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# 5 design trends to transform your keynote

Fresh ideas from our AV  
production experts





## Younger generations and digital mindsets have been pushing us toward event reinvention.

And that includes opening sessions. Our production teams orchestrate events of all sizes across the globe. We asked them to weigh in on the latest trends as well as new ideas and approaches making an impact in the market. Consider these ideas and tips when planning your next event.

### A room with a (new) view

The traditional auditorium approach is getting an upgrade with new designs and configurations that provide new perspectives and visual interest for attendees. Here are some of our favorite ways to elevate your keynote by reimagining the space.



## A hall in one

Picture an all-encompassing, open environment that combines theaters, opening sessions, sponsored activations, and exhibits into one expansive space.

### Why we love an experience buffet:

- Creates a mini event city (think “festivalization”) with a variety of touch points
- Convenient for attendees — easy access to everything
- Increases ROI for sponsors and exhibitors with guaranteed foot traffic (Bonus for you: No extra cost to your budget!)



# Trend 2

## Crowd surround

Your opening session may not have Taylor Swift and multiple costume changes, but you can still bring your show/session to the crowd. Elevate excitement with satellite stages within the audience as well as extensions from the main stage surrounded by seating — additional staging and lighting will add to the budget, but won't break the bank.

### Why we love in-crowd performances:

- Surprise and delight — it's unexpected. And fun!
- Immerses audiences in the experience, creating meaningful engagement
- Encourages interaction between attendees and presenters



Trend **3**

# Play all the angles

A simple shift in setup perspective can make a monumental visual impact. Swapping traditional straight-ahead configurations (for screens, seating, or stages) with a slanted layout can instantly elevate the whole vibe.

### Why we love a new slant:

- It's easy, unexpected and impactful
- Doesn't require any special equipment or cost
- Conveys willingness to step out of the comfort zone

### More considerations for a killer keynote:

- **Stage to engage:** Try multilevel and uniquely shaped stages: circular, triangular, or thrust stages — where the configuration is surrounded by seating on three sides
- **Wrap it up:** Opt for carpet or fabric wraps for the stage versus standard risers with outdated pleated skirts
- **Elite seating:** Replace traditional banquet chairs and tables with modern or even custom pieces
- **No-diums:** Select sleek furniture and talk show setups to replace yesterday's podiums
- **Screen time:** Modernize stage and room spaces with LEDs (more on that coming up!)
- **Turn the tables:** Let the music play — incorporate a DJ table into the stage or on a satellite platform. This dance-party add-on can open the meeting, cue walk-up music for presenters or talent, and keep energy up
- **Mic drop:** Give presenters head-worn, wireless mics or lavs so they can roam free

Focus

# Light the way

Spotlighting a stage performance isn't new, but it's essential for an engaging and memorable experience. Add in new technology and inventive audio visual pros and you're golden.



# Trend 4

## Illuminate for mood, meaning, and memory

All speakers have key things they want the audience to understand and remember. They also want to make it entertaining. Purposeful lighting can help accomplish all three.

- **Ambiance:** Set the tone for the experience and cue shifts in mood. Get immersive by coordinating sets, graphics, and lighting. *Tip: Orchestrate color and effect — cool for calm and warm for energy. Check out more hues you can use below.*
- **Comprehension:** Subtle shifts (color, intensity, and movement) can signal topic changes, speaker transitions, and key messages. *Tip: Aim for no more than three takeaways per session.*
- **Comeback stories:** Everything old is new...again: laser beams, strobes, tube lighting, and neon. Add these pops of nostalgia to enhance branding and create drama people remember.

### Why we love purposeful lighting:

- Boundless options that don't add cost
- Entertains and elevates the visual experience
- Can help achieve strategic goals by imprinting the most memorable moments



### Shades of emotional response:

pure, neutrality
intensity, passion
ecology, wealth, growth
calm, dignity, trust
warmth, creativity, excitement
happiness, stimulation, bright
royalty, pride

Trend

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# Use LED screens beyond content display

When it comes to content delivery, LED screen technology keeps getting better (and bigger). But these inventive displays can do a lot more than just present your branded content.

## Set design

- Wrap screens around the stage
- Create depth and allow space for (and to conceal) speakers entering and exiting the stage
- Construct adjacent towers from the ground or above (great option to add height if rigging isn't available)

## Visual engagement

- Create a content “ceiling” with multiple tiles for visuals/messaging (hello, sponsorship opportunity!)
- Opt for rounded edges, concave sides, and curved panels
- Design new shapes, words, letters, etc., using standard rectangular panels
- LED tickers — these involve connecting multiple panels (could be as many as 80-90) to create an ongoing “ticker” of messaging or visuals

## Big reveals

- Form into a cylinder to hide surprise talent or unveil a new product, such as a helicopter within the cylinder

### Projection mapping — is it the right move?

This cool technology isn't new, but continues trending because it's undoubtedly a feast for the eyes. The downside? It'll cost ya. If you need to cut costs, opt for the cost-effective genius of LED screens.

## Why we love this not-so-new star of the show:

- It's cost effective! Advancing tech brings costs down, making them more accessible than ever
- Syncs with lighting effects
- Scalable, durable, and outdoor friendly (rain, sleet, or snow!)





Focus

# Quick wins to unlock your keynote

- Open the show with a warm-up act to **energize the audience** before diving into business
- **Animated logos** and slides for openings and/or speaker transitions
- Botanical or **sustainable** themes
- Break larger sessions into **bite-sized presentations** to give attendees some breathing room during the experience
- To refresh remote viewing, consider a coffee lounge where attendees can watch a **broadcast** of the opening session as well as breakouts simultaneously with the option to jump between them

Take your general session far beyond general by reimagining the look and format.

Work with an experienced AV production partner to design a fresh spin that captivates from the start.

Attendees will talk about it, remember it, and stay tuned to see what you'll do next.



# Want to amplify your event with the latest audio visual design?

Let's talk

5 keynote design trends

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