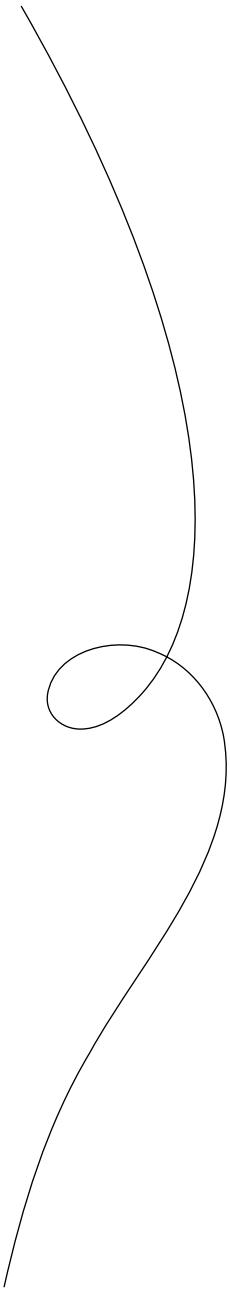


Executive Summary

In-person event networking is no longer a side benefit, it's the primary driver of event value for organizers, attendees, and sponsors alike. Our 2025 survey of 300+ event professionals, attendees, and sponsors reveals a shared truth; people want better, more intentional connections and they're willing to prioritize the events that help them make those connections.

For organizers, networking isn't just a nice-to-have, it's a strategic imperative. 87% of organizers say networking is very important to the success of their in-person events, and another 11% call it somewhat important. Most are actively encouraging attendee networking, yet many still face challenges with execution: 42% say attendee engagement with networking features remains low or very low, revealing a gap between intention and impact.



87%

of organizers say networking is very important to the success of their in-person events

Attendees, meanwhile, are showing up with clear goals and expectations. Nearly half (46%) say they attend between 1-4 in-person B2B conferences annually, and another 41% attend between 5-9. But only 53% say those events include structured networking tools or opportunities, leaving many to navigate connections on their own. While 39% describe themselves as outgoing and eager to engage with others at events, the rest report a more selective approach, either based on event goals or a personal preference for one-on-one interactions. This range of preferences highlights the need for more flexible, inclusive networking formats.

92%

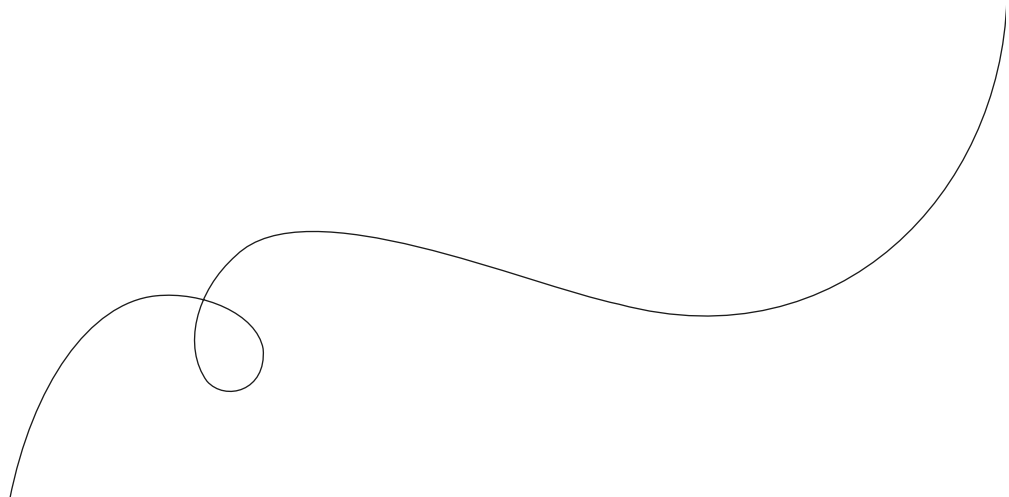
of attendees followed up with someone they met through a networking feature

34%

of attendees note that nothing ever came of the interaction

Despite these challenges, attendees are making the effort to build relationships. An overwhelming 92% say they've followed up with someone they met through a networking feature in an event app, but 34% also note that nothing ever came of the interaction. This points to a broader need for better matchmaking, more seamless follow-up tools, and stronger alignment between event content and connection opportunities.

Sponsors and exhibitors are rethinking their approach to networking as well. 84% say that attendee networking is important to achieving their event goals, and their strategies are shifting to match. More than half (57%) now prioritize branded experiences, like happy hours, curated dinners, or invite-only roundtables, over traditional booth space, in pursuit of more meaningful engagement. Another 24% say they still do both, but that experiential formats are proving more effective and are being actively prioritized. As sponsors seek more tailored opportunities to connect, many are also turning to technology: 47% report using digital tools to support networking, though 33% say those tools still leave room for improvement.



While networking remains a top priority across all three personas, clear challenges persist: engagement is inconsistent, discovery is fragmented, and impact is difficult to measure. Just 30% of sponsors say they're able to consistently identify high-quality leads, and despite 71% feeling confident in their ability to measure event success, 23% still cite poor booth traffic as a major obstacle, while 20% struggle with limited access to attendee data.

Still, there's clear momentum toward improvement. Across the board, event professionals are embracing more curated, tech-enabled networking experiences that emphasize quality over quantity. From AI-powered matchmaking and flexible meeting formats to enhanced pre-event access and real-time insights, the industry is leaning into innovation to create better, more valuable connections.

This report explores how networking is being perceived, prioritized, and delivered across the events landscape today and where there's opportunity to evolve the experience for everyone involved.

84%

of sponsors say that attendee networking is important to achieving their event goals

57%

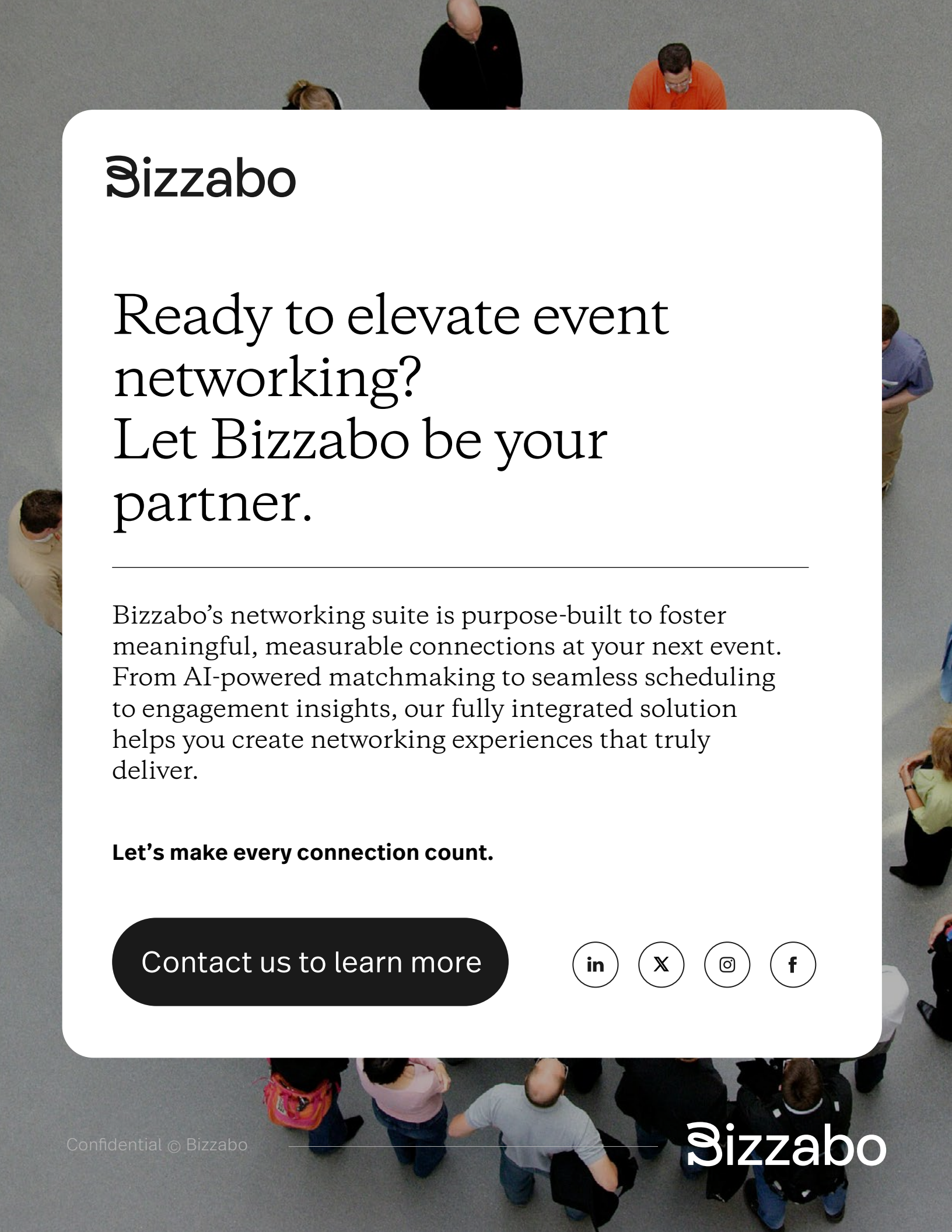
of sponsors now prioritize branded experiences like happy hours, curated dinners, or invite-only roundtables over traditional booth space

47%

of sponsors report using digital tools to support networking

Want to discover industry benchmarks and event trends for 2025?

[Download our 2025 State of Events and Industry Benchmarks report](#)

An aerial, top-down view of a crowd of people at what appears to be a conference or networking event. The people are scattered across a light-colored floor, some standing in small groups, others walking. The image is used as a background for the advertisement.

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