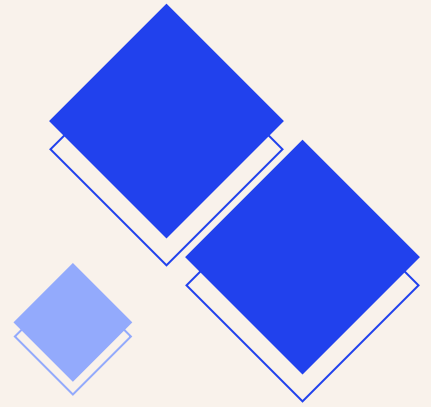




EVENTS AND KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY OUTLOOK

2027

Five trends shaping Saudi Arabia's events and knowledge economy

How forums and business events will create knowledge, engage audiences and deliver long-term impact in the year ahead.

INTRODUCTION

From successful events to lasting platforms

Saudi Arabia's calendar of forums, conferences and business events continues to grow. As it does, so do expectations of what those events should achieve.

This outlook draws on more than five years of designing and delivering knowledge programmes across Saudi Arabia's national platforms, including Biban 23, the World Investment Conference 28 and the Ministry of Culture's Riyadh International Book Fair 2021.

It looks at how expectations of business events are changing as the Kingdom strengthens its position as a destination for entrepreneurship, investment, innovation and international knowledge exchange.

Our central argument is that the industry is moving beyond conventional measures such as attendance, scale and speaker numbers.

In 2027, successful forums will be judged by the content they generate, the professional communities they strengthen, and the outcomes that continue long after the event concludes.

“Saudi Arabia has demonstrated its ability to bring together influential leaders, entrepreneurs, investors and decision-makers through ambitious forums and conferences. The next opportunity is to build on this momentum by creating platforms that extend beyond a specific date or venue and continue delivering knowledge, connections and value throughout the year.”

NOOR MARZOKY, FOUNDER AND CEO, WORKSHOP X

THE SHIFT AT A GLANCE

FROM		TO
01	A single annual occasion	→ A year-round knowledge platform
02	Success measured by attendance	→ Success measured by impact
03	Content decided after logistics	→ Content strategy leading from day one
04	One programme for every attendee	→ Personalised, participatory experiences
05	Local teams in delivery roles	→ Saudi talent in strategic, specialised roles



TREND ONE

Events will evolve into year-round knowledge platforms

Major events are shifting from isolated annual occasions into continuous knowledge platforms. Conversations begin before attendees enter the venue and continue afterward through reports, interviews, digital content, community engagement and follow-up initiatives.

This shift lets organisers maintain relationships with their audiences, reinforce key messages, and build greater long-term value from the ideas and expertise shared through their platforms.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ORGANISERS

- ◆ Plan the programme as a twelve-month calendar, not a two-day agenda.
- ◆ Decide before the event which insights will be published afterwards, and in what form.
- ◆ Give your community a reason to return between editions.



TREND TWO

Impact will become more important than attendance

Audience numbers remain relevant, but they no longer offer a complete measure of success. Organisers and stakeholders are placing more weight on the quality of participation, the knowledge exchanged, the connections established, and the actions an event generates.

This pushes teams to define their intended outcomes at the earliest stages of planning, then design programmes that support those objectives.

“A full venue can demonstrate interest, but it does not necessarily show whether an event created meaningful impact. The industry will increasingly need to ask what changed because a forum took place: What knowledge was shared? Which relationships were formed? What conversations continued? Those are the questions that will help define success.”

NOOR MARZOKY



TREND THREE

Content strategy will guide event development from the start

In 2027, content strategy sits at the centre of event planning rather than an afterthought. Instead of confirming a venue, speakers and agenda before deciding what the event should communicate, organisers start with a clear purpose, an audience need and a central narrative.

This content-led approach keeps speakers, sessions, communications and audience experiences contributing to one coherent conversation, and makes it easier to extend an event's insights across media, digital channels and future programming.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ORGANISERS

- ◆ Write the central narrative before the speaker list.
- ◆ Brief every speaker on the question their session answers within that narrative.
- ◆ Use the same narrative to guide communications before, during and after the event.



TREND FOUR

Audience experience will become more personalised and participatory

As event calendars grow more crowded, audiences are more selective about where they invest their time. Workshop X sees rising demand for relevant, interactive experiences that let attendees engage according to their own professional interests and objectives.

Smaller discussions, tailored content journeys, facilitated networking and interactive formats increasingly complement traditional keynotes and panel sessions. Technology and artificial intelligence can support this shift by helping organisers understand audience interests and deliver more relevant experiences, but only when they serve a clear purpose rather than novelty for its own sake.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ORGANISERS

- ◆ Offer attendees routes through the programme that match their goals.
- ◆ Balance keynotes with smaller, facilitated formats.
- ◆ Introduce technology where it makes the experience more relevant, not just newer.



TREND FIVE

Saudi talent will take on more strategic and specialised roles

The continued growth of the industry is creating demand for Saudi expertise across content development, experience design, project strategy, stakeholder management, production, technology and impact measurement.

As local professionals gain experience delivering increasingly complex platforms, Workshop X expects them to play a larger role in shaping event narratives, directing multidisciplinary teams, and building experiences that meet international standards while reflecting a strong understanding of Saudi audiences and priorities.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ORGANISERS

- ◆ Give Saudi professionals ownership of narrative, content and strategy, not only delivery.
- ◆ Build mentoring and knowledge transfer into every major platform.

“The growth of the sector is also creating an important professional legacy. Saudi talent is gaining experience across disciplines that require creativity, strategic thinking and leadership. Investing in those capabilities will be essential to building an industry that is both ambitious and sustainable.”

NOOR MARZOKY

LOOKING AHEAD

What will define the industry in 2027

The evolution of Saudi Arabia's events industry will be defined not only by the number or scale of events delivered, but also by their ability to contribute to wider business and knowledge ecosystems.

By combining purposeful content, relevant audience experiences, measurable outcomes and strong local capabilities, Saudi Arabia's forums can continue evolving into influential platforms that connect ideas, people and opportunities.

Five questions to answer before you plan your next forum

Workshop X recommends that organisations planning forums and conferences in 2027 begin with a clearly defined purpose, identify the audience outcome the platform should create, and develop a strategy for maintaining engagement after the event concludes.

- 01 **Purpose.** What is this platform for, and what should be different because it took place?
- 02 **Audience outcome.** What should participants understand, question or do differently when they leave?
- 03 **Narrative.** What is the central conversation that every speaker and session will contribute to?
- 04 **Experience.** How will different attendees find the parts of the programme most relevant to them?
- 05 **Continuity.** How will the knowledge, relationships and conversations continue once the event has closed?



ABOUT WORKSHOP X

Workshop X is a Saudi knowledge partner specialising in forums, conferences and knowledge platforms. Founded by Noor Marzoky, the company designs the intellectual structure of an event and the experience through which participants encounter it, from research and agenda development to speaker preparation, content production and audience engagement. Its work includes Biban 23 with Monsha'at, the Ministry of Culture's Riyadh International Book Fair 2021, the World Investment Conference 28 and the Education & Training Investment Forum 2026.

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