

The Role of AI in Events



Nowadays it's all about AI. All the time, every day, every conversation. And while there is no doubt that AI will help make us more efficient and more resourceful, we need to remember that all AI is not equal, and although you might read about how great an AI tool is working for some people, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution.

Consider what you are trying to accomplish

AI cannot do our jobs for us yet (thank god)... but it can help us do our job faster, more efficiently and better. Think about your pain points and how AI might be able to help and then think even harder about whether it can really help or solve the problem. Here are two examples:

Getting flooded with emails that you can barely keep up with? 100 per cent this is what AI is made for. Tools like Google Mail's built in AI (Gemini) or third-party tools like Fyxr can be tremendously helpful in sorting and filtering emails, drafting replies (don't auto send), or with the ability to search your email history with simple prompts like "give me an update of where things stand on the Sony event and if there is anything I haven't gotten back to them about."

Putting together your event rental orders for you? While AI might be able to do this entirely for you one day, the intricacies of how our industry works sometimes makes AI less useful. We tried it and ended up finding that AI tools could help troubleshoot eg: did I forget anything based on this menu, but between understanding what dishes might need what size or shape plate, how to adjust glassware based on the design, etc it really cannot replace an event professional so don't waste your time.

Understanding that every problem cannot be solved by AI is an important first step in figuring out where it can help and where your excitement over using AI may outweigh its benefit.

Get help where you need it

AI is especially useful helping with tasks that are outside of our core competency and/or take up our time that could be better spent doing something else.

We aren't graphic designer (or at least we don't have time to be) but this is one area where AI can really help you shine. The tools for content design in smaller formats (presentations, images, etc) are limitless and many like Gemini, Claude Designer, Chat GPT, are simple to use and can be affordable if you are more specific about what you need.

Same goes for research and analytics. Want to figure out what are the items you rent most or the dishes that get served most often at plated events? You can drop your contracts into many tools and then just start asking questions.

In both these cases though consider cost and time. The more specific you are with your prompts, the better the results. Just like the AI learns from you, you should learn from the AI and improve your prompting to get the results you want faster and with less interaction (aka cost).

AI can also help you solve very complex problems but it won't happen with a few prompts. In our case we have been building a content development tool for our immersive and large-scale projects to solve the problem of producing video content for massive screens at high quality and resolution – well this project is not just throwing something into Claude or the like, it's a multi-month development project (called Athena) and it will likely take us years to develop and require constant tweaking. If you have the appetite for it embark on one of these projects to solve a larger problem or challenge a bottleneck in your business but understand first the commitment.

Things to keep in mind

AI is not free. Make sure you understand the costs of the tools you are using and when you 'opt in' for extras. Most AI tools have a limited amount of 'credits' in their entry packages and more powerful features require more expensive packages. Watch this carefully since these can change without notice.

Also check your toggle button in any AI as to the level of AI you are using or the sub model. With Gemini there are three levels (3.6 Flash for basic tasks eg: find me the name of that restaurant in the Bellagio hotel with the amazing cigar shaped dessert) Claude however has many more models (Sonnet 5, Haiku 4.5, Opus 5, Fable 5) and each is a different level of power and generally focused on different types of tasks. Each of these choices will impact the number of credits you use so don't just pick the top one as a default, since it's sort of like choosing a Ferrari to drive to work three blocks away with bumper-to-bumper traffic.

Finally for those younger event professionals – please remember that AI cannot convey your personality and us more 'seasoned' professional don't want to hire or work with someone who only uses AI. We want someone who uses AI to make themselves more productive or improve the quality of their work. I often run resumes, introduction letters or even emails through an AI checker myself and if the AI rating is above 80-90 per cent I know the person took a shortcut.

The AI Reality

The fact is that AI is amazing and also scary.

We are becoming so reliant on it that I equate it to a drug. The big AI companies are giving it to us for free (or cheap) for now... but once we are hooked, expect those costs to increase DRAMATICALLY and by then we won't be able to do without it.

Also while that little disclaimer on all AI models being used by most businesses that you can barely read at the bottom in small text "Your chats aren't used to improve our models," that doesn't mean your data is safe. We've seen more and more lawsuits against the big AI companies about how they use our data and our interactions so keep that in mind as you upload your documents and thoughts and ask yourself... would I leave this document on the counter in Starbucks?

Final Thought

I love using AI despite all the concerns I have about it, but what I always remind myself is that AI can also backfire on you. If you're using AI because you're too lazy to do something yourself, it probably means you shouldn't be using AI for that task. Take for example this article. While I could have prompted AI to write it for me, and perhaps it would have thought of some things I didn't, it wouldn't be my experiences, my opinions or my thoughts, in which case why would this or any publication need me anymore.

Human thought and the intricacies of our thought is something AI cannot replicate ... yet.

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