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1 INITIAL SITUATION

1.1 The Importance of Conferences

Meetings and conferences are important as opportunities: to exchange experiences and ideas; gain new skills and cutting-edge knowledge that can lead to promotions; see innovation on display (often before they are widely available in the marketplace); meet experts and influencers, and network with others that can lead to new customers or suppliers. Participating in conferences – such as by serving as a speaker or on a panel discussion – can help raise awareness of your company, product or service, and lead to new sales. They are also an opportunity break out of your comfort zone by trying new work-related ideas. They are also an opportunity to have fun but they have to be interesting and deliver value in order to encourage people to attend next year.

Meetings also serve to promote international understanding because events reflect national and international developments and set impulses in political, economic, scientific and social areas.

The German Convention Bureau (GCB) researches the future of meetings because Germany is a leading destination for interesting and successful meetings and conferences. In its 2018 annual list, the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA), Germany ranked first for the 14th consecutive time among European conference and meeting destinations. (As in previous years, Germany ranked second overall behind the U.S.A.) Germany thus holds a leading position as a destination for conferences, meetings and events. Around three million events with over 400 million participants took place in Germany in 2017.

1.2 Megatrends Shape the Industry

In 2013, the GCB German Convention Bureau e. V., together with its partners, published the study "Conference and Congress of the Future." This analysis identified five megatrends highly relevant for the meetings and conventions industry: The mechanization of working and living environments; followed by the megatrends of globalization and internationalization; mobility; sustainable development; and demographic change.



In particular, the megatrend of advancing technology and digitization will shape and challenge the meeting industry in a wide variety of areas until 2030. Examples of this are information and data security, new forms of knowledge transfer, virtual conference units and the networking of virtual spaces, and increased participation by participants or human-machine interfaces. At the same time, conference organizers must take human needs into account despite advancing technology.

1.3 The Future Meeting Space Innovation Network

The "Future Meeting Space" innovation network launched in 2015 as a continuation of the Future Study and the GCB's digital strategy. Our aim is to systematically anticipate relevant developments in the meetings and conferences industry in order to determine indications of future organizational, technological and spatial requirements. By not only highlighting developments and opportunities, but also by providing clear recommendations for action, the "Future Meeting Space" project represents an important driving force in the further development of the industry.

1.3.1 The Organizers

The GCB German Convention Bureau e.V., and the EVVC European Association of Event Centres e.V., together with the Fraunhofer-Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO, form the core team of the Innovation Network. In the Future Meeting Space innovation network, we work together with other research partners, to scientifically examine developments in the meetings and conferences industry.

The GCB German Convention Bureau e.V. represents Germany as the world's leading and sustainable conference and meetings destination. It supports its members and partners in the international and national marketing of their products and services and acts as a driving force for the industry. The approximately 170 members represent over 430 companies and are among the leading hotels, congress centers, locations, municipal marketing organizations, event agencies and service providers from the German meetings and conference industry. As strategic partners, Deutsche Lufthansa, Deutsche Bahn and the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) support the work of the GCB.



The EVVC European Association of Event-Centres e.V. represents around 750 event centers, conference centers, arenas and special event locations of all sizes in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and other European countries. Event planners and suppliers complete the spectrum and make the EVVC the most versatile network in the industry. The main tasks of the EVVC are to inform, advice and promote its members in a professional network that also offers an ideal



communication platform. Important topics of the association are also the development of education and training in the industry, the preparation of industry-relevant key figures and communication with political representatives to represent the interests of the meeting and congress industry.



As part of the Fraunhofer-Association e. V., the Fraunhofer-Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO belongs to the largest organization for applied science in Europe. The central task of the Fraunhofer-Association is "research for practice" in close cooperation with clients from industry and the public sector in order to advance the innovation process and the development of key technologies.

1.3.2 Project Structure

As consortium leaders, the GCB and EVVC, along with the Fraunhofer IAO as the project execution and the research partners, we form a complementary team from science and practice to address the challenges of the increasing intensity of competition in the conference and congress industry.

The research partners who support the project with their research contributions and their respective expertise are:

- KFP Five Star Conference Service GmbH
- SevenCenters of Germany
- Tourism NRW e. V.
- Panasonic Marketing Europe GmbH
- Sennheiser electronic GmbH & Co. KG
- VDE e. V. Conference Service in cooperation with m:con – mannheim:congress GmbH
- Education Foundation of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)

Project Management

Organisation and management



Research meetings
Best practice visits
Networking

Project Processing

Conception and processing of the research topics



Project Partners

Participation in research meetings, transfer to the company and contribution of specialist knowledge



"Future Meeting Space"
innovation network.
Project structure.

1.3.3 Objectives of the Innovation Network

Our overriding aim is to develop ideas, concepts and aids for the further development of the German meetings and conferences industry to expand the competitiveness and market position by demonstrating innovation leadership. In the Innovation Network, we see ourselves as industry pioneers for innovative scenarios and sustainable events. The following key questions accompanied the process:

- What steps should organizers, operators, investors, suppliers and service providers, as well as destinations, take to plan and organize successful events in the future?
- What are sustainable event formats and what new requirements arise from them?
- How do we ensure the human element is placed at the center of objectives?

In the Future Meeting Space innovation network, we have addressed the complexity of these questions – together with innovative technology companies, solution providers, forward-thinking organizers and destinations.

1.4 Review Phase 1

In the first project phase (January 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016), we analyzed current developments impacting the events market. Our first goal was to create an innovation catalogue covering the fields of society, didactics and methodology, technology, mobility and infrastructure – each with regard to and from the perspective of the conference and conferences industry.

Next, we conducted expert interviews focus groups as part of the research process, which resulted in the development of six innovative event scenarios. We summarized those findings in our Future Meeting Guide, which can be downloaded from www.future-meeting-space.com.

1.5 Phase 2

1.5.1 Objective Phase 2

In the second research phase, we examined success factors for events based on types of participants at events and criteria such as: the impact of different methodological and technological elements affects acceptance, and Knowledge transfer learning progress and experience value.

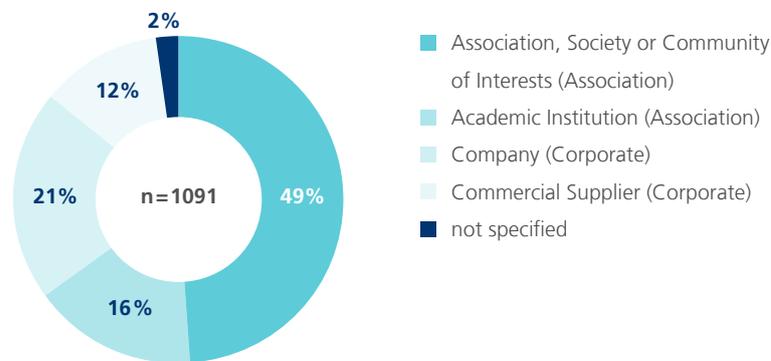
In the study, the participants described an event of their choice from the last twelve months and provided additional information on their own characteristics, preferences and individual behavior patterns.

1.5.2 Study Development

In a first explorative workshop, we identified personas with the research partners with the aim of identifying all necessary characteristics. Our aim was not only to record the classic socio-demographic data, but also to record characteristic behavior patterns of participants. In the process of creating the survey, we examined existing question constructs, tested and adapted them for their applicability in the context of our topic and established our own criteria. On this basis and on the basis of developed theses, we created a questionnaire with approximately 41 questions. After a pretest, we posted the new questionnaire online and promoted it to get user response. From September 2017 to June 2018, more than 1,100 event participants were surveyed retrospectively. (Retrospective means that survey participants described an event from the prior twelve months.) We chose this procedure in order to also be able to record the aftereffects (e. g. network formation).

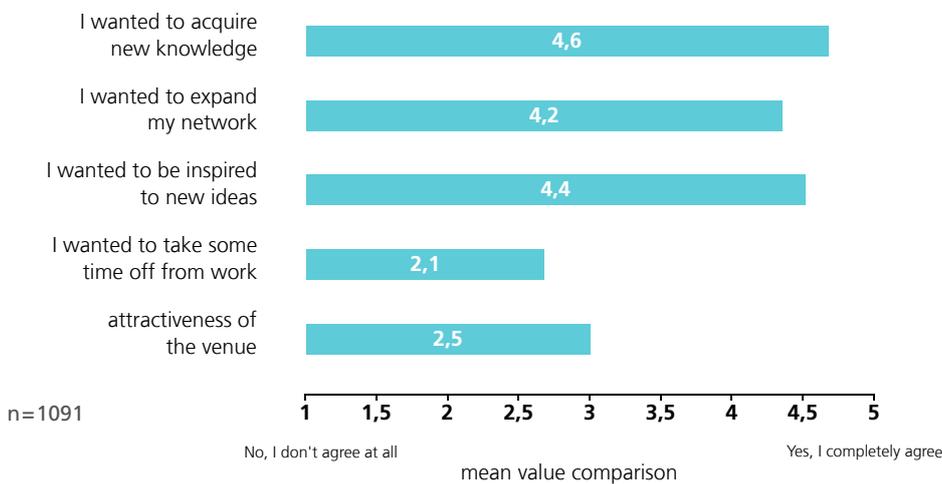
1.5.3 Participants of the Survey

The following section describes the distribution of survey participants according to gender, motivation to participate and other criteria.



*Evaluated/attended Events.
Who hosted the Events?*

Almost half (49 percent) of the organizers are associations, societies or communities of interest.



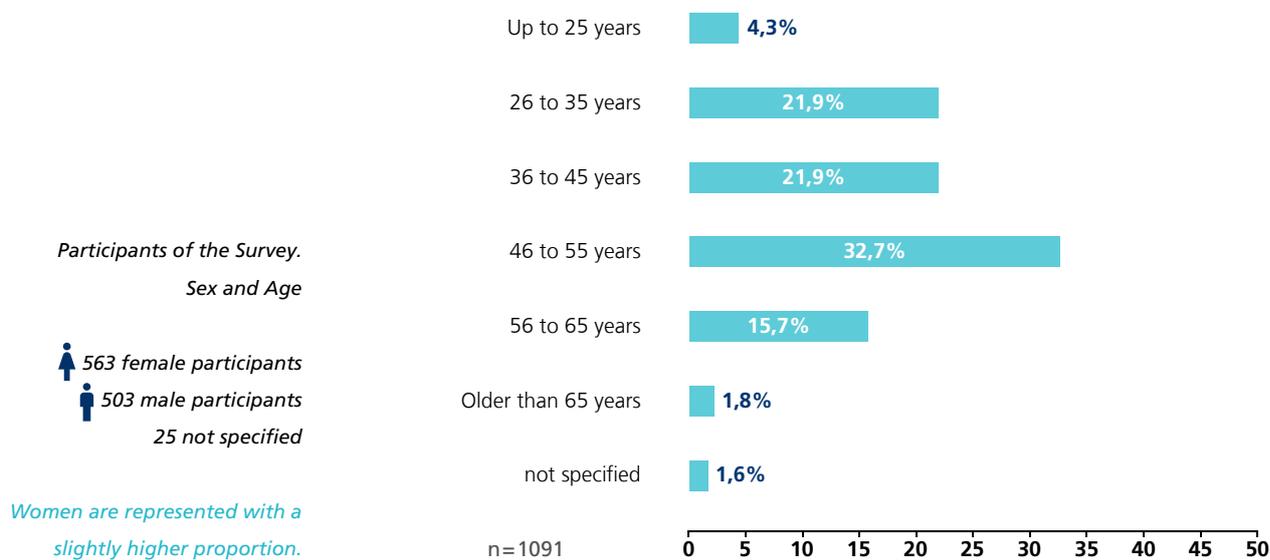
Motivation to participate in the Event.

Time off from work and the attractiveness of the venue play a secondary role in motivating people to attend events.

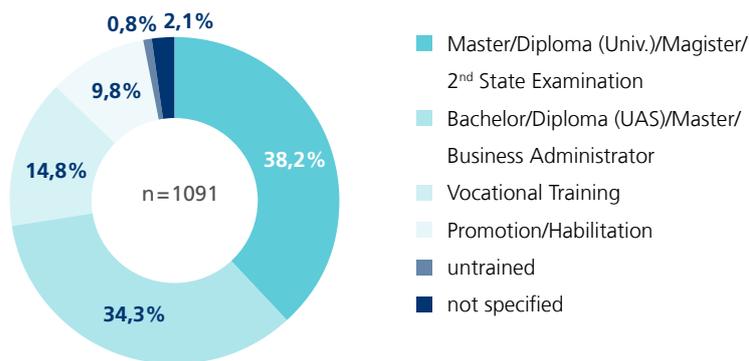
Almost half of the events considered were organized by associations, clubs or interest groups from the association sector. The second largest share accounted for companies as organizers, followed by scientific institutions and commercial providers.

INITIAL SITUATION

The motivation to participate in events clearly shows that our participants visit events primarily to gain new knowledge, to expand their network and to be stimulated to get new ideas. The trigger for attending a business event is less likely to use of time off from the workplace or the appeal of the business event location itself.



Slightly more women than men participated in the survey. People classified as Gen X (age 46 to 55) represented the largest age segment followed by Gen Y (age 26 to 35) and those aged 36 to 45 – important age demographics when looking at the future needs of meeting participants.



*Participants of the survey.
Level of education*

The vast majority of participants have an academic degree (> 80 percent).

With our study, we predominantly were able to reach academics, of whom 10 percent have a Ph.D. or have done post-doctoral work; nearly 40 percent have a master's degree or a comparable degree and about 35 percent have a bachelor's degree. Approximately 15 percent of the study participants have completed vocational training.



*Participants of the survey.
Positions in the organizations*

60 percent of the study participants are managers.

Given that 60 percent of the participants are managers, we successfully reached decision-makers with the study.

2 RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The main results of our study identified the following types of participants as well as key success factors.

2.1 Types of Participants



2.1.1 Criteria for Differentiating Participant Types

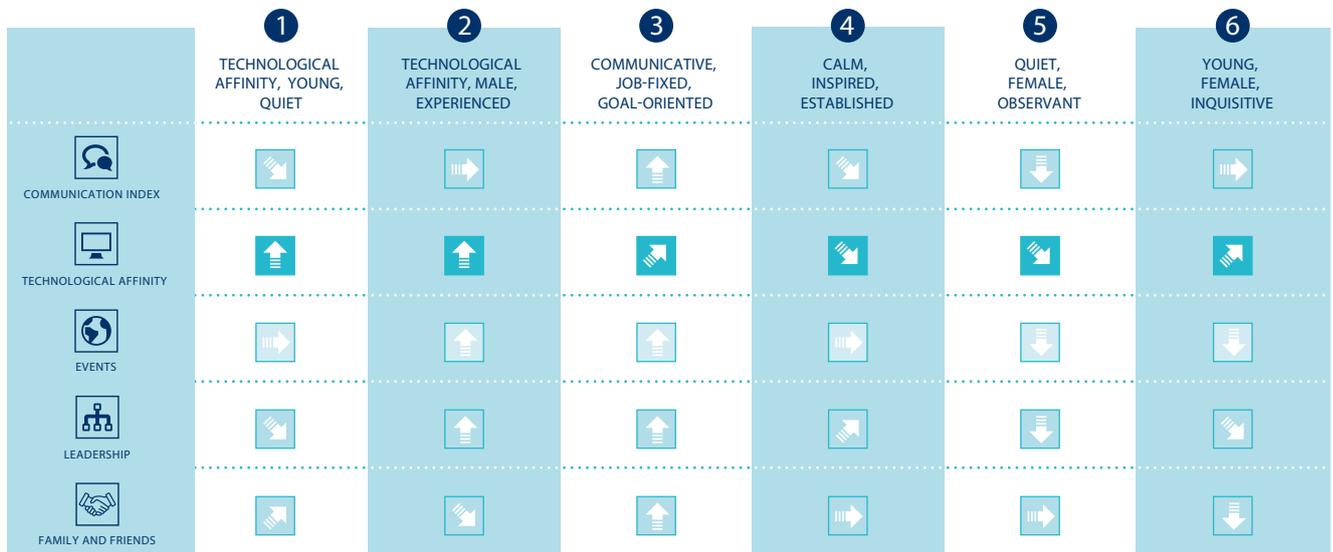
Using the statistical procedure of a cluster analysis, we categorized the data set into six participant types with the following five characteristic values:

- The communication index, which is made up of the two characteristics "activity" or "passivity" and the willingness of a person to communicate.
- The technical affinity of a participant which describes whether a person deals with new technologies early and intensively, i.e. belongs to the so-called early adopters.
- The position of the participant in the organizational hierarchy.
- The number of events attended in one year.
- Career orientation, which is measured by the question of whether family and friends often have to stand back for work.

Next, we wanted to obtain a more differentiated look at the more than 1,100 study participants so we could examine whether and how different event offerings are accepted by them and what they get from those events.

2.1.2 Profile of the Individual Types

In the following we briefly describe the identified types of participants. It should be noted, of course, that the naming of attributes in the profiles is always only a matter of the majority of the type and that some individual types can differentiate even further within their respective affiliations.



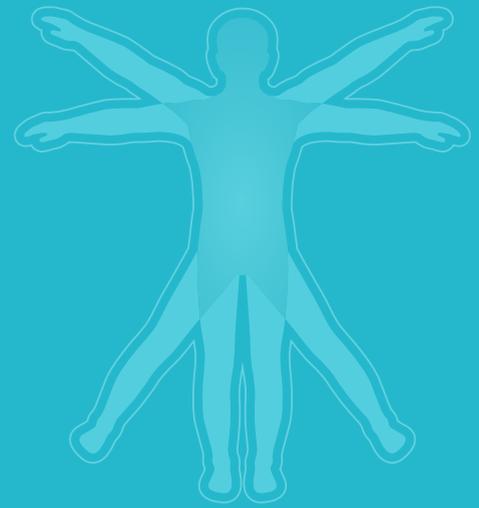
Overview of participant types

and their characteristics.

2.1.2.1 Type 1: Technological Affinity, Young, Quiet

Participant type 1 is characterized by a high technical affinity. It is rather a less communicative type and more often a "normal" employee or at the lower management level. Nevertheless, this person is also characterized by a stronger career orientation who attends an average number of events. Men and women are nearly equally represented. The data set contains younger participants who can be assigned to this type.

Participant type 1s typically attend digital and disruptive events. For this type, the attractiveness of an event location is more often the decisive factor than for the other types in the study. However, type 1s are also more likely to be inspired by new ideas and sees the use of media as an important added value of an event. At the events this type attends, type 1s use digital offers and come into contact with other participants via these digital offers. This also means that they will be able to conclude more concrete deals in the aftermath. They are also more likely to attend events which can be the real meeting of a virtual network and at which other participants are involved via live connections. This type could become even more important for events in the future, because they are digital, young and more likely at the beginning of their career.



2.1.2.2 Type 2: Technological Affinity, Male, Experienced

Participant type 2 is also characterized by a high technical affinity. Compared to type 1, this type very often attends events and is also often a sought-after speaker there. Despite more often serving as an event speaker, type 2s are only an average communicators. Type 2s often belongs to the middle and upper management levels of organizations. They tend to be a little older but are no longer as career-oriented as type 1s. With over 70 percent of this group, type 2s are more often a man who has earned a Ph.D.

Interestingly, over 20 percent of type 2s are self-employed or entrepreneurs. Frequently they participate in events on their own initiative or self-determined, but rarely to take a break from work. At the events attended by type 2s, discussions and results are also more frequently conducted and visualized in interactive formats.

2.1.2.3 Type 3: Communicative, Job-fixed, Goal-oriented

Participant type 3 is characterized in particular by a high communication index. Type 3s attend events very frequently where they also appear occasionally as speakers. In organizations, type 3s come from middle and senior management and are more likely to be found among older participants. They have a strong career orientation and are 60 percent more likely to be men with an academic degree compared to other participants in the survey. The technical affinity is high within this type and as with type 2, there is a high percentage of self-employed.

The participant type 3s network intensively at events, can expand their network better than other types, frequently change seats at social events and many other participants approach them. They attend a business event in a targeted manner, and taking time off from work is almost irrelevant to them. Particularly at specialist exhibitions, type 3s can discover many new and interesting things for themselves and subsequently integrate this new knowledge well into their everyday working life. Type 3s are more of interactive and in this way acquires more knowledge more easily.



2.1.2.4 Type 4: Calm, Inspired, Established

Participant type 4 can be found at all management levels. They have both a lower technical affinity and a low communication index and participates on an average amount of events per year. The career orientation of this rather older type is neither strong nor weak. Men and women are also almost equally represented in the data set for this type.

What is striking about type 4s, however, is that about 20 percent are self-employed and an above-average number have an academic degree. They rarely participate as a speaker at events. In addition, type 4s rarely take part in their own organization's events, but visits events offered or organized by others and is often inspired to new ideas there.

2.1.2.5 Type 5: Quiet, Female, Observant

The participant type 5 is predominantly – with 80 percent – female and has no leadership responsibility. Type 5s rarely attends events; if they do, it is as a silent participant without a high communication index or as a speaker. If they attend events, type 5s are more likely to be found at events of their own organization. In addition, type 5s indicate that they have a rather lower affinity for technology.

Career orientation is average for this type which is rather middle-aged, with a very high proportion of these participants having an academic degree. With over 20 percent, this type of employee has a strikingly high number of part-time employees in the data set.

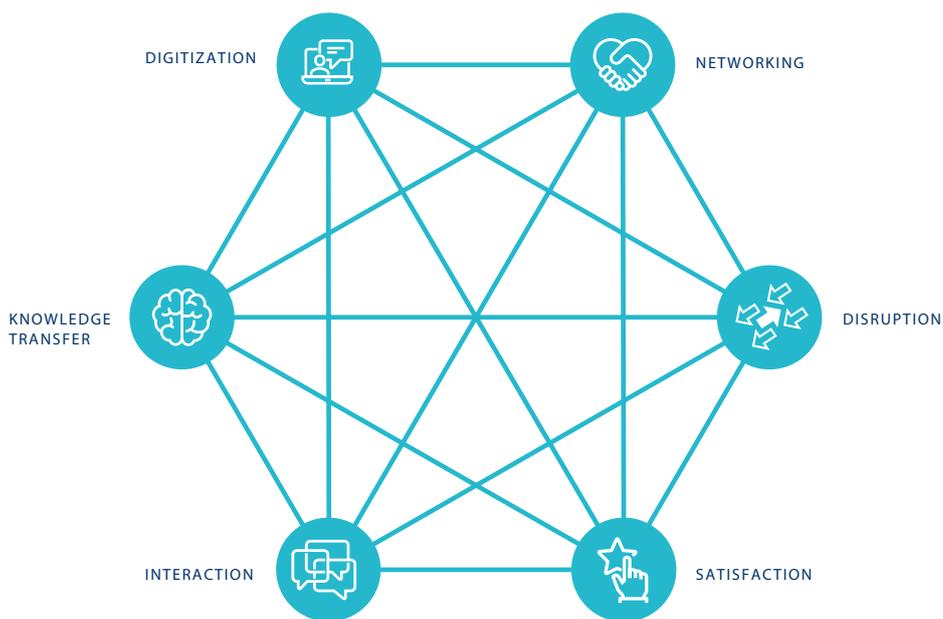
Participant type 5s rarely take part in events of their own free will; they are usually sent there. Nevertheless, they acquire comparatively more knowledge than the other types when participating.

2.1.2.6 Type 6: Young, Female, Inquisitive

Participant type 6 is also predominantly female (65 percent), has a low career orientation and attends significantly fewer events. Type 6s are more likely to be found at employee and team management level. They are an averagely intensive communicator, largely technophile and rather younger. Like type 5, type 6s are also conspicuously often an internal participant at an event, but can still be found from time to time as a speaker. Type 6s work full-time and have an academic degree.

Type 6s are rather satisfied at events, can be inspired, acquire easily more knowledge and discovers many new and interesting things at trade exhibitions accompanying the event. This type preferentially describes events at which the results are comprehensively visualized in interactive formats and at which other participants are integrated, e. g., through live broadcasts. This certainly – as described above – also contributes to his satisfaction.

2.2 Success Factors



Success Factors

To measure the success of events, the following indices describe individual success factors that were identified on the basis of different criteria during the course of the study project. Following the survey, the indices were then checked by means of a factor analysis.

2.2.1 Index Satisfaction



- 1 My expectations of the event were fully met.
- 2 During the event I was constantly motivated.
- 3 I was very enthusiastic about the event.
- 4 I can recommend the event without any restrictions.
- 5 The visit to the event was very worthwhile.

The Network Index consists of the following criteria.

The Satisfaction Index is formed from the following aspects, among others: 1) fulfilment of the participant's expectations of an event, 2) maintenance of the participant's motivation and enthusiasm during the course of the event, and 3) unrestricted recommendation of the event by the participant. The satisfaction survey can be regarded as classic because it is conducted at numerous events, albeit in different forms. The Satisfaction Index in the survey is fundamental to whether participants of an event felt that the visit was worthwhile and that their expectations had been fulfilled.

If these factors are taken into account, participants are fundamentally satisfied and recommend the event to others.

2.2.2 Index Knowledge Transfer



- 1 My knowledge has increased considerably as a result of the event.**
- 2 The event has massively increased my understanding of the topic.**
- 3 The event inspired me to come up with many new ideas.**
- 4 My interest in the content was clearly increased.**
- 5 I was able to use the new information very well in my daily work.**

The Knowledge Index consists of the following criteria.

In our study, the Knowledge Transfer Index turned out to be one of the most important indices, since the need to acquire new knowledge is one of the most relevant criteria for attending an event. The index describes how much a participant's knowledge has increased during an event, how much the understanding of the topic of the event has deepened and whether, and to what extent, the general interest in a topic has increased as a result of attending the event.

The use of the acquired knowledge is also a component of the index and is recorded via the two partial aspects of whether the event stimulated visitors to new ideas and whether they were able to use the information in their subsequent day-to-day work. These two aspects in particular make it clear why we decided in favor of a retrospective survey when designing the study concept, because the usability cannot always be assessed beyond doubt immediately after the conclusion of an event.

2.2.3 Index Networking



- 1 I was able to make many new contacts at the event.**
- 2 The participation was very enriching for my network.**
- 3 It was easy for me to get in touch with other participants.**
- 4 Numerous participants approached me.**
- 5 The exchange with other participants was an important enrichment for me.**

The Network Index consists of the following criteria.

Our Networking Index describes the extent to which participants interviewed were able to network with other participants at the event he described. In addition, the index indicates whether participants approached each other and whether participation in the event was really enriching for their own network.

For many people, the expansion of their own network is an important motivation for attending the event.

2.2.4 Index Interaction



- 1 I have intensively participated in the interactive formats.**
- 2 I visited a wide range of interactive formats.**
- 3 The interactive formats were highly inspiring.**
- 4 The interactive formats have greatly expanded my knowledge.**
- 5 Discussions and results of my interactive formats were comprehensively visualized.**

The Interaction Index consists of the following criteria.

The Interaction Index describes the offer of interactive formats within an event as well as the intensity with which the respondent participated in these interactive elements.

The Interaction Index also looked at whether the interactive formats could expand participants' knowledge of the event topic and whether these topics were inspiring. In addition, the index records and describes whether discussions and the results achieved were visualized in these interactive formats and thus made understandable and documented in a sustainable manner.

2.2.5 Index Digitization



- 1** Numerous geographically distant speakers were involved.
- 2** Speakers who were geographically distant were integrated very close to life (e.g., life-size, holographic).
- 3** Within the scope of the interactive formats, other participants were also intensively involved, e.g., via live connections.
- 4** The interaction between speakers and participants was digitally supported throughout (e.g., questions, comments and votes via apps).
- 5** Discussions and results of the interactive formats were visualized in real time, using digital tools.
- 6** Within the scope of the interactive formats, virtual tools (e.g., 3D visualizations and virtual reality) were used intensively.
- 7** Through digital offers (e.g., event app) I came into contact with very interesting other people.

The Digitization Index consists of the following criteria.

The Digitization Index summarizes the topics related to media and technologies. It describes whether the most modern virtual tools were used for interactive formats, and to what extent digital tools were used to visualize the displayed and developed content.

In order to achieve a high Digitization Index, speakers or other participants must be integrated as close to life as possible (e.g., via holography) at events both in interactive formats and in plenary sessions, e.g., via live broadcasts.

The index also describes the intensity of interaction between speakers and normal participants with digital tools as well as a digitally supported exchange between participants, e.g., via an event app.

2.2.6 Index Disruption



- 1 The event has changed me a lot.
- 2 The event partly surprised me.
- 3 The event triggered a strong sense of community.
- 4 The event will remain in my memory for a long time to come.

The Disruption Index consists of the following criteria.

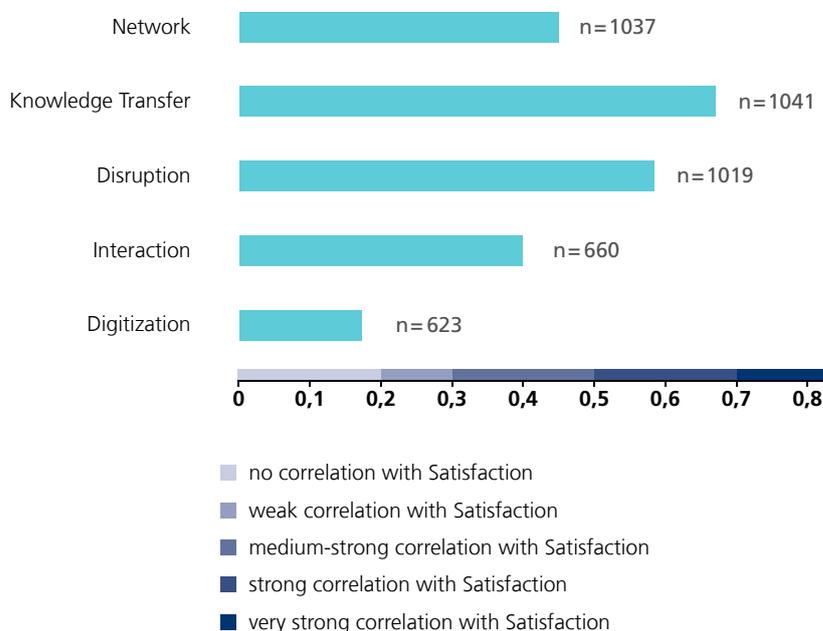
With the Disruption Index, we introduced a new approach to events in addition to the classic satisfaction survey. Our newly developed Disruption Index first describes whether an event attended by a participant could trigger a change for the participant. Disruption in this context is understood by us as breaking up familiar structures and patterns of thought into something completely new for the participant. This success factor can be used to describe event experiences that have a change effect on participants.

Did the event attended and described surprise or personally change the participant with its contents and processes? An important part of the Disruption Index is also the question whether a sense of community between the participants of the event could be created and, of course, whether this event will be remembered by the evaluating participant in the long run.

2.3 Findings in Connection with the Success Factors

2.3.1 Learning and experience makes participants happy

*Anyone who learns something
new also leaves the event
satisfied.*

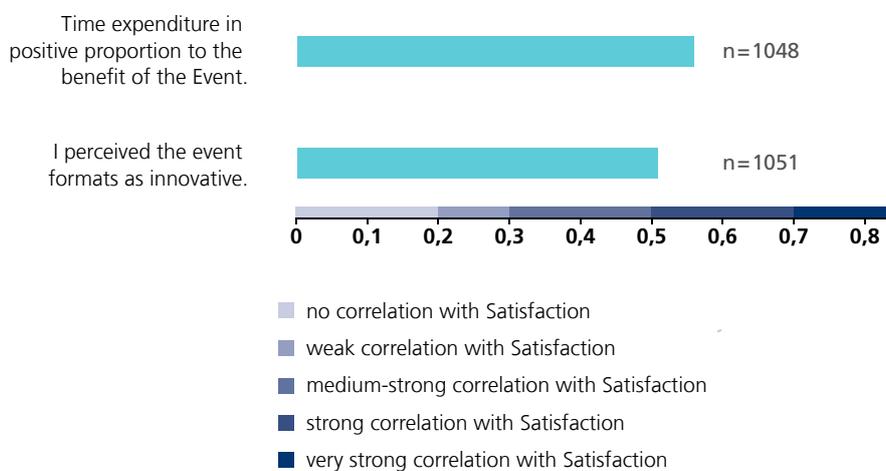


The Satisfaction Index can also be described as a meta-success factor. It reflects whether the basic requirements of a participant for an event could be fulfilled.

There is a strong, positive correlation between the two indices of knowledge transfer and satisfaction. So if you learn something new, you can be satisfied with an event. Conversely, this means that satisfaction can be achieved by imparting knowledge.

A second important index with an equally strong correlation is our newly introduced Disruption Index. It is not only the acquisition of new knowledge that is necessary for the "well-being" of participants, but an event also should, in order to be successful, surprise participants, convey emotions and contents to them that change their attitudes and behavior; it should remain in memory and furthermore create a sense of community among the participants.

2.3.2 Satisfaction of Participants



In addition to a positive relationship between time and benefit, innovative formats are particularly important for the satisfaction of participants.

Numerous factors have an influence on the satisfaction of participants. However, two factors in particular have played a major role in our study and will now be examined in more detail.

Those who perceive event formats as innovative achieve a higher level of satisfaction with an event. It is therefore indispensable to integrate innovative formats into an event in order to address the fundamental success factor of satisfaction. Both the integration of digital media and interactive formats can play a role here. The participants want to get to know new formats again and again, because the formats they know wear out. At the same time, good results can still be achieved with these (e.g., with a World Café, a structured conversational process for knowledge sharing). It is therefore important to use both known and unknown formats and technologies.

In addition, the fit of content and location is also important for the success of an event. If participants experience that the location has been selected to match the content, they perceive the event as worthwhile and are more willing to recommend it to others.

2.3.3 Innovative Formats

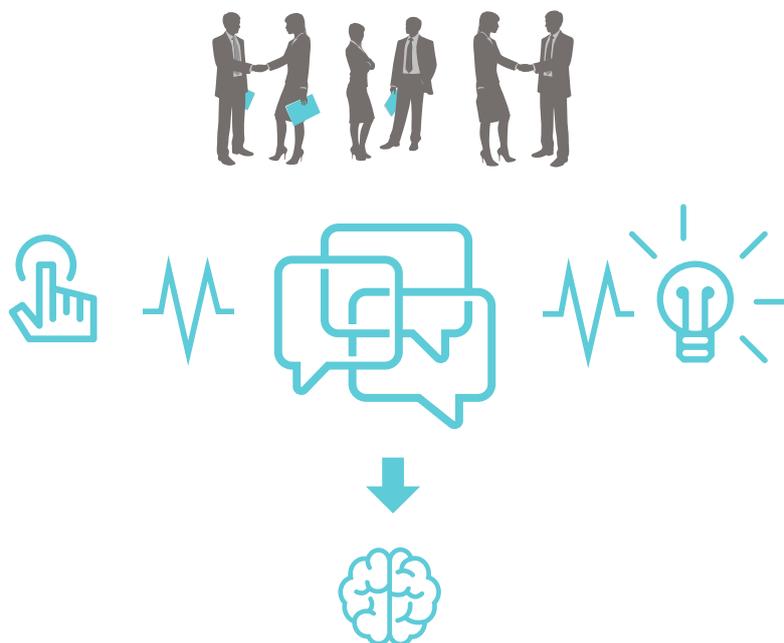
Innovative event formats go hand in hand with the use of New Media.

Correlation 0.563; strong correlation; n=1063.



As already mentioned, satisfaction is generated by the integration of innovative formats, among others. Innovative formats are on the one hand interaction-promoting formats such as a Fish Bowl (conversation form that can be used when discussing topics within large groups) or a BarCamp (participatory workshop-method) which bring the participants into conversation with each other and promote exchange. On the other hand, this means in particular the use of new technologies for the visualization of content, the integration of spatially distant speakers by means of large-format media installations or also for the presentation of content by means of virtual reality. The design and application possibilities for innovative formats are manifold and the participants of an event often come into contact with a new technology for the first time. Examples of this in the past were products and technologies such as Google Glass, VR glasses, Pokémon Go or the large-format Surface technologies from Microsoft. Just as effective are these technical elements and sometimes also gadgets to document workshops or to create atmospheric effects.

2.3.4 Interactive Formats promote Knowledge Transfer



Knowledge is massively expanded through interactive, highly inspiring formats.
Correlation 0.731;
strong correlation; n=676.

As described above, Knowledge Transfer is the most strongly correlating factor for satisfaction. In order to accelerating the gain of knowledge from an event, it is essential to integrate inspiring and above all interactive formats into the event process.

To ensure that the topics conveyed remain in the memory for a long time, participants must be motivated and encouraged to work together. If the formats have an inspiring effect, this strengthens the absorption and internalization of new information.

2.3.5 Duration and Type of Participation are without Affecting the Formation of Networks

Participation as an individual (n = 499) or accompanied by family (n = 40), friends or colleagues (n = 521) has no effect on the Networking Potential.

The heterogeneous composition of the participants (occupation, industry, hierarchy) has no influence on the Networking Potential (n = 1053).

The duration of the events attended has no influence on the Networking Potential (n = 839).



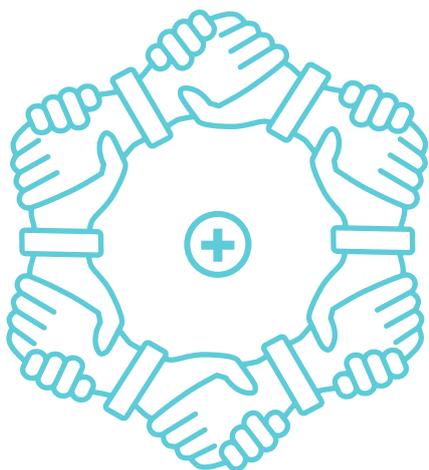
Our Networking Index describes the development of relationships between the participants of an event.

An interesting result of our survey is that factor frequently discussed in the conception of events that might have an influence on the quality of networking – such as participation as an individual or in connection with friends or colleagues – were shown to not have any significance. So single or joint participation is not decisive factor; both can successfully lead to new contacts.

The same was shown with regard to the homogeneity or heterogeneity in the composition of the participants, e. g., with regard to profession, industry or in particular the hierarchy, is often discussed and also has no influence on the network quality and the potential to establish new contacts. Neither heterogeneous nor homogeneous groups are therefore more or less successful in this area.

We were particularly surprised that the duration of an event had no influence on networking. It makes no difference whether an event lasts half a day or a week. What is more important for getting to know other participants is the intensity and the supporting formats and methods that help the participants to network with each other.

2.3.6 Networking has a Positive Effect on Closing Deals



Networking during an event has a positive effect on the conclusion of business after an event.

*Correlation 0.331;
medium-strong correlation;
n = 1039.*

In fact, the survey also showed that networking helps. Those who have a better chance of cultivating contacts after the event and of creating concrete business relationships from it are those who approach other participants, get involved in discussions, and are open-minded and exchange ideas with others. Even in the age of social media, personal meetings and getting to know each other still play an important role in establishing reliable business relationships.

2.3.7 After Highly Digital Events, More Concrete Deals are Concluded

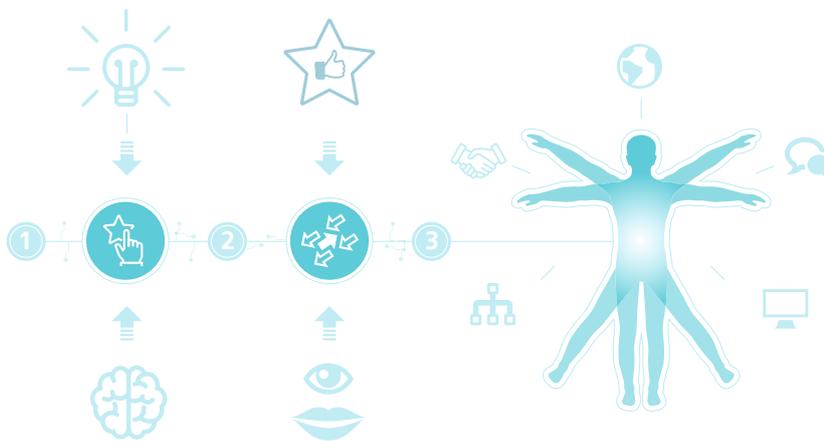
*After highly digital events,
more concrete transactions are
concluded.
Correlation 0.609;
strong correlation; n = 628.*



However, "doing business" can be supported by the use of digital media or technologies in the course of events. According to our study, it is important to provide a digital background for events. This ranges from communication-enhancing light and sound, e.g., via apps for helping the participants to network to the use of innovative, novel technologies such as VR (Virtual Reality) or holographic representations of objects and people. All these elements help to encourage discussion between the participants.

2.4 Relationship between Participant Types and Success Factors

Our described success factors have a positive effect on all types and can be found and applied to each of the individual participant types.



Positive impact of success factors on all types of participants.

However, our evaluation also shows that individual types need more support in different areas and others need less so that the effect of the success factors can fully unfold. Of course the organizer or the meeting planner is asked to deal with the different types and to "pick them up" during the conception and execution of the event. It is not beneficial to forego the use of technology, such as an event app, simply because it is assumed that there may be fewer participants with an affinity for technology. It is rather necessary, for example, to provide low-threshold service offerings by attentive personnel who then support exactly these participants in the application and offer unobtrusive assistance again and again. The same applies to encouraging participants to become active in interactive formats, as these contribute significantly to knowledge acquisition and learning success. Participants should also be supported in networking within such formats and in social elements of an event by integration and motivation to participate.

Factors such as interaction, networking and innovative technologies make sense for all participants and bring added value. They promote the expansion of one's own knowledge as well as networking and lead to concrete business transactions. Accordingly, this also applies to the different types of participants.

It is therefore important to support those types of participants who have deficits or are somewhat weaker in various areas and have difficulties with, for example, networking and interaction, in motivating them, introducing them, enabling them to get involved. They need to be motivated to use technology, collaborate interactively and network.

The effect of the success factors is equally positive for all types of participants. However, one type of participant may find it easier to network, for example, while the other type is a pioneer, for example in the use of new technologies.



3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

3.1 Recommendations for Action

"Without knowledge transfer, everything is nothing. Acquiring knowledge, discovering new things is what makes you satisfied!" This sentence is central to one of the most important findings of our study.

The higher the disruption factor, the longer participants remember an event – because in the context of events, disruption means that participants have experienced their behavior as changed. Events change their participants – especially through the acquisition of new knowledge in interaction with other participants and in interaction with new technologies. Disruption is the key to satisfaction with an event – admittedly a high standard – but perhaps also the future of events in the digital age.

The composition of the participants at events (homogeneous vs. heterogeneous) is of secondary importance for networking – the time of professional pride seems to be over, at least for our study participants – because hierarchy, occupation and field of study do not show any effects on togetherness and making contact in our study. Also whether you go to an event alone, with colleagues or friends has no influence on networking.

It is interesting to note that events should not last too long because the additional time involved has no influence on the networking potential of an event, for example. The financial expenditure of an event can be better used for a second event or for brilliant speakers, for new technologies, media and interactive formats.

Participants are significantly more satisfied if the event is perceived as innovative. Innovative formats should use new media and technology – but meaningful or value adding.

Sound and light, which create a pleasant atmosphere, are worthwhile, because this atmosphere makes it easier for the participants to get into conversation with each other and thus inspires networking – a frequent motive for participating in and organizing events.

One should enable participants to network with each other and to use technology and media at events (new networking, visualization and presentation technologies) to make it easier for participants, for example, to make contact via apps and to talk together about the latest technologies used in events. This also helps to conclude concrete business deals with each other with a higher probability after the event.

In addition, knowledge transfer should be ensured at events. This helps participants feel more satisfied and makes them recommend the event to others and come back themselves.

If knowledge is power, it also makes participants happier. In order to achieve this goal, organizers should choose speakers who can illuminate all aspects of a topic (not only partial aspects), that speakers can answer questions from the audience and to react spontaneously and interact with the audience; that is, sufficient time and appropriate formats must be scheduled in the agenda (e. g., Fish Bowl, questions about apps). Sustainable knowledge transfer also works through the use of interactive formats, such as small group work or self-organized interactive work, which should, however, take place in a structured framework. Knowledge that the participants develop together in self-organized groups within an overarching agenda remains in the memory for a long time.

This knowledge transfer can be achieved through inspirational new formats. Important here is the visualization of the edited topic, e. g., with the help of writable walls.

In the future, virtual presentation on large projection screens will also be important. Knowledge is generated through the visualization, also in the form of self-created models by the participants – so it is indispensable to have materials ready and to make them accessible.

Events should surprise and must be designed from different perspectives. It can be worthwhile to fade in speakers virtually, because virtual integration of other participants and speakers is particularly impressive, as large and as realistic as possible.



In the future, disruptive moments should be provided at events. Events can change CVs and organizations. Such events will be remembered by the participants for a long time. New knowledge is primarily responsible for this: new content and interaction between and with the participants and speakers must be made accessible.

This not only strengthens the interaction, but also serves the different types of learners: by trial and error, experimentation and independent execution, different senses are addressed.

It is important that the organizer is open to the needs of the participants:

The organizer should plan and support small group work, provide time for interaction and motivate people to make technology available and accessible to less technology-oriented people. The organizer should therefore offer low-threshold assistance.



Impact of success factors.

The venue and the topic must be coordinated. A place should be found that fits the theme or can be brought into line with the theme. The location should be a good host and support the customer in the best possible way at the event. The location should meet the organizer's requirements while taking into account the spatial, technical or organizational implementation of the event objectives in its rooms. A simple but essential support to create a pleasant atmosphere can be to play music in the background and to use pleasant lighting – because doing so can boost participants' satisfaction.

3.2 Recommendations for Action for the Participant Types

The rather reserved participant types must be supported in communication and networking with other participants. This means that they can have an extended network at their disposal after an event, feel a more intensive community experience and have an increased chance of concluding concrete business deals or enriching and advancing projects.

Less technology-oriented participant types should be supported by using media. The media must be explained to participants so that they can experience it as an important added value and come into contact with other participants more easily, e. g., via digital offers. It is necessary to provide assistance so that these participants understand and use new media and technologies. Providing assistance includes attentive personnel to help discreetly set up and use the technology.

For the more stationary and quiet participant types, the organizer should support the change of sites and seats at social events with mixing formats, so that they can more easily exchange information with many other participants. They should be guided and motivated in order to remove and overcome barriers.

Although there are also active participants, good hosts at events should particularly try to help and encourage the less active and quieter participant types to participate actively. This in no way harms the active participants, but makes the event more successful for reserved characters and increases the number of satisfied multipliers.

To get to the point: Participants are always guests. Organizers and event centers should therefore focus on the participant experience in order to be qualified and attentive hosts for their customers.



4 OUTLOOK

During the second research phase, we worked out many different factors that have to be actively examined for the own organization and, if necessary, integrated for the own events.

Following the second phase of research, the topics in the Future Meeting Space will be further developed and expanded in a third research phase. The research objective is to identify and shape further industry-relevant developments. Further information can be found at: www.future-meeting-space.com.

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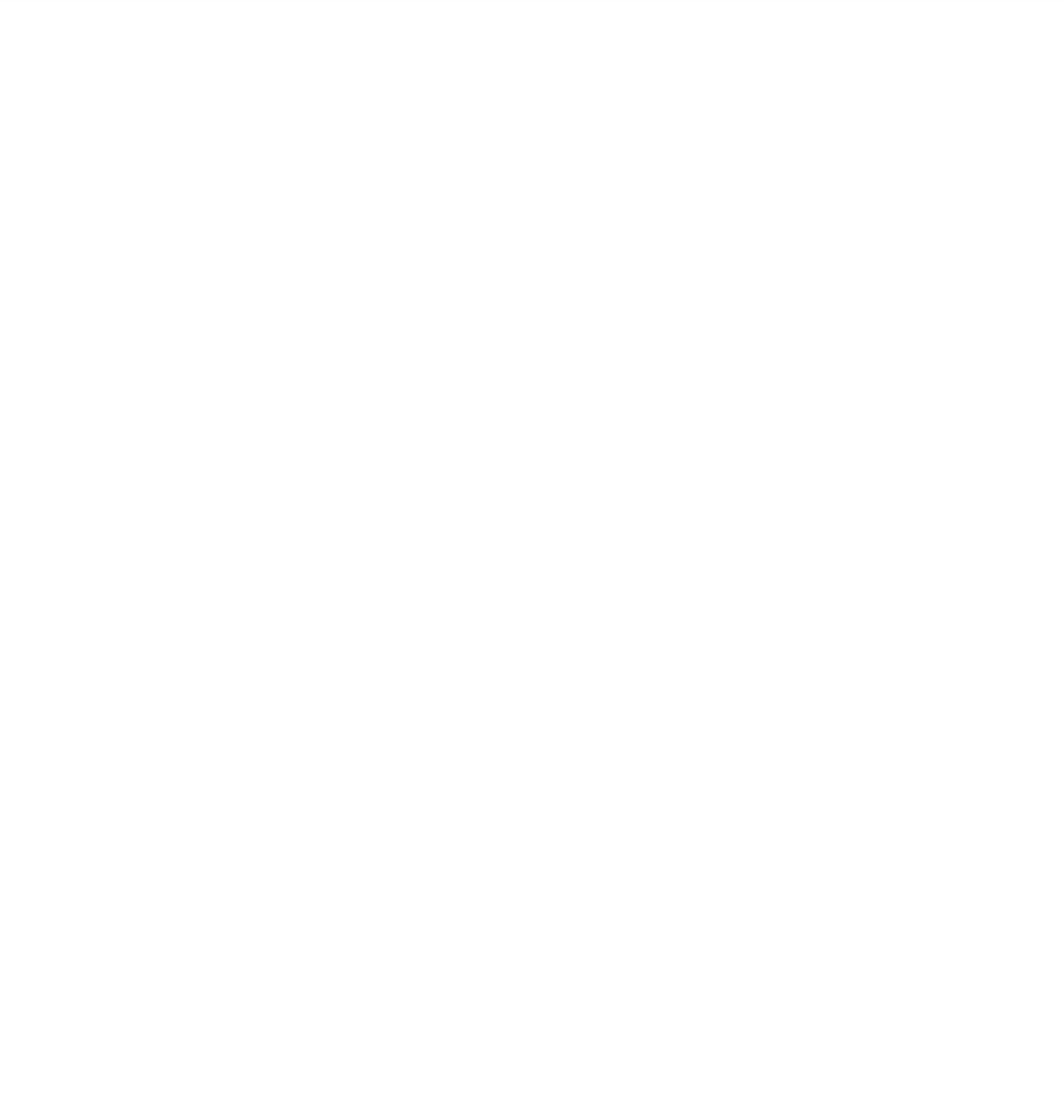
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