

# DELIVERING MULTI-SENSORY EXPERIENCES AT EVENTS

*Martin Lindstrom, a well-known author and brand consultant, found that brand impact increased by 30% when more than one sense is engaged and by a whopping 70% when three senses are integrated into the brand message.*

## THE POWER OF ENGAGING ALL FIVE SENSES

Our experience of the world involves a number of senses - sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. These senses are not isolated from one another. In fact, awareness of our surrounding environment is the result of all five senses working together. Over the years, countless studies have proven sensory stimulation plays a large part in memory formulation and association. For years retailers have embraced these findings and implemented sensory experiences into their marketing in an attempt to boost sales, reinforce branding and improve the overall customer experience. Similarly with event technology, we're seeing the impact of consumer marketing trends act as the driving force behind the event experience.

Whilst the power of engaging the five senses is commonly known by event managers, studies reveal applying the theory into practice is lacking. A recent survey by [London & Partners and CWT Meetings & Events](#) found that **78% of event professionals believe that events appealing to multiple senses deliver a more memorable and creative experience for delegates and audiences.** However only 27% of those surveyed believed that the five senses are being effectively stimulated at events.

To fully understand how event planners can harness the senses to create more memorable experiences, we have gathered recent examples to demonstrate how brands are embracing the power of smell, taste, touch, sight and sound to create indelible experiences in immersive environments.

***"We are not thinking beings that feel; we are feeling beings that think."***

Antonio Damasio,  
Professor of Neuroscience,  
University of California

**Here's how you can harness the power of the 5 senses to captivate your attendees.**

## SEEING IS BELIEVING

Nothing captures attention more effectively than beautiful visuals. Design a truly stunning event environment by using dynamic stage design brought to life via captivating motion graphics, stunning lighting, precision projection, and immersive styling.

An event which greatly captures the attention of the audience through their sight, makes the event memorable by enhancing the ability of the audience to recollect specific moments. Often, this is because those things which they see are simply spectacular or evoke strong emotions in them that last. An obvious example is VIVID Sydney which features mesmerising outdoor lighting sculptures and installations. Below are a number of examples on how you can use visual elements and technology to stimulate the sense of sight.

**1. STAGE DESIGN**

Your stage is more than a platform, it's an event feature. Stage set design can be the difference between a good event and a great one. Create unforgettable event experiences by designing a stage that moves beyond the presentation, speaker or performance - and becomes a feature in itself.

- 1. Create shapes to project on to using Digital Banners and Widescreens
- 2. Stage design with hexagonal panels
- 3. Styling the set with 2D & 3D Scenic Panels
- 4. Create a cinematic experience with Mega Curved Screens



**2. PROJECTION MAPPING**

Harness the power of cutting edge projection mapping techniques to create visual illusions that will stay in your participants' memory long after your event is over. Thanks to advances in technology, projection mapping has many more uses and has become much more affordable. It's no longer reserved for huge Disney-sized budgets but is within the reach of a much more budget conscious venue or event manager.



**Projection Mapping for Stage Design**

Inspired by the AHA NSW's geometric logo elements, we built a custom stage comprised of a 20m projection set interspersed with coloured acrylic panels. We brought the set to life using state-of-the-art projection mapping to create a digital backdrop for the opening video and multimedia. The result was a dynamic, impactful 3D canvas for content delivery.



**Feature Projection Mapping**

A once-in-a-lifetime dining experience for 100 VIPs at the Dom Pérignon Lumiere Dinner. Using twelve high definition projectors, plate settings were brought to life with creative custom animation projected to align perfectly between cutlery and plate settings. Each course was punctuated by a different light show, projected onto the tables.

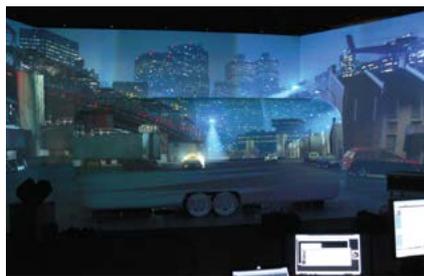
### 3. MOTION GRAPHIC CONTENT

Event planners have unlimited possibilities in content creation thanks to advances in animation and motion graphic technology. Motion graphics and animation is one of the biggest trends in event technology. After all, if a picture says a thousand words, then a video says a million more. It illustrates the core concepts of your brand message and tells your story in a way that captivates and entices audiences. A video engages your audience, gives a personal insight into the business and in turn generates leads.

Designing your stage set with motion content videos in mind will ensure your on-screen content is delivered with maximum impact. In general, wide screen formats suit this content best such as creating stunning vistas projected content onto mega wide curved screens. This creates a cinematic like experience which can transport your guests to the location you're creating in the video.

### 4. IMMERSIVE STYLING

With the ever increasing role technology plays in the way events are brought to life, over the last few years we have been moving away from 2D cut-out props and conventional sit down dinners in favour of interactive, dynamic and content-based theming. These are called 'Immersive Events' that move beyond theming to using technology in designing a cohesive look across all event elements.



#### AlienWare product launch

Our team embarked on a path to take the audience on a journey to the alien planet through digital content, projection, pyrotechnics, actors and lighting. This event required the collaboration between the client's 3D animated content perfectly mapped with our 3D projection design.



#### AHA gala dinner, Pan Pacific Perth

Beautiful multimedia was produced by our team depicting ink being poured into water and transformed into visual art for a gala dinner. They delivered a creative concept which combined their creativity with industry-leading technology. The guests were impressed by the swirling, fluid graphics, an abstract idea, evoking ambient energy and emotion in a unique way. The vision was projected onto a modular set that created a 3D canvas for the multimedia.



#### Wizard of Oz themed gala ball

Every element was themed perfectly to create Brisbane Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust spectacular. From the amazing projections to the imaginative styling, every aspect of the event transported guests down the yellow brick road. The entrance was brought to life with Dorothy's House and iconic ruby slippers, and even a simulated hurricane using dramatic lighting and sound effects. Impeccable detail in the décor created a visual feast.



#### Capital S.M.A.R.T. conference

Staging Connections worked with Capital S.M.A.R.T to bring their '007 Bond' theme to life. This theme was integrated throughout every aspect and acted as the creative 'glue' tying everything together in one cohesive message across the multi-venue event.

## 5. LIGHTING

Great lighting and special lighting effects are the foundations for appealing to the sense of sight. It is so much more than just putting a spotlight on your performer or a few stage lights here and there. Lighting creates ambience, displays video content and can be used to highlight architectural elements or styling pieces to build a visual experience that will leave your guests in awe. You can also use lighting to direct your guests' attention to events going on within a show, or to grab their attention on speakers or items you need to reveal.



### LED Lights

LEDs or Light Emitting Diodes are 10 times brighter than their tungsten equivalent, which means they're perfect for events where there are lots of ambient light or at outdoor events. Using a combination of red, green, blue and white LEDs, you can electronically control the mix to create any desired colour.



### Uplighting

Uplighting is a great way to create an atmosphere at your event. Rooms can look bland if you do not use perimeter lighting. This is especially important for a plain venue, empty ballroom or conference centre where you may need to build ambience with more lighting and decor. It's a great way to tie in a brand or theme colour and create an impact for your guests entering the room.



### Pin Lighting

Fixed or moving Pin lighting is an excellent way to direct attention to certain parts of your event. Using a spotlight to create a dramatic effect transforms centrepieces, decor elements and table settings into incredible pieces of art. Pin lights add drama to your event lighting and also provide separation that is often needed between dark table linens and centrepieces, allowing the centrepieces to pop and stand out. Pin lighting will make your event design a more dynamic visual experience.



### Branded Lighting: Gobos

The name is basically short for 'Goes Between' or 'Goes Before Optics'. Gobos are great for communicating your brand or event message in an eye-catching way. Depending on their design they can also be used to help theme an event. Using a branded gobo, the Adelaide Crows' logo and their tagline 'We Fly As One', was projected across iconic Adelaide buildings, the Adelaide Oval and its surrounding footpath and even trees.



### Lighting that moves: Kinetic Lighting

Event lighting doesn't always have to be fixed. Our Melbourne team developed a unique moving lighting installation for the 2015 Million Dollar Lunch fundraising event. The glowing Yo-Yo LED balls moved on a vertical axis via motorised controllers programmed via our primary control system from our GrandMA desk, to align the internal LED's with a sequencing colour changing, that created a kinetic chandelier piece unlike anything else.

## MAKE SOME NOISE

Create sound scapes that evoke powerful memories. Whether you're creating a gala atmosphere, delivering a professional conference or revving up the crowd, clear and well-balanced sound is vital.

The primacy importance of sound in everyday life is obvious to everyone, yet the process of creating an aural presence at an event with excellent results is not widely understood outside of technical circles. It may not have the visual spectacular presence of a huge projection screen or complicated lighting show but there is a lot going on that cannot be seen – but is definitely heard.

Generate the emotions you want your audience to feel at specific times during an event by strategically planning your music. [A recent report by BrainStrength Systems™ and PSAV suggests](#) that well-chosen entrance music can set the right mood for the meeting. During brainstorming or problem-solving sessions, light classical music speeds up thought, while music related to the conference topic can also be used to introduce activities or illustrate key points, creating immediate recognition and adding to the meaning of the event.

Nothing is more pleasant than having the right kind of sounds or music at an event. You want to create the perfect mood for your attendees – not irritate them, make them yell or struggle to hear.

Whether it's creating an atmosphere, delivering a polished onstage interview, or a professional multimedia presentation, perfectly balanced audio is vital for a successful event.

## TO TOUCH IS TO CONNECT

The skin is the body's largest organ and the source of our vital sense of touch – so make sure you use it in your events. Touching something creates a real connection. In an event, your audience will definitely see and listen to many different things, however, these may not be remembered in entirety. Let them touch something and it is a different story.

When people use their hands, their sense of touch is engaged and they tend to remember what they touch (and see in the process) more clearly. Unknowingly, your brand/corporate image becomes strengthened. And that's where our latest interactive technology comes in. First made available in smartphones, the trend for ultra-responsive surfaces has accelerated and can now be incorporated into events. Nothing gets your audience more involved than engagement via polling, interactive presentations and screens, event apps, gesture control and of course their personal mobiles.

Of course, there are many ways you can introduce a sense of touch, such as tactile styling elements, textured decorative panels, interactive technologies or even physical activities. Think about the tactile aspects of the props, decor, furniture and other physical objects at your event and how they will make it memorable.

***“Our five senses act as biological learning portals, with all information and stimuli entering our brains through those doors. So the more of the brain that's activated, the more easily learning occurs and the more likely we are to retain what we learned. Human brains crave unique multi-sensory experiences.”***

London & Partners, Official  
London Convention Bureau



### Make Q&A Fun!

SpeakUp! is Staging Connections fun, soft throw-able microphone - our latest audio product available. Make your next conference, presentation, large meeting or lecture more fun and engaging with our microphone specifically designed to increase audience participation.

Staging Connections offer services that allow for interaction during your exhibition or event like touch screens and Touch Kiosk technology. You can use these touch screens for presentations or quizzes, encouraging your guests to participate and get actively involved. The sense of touch is particularly important for attendees who are Kinesthetic learners - who actually need to physically do or touch the activity to learn it.

From textural styling elements to the latest in interactive technology - there are a myriad of ways to engage your attendees' sense of touch at events.

### 1. STYLING

There are many ways styling services can introduce a sense of touch, such as tactile elements, fabrics or textured decorative panels. Think about the tactile aspects of the props, decor, furniture and other physical objects at your event and how they will make it memorable.

### 2. LIVE AUDIENCE POLLING

Event Poll allows you to ask attendees' their opinion, get live feedback on hot topics and see everyone connecting with the content. Say goodbye to traditional event data and hello to the new frontier of data mining – event insights in real time. Even those who do not have a smart phone can join in via SMS, so audience members find it almost impossible not to participate.

### 3. INTERACTIVE PRESENTATIONS

Gone are the days of PowerPoint. With Intel-Touch you can turn a flat presentation into a dynamic microsite with full interactivity. The cutting-edge presentation software allows you to access everything you need for your presentation with the touch of the screen.

### 4. EVENT APPS

Event apps are ideal for the busy event planner. They allow you to swiftly upload and communicate everything from agendas, seating charts, speaker bios, news, document downloads, to sponsorship information and much more. Say goodbye to endless print-outs and hello to Event Briefcase: your event in the palm of your hand. Staging Connections event app is free for those using our events services, [click for more information](#).



Textural elements engaged the sense of touch with the centrepieces at the Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust gala ball.



Event apps make it simple and convenient for attendees to access important information anywhere, at anytime. All at the touch of a button.



Touch Kiosk was used to engage spectators in Hobart for the Sydney to Hobart yacht Race. The interactive screen displayed trivia to promote tourism to the area.



Paint stroke motions were used to reveal the 'Colour of the Year' for the Asian Paints Conference. Each hand movement automatically displayed the information on screen.

## SERVE UP A TASTY EXPERIENCE

Food is an extremely important part of a meeting or event. After all, who does not crave delicious food? Menus bring to life an organiser's theme through the imaginative presentation of dishes, smells and ingredients.

Matching the menu to your message or theme could be the simplest yet most impactful way to enhance your event. However, it is often overlooked in the event planning phase as other considerations are prioritised.

We all remember a really fantastic meal, or a really terrible one. The food you present can be just as much a part of your event theme as all the other elements. Think modern Australian for an international sales incentive; French delicacies for a burlesque theme; ribs and burgers are perfect for a taste of the Wild West and noodles and Asian delights for a Chinese New Year theme.

More practically, many attendees have a dietary preference, and making sure they are well taken care of shows you really care. Attendees remember that.



Pop-art inspired desserts for a Vintage Super Hero theme



Traditional Australian tucker for an Australian themed incentive



Colourful sweets and canapés served for a Mad Hatters Tea Party

## SHOW AND SMELL

Smell, another sense which often takes a backseat to sight and sound during event planning, can be an extremely powerful tool in making your event experience more memorable to your audience. It has been found that odour-evoked autobiographical memory describes the vivid emotional memories often triggered by various scents because scents are much more effective as reminders of our experiences compared to other senses like sight or sound. In fact, the power of scents is precisely the basis behind aromatherapy's effectiveness in inducing deep physical and emotional responses.

So, try scenting conference sessions, to trigger positive emotions in participants. Smell is the only sense that actually has a direct connection to our body's limbic system, which is the area of the brain that processes memories and emotions, because it gets routed through our olfactory bulbs. Moreover, our bodies contain much more smell receptors (at least 1,000) compared with those for other senses like sight (four). Aromatic flowers, foliage or even spices are simple ways in which you can introduce scents to your event.

Additionally, scented events are more dynamic and enjoyable than unscented ones because ambient scenting improves guest experience, ambiance and improves memory recall of your special event. Consider incorporating a fragrance into your next event with an ambient event scenting solutions as well as our other scented solutions such as scented printing - why not scent invitations, menus or other printed materials?

***"A brand with a scented logo has a 65% chance of being remembered by a customer after a year, while an unscented brand has a 50% chance of being forgotten within the first 3 months."***

Sense of Smell Institute, reported on [Scent Australia](#)

Using scent as a form of marketing during an event offers numerous benefits to customers and the audience, including the ability to enhance the theme you are trying to portray in your event by evoking deep emotional instincts and responses, decreasing their stress levels and helping to raise their mental performance and perceived impression of your corporate brand. Above all, much research has recognised scent's ability to be an effective branding channel even at subtle levels. This means that if there are two companies with similar profiles hosting similar events, the one which used scent during the event would be more easily remembered and distinguished compared to the other.

#### Ideas for using scent

- Native Australian flora and foliage for the Australian themed incentive
- Custom oil diffusers created for hotels to create their signature scent
- Spices / cinnamon fragrance dispensers for a Arabian Nights themed show
- The scent of pine and wood for an enchanted forest
- Delicious spices for Bollywood or the scent of salty sea air for a beach theme

#### Brands that use scent

- The Body Shop sprayed strawberry essence on the sidewalk leading up to their first shop in order to attract the public's attention. - [Scent Australia](#)
- Abercrombie & Fitch made a strong impact by diffusing a Signature Scent. Returning customers can elicit a number of fond memories from past shopping experiences there, which allows the company to draw a lot more traffic to their stores. - [Scent Australia](#)

## IT MAKES SENSE

As humans, we have been given the five senses that enable us to experience the world in a myriad of ways. It's really up to you as an event planner to decide how you want to take your attendees on a journey.

It's by appealing to the full range of feelings and senses of events participants, that you can greatly increase the chances of them learning and remembering your content. Through providing your participants with fully immersive experiences, incorporating sight, sound, smell, taste and touch, the messages conveyed at conferences, product launches and presentations become so much more memorable and effective.

## MORE INFO

Staging Connections is a leading event services provider who can help bring these sensory stimulating ideas to life. With over 35 years experience delivering extraordinary experiences we have the ideas, technology and talent to make your event vision a reality. Therefore it makes sense to speak to the experts when planning your next event.

Talk to your local Staging Connections representative or get in touch by emailing [info@stagingconnections.com](mailto:info@stagingconnections.com) or call **1800 209 099** (AU) or **+64 9 259 0025** (NZ).