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AI analysis

The Power Alignment: How MDs, CTOs & CMOs Unite to Future-Proof Events with Tech

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CEO & Co-founder at Evessio

Rachael Miller
Digital Delivery & Development Director, Digital Transformation, at William Reed

Robin Booth
Managing Director at emap

Sophie Eke
Chief Marketing Officer at Arc Europe

Moderator: Matt Coyne
Host & Content at Waves Connects

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Summary

The session delved into how MDs, CTOs, and CMOs can collaborate effectively to future-proof events with technology. The discussion began with the acknowledgement that choosing the right technology is no longer the primary challenge; rather, aligning leadership, strategy, and operations is crucial. It was highlighted that customer expectations have increased significantly, necessitating quicker decision-making and technology deployment. The panellists agreed that focusing on customer alignment rather than internal alignment is key, with technology serving as a delivery service to product owners rather than a strategic tool in itself.

Gary Clement emphasised the importance of collaboration between technology providers and event organisers. He noted that technology is now integral to event management and highlighted the need for seamless integration of pre-event, in-event, and post-event data to enhance visitor experiences. Rachael Miller discussed the challenges of achieving internal alignment and the necessity of having specialised teams to manage complex technology. She stressed the importance of setting clear roles and responsibilities to ensure successful technology adoption and continuous improvement.

Robin Booth argued against the necessity of internal alignment, stating that the focus should be on customer alignment. He suggested that big, expensive projects are no longer viable and advocated for lean and agile approaches. Booth also pointed out that customer service-driven chatbots and AI tools can significantly improve operational efficiency and customer experience, citing examples of successful AI implementations in event management, such as live session summaries and automated customer queries.





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The panel discussed the issue of data flow and the importance of connecting disparate data sources into a centralised system for better personalisation and segmentation. Rachael Miller mentioned ongoing efforts to integrate data to enhance customer and sponsor experiences, while Booth highlighted the advantages of using purchased technology over in-house development to avoid scope creep and ensure scalability.

Regarding AI, the panellists agreed that it offers exciting opportunities for innovation, particularly in marketing and operations. Examples included personalised marketing campaigns and live session summaries, which have positively impacted customer engagement and operational efficiency. Robin Booth emphasised the experimental nature of AI implementations, suggesting that while many initiatives are still in the pilot phase, they hold significant potential for future integration.

In conclusion, the session underscored the importance of focusing on customer experience and leveraging technology to meet evolving expectations. The panellists recommended adopting agile approaches, collaborating closely with technology providers, and continuously experimenting with new tools to stay ahead in the rapidly changing landscape. They also cautioned against rigid five-year plans, advocating for flexibility and readiness to adapt to unforeseen changes, particularly in the context of AI advancements.

Takeaways

Focus on customer alignment over internal alignment

Robin Booth argued that internal alignment is often impractical and unnecessary. Instead, organisations should prioritise aligning their technology and strategies with customer needs. This approach ensures that technology serves its primary purpose of enhancing customer experiences and meeting evolving expectations.

Leverage AI for operational efficiency and enhanced customer experience

The panellists provided examples of successful AI implementations, such as live session summaries and automated customer queries. These tools can significantly improve operational efficiency and customer engagement. Continuous experimentation with AI can lead to innovative solutions that enhance both the attendee experience and organisational productivity.

Adopt agile approaches and collaborate with technology providers

Gary Clement and Rachael Miller emphasised the importance of specialised teams and clear roles for managing complex technology projects. Collaborating closely with technology providers ensures seamless integration and scalability. Agile methods allow organisations to quickly adapt to changes and continuously improve their technology stack to meet customer demands.



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