

# Challenges and opportunities for high-value events



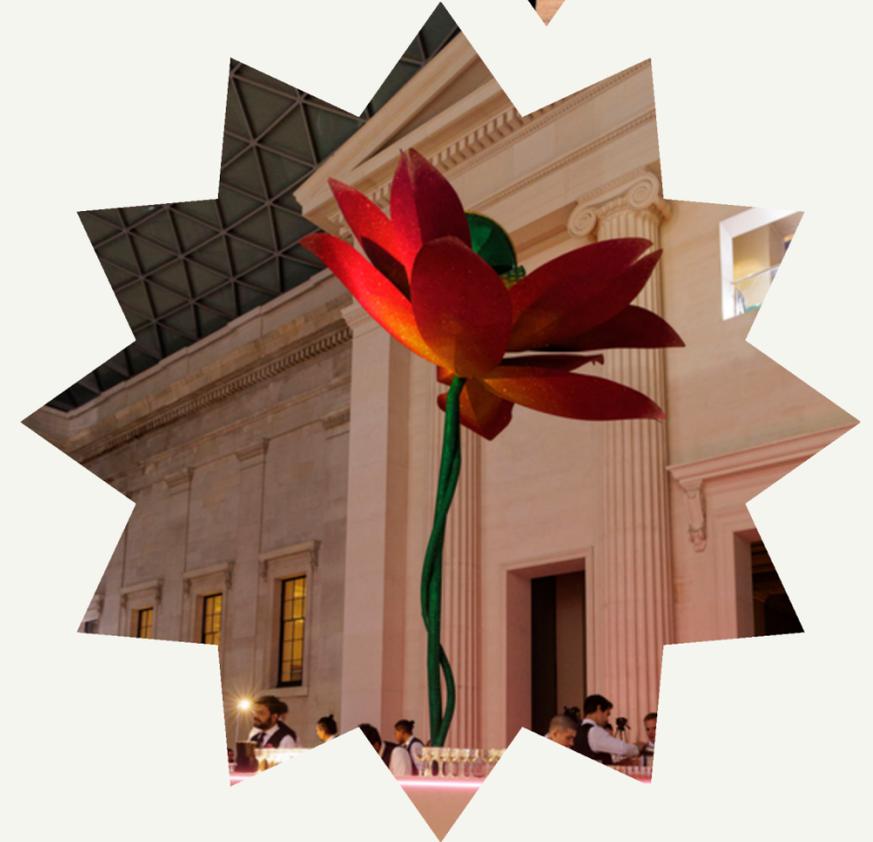
Rebecca Elcome, Managing Director





# About Us

- Specialising in event programmes for social impact organisations
- Delivery, strategy, interim and consultancy
- Training and mentoring
- Galas, awards and conferences
- UK and international



# Who we have worked with



ALLCHILD

Ark

AV<sup>UK</sup>



BAFTA

The British  
Museum

CONSERVATION  
INTERNATIONAL



English  
National  
Ballet

Frontline

Garfield Weston  
FOUNDATION

GLOBAL  
SCHOOLS  
FORUM

HUMEN

Marie  
Curie



Pancreatic  
Cancer  
UK

PARKINSON'S<sup>UK</sup>

the  
resource  
alliance



RIGHT TO PLAY

ROYAL  
FOUNDATION  
OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS  
OF WALES

SADL  
ERSW  
ELLS



St John  
Ambulance



UBUNTU  
PATHWAYS

ual:  
university  
of the arts  
london

WELLBEING  
OF WOMEN

Womankind  
Worldwide

## STRENGTHS

- Passionate and hardworking event managers
- Loyal donors and longstanding supporters
- Wider internal support/resource e.g prospect research
- Dedicated and knowledgeable events and fundraising teams with strong stakeholder relationships
- Ability to move at pace and forward-thinking approach
- Examples of success

## WEAKNESSES

- Lack of resource and decreasing team size
- Lack of time to plan - events are currently mostly reactive
- Lack of clarity in objectives
- No investment in resource
- Limited pool of warm, active donors to invite to events
- Processes not streamlined
- Difficulties and delays in making decisions
- Internal hierarchies as a blocker

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Event landscape is changing
- New generation of donors
- Special events don't have to be galas!
- To leverage tech and data
- To build longer term relationships
- To focus on people not numbers
- To further develop existing and prospective partnerships

## THREATS

- Wider charity landscape changing
- Significant redundancies and cuts across the sector
- Giving fatigue
- Competition
- Scare-mongering and negativity towards ROI
- The risk of standing still

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A SWOT for the sector



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# H.O.P.E

## **H – HARD CHOICES**

DOING FEWER EVENTS, BETTER – AND BEING BRAVE ABOUT WHAT NO LONGER WORKS

## **O – OPTIMISING OUR STORIES**

...BY USING TECH AND CREATING MEMORABLE, INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES

## **P – PEOPLE-CENTRED DESIGN**

PUTTING DONOR MOTIVATION, EMOTION AND IDENTITY AT THE HEART OF EVENT STRATEGY

## **E – ENGAGEMENT POST-EVENT**

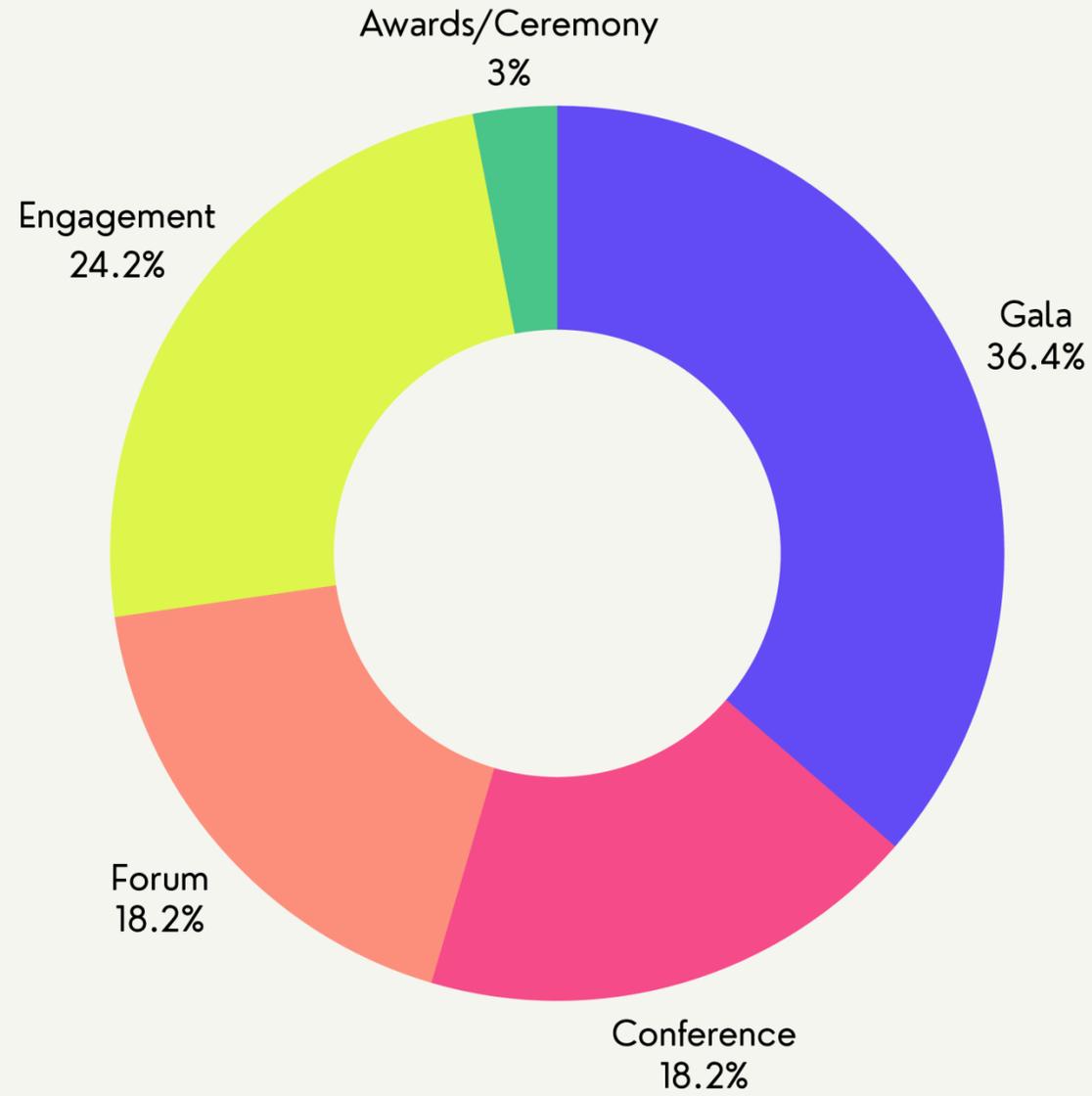
BUILDING LOYAL, LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS AND DEMONSTRATING IMPACT



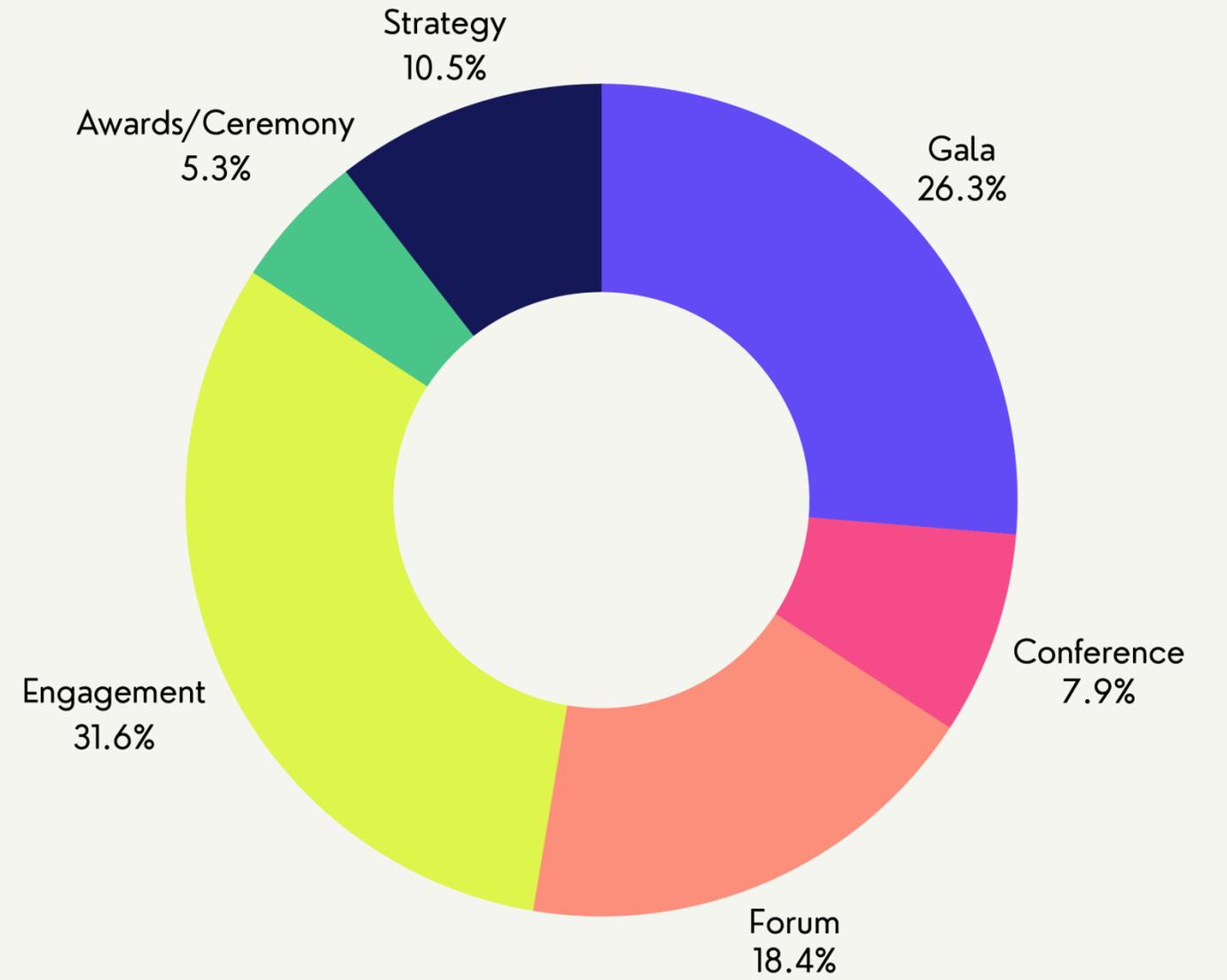


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# 2024



# 2025





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HOPE  
FOR  
SPECIAL  
EVENTS

## HARD DECISIONS

Doing fewer events, better – and  
being brave about what no longer  
works

## What we're seeing

- **Amazing examples of new products and events**
- Significant competition and event fatigue
- Increased costs
- A tougher market
- A smarter mindset
- Under-resourced teams – who need to deliver more with less
- A need to take considered risk

### In practice

1. Review and audit - use your existing data to evidence need for change
2. Scrutinise your spend
3. Buy-in from those with influence (whether stopping or starting)





...by using tech and creating  
memorable, interactive  
experiences

## What we're seeing

- Technology being used creatively
  - Simulation using iPads (e.g. Tactical Tech)
  - Visual (e.g. Right to Play UK and Bridges for Music)
- Interactive and immersive experiences (e.g. AllChild, Ark)
- Increased expectations
- Need to find boundaries and to be intentional
- Possibility that the world will reject technology and revert to more traditional forms





**Putting donor motivation, emotion and identity at the heart of our event strategy**

## What we're seeing

- Focus on numbers rather than people
- “One-size fits all” events
- A shift towards more bespoke, intimate and personalised event calendars
  - Event series with different themes
  - Events that reflect wider trends and interests
- A need to understand your existing and target audiences, their capacity, interests, motivations
- Opportunities for depth over breadth
- Opportunities to build more meaningful relationships with donors

### In practice

1. Review of existing data and data points - who, what, how, why
2. Network mapping
3. Pick up the phone! (or go for coffee)



ENGAGEMENT  
POST-EVENT

Building loyal, long-term  
relationships and  
demonstrating impact



## What we're seeing

- Lots of examples of stewardship done badly and missed opportunities (their words not ours!)
- Why? Teams are under-resourced
- Post-event before the event
- Opportunity to use events as a launchpad for campaigns or giving circles
- Opportunity for year-round touch points and wider support (beyond money and beyond events)

### In practice

1. Clear objectives and measurables from start
2. Review and update of reporting and evaluation mechanisms
3. Engaging wider organisation in the post-event plans from start to build into planning



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