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AI analysis

AI as the Catalyst: Personalization at Scale in the Event Space

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Summary

The session delved into the transformative role of AI in personalizing event experiences at scale. Ken Madden, the SVP and Head of Technology & Innovation at George P. Johnson Experience Marketing, shared his insights on how AI is revolutionising the event space by enabling hyper-personalized experiences for attendees. Madden highlighted the shift in event technology investments due to the pandemic, resulting in a significant increase in event tech teams and platforms. He emphasised the importance of generative AI in creating personalised and engaging experiences, providing examples from major events like Dreamforce and Google Next.

Madden noted that personalization has become ubiquitous in the event industry, yet its definition varies widely. He shared his experiences from Dreamforce 2018, where his team pitched five ideas for a personalized event journey, ultimately implementing only one due to the complexity involved. The successful launch of Dreamforce Navigator demonstrated the potential of AI-driven personalization, despite the challenges in developing such technologies. Madden's recounting of these experiences underscored the importance of strategic planning and the need for robust technological infrastructure to achieve meaningful personalization.

The speaker discussed the current state of personalization at events, citing examples of AI-driven experiences that enhance attendee engagement. These included personalized latte art at Google Cloud Next and narrative layering in IBM's table tennis experience. He explained how generative AI can create unique, memorable experiences by layering different modes of AI, such as visual, text, and audio, to provide real-time feedback and interaction. Madden argued that while these technologies are still in their infancy, they hold immense potential for transforming event experiences.





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Madden highlighted three key factors driving the adoption of AI in the event space: the increased importance of event tech investments post-pandemic, the proliferation of accessible event tech platforms, and the emergence of generative AI. He emphasised that the real challenge lies not in the availability of these technologies but in their meaningful application to enhance attendee experiences. Madden encouraged event organisers to experiment with AI tools and learn from these experiences to create more engaging and personalised events.

The session also included a live demo of a session personalizer tool, showcasing how AI can tailor event content to individual preferences. Despite technical difficulties, Madden demonstrated the potential of AI to generate personalized session abstracts based on attendee profiles. This tool exemplified the practical application of AI in enhancing the relevance and engagement of event content, highlighting the ease of implementation and the power of AI-driven personalization.

In conclusion, Madden stressed the importance of understanding the attendee journey and aligning personalization efforts with business objectives. He advised event organisers to focus on the strategic application of AI technologies, rather than getting overwhelmed by the plethora of available tools. By thoughtfully integrating AI into event planning and execution, organisers can create more meaningful and impactful experiences for attendees. The session underscored the transformative potential of AI in the event space and encouraged a forward-thinking approach to leveraging these technologies.

Takeaways

AI-driven personalization is becoming essential in the event space

Ken Madden highlighted how AI enables hyper-personalized experiences for attendees, making events more engaging and relevant. The shift in event technology investments post-pandemic has accelerated the adoption of AI tools, allowing for more innovative and memorable event experiences.

The successful application of AI requires strategic planning and robust infrastructure

Madden's recounting of his experiences at Dreamforce underscored the complexities involved in implementing AI-driven personalization. He emphasised the need for strategic planning and technological infrastructure to achieve meaningful personalization, highlighting the importance of understanding the attendee journey and aligning efforts with business objectives.

Experimentation and learning are crucial for leveraging AI in events

Madden encouraged event organisers to experiment with AI tools and learn from these experiences to enhance attendee engagement. He demonstrated practical applications of AI through a live demo, showcasing the ease of implementation and the transformative potential of AI-driven personalization in creating more impactful event experiences.



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