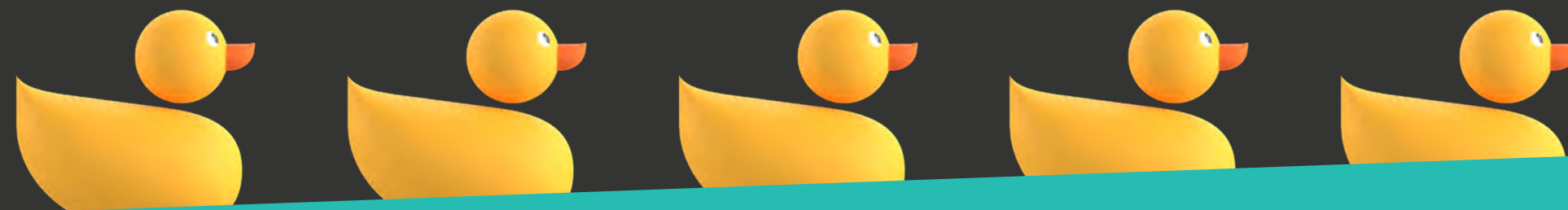


Official Festival Report

x

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Official Festival Report



Leicester Business Festival 2023



For the ninth year running, Leicester Business Festival 2023 was an outstanding success, showcasing the breadth and magnitude of the local business community over the course of two weeks with a variety of events on offer. Once again, we saw collaboration from a great number of local professionals, the strengthening of existing partnerships and the fostering of new opportunities to encourage growth in the region.

Continuing on feedback from previous years, the CIC kept the number of events this year to a reduced amount, which meant that events were of a high quality and topics were not excessively repeated across the programme of events. The feedback from attendees suggests that this method is appreciated, with 86% rating the quality of events 'good to excellent'.



Based on previous feedback, we maintained the use of sectors for Event Hosts to categorise their event and for attendees to understand the event aims and objectives better.

Every year the Festival is reviewed from all aspects to ensure both user experience and operational perspectives have been considered to objectively make recommendations for the future of the festival. There is more information on the future of the festival at the end of this report, but before that you are invited to come along on the journey of what everyone involved has achieved in the last 12 months for the city and county.

A huge thank you to all involved, your support and contributions are key to the Festival's ongoing success. Onward to the 10th Anniversary!

Alister de Ternant
Managing Director | Associate Events

Imogen Fowler
Project Manager | Associate Events

Everyone at Team Associate Events

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Recommendations, dates for next year



#LBF2023



01.

A Look at LBF2023

HEADLINE STATISTICS



72

REGISTERED EVENTS



1,813

ATTENDEES



17%

ATTENDEES FROM OUTSIDE THE REGION*



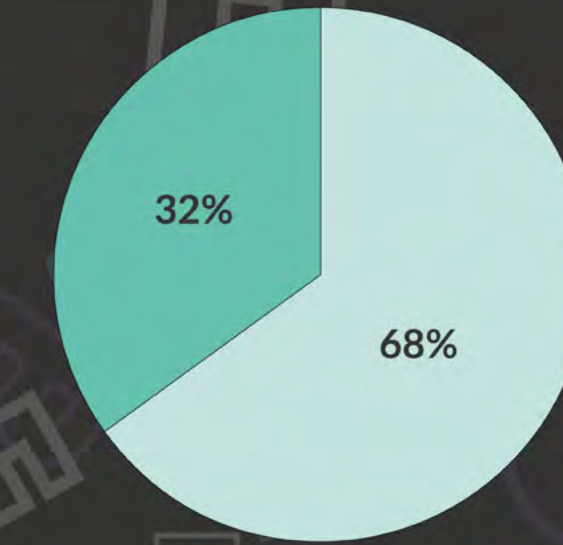
831

BUSINESSES ENGAGED



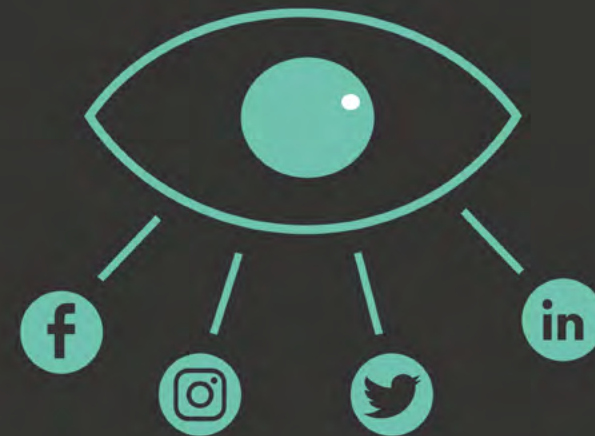
22

DIGITAL EVENTS +6 HYBRID



REGIONAL SPLIT (REGISTERED EVENTS)

Leicester City 68%
County 32%



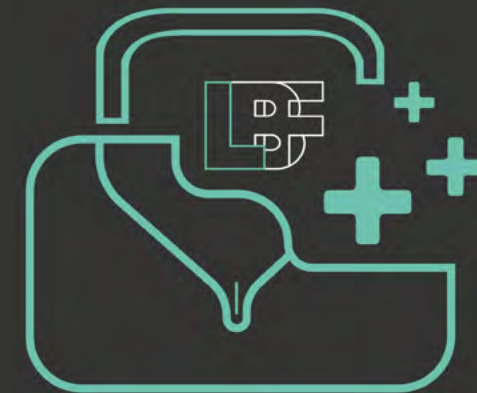
30,647

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS



86%

EVENTS RATED 'GOOD TO EXCELLENT'



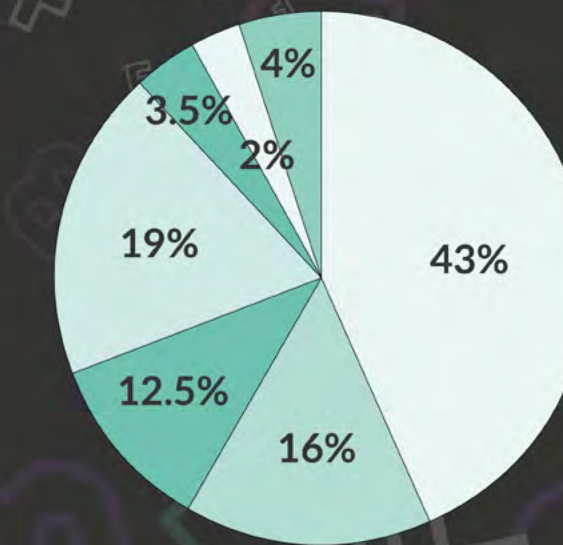
81%

FELT LBF HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THEM OR THEIR BUSINESS



72

IN-PERSON VS DIGITAL EVENTS: 50 IN PERSON, 16 DIGITAL, 6 HYBRID



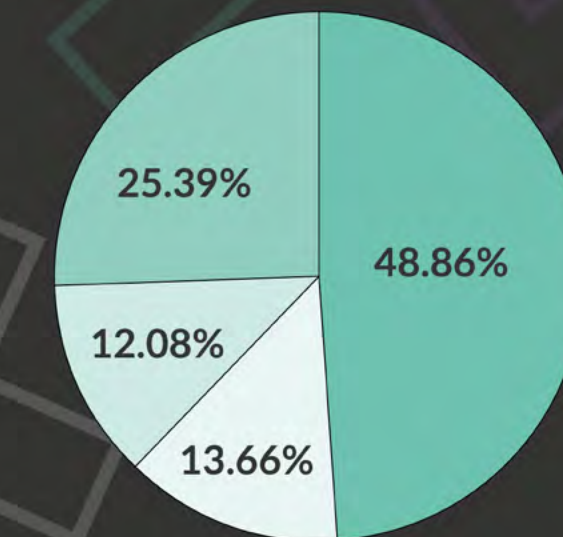
SECTORAL SPLIT (REGISTERED EVENTS)

Business & Employee Success 43%
Creative & Digital 19%
Education & Skills 16%
Profession & Financial Services 12.5%
Property & Construction 3.5%
Retail, Tourism & Hospitality 2%
Science & Technology 4%



46

NEWS PIECES (34 ONLINE, 9 OFFLINE) PLUS 2 BBC RADIO LEICESTER INTERVIEWS



BUSINESS SPLIT BY SIZE*

Micro <10 employees 48.86%
Small 11 - 49 employees 13.66%
Medium 50-249 employees 12.08%
Large >250 employees 25.39%



33

'NEW' LBF EVENT ORGANISERS



21,524,675

TOTAL MARKETING CIRCULATION



14,940,277

TOTAL MARKETING REACH

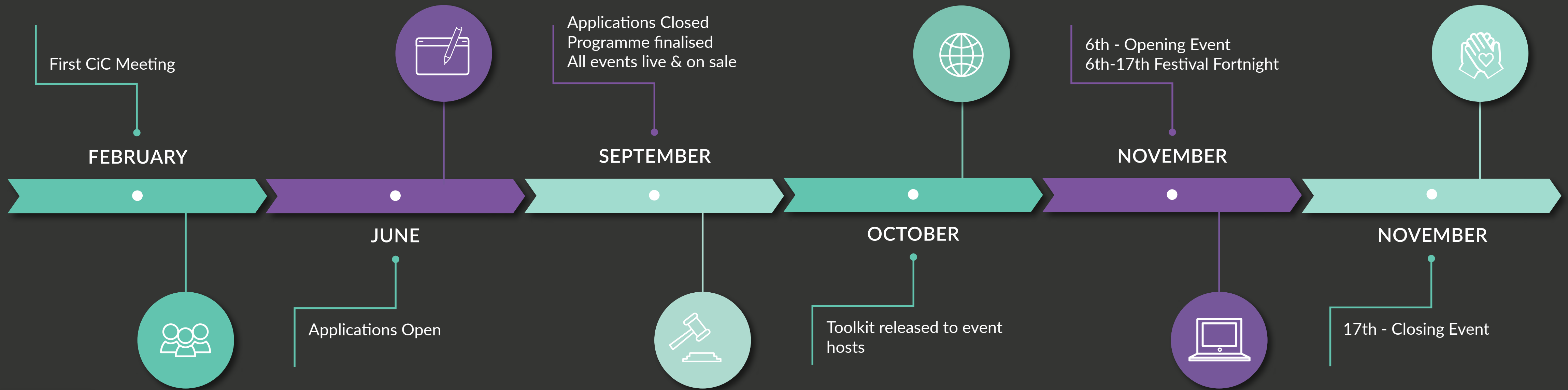


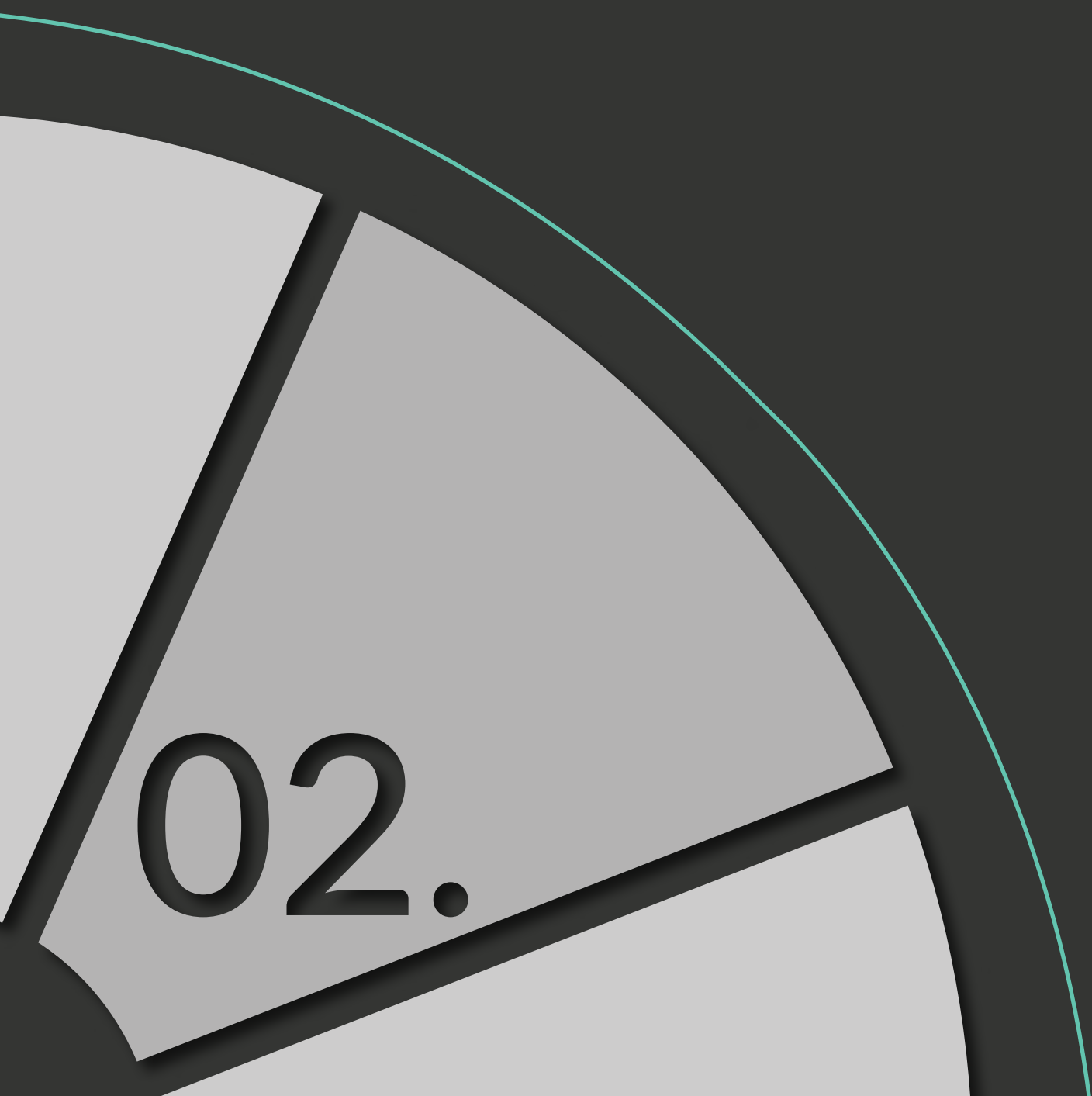
37,410

CIRCULATION OF PRINTED ARTICLES FEATURING LEICESTER BUSINESS FESTIVAL

*of those registered via Ticket Leap

Figures estimated as of 17-11-23





02.

Income & Expenditure

As a Community Interest Company, the LBF is funded entirely by income generated from private and public sector ‘sponsorship’. This is offset against the overall LBF running and management costs at an amount agreed by the LBF Directors. Any surplus is automatically reinvested into the Festival.

The core aim of the CIC is to place the LBF at the front and centre of the UK business agenda, to drive inward investments and economic growth, a coherent, united and consistent outward promotion of the region’s business innovation and activities. The CIC relies solely on sponsorship from private and public entities who share these aims and objectives for the region.

The core aim of the CIC is to place the LBF at the front and centre of the UK business agenda, to drive inward investments and economic growth; a coherent, united and consistent outward promotion of the region’s business innovation and activities. The CIC relies solely on sponsorship from private and public entities who share these aims and objectives for the region.

HEADLINE PARTNER



SPONSORS

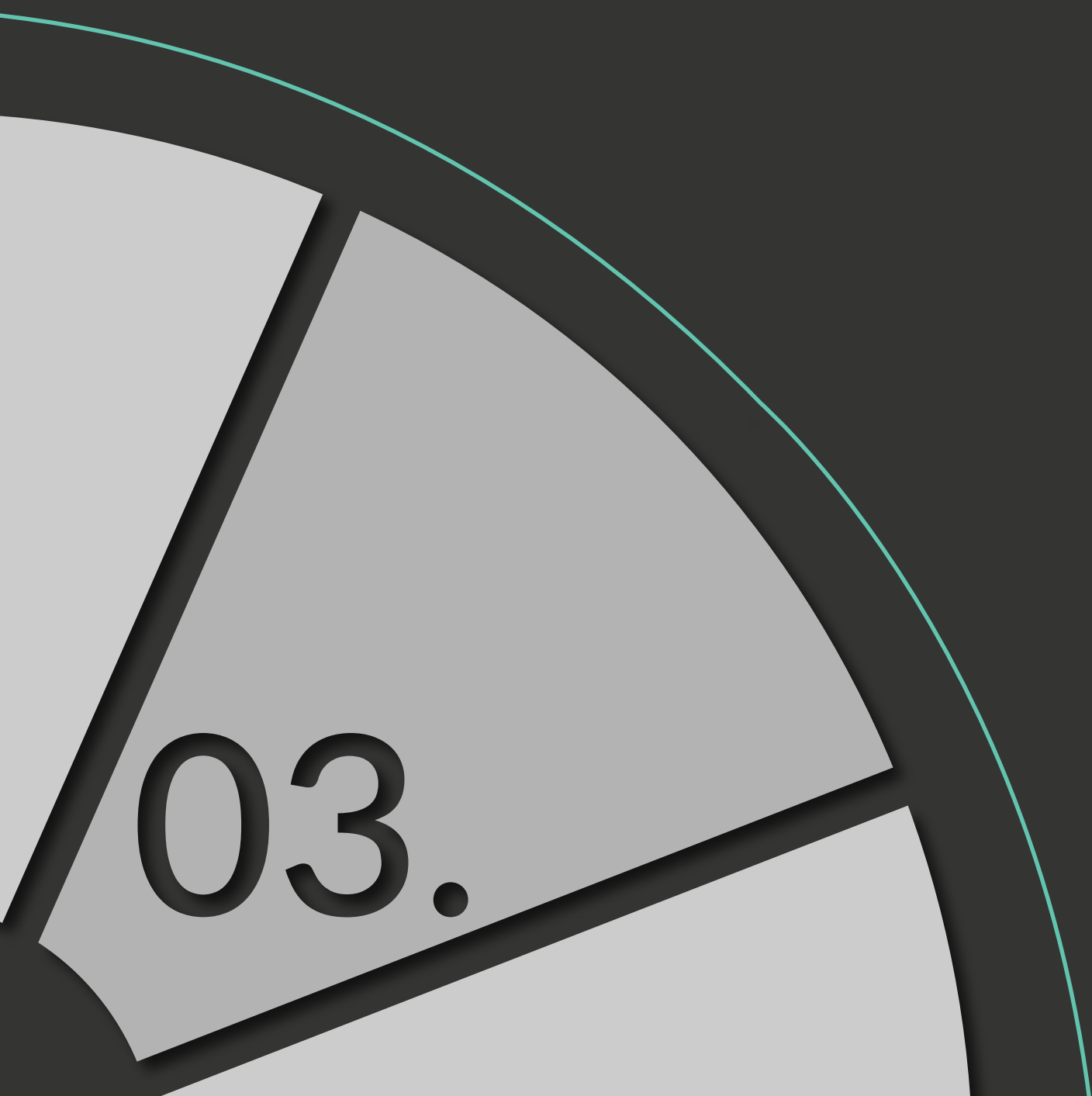


PARTNERS



Following on from previous years, hard costs were minimised in terms of print (such as pull up banners, printed brochure, posters etc.). Previously this was due to minimising contact between events due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year it was a choice made due to budget constraints. However, this year, we received feedback from Event Hosts that they would like to have banners to help advertise their events, and provide photo opportunities, therefore this is something that we are considering for 2024.

To support the CIC in celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Leicester Business Festival, a donation button has been added to the Leicester Business Festival website so that anyone can make a donation of an amount they wish. This was based on feedback from attendees that they cannot believe how much information they take away from events for free, and wish to champion the festival in continuing.



03.

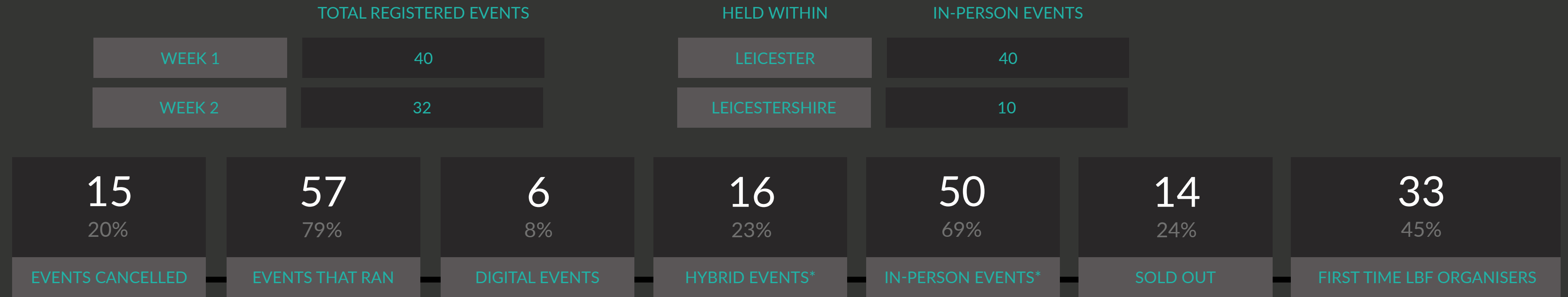
Events

This section is all about the events: the amount, format, spread by week and popularity, themes and how these reflected turnout and interest.

Overview

There were a total of **72 registered** events in the 2023 Business Festival programme. The CIC Board wanted to limit the number of this year to around **70 events**, following on from feedback in previous years that there are too many events.

There continued to be a preference for in person events, however, a rise in the use of hybrid opportunities as **69% of registered events** were in person, **8% were digital** and **23% were hybrid**. This demonstrates how online platforms to hold events have continued to be useful post-pandemic to enable accessibility for attendees.



In other positive news, **24% of events 'sold out'**, (or reached capacity) with most increasing their delegate numbers - then selling out again!

Despite being in its ninth year new businesses are engaging with Leicester Business Festival, with **33 new event hosts for 2023**. This is great in two respects: 55% of organisers were previously involved, saw a benefit in doing so and returned for more; whilst **45% of organisers** were new people willing to try the festival and find out what it had to offer. We hope that many will continue to take interest in the festival and submit an application as part of the **10th anniversary**.

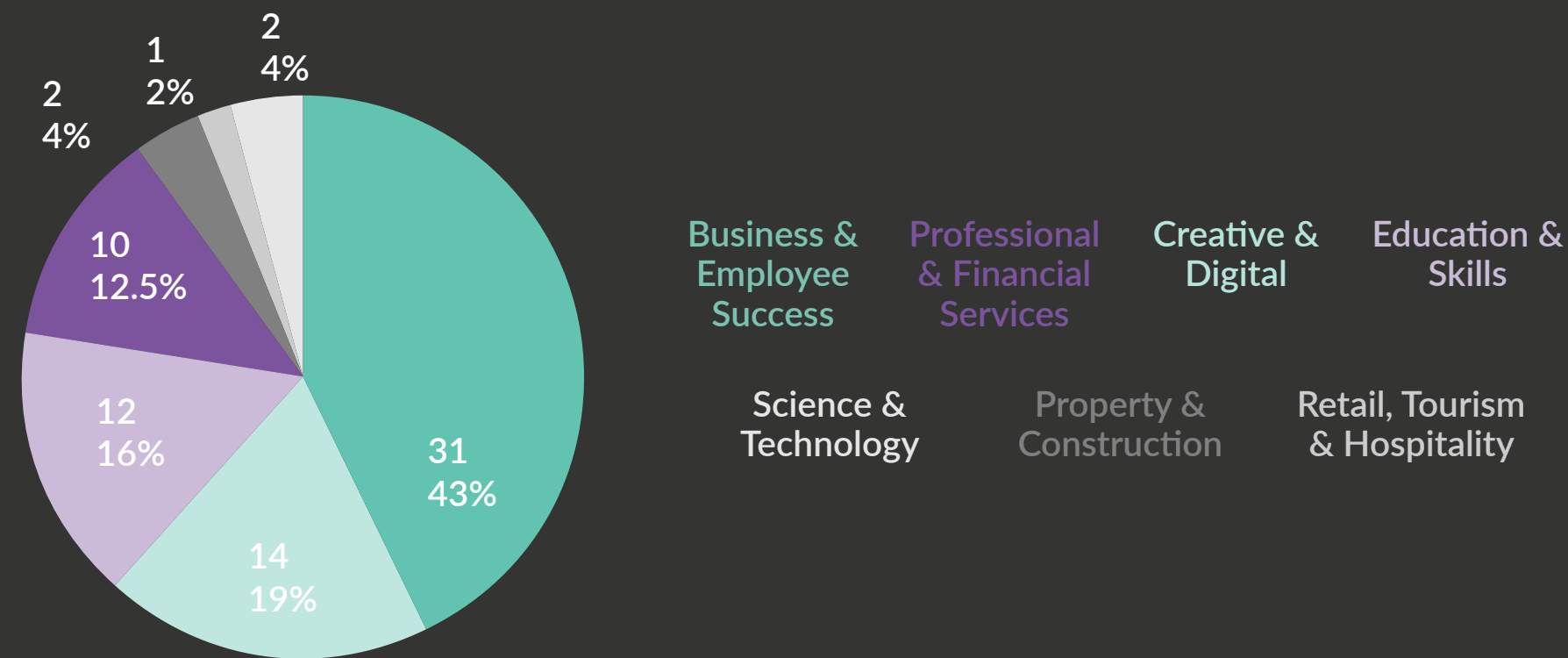
REGISTERED EVENTS BY DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	TOTAL
WEEK 1	6	7	11	12	44	40
WEEK 2	5	8	6	10	3	32
TOTAL	11	15	17	22	17	72

We can see from the above that week 1 was more popular with **55% of events registered** in the programme taking place this week. It is typical for event hosts to want to take advantage of the "buzz" at the start of the festival, when advertising their event.

Thursdays in **both weeks were very popular**, which is quite typical for the Festival. This was closely followed by Wednesdays and Tuesdays. The data follows trends seen in previous years, with Mondays and Fridays being the quieter days.

Events split by Sectors

Previously events have been split into sectors, this year however the events were split into themes, below is an explanation of each theme.



Unsurprisingly, the most popular sector was Business & Employee Success, accounting for nearly 43% of the events, followed by Creative & Digital at 19%. This is a slight change in trend from previous years, when Professional & Financial Services has been the second most popular sector for events. This is perhaps due to the rise of social media and AI with businesses wanting to upskill in these areas. Interestingly, Education & Skills was the third most popular sector, closely following Creative & Digital, accounting for 16% of events.

43%
attendees were from
BUSINESS & EMPLOYEE SUCCESS

Popular event types

Unsurprisingly, Business & Employee Success accounted for 4 out of the top 10 events in LBF2023. Creative & Digital was the second most popular event sector out of the top 10 events, which is concurrent with the above most popular event sectors overall.

Top 10 attended Events

EVENT	HOST	REGISTERED ATTENDEES	SECTORS
Activating Inclusive Growth and Innovation Money to Grow your Business Routes to Funding	University of Leicester - School of Business	111	Business & Employee Success
How To Win Over Your Audience on Social Media	Status Social	89	Creative & Digital
Regulatory Innovation in the Life Sciences	Charnwood Campus Management	84	Science, Technology & Space
Brewing Innovative Ideas Roadshow: Blaby District	De Montfort University	71	Education & Skills
The Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Business Operations	Nelsons Solicitors	69	Business & Employee Success
Tourism Trends - Are you embracing changing consumer behaviour and future-proofing your business?	Visit Leicester	60	Retail, Tourism & Hospitality
Inspiring Entrepreneurs - "Ambitions Challenges Funding Failure Your Team Your Network"	Charnwood Borough Council & Loughborough University	50	Business & Employee Success
Everything you always wanted to know about starting a business but were afraid to ask	Sir Thomas White Loans Charity	49	Business & Employee Success
My Way or the Highway	Leicestershire County Council	45	Property & Construction
Create Better Content	LikeMind Media	43	Creative & Digital

Sold Out Events

From the sold-out events we can see that Business & Employee Success and Creative & Digital had an equal number of sold-out events. This alludes to there being more of a demand for Creative & Digital events, than event hosts who are holding Creative & Digital events, perhaps in the 10th edition of the festival we will see further balance between the two sectors.

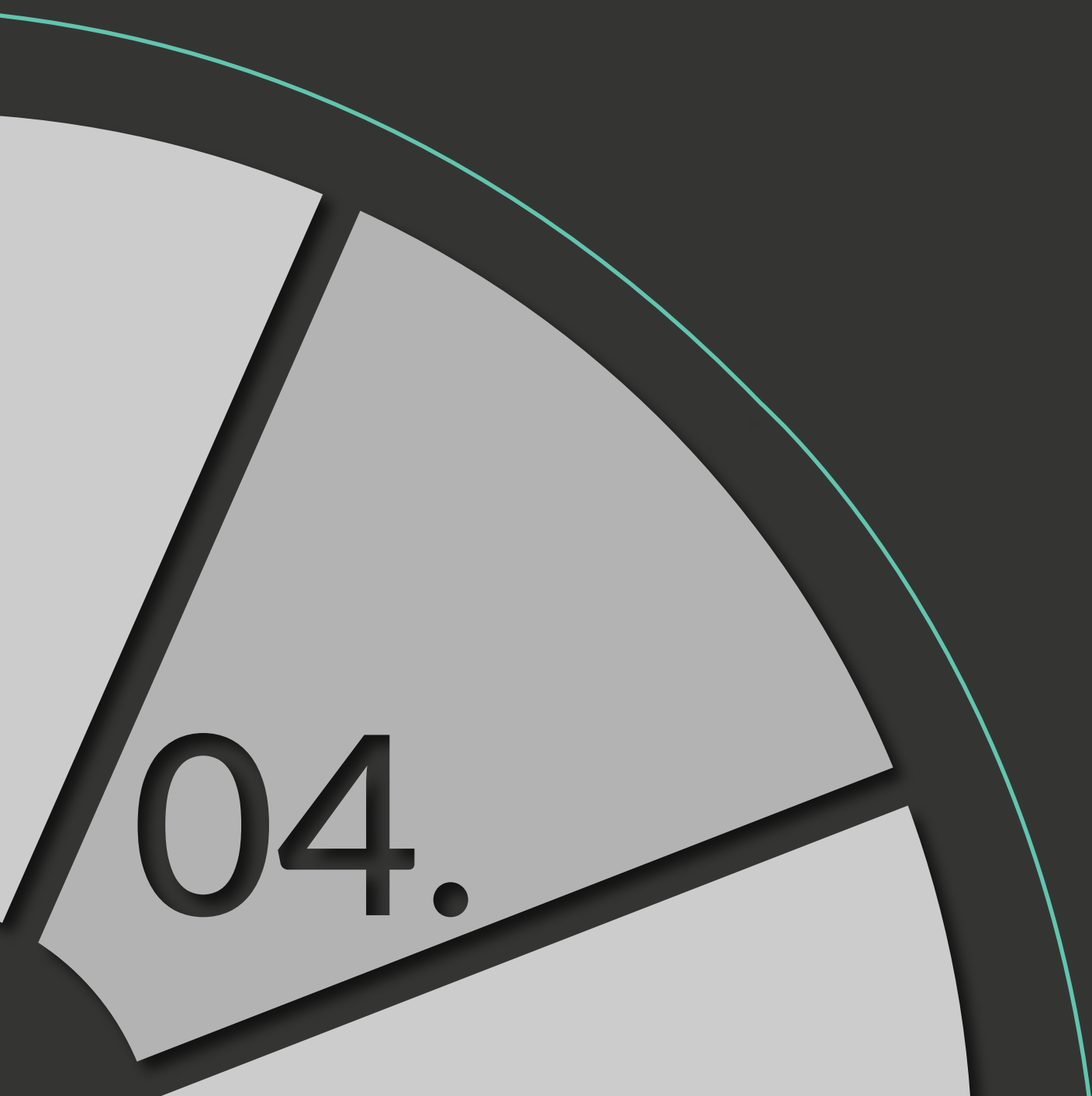
There was a real variety in the range of topics from the sold out events this year and it was exciting to see the emergence of events focused around AI were well received to push growth in the Leicestershire business community.

EVENT	HOST	REGISTERED ATTENDEES	THEME
Activating Inclusive Growth and Innovation Money to Grow your Business Routes to Funding	University of Leicester - School of Business	111	Business & Employee Success
The Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Business Operations	Nelsons Solicitors	69	Business & Employee Success
Inspiring Entrepreneurs - "Ambitions Challenges Funding Failure Your Team Your Network"	Charnwood Borough Council & Loughborough University	50	Business & Employee Success
My Way or the Highway	Leicestershire County Council	45	Property & Construction
Create Better Content	LikeMind Media	43	Creative & Digital
Managerial Speak	Notepad Wisdom	40	Business & Employee Success
Leverage LinkedIn over Lunch	Moss Social	37	Creative & Digital
3 ways to 10x your business visibility using Instagram Marketing	Immortal Monkey	30	Creative & Digital
Digital Marketing 101 with Digital Ethos	Digital Ethos	25	Creative & Digital
Fundamental Wellbeing Essentials	SkillBase First Aid	16	Education & Skills

*Events above highlighted sold out more than once.



It is essential to remember, however, that it is not always about numbers! The 'quality' of the event and what the organisers and attendees actually get out of it is far more important!

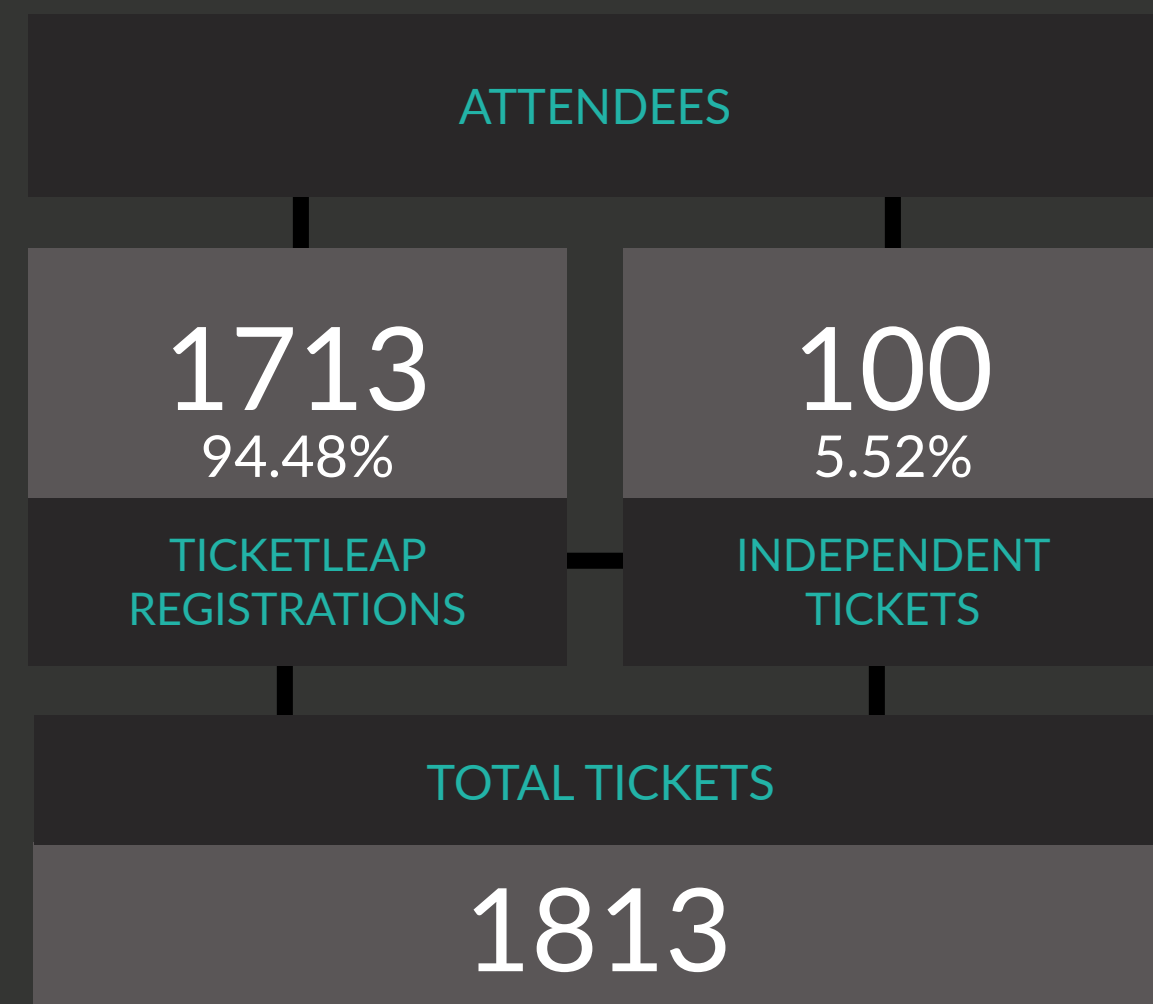


04.

Engagement

This section is about business festival attendees: where they were from, what type of business and which sectors they work in.

Overview



There were just over 1800 attendees registered to attend events this year, this has dropped from 2022. However, this is most likely due to the closing event being much smaller, compared to a gala dinner last year. There were also fewer events in general.

The number Ticketleap registrations is measured by individual 'purchases' made via the Festival's official ticketing platform. 'Independent Tickets' refers to any events that did not use our platform, which was just The Business Quiz this year.

Outside Region Engagement

The festival saw 290 attendees from outside the area which is a decrease from 2022, but similar to pre-COVID years, suggesting that the return on in-person events is impacting the reach of the Festival.

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Registrations from outside area	28%	22%	21%	17%

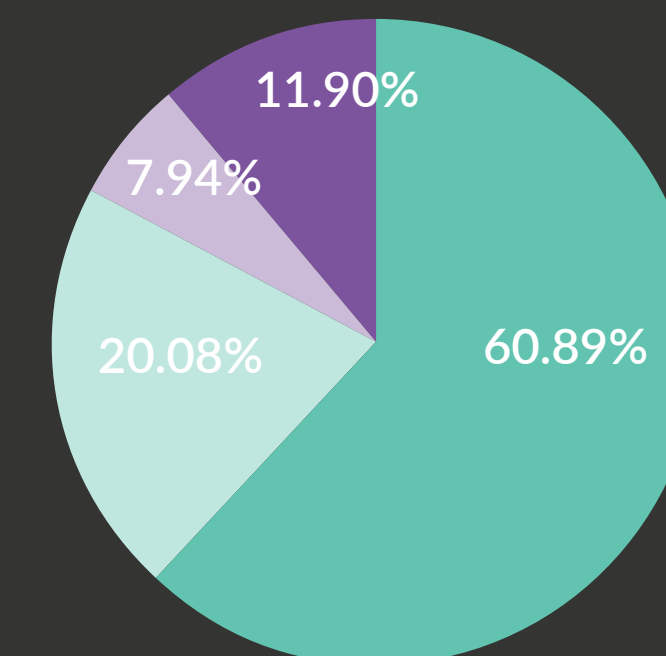


Public vs Private Sector attendees

Attendees (based on online Ticketleap registrations)	No.
Private Sector	1043
Public Sector	344
Third Sector	136
N/A or other	190
Total	1713

Over 60% of the LBF attendees were from the private sector, which shows that the LBF is having a positive impact on the business community. A fifth of the attendees are from the public sector, and just 8% being from the Third sector.

60%
attendees
were from
THE PRIVATE SECTOR



Buyer sector

SECTOR (Buyer)	ATTENDEES	%
Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	65	3.79%
Business support	234	13.66%
Communications, Marketing & Creative Industries	215	12.55%
Education & Skills	271	15.82%
Professional Services	214	12.49%
Property & Construction	103	6.01%
Retail, Tourism & Hospitality	119	6.95%
Science & Technology	146	8.52%
Transport & Logistics	37	2.16%
Other	309	18.04%
TOTAL	1713	100%

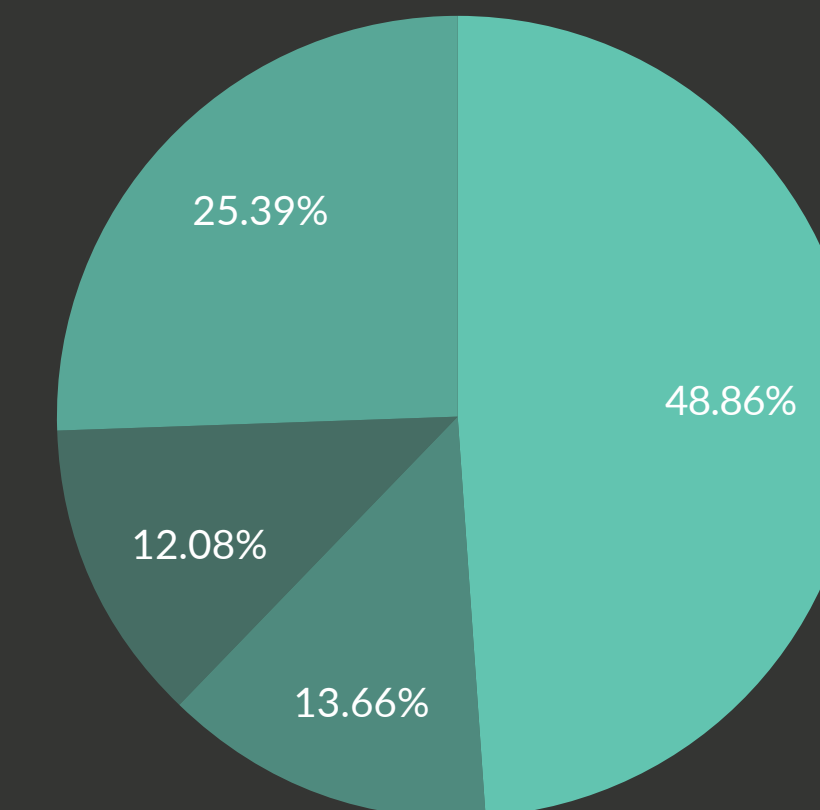


Discounting the 'other' category which includes various areas such as those who were unsure of their sector, not-in employment, students, third sector etc. The most popular sector for attendees was Education & Skills, has changed from previous years. This move away from Business Support which has previously been the most popular sector may suggest that those working in the education sector are looking to grow. There was also a lot of engagement from all three universities in the region.

Naturally as a business festival, it can be expected that Professional Services, Business Support and Communications would be some of the most popular sectors, and historically always have been.

Business size

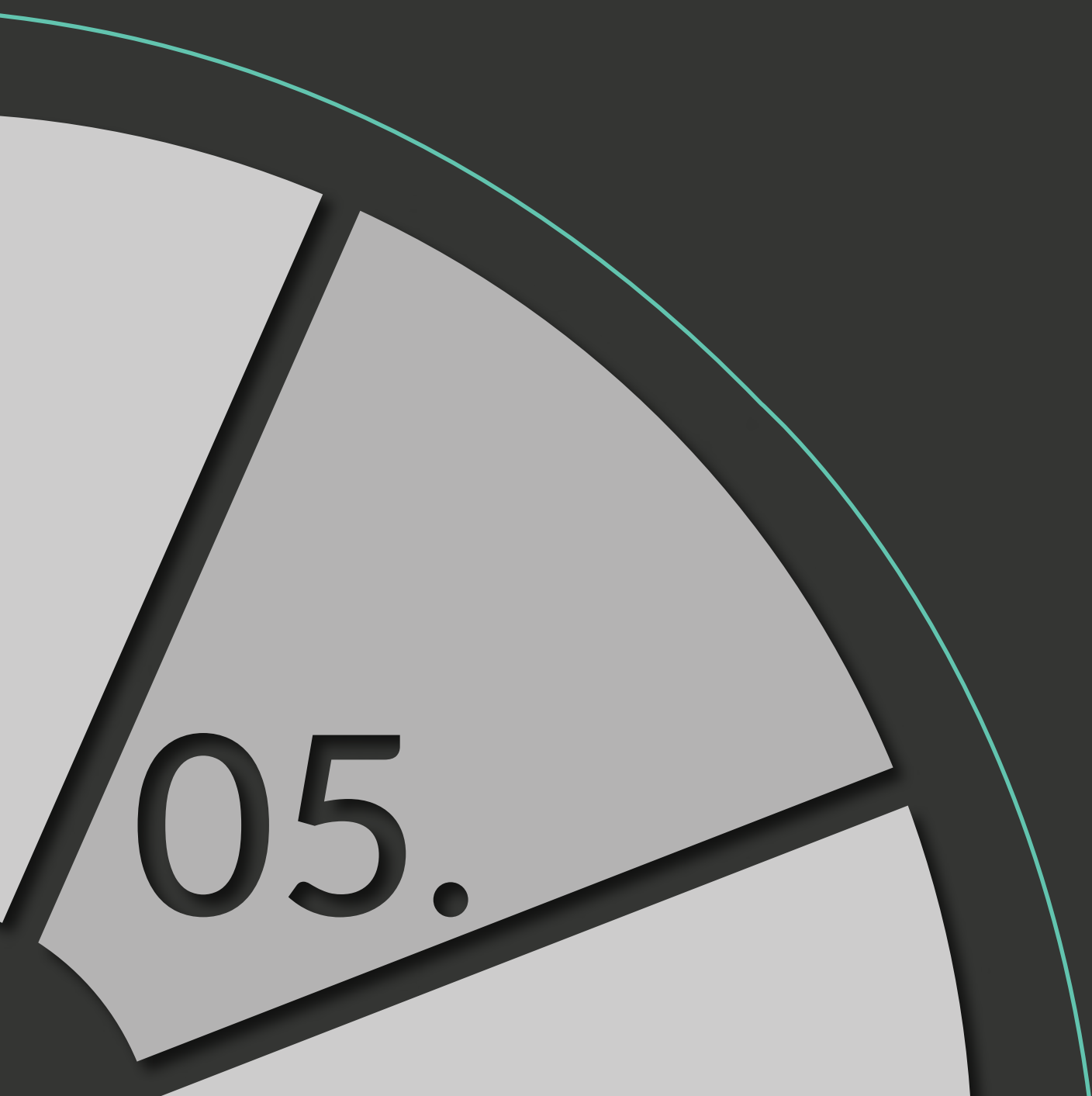
BUSINESS SIZE	ATTENDEES
Micro <10 employees	837
Small 10-49 employees	234
Medium 50 - 249 employees	207
Large >250 employees	435
Unknown	0
TOTAL	1713



This is an important set of data, because it shows that the spread of attendees according to their business size is weighted at either end of the scale rather than SMEs as one might expect.

The largest proportion were micro businesses at 48.86% for 2023 (up nearly 5% from 2022), the proportions of SMEs has dropped slightly and large businesses have remained roughly the same.





05.

Publicity & Promotion

This section is all about the business festival promotion, including the media (print, digital and broadcast), digital communications, brand placement, advertising and social media.

Overview

In 2023, we implemented a new monitoring system, which has resulted in different stats being provided.

There were 46 pieces of news coverage this year, with 9 of those being in print and two live radio interviews.

This is an incredible feat in the changing landscape of PR. With more stringent and accurate monitoring, it is estimated that there are over 1 million lifetime views of coverage based on audience reach and engagement, and a further circulation of 37,000 printed articles in publications such as Leicester Mercury, Burton Mail and Business Network Magazine.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Circulation	20,408,839	31,522,667	26,691,195	28,527,560	21,524,675
Reach	11,497,531	18,233,145	16,623,132	17,689,793	14,940,277

The total reach and circulation figures are made up of:

- printed media (press and publications);
- web and online (including media websites);
- radio and TV; brand placement and advertising (through contra deals and direct advertising);
- partner communications (such as company newsletters, e-blasts, internal publications etc.)
- social media impacts.



TOTAL MARKETING CIRCULATION

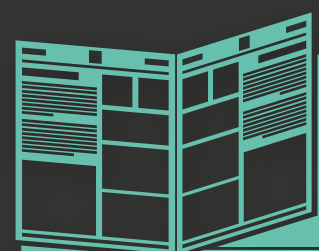


TOTAL MARKETING REACH

The total reach and circulation figures are made up of:

<p>PRINTED MEDIA (press and publications)</p>	<p>WEB AND ONLINE (including media websites)</p>	<p>RADIO AND TV (brand placement and advertising through contra deals and direct advertising)</p>	<p>PARTNER COMMUNICATIONS (such as company newsletters, e-blasts, internal publications etc.)</p>	<p>SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACTS</p>
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Printed Media

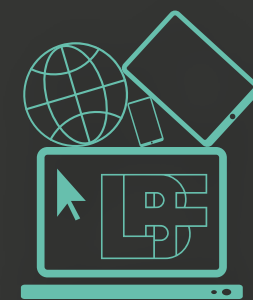


Reach
37,410

In total, 18 press releases were issued throughout the duration of the festival year, highlighting all the key dates in the calendar, events and sponsor spotlights.



Web & online publicity



Reach
21,176,618

This covers any online news articles, website visits, and eNewsletters. This figure could be much higher, if we could track partner communications.



Radio & TV



Reach
140,000

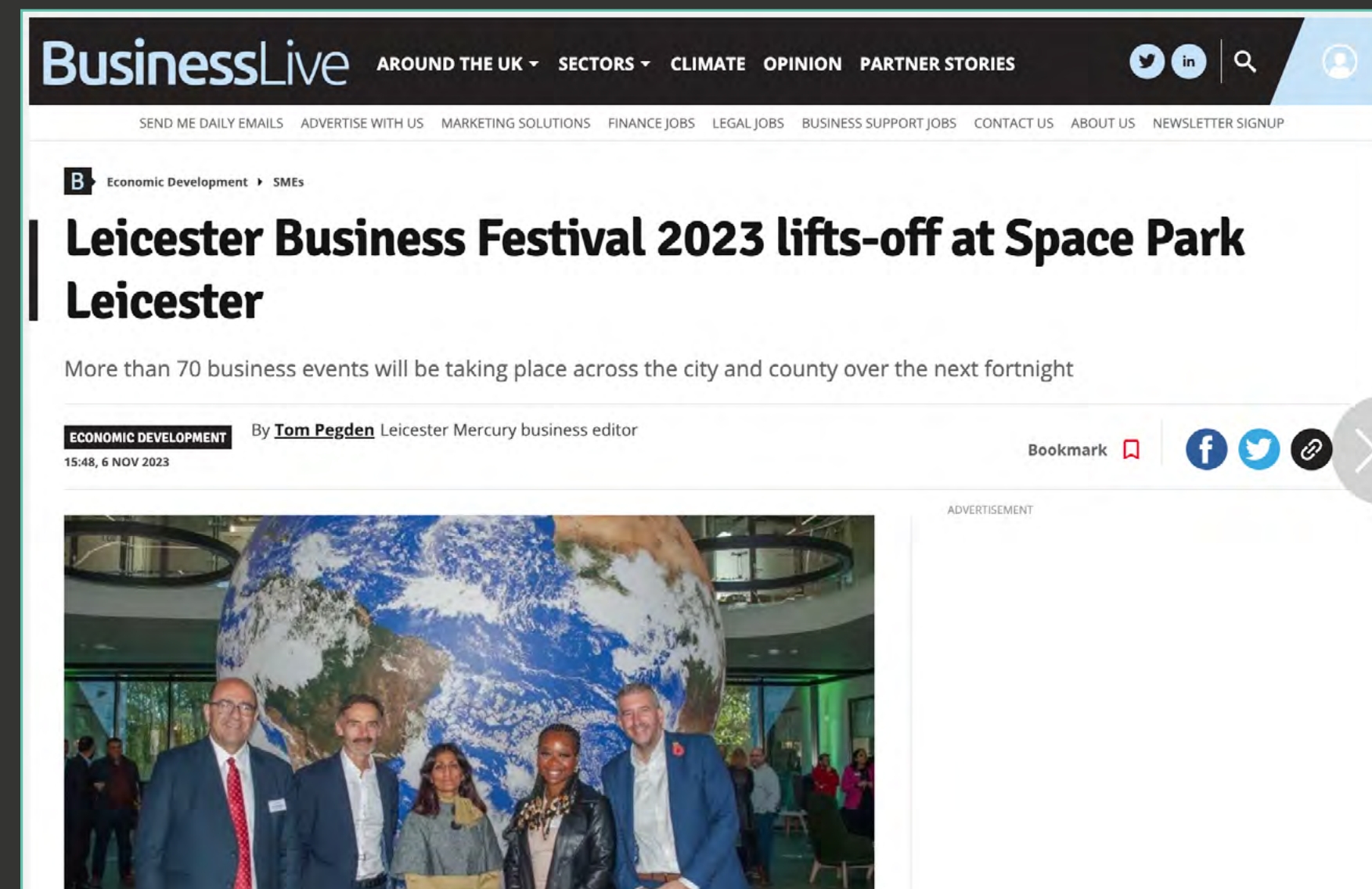
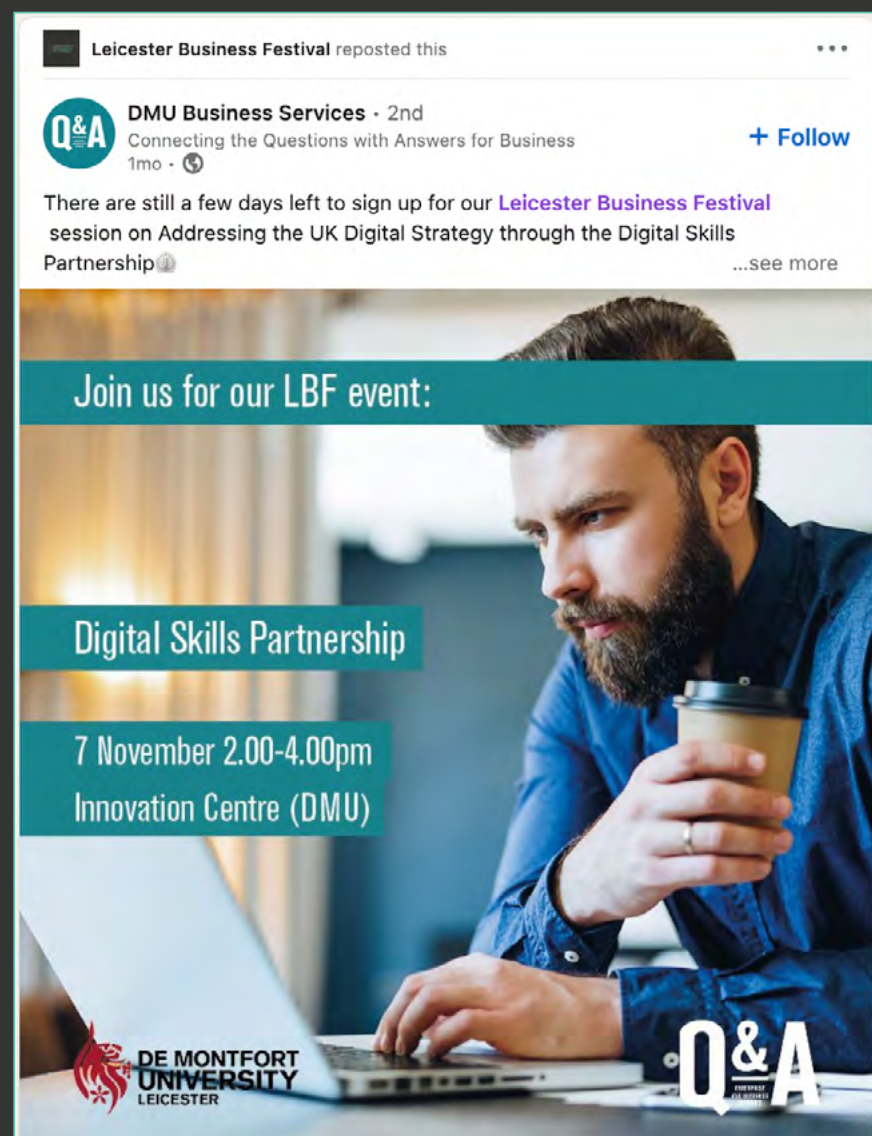
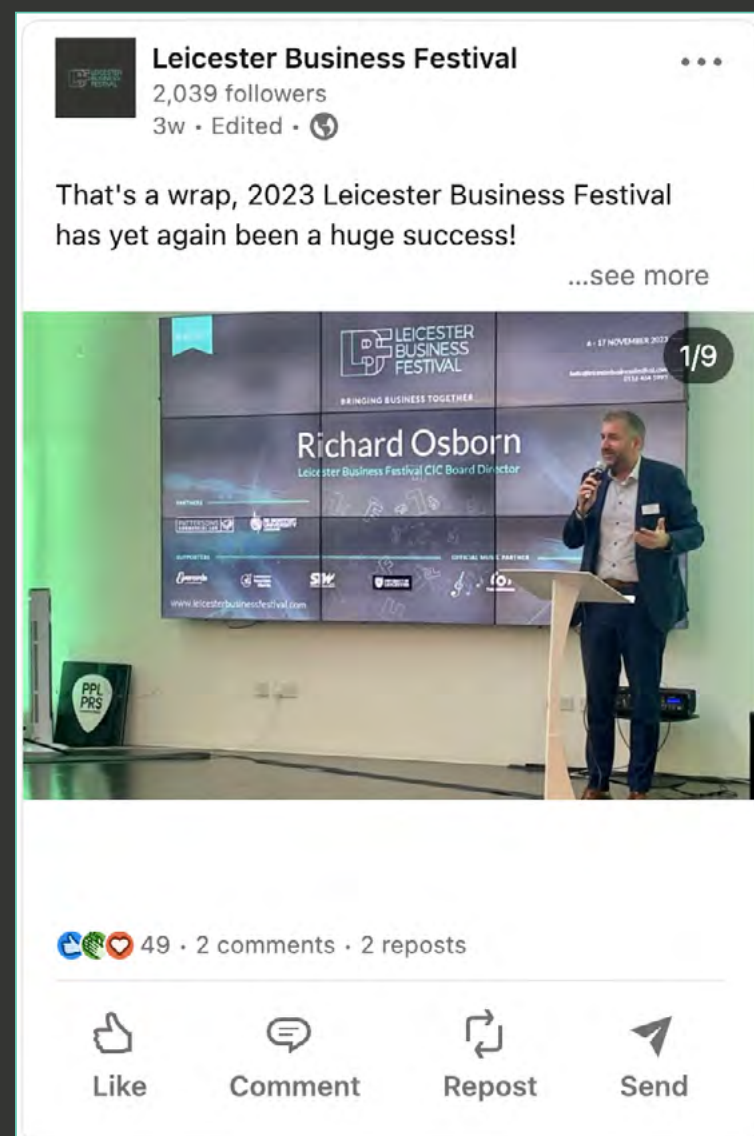
These figures relate to any sort of radio and TV coverage. They were boosted by two brilliant interviews on BBC Radio Leicester.



Social Media



Reach
30,647



X and LinkedIn were by far the most valuable platforms for LBF content. This is unsurprising as both are more business-focused than Facebook, with businesses having a heavy presence and interacting with other businesses on Twitter and LinkedIn far more than the more Business to Consumer and Consumer to Consumer focused Facebook.

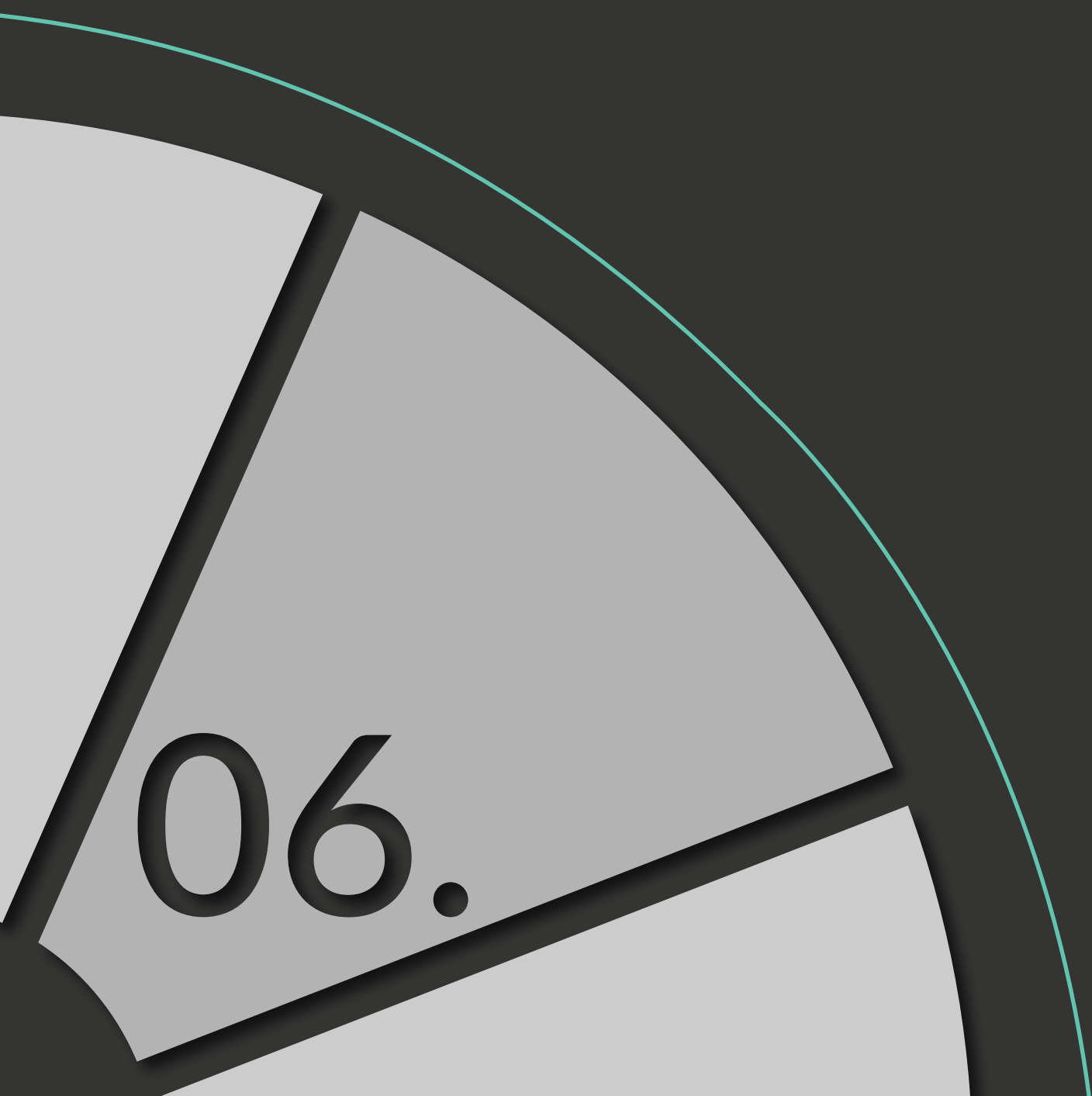
When looking at engagement of social media it was event hosts who most often interacted with content curated on LBF platforms. Stakeholders such as sponsors and news outlets were also very engaged and reliable when it came to social media shares, likes and comments of LBF platform posts.

This year, the engagement on LinkedIn in particular, was much higher than previous years.

With event hosts sharing their events in the run up and during the Festival, a real community feeling started to emerge.

With the increase in in-person events, there was an increase in interactivity from hosts and attendees as they were out and about at events. These 'on the ground' posts always tend to get more likes and comments as people connect with other attendees.

There has been significantly less promotion by partners and contra deals in 2023, which has dramatically reduced the overall reach of the Festival. As always, it is very difficult to track all communications being sent out by partners and sponsors, and near impossible to know the analytics of those.



06.

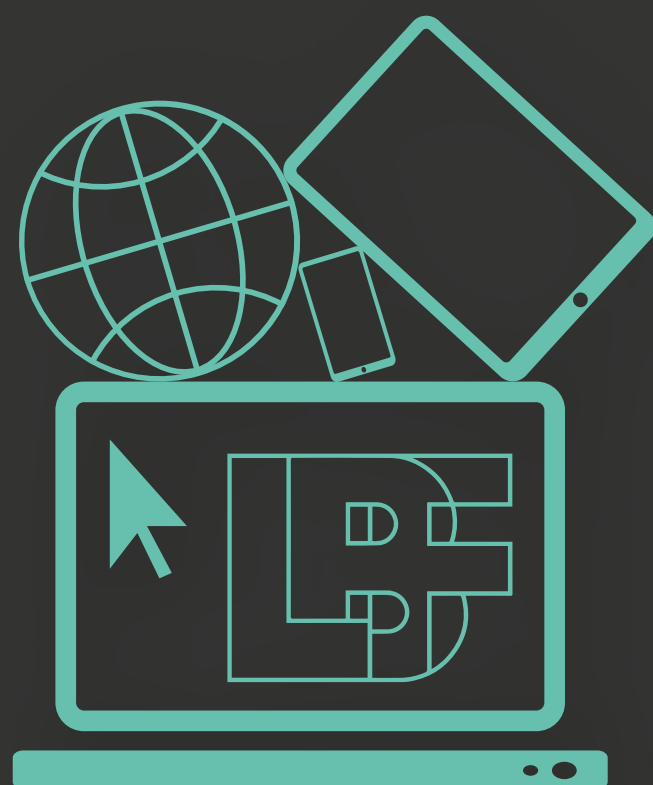
Feedback

This section looks at all the feedback regarding the Festival, this includes surveys sent to attendees and hosts, social media comments and direct emails from those involved.

OVERVIEW

The feedback for LBF2023, like most years, is very positive. Attendees, hosts and stakeholders alike, understand the importance of Leicester Business Festival and how it supports businesses, entrepreneurs and the local business community and economy.

As seen as the statistics, over **81% of attendees said that their business benefited from attending** an event in the Festival. Over 86% of attendees said that the quality of events was good to excellent. Over **81% of respondents** were also interested in being involved in 2024, which again shows that people recognise the benefits of the festival and want to continue to receive these.



People felt the main benefits of the Festival were:

- Useful knowledge - over 56% of attendees said they had learnt something new.
- Generated relevant & helpful introductions within business community - over 47% of attendees reported this benefit.
- Offered networking opportunities with people who might not network on a regular basis - over 43% of attendees were given access to new networking opportunities.

Feedback highlighted:

- I've been a big fan of the LBF for years now as the support it gives to local businesses through collaborative opportunities is phenomenal.
- I knew our event for Leicester Business Festival was going to be fun. I just didn't know how much fun - The energy and ideas were off the chart!
- A huge thank you to everyone who has made this event possible, it takes a village (or a business community!) and a huge amount of collaboration.
- I learned so much and received incredible advice to implement right away.

Improvements suggested in feedback:

Every year, Leicester Business Festival asks for feedback on how to improve in the future. This feedback is then used to guide the programme and structure the following year.

- More marketing of the Leicester Business Festival, especially when event applications open.
- Better communication from Event Hosts if there are changes/cancellations for their events.
- Initiatives as part of the festival which run all year around such as LUinc.
- Handouts for people to take away from the events.
- Maybe consider the option of a contribution towards costs of £5 or let hosts charge. People are likely to attend if they have paid.





07.



Summary and recommendations

We are keen to ensure that the tenth edition of Leicester Business Festival is the best yet, and have therefore taken the opportunity to review the statistics detailed in this report and speak with stakeholders of the Leicester Business Festival to receive feedback, understanding what continues to work well and what areas need improvement. We have outlined some of the topics of discussion below and will utilise these in the planning of next year's festival.



Pre-festival

SUBJECT AREA	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
Event Clashes	Overlapping events. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are always popular days for events - particularly the mornings.	The only way to combat overlapping events is to drastically reduce the number of events, or only allow for 1hr events to maximise the number of slots available.
Event Applications	Despite updating the application form in 2022, there is still often missing information - making the process longer for the administration team.	If the number of events is restricted further, we can update the application process to stress its competitiveness, meaning events without complete information are less likely to be accepted into the programme and explain this on communications to hosts prior.
Event Awards	New Event Hosts were unaware that there would be awards as part of the closing ceremony. They wish they had known to be able to provide a competitive event offering.	Leicester Business Festival team will make the award categories clear at the event application stage, so that event hosts can tailor their events should they wish.

Events

SUBJECT AREA	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
No shows	Events are free to maximise accessibility for attendees, however, this means people have no obligation to attend on the day. For sold out events, this can mean that someone who genuinely wanted to attend may miss out on valuable information.	Some event organisers in 2023 opted for a “waiting list”, therefore stressing to attendees to let the host know if they can no longer attend, as someone else would love to take their place - which helped this. If LBF2024 is supported by a charity again such as Leicester Hospitals Charity, there is also the suggestion of paying a donation, to encourage attendance.
Digital Event Links	Digital Events are still a great way to host an event, however it is important that all attendees receive the link in advance of the event. Not all Event Hosts shared their event links with the Leicester Business Festival Team. This meant that attendees were contacting LBF for the link, and we were unable to help them.	If hosting a digital event, it will be mandatory to submit your event link at the time of application so that the Leicester Business Festival team are able to use this in communications with event attendees.



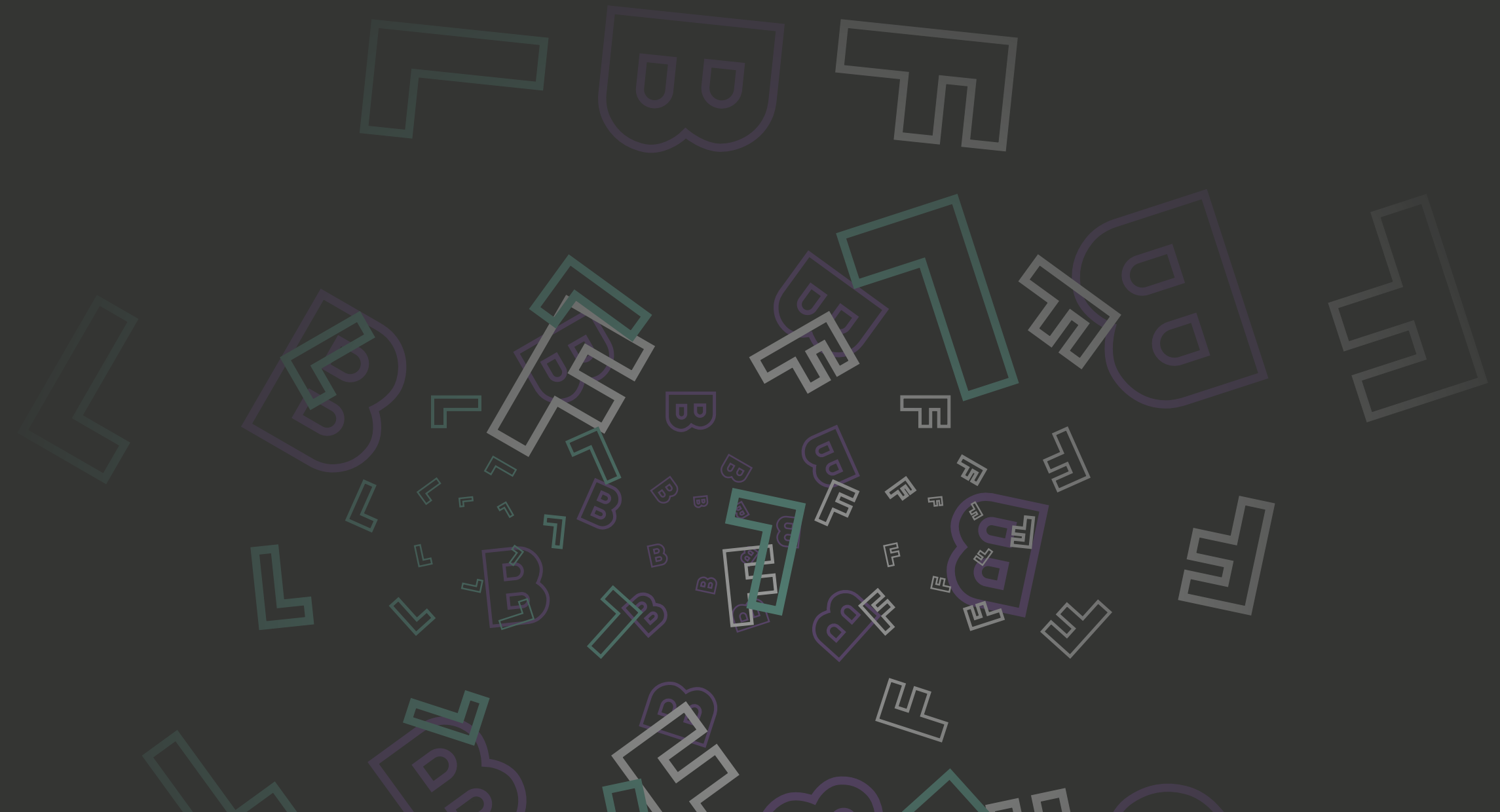
Management and Structure

SUBJECT AREA	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION
LBF Advocates	In previous years the Festival has had both a steering group and sector/theme leads to help push and promote LBF - with varying degrees of success.	Utilise the people already supporting and engaged with LBF. Arrange more regular touchpoints with them, and look at providing them with collateral so it is easy for them to share to their networks.



LEICESTER
BUSINESS
FESTIVAL

associate
events



Thank you



Thank you & we look forward to seeing you
in 2024 for the 10th anniversary!