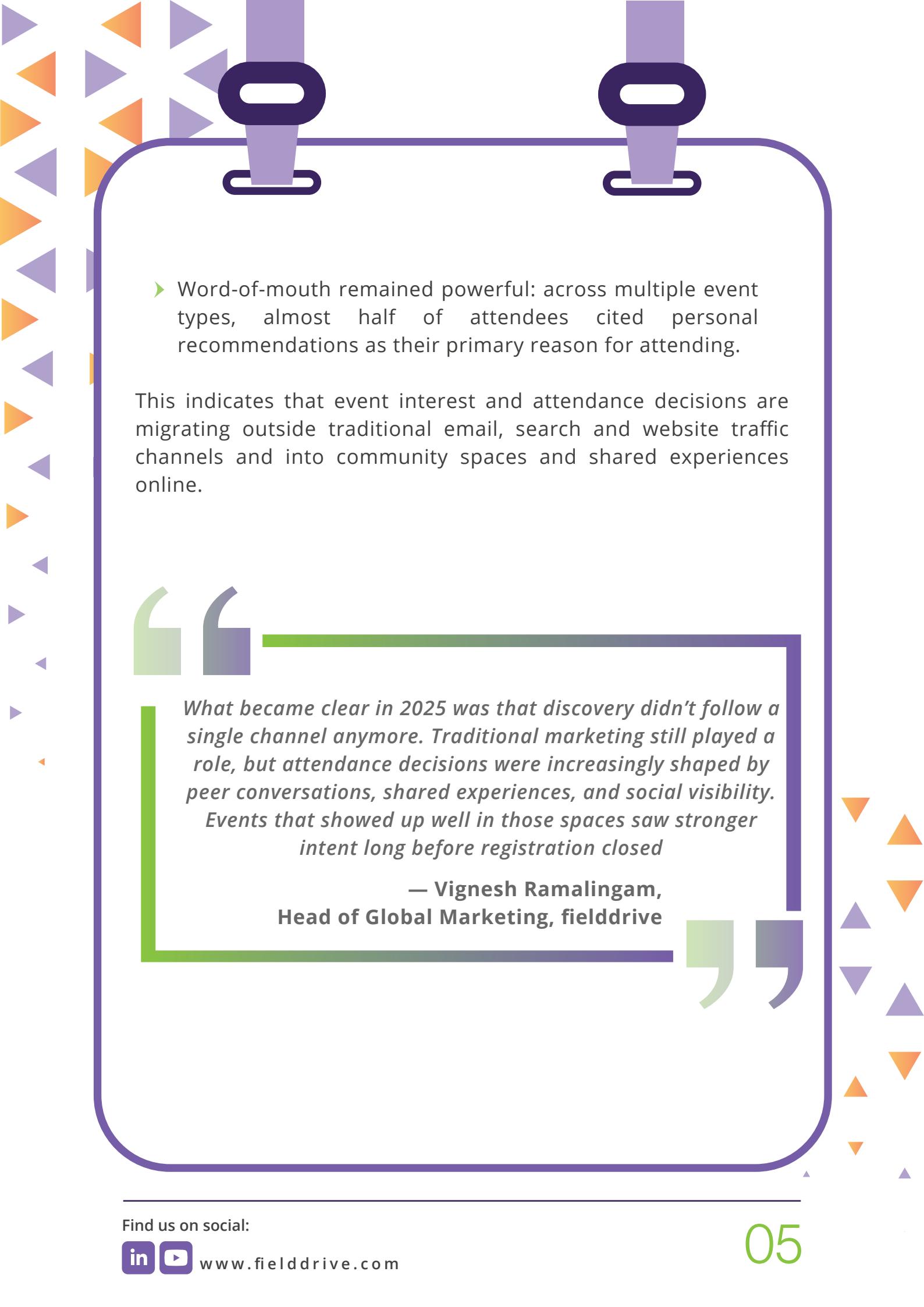
› Word-of-mouth remained powerful: across multiple event types, almost half of attendees cited personal recommendations as their primary reason for attending.

This indicates that event interest and attendance decisions are migrating outside traditional email, search and website traffic channels and into community spaces and shared experiences online.

> *What became clear in 2025 was that discovery didn't follow a single channel anymore. Traditional marketing still played a role, but attendance decisions were increasingly shaped by peer conversations, shared experiences, and social visibility. Events that showed up well in those spaces saw stronger intent long before registration closed*

> **— Vignesh Ramalingam,**
> **Head of Global Marketing, fielddrive**
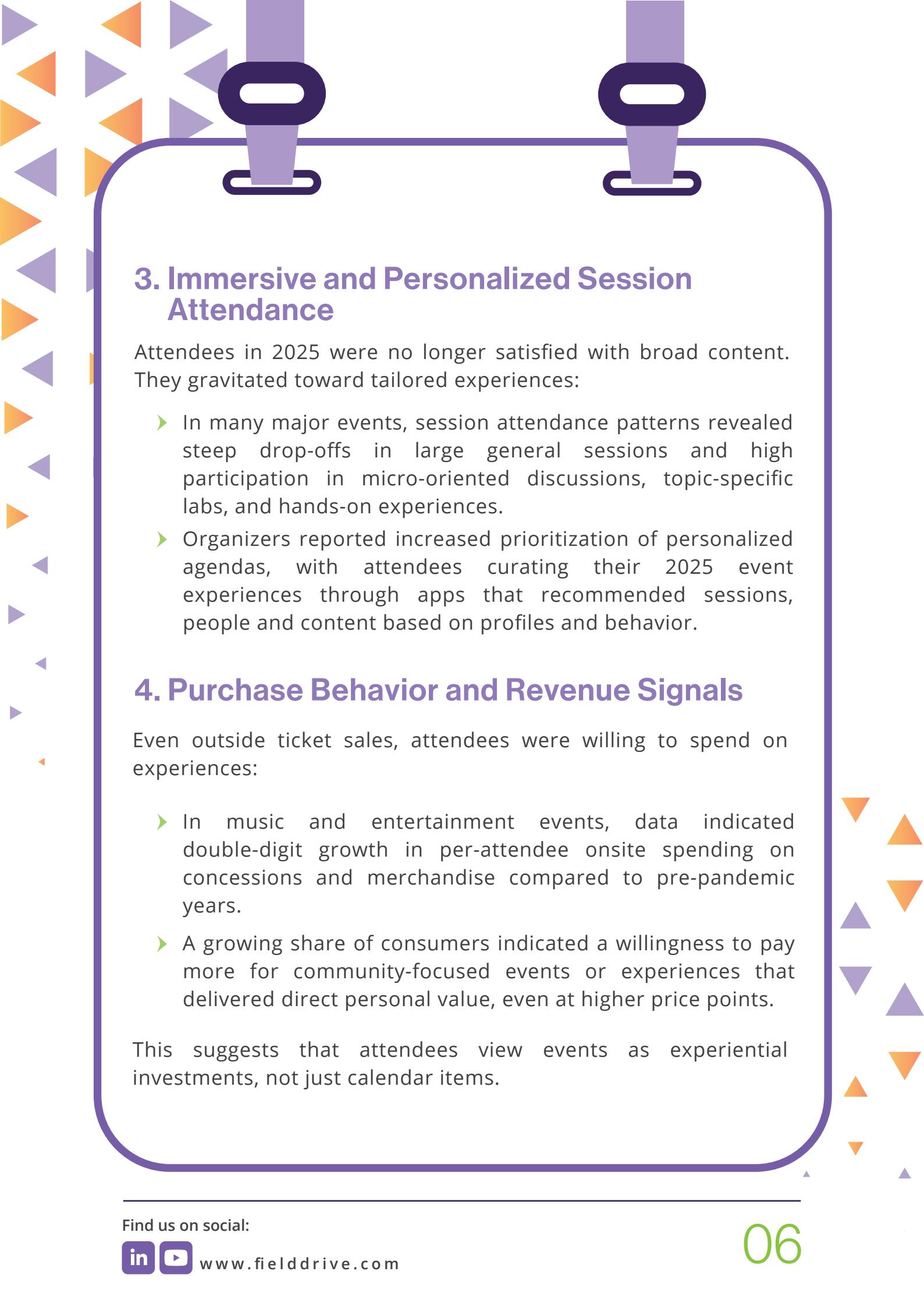
3. Immersive and Personalized Session Attendance

Attendees in 2025 were no longer satisfied with broad content. They gravitated toward tailored experiences:

› In many major events, session attendance patterns revealed steep drop-offs in large general sessions and high participation in micro-oriented discussions, topic-specific labs, and hands-on experiences.

› Organizers reported increased prioritization of personalized agendas, with attendees curating their 2025 event experiences through apps that recommended sessions, people and content based on profiles and behavior.

4. Purchase Behavior and Revenue Signals

Even outside ticket sales, attendees were willing to spend on experiences:

› In music and entertainment events, data indicated double-digit growth in per-attendee onsite spending on concessions and merchandise compared to pre-pandemic years.

› A growing share of consumers indicated a willingness to pay more for community-focused events or experiences that delivered direct personal value, even at higher price points.

This suggests that attendees view events as experiential investments, not just calendar items.

Organizer Data Tracking Practices in 2025

1. Tracking Beyond Registration

Organizers expanded their tracking systems to capture multi-dimensional behavioral data:

- ▶ Badge scanning and passive tracking enabled real-time insights into attendee flow, dwell time, booth penetration, session popularity, and networking behavior

- ▶ Mobile app interactions captured what content attendees viewed, which exhibitors they followed, session materials they downloaded, and their networking intent signals.

- ▶ Real-time response polls and live Q&A engagement offered another layer of behavioral signals that went beyond mere physical presence.
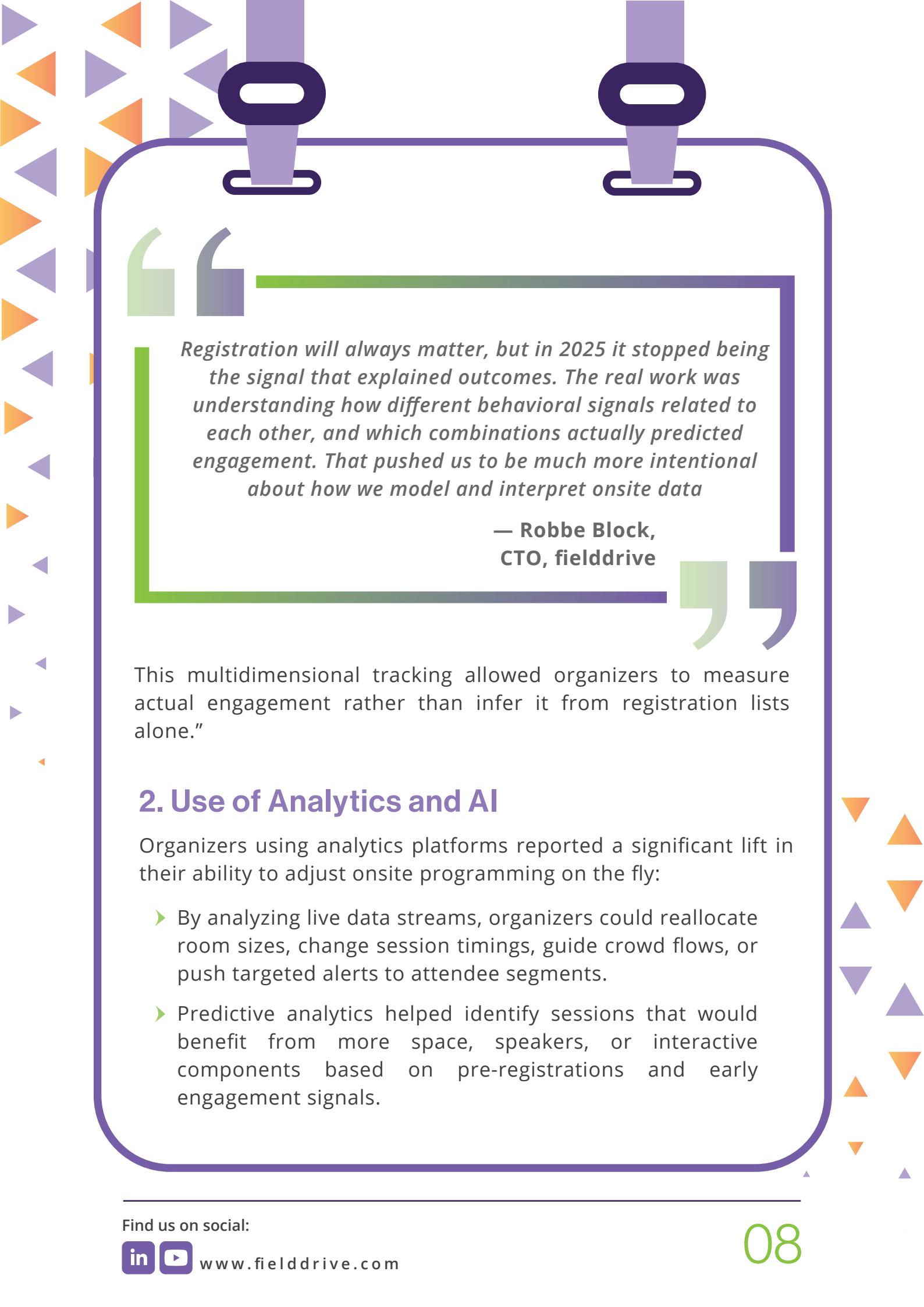
> *Registration will always matter, but in 2025 it stopped being the signal that explained outcomes. The real work was understanding how different behavioral signals related to each other, and which combinations actually predicted engagement. That pushed us to be much more intentional about how we model and interpret onsite data*
>
> **— Robbe Block,**
> **CTO, fielddrive**

This multidimensional tracking allowed organizers to measure actual engagement rather than infer it from registration lists alone."

2. Use of Analytics and AI

Organizers using analytics platforms reported a significant lift in their ability to adjust onsite programming on the fly:

> By analyzing live data streams, organizers could reallocate room sizes, change session timings, guide crowd flows, or push targeted alerts to attendee segments.

> Predictive analytics helped identify sessions that would benefit from more space, speakers, or interactive components based on pre-registrations and early engagement signals.

AI-driven analytics became integral to post-event reporting, with some platforms even delivering real-time insights during the event with minimal manual intervention.

## 3. Seamless Check-Ins and Smart Badging

Several high-attendance events reported that contactless check-ins and smart badge systems dramatically reduced congestion and improved data quality:

> Facial recognition or RFID-enabled badges drove faster entry and enabled signal tracking that integrated with session attendance and engagement dashboards.

> Digital badges also allowed exhibitors to capture opt-in lead data more efficiently than traditional business card drops.
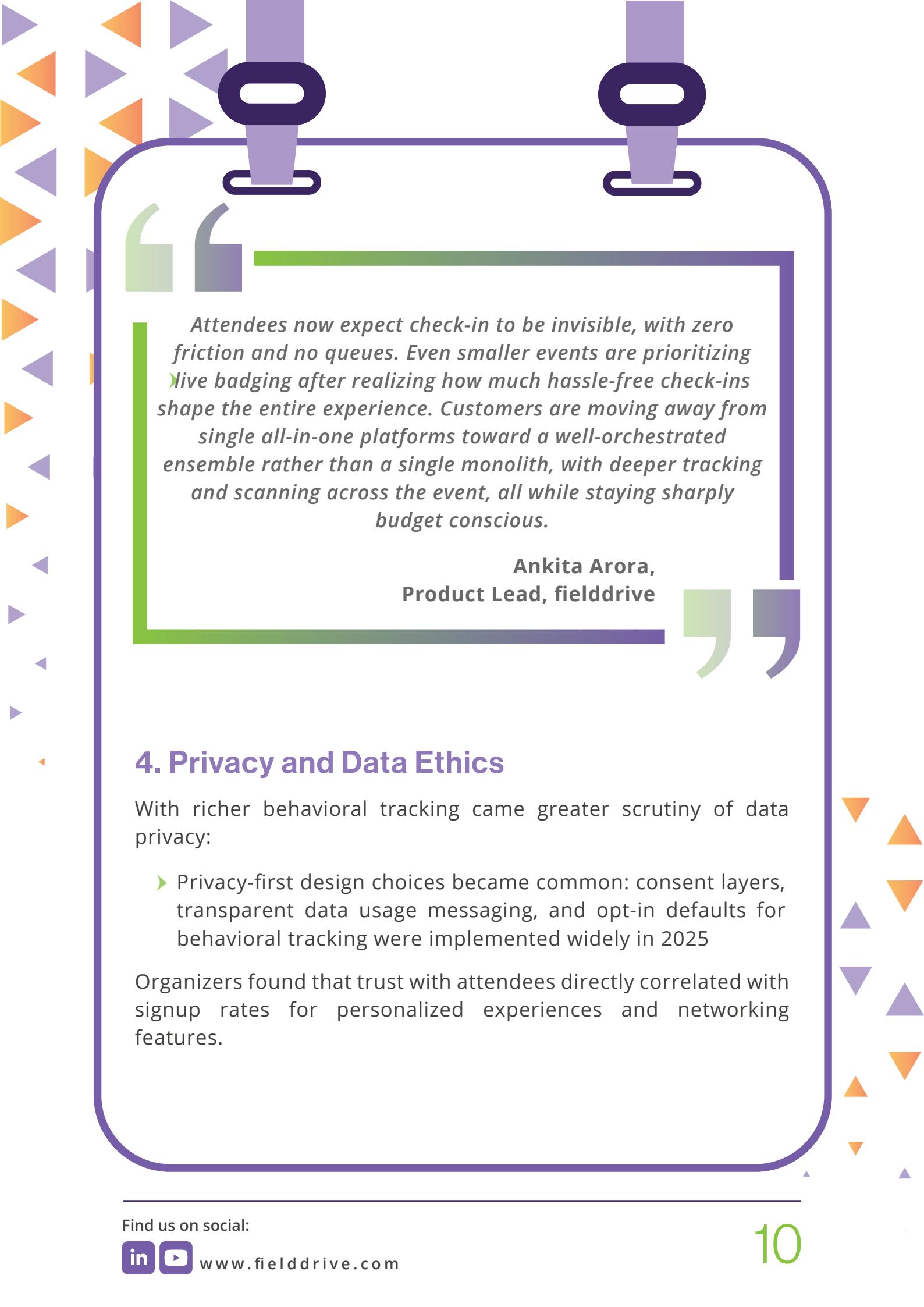
Attendees now expect check-in to be invisible, with zero friction and no queues. Even smaller events are prioritizing live badging after realizing how much hassle-free check-ins shape the entire experience. Customers are moving away from single all-in-one platforms toward a well-orchestrated ensemble rather than a single monolith, with deeper tracking and scanning across the event, all while staying sharply budget conscious.

**Ankita Arora,
Product Lead, fielddrive**

4. Privacy and Data Ethics

With richer behavioral tracking came greater scrutiny of data privacy:

> ❯ Privacy-first design choices became common: consent layers, transparent data usage messaging, and opt-in defaults for behavioral tracking were implemented widely in 2025

Organizers found that trust with attendees directly correlated with signup rates for personalized experiences and networking features.

fielddrive's Key Learnings from 2025

1. Timing and Context Drive Signal Quality

➤ Session dwell time correlated strongly with purchase intent signals at expos. Attendees who spent more than 20 minutes in product zones were far more likely to convert to sales leads.

➤ Networking engagement score (based on app interactions, booth visits, and badge scans) proved to be a stronger predictor of follow-up interest than simple badge scans alone.

Actionable insight: Integrate behavior scoring early in capture flows and tie it to engagement outcomes.

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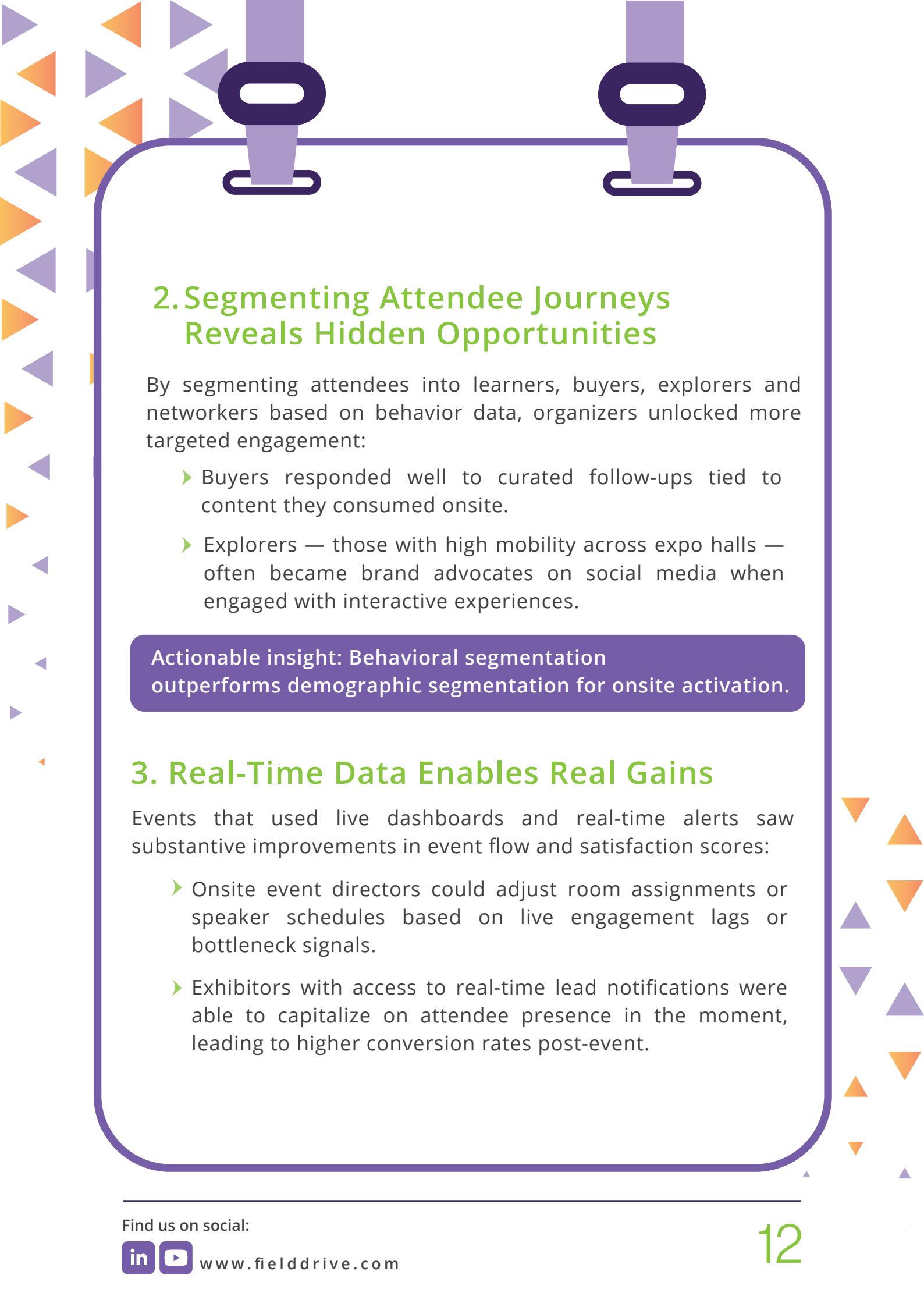
2. Segmenting Attendee Journeys Reveals Hidden Opportunities

By segmenting attendees into learners, buyers, explorers and networkers based on behavior data, organizers unlocked more targeted engagement:

- ▸ Buyers responded well to curated follow-ups tied to content they consumed onsite.

- ▸ Explorers — those with high mobility across expo halls — often became brand advocates on social media when engaged with interactive experiences.

> **Actionable insight: Behavioral segmentation outperforms demographic segmentation for onsite activation.**

3. Real-Time Data Enables Real Gains

Events that used live dashboards and real-time alerts saw substantive improvements in event flow and satisfaction scores:

- ▸ Onsite event directors could adjust room assignments or speaker schedules based on live engagement lags or bottleneck signals.

- ▸ Exhibitors with access to real-time lead notifications were able to capitalize on attendee presence in the moment, leading to higher conversion rates post-event.

> *What changed for exhibitors wasn't volume, it was timing. When leads came in hours or days later, momentum was gone. When signals showed up while the attendee was still onsite, conversations actually turned into follow-ups. That gap was very visible in 2025.*

**— Pascal Lagadec,
VP Sales and Business Development,
fielddrive**

4. Sustainability Expectations Influence Behavioral Signals

Attendees increasingly rewarded events with visible sustainable practices:

> Digital materials, eco-friendly installations, and green partner showcases drove higher engagement times compared to traditional exhibits.

Actionable insight: Sustainability cues are not just moral priorities they are behavior drivers.

Case Studies

Case Study 1:
Major Technology Conference, Singapore

At a flagship technology summit with 15,000 attendees, fielddrive analytics revealed unexpected engagement patterns.

Key observations:

- Peak networking activity occurred during unscheduled breaks rather than formal networking sessions.
- Booth traffic declined sharply after lunch.

Actions taken:

- Live dashboards prompted organizers to shift sponsor showcases to early afternoon slots.
- Networking spaces were reprogrammed to align with organic attendee behavior.

Outcome:

- Daily sponsor engagement increased by 18%.
- Attendee satisfaction scores improved around networking accessibility.

Case Study 2:
Global Marketing Festival, Europee

A large-scale marketing festival with 70,000+ visitors used badge scan data to map attendee pathways.

Key observations:

- ❯ Early morning sessions were frequently bypassed.
- ❯ Afternoon keynotes and experiential zones attracted sustained attention.

Actions taken:

- ❯ Exhibitors introduced micro-sessions aligned with post-keynote traffic.
- ❯ Content schedules were adjusted in real time.

Outcome:

- ❯ Opt-in leads increased by 22%.
- ❯ Exhibitors reported higher-quality conversations.

Case Study 3:
Regional B2B Expo, North America

A 9,500-attendee manufacturing and logistics expo focused on session-level intent.

Key observations:

▸ Attendees attending multiple technical sessions showed 3× higher follow-up intent.

▸ Dwell time outperformed attendance counts as a lead-quality indicator.

Actions taken:

▸ Traffic was redirected dynamically using in-app prompts.

▸ Exhibitors received real-time alerts for high-intent attendees.

Outcome:

▸ Lead quality scores increased by 27%.

▸ Exhibitor satisfaction improved significantly.

Case Study 4:
Cultural Festival, Australia

A sustainability-focused festival with 40,000+ attendees tested engagement impact.

Key observations:

- ▸ Eco-friendly zones saw longer dwell times than traditional exhibits.
- ▸ Transparent consent messaging increased opt-in rates.

Actions taken:

- ▸ Digital materials replaced printed guides mid-event.
- ▸ Sustainable partners were repositioned using live data.

Outcome:

- ▸ Engagement in green zones increased by 31%.
- ▸ Social sharing rose during the latter half of the festival.

Looking Ahead

The defining shift of 2025 was not scale or technology, but intent.

Attendees arrived with clearer goals. Organizers moved from static planning to adaptive execution. Data became a live operational layer rather than a post-event artifact.

The most successful events functioned as living systems. They listened, adjusted, and responded while the experience was still unfolding.

As the industry moves into 2026, the question is no longer whether to track onsite behavior, but how intelligently that data is used, how transparently it is collected, and how meaningfully it enhances the experience.

The future of events will not be measured solely in attendance or lead volume, but in moments captured, decisions informed, and experiences shaped in real time.

And onsite intelligence is where that future is taking shape.

If 2024 was about proving events were back, 2025 was about rebuilding how they run. We saw organizers stop chasing shiny formats and start investing in the fundamentals: flow, experience design, data discipline, and trust. That's what made the best events feel effortless even when they were massive. Going into 2026, the industry is heading toward something more continuous. Events won't be isolated 'dates on the calendar' anymore, they'll be connected systems that learn from each edition, personalize more responsibly, and show value faster to attendees, sponsors, and teams."

Abhishek Jain,
CEO, fielddrive