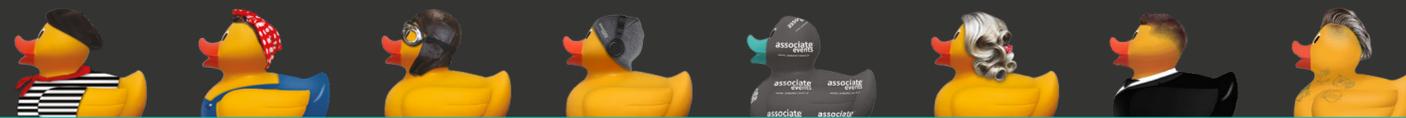


Official Festival Report

by

associate events

events | production | brand | pr



associate-events.com



Headline Partner



Official Festival Report



Leicester Business Festival 2021



BF 2021 will historically be seen as a year of resilience, with the festival springing valiantly back into its former familiar shape, welcoming many in-person events after a highly successful but almost all-digital offering in 2020. This year showed what can be achieved with combined determination, strength and invaluable experience. The business community has redefined what it means to work collaboratively, with local businesses, sponsors and supporters co-hosting events, sharing knowledge, resources and audiences.

During the downtime of last winter, the CIC were able to reflect on the structure of the festival and look at how it could be adapted to meet the ever-changing goalposts and hurdles of the event industry. When looking at how the 'sectors' of yesteryear had worked so successfully in collaboration, suddenly the idea of the festival being in a sectorial split no longer made sense. The 'sectors' had already proved they could not only

work together but also learn from and influence one another, showing once again that the local business community when whole was greater than the sum of its parts. Therefore five 'Themes' were introduced and were used as influencers and benchmarks for initial event ideas through to delivery.

With the format of the festival changing once again this year, successes and learnings have been discovered along the way. Both user experience and operational perspectives have been considered when evaluating event feedback 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 LBF has achieved over the last 12 months for the city.

A huge thank you to all involved, your support and contributions are key to the festivals ongoing success. Onward to 2022.



Alister de Ternant
Managing Director | Associate Events

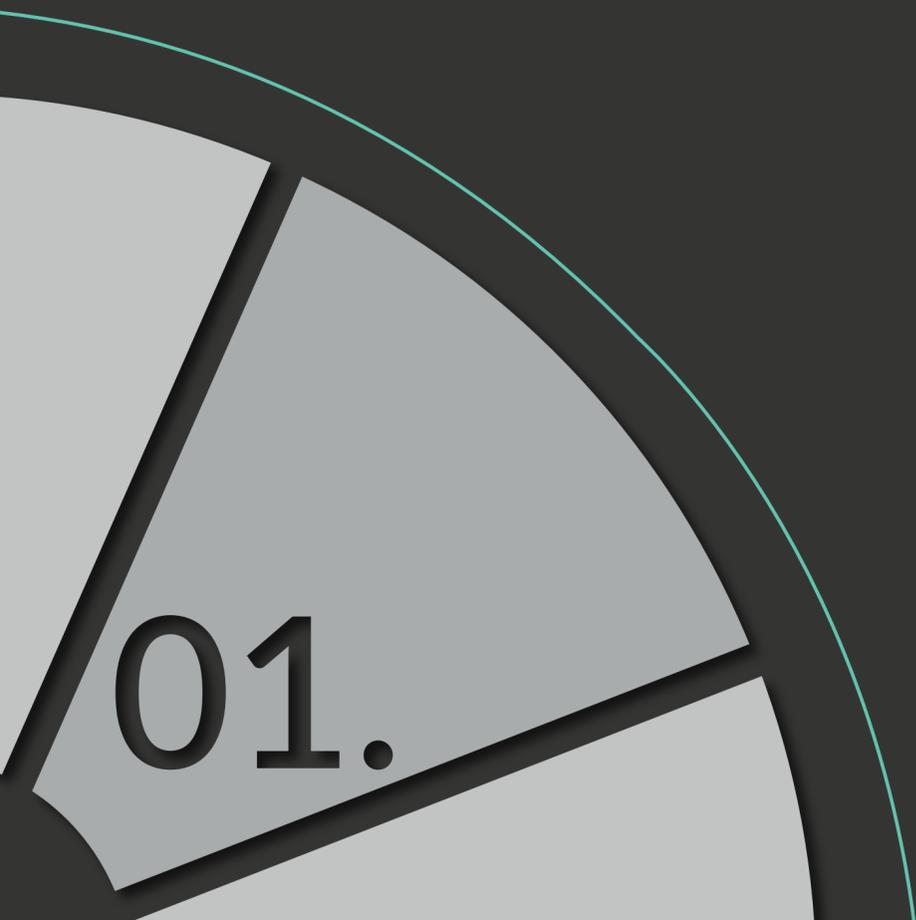
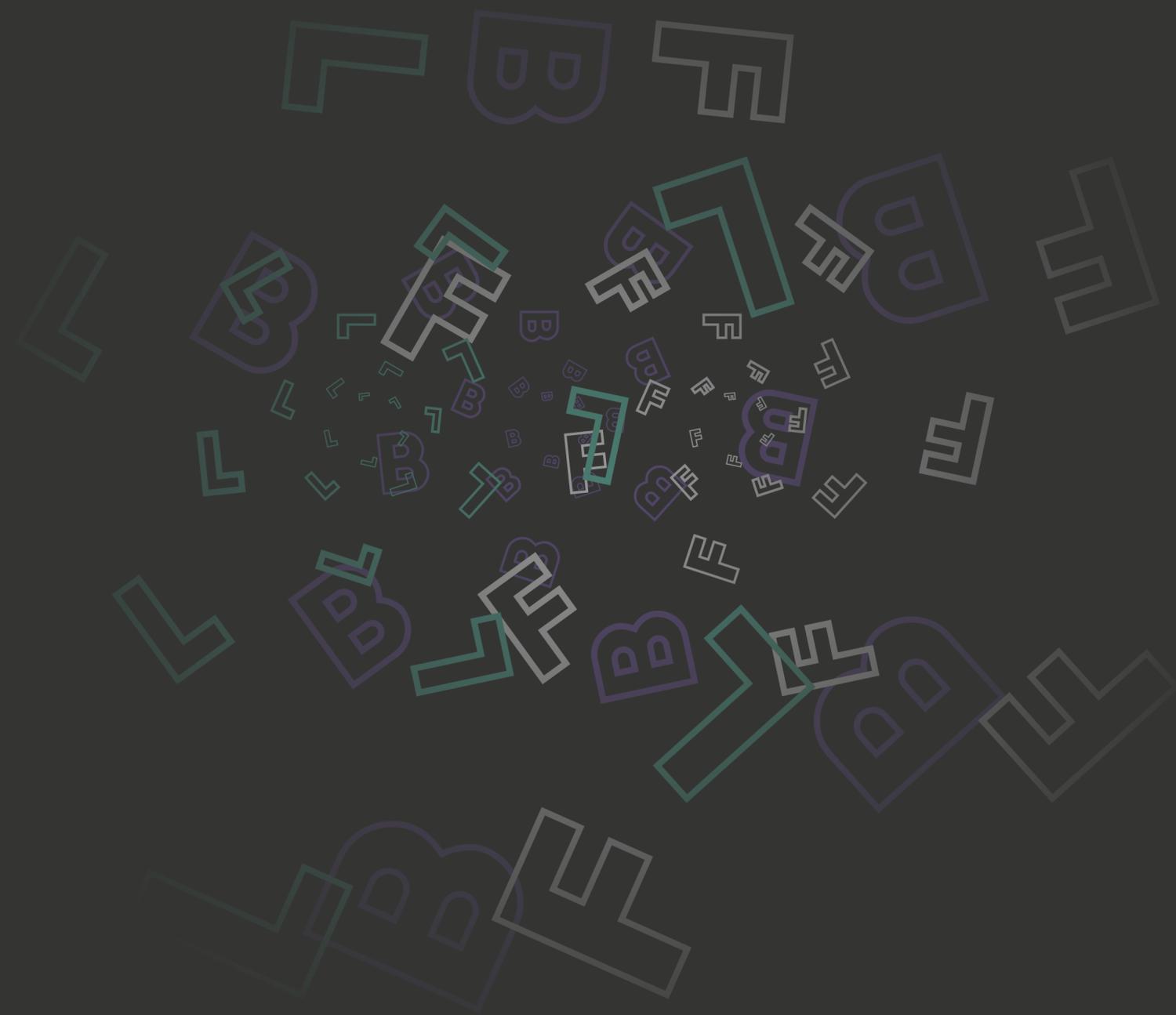
Tara Glover
Project Manager | Associate Events

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
A Look at LBF2021	4
<i>Headline statistics, key milestones</i>	
Sponsorship	7
<i>Sponsorship</i>	
Events	9
<i>Events data</i>	
Engagement	13
<i>Attendee data, business data</i>	
Publicity & Promotion	16
<i>Print, digital & broadcast media, brand placement, marketing</i>	
Feedback	20



#LBF2021



A Look at LBF2021

HEADLINE STATISTICS



90

REGISTERED EVENTS



10

EVENTS SOLD OUT



1,889

ATTENDEES



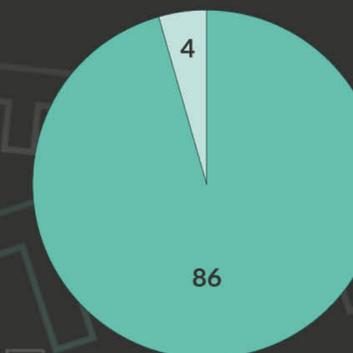
22%

ATTENDEES FROM OUTSIDE THE REGION*



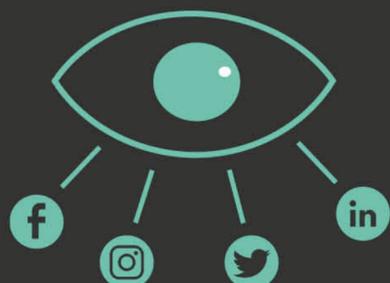
699

BUSINESSES ENGAGED



REGIONAL SPLIT (REGISTERED EVENTS)

Leicester City 86
County 4



399,118

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT



94%

EVENTS RATED 'GOOD TO EXCELLENT'



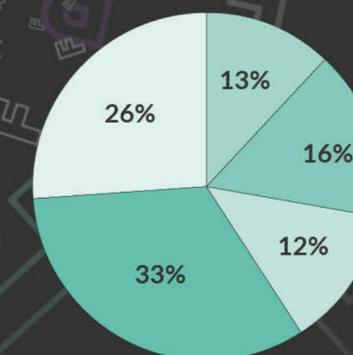
54%

DIGITAL EVENTS



86%

FELT LBF HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THEM OR THEIR BUSINESS



SECTORAL SPLIT (REGISTERED EVENTS)

Resilient Innovation 12%
Connectivity 16%
Perception 13%
People 33%
Growth 26%



32%

'NEW' LBF EVENT ORGANISERS



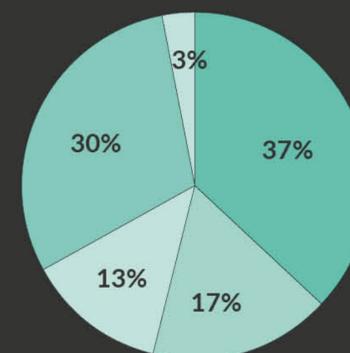
26,691,195

TOTAL MARKETING CIRCULATION



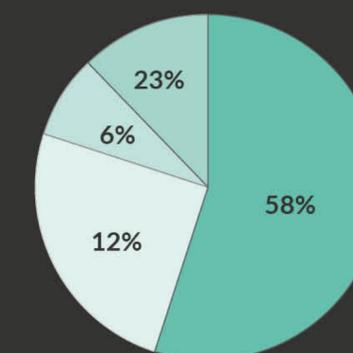
16,623,132

TOTAL MARKETING REACH



BUSINESS SPLIT BY SIZE*

Micro <10 employees 37%
Small 10 - 49 employees 17%
Medium 50-249 employees 13%
Large >250 employees 30%
Unknown 3%

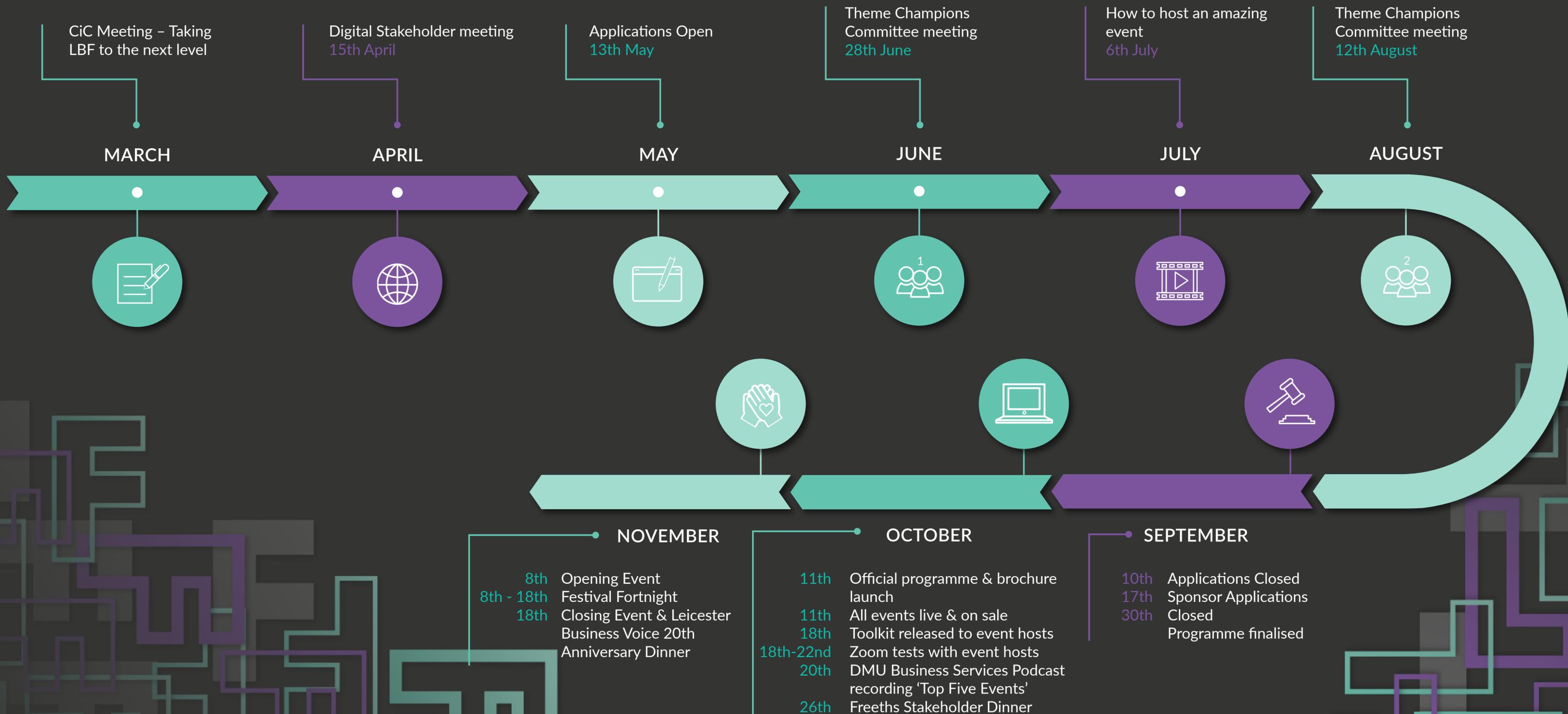


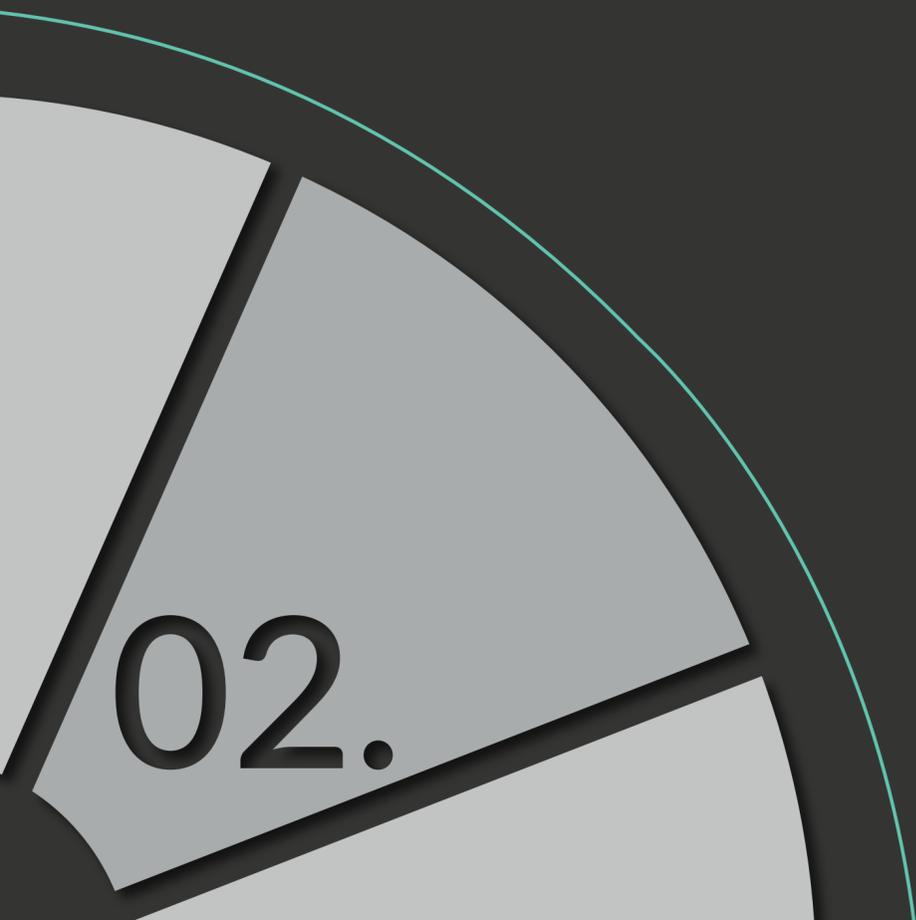
PRIVATE VS PUBLIC SECTOR ENGAGEMENT*

Private Sector 58%
Public Sector 23%
Third Sector 6%
Unknown 13%

Figures estimated as of 19-11-21

*of those registered via Ticket Leap





02.

Sponsorship

Official Festival Report Leicester Business Festival

SPONSORSHIP

As a Community Interest Company, the LBF is funded entirely by income generated from private / 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 investment and economic growth, a coherent, united and consistent outward promotion of the regions 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

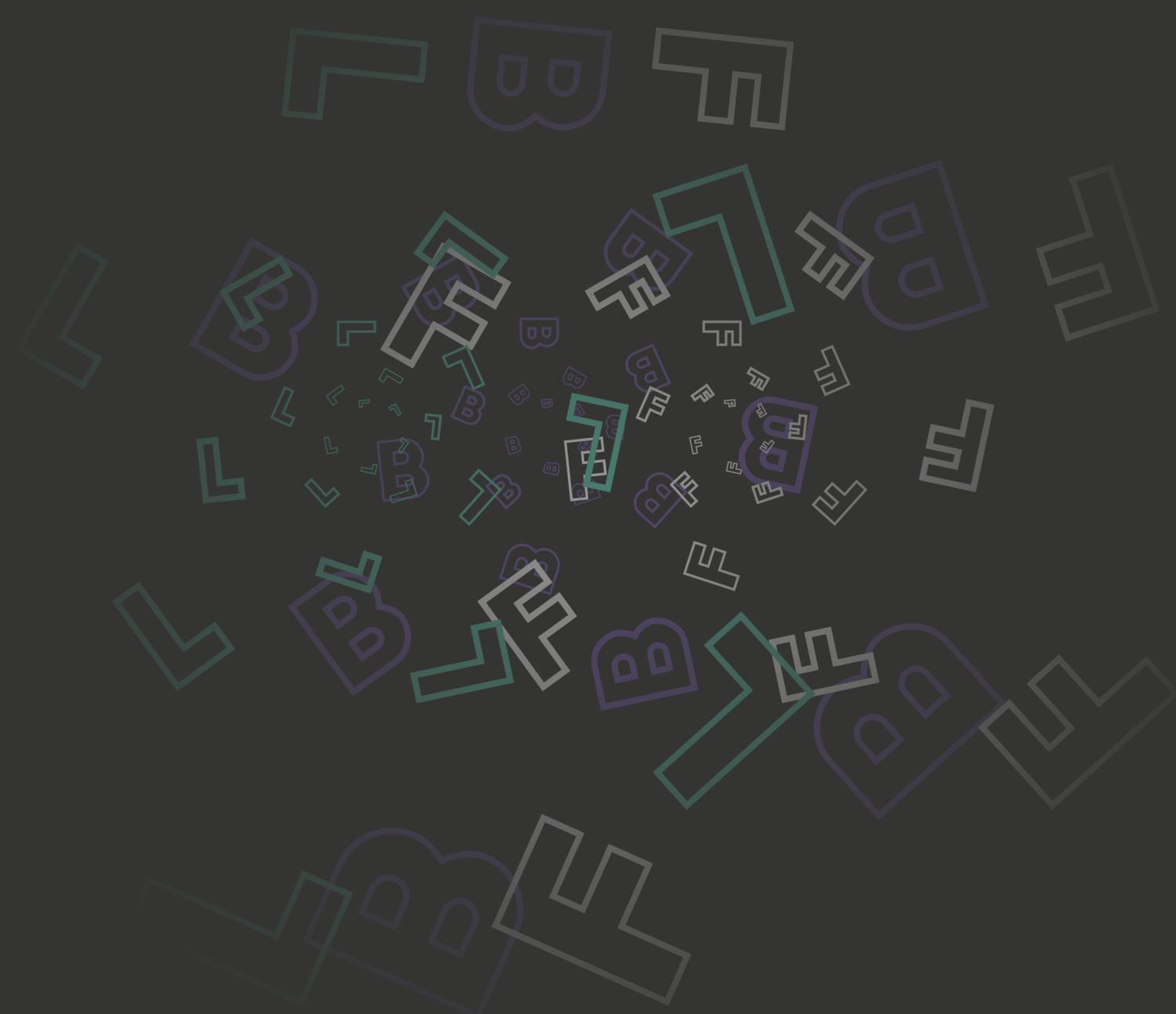
PARTNERS

SPONSORS



SUPPORTERS





03.

Events

Official Festival Report Leicester Business Festival

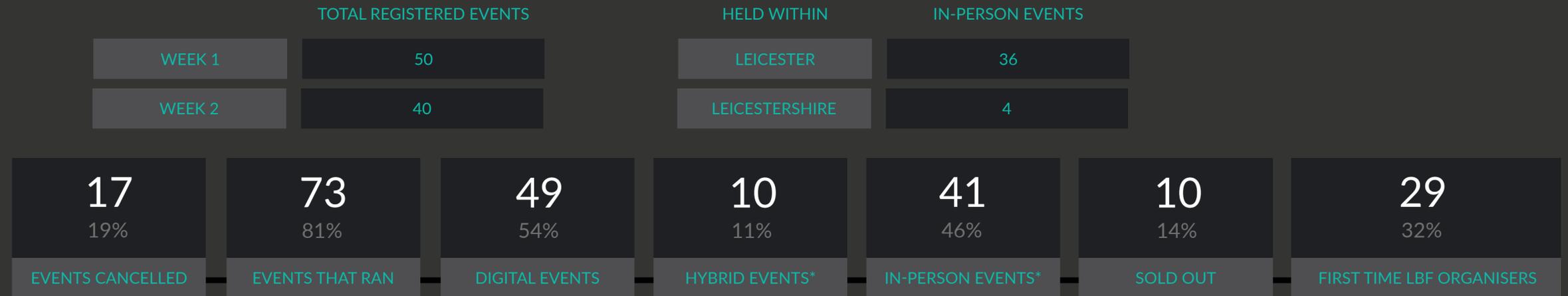
EVENTS DATA

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 90 registered events in the 2021 Business Festival programme. This was a very positive and reassuring figure, demonstrating that under ever-changing circumstances there is a high demand for the festival and a strong desire by the business community to be involved.

Figures are based on registered events and there was a fairly equal split between digital and in-person events, 46% of events registered were in-person and 54% were digital. Many of the in-person events had a hybrid element with event organisers feeling increasingly capable of hosting this type of event.



In other positive news, 14% of events 'sold out', (or reached capacity) with most increasing their delegate numbers - a benefit to digital events as this is obviously very easy to do with minimal effort.

In addition, 29 events were run by first-time LBF event organisers. This is great in two respects: 68% of organisers were previously involved, saw a benefit in doing so and returned for more; whilst 32% of organisers were new people willing to try the festival and find out what it had to offer.



REGISTERED EVENTS BY DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	TOTAL
WEEK 1	7	11	9	13	9	1	50
WEEK 2	7	13	11	9	0	0	40
TOTAL	14	24	20	22	9	1	90

We can see from the above that week 1 was more popular with 56% of events registered in the programme taking place this week. With the closing event on Thursday 18th, it meant there would naturally be fewer events in week two due to it only being 4 days long.

Tuesday was the busiest day overall, but Thursday in week one and Wednesday in week two also stand out in terms of popular days. Interestingly the festival also hosted a weekend event.

Official Festival Report Leicester Business Festival

Events split by Themes

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



Resilient Innovation

Covering new products or services, life in a post-COVID world and strategies for the future.



Sustainability & Connectivity

This includes digital connectivity and communications and also the movement of people and goods.



Perception

All about getting your business, product, service or even geographical area to stand out in the crowd and against competitors.



People

All things people related including diversity, resilience, HR, skills and training and the well-being of employees.

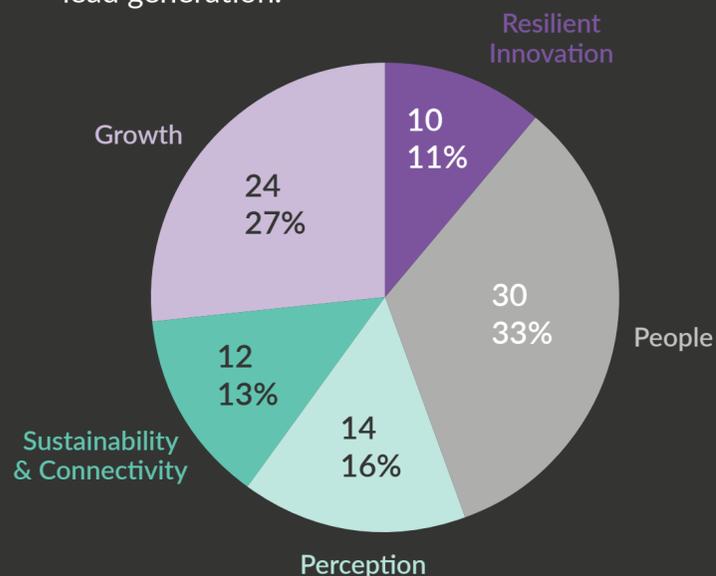


Growth

Everything associated with organisational growth including help, advice, networking and lead generation.

Growth

Everything associated with organisational growth including help, advice, networking and lead generation.



Unsurprisingly, the most popular theme was People, accounting for 33% of the events, with Growth proving the next most popular at 27% followed by Sustainability & Connectivity, Perception and Resilient Innovation which all had similar figures. As this is the first year the festival events has been split into themes and not sectors there is not yet any comparable data. However, People and Growth were always likely to be popular categories, with leaders and managers wanting to focus on their staff after such a challenging time and then look at business growth after a period of stagnation.

Popular event types

The most popular themes, People and Growth each made up 25% of the events within the top 10 most popular list. What is interesting is that the other 50% was made up of an equal split between Resilient innovation and Perception. Meaning that Sustainability & Connectivity did not feature at all in the top 10 most popular events and only featured once in the 10 sold out events. What was most surprising about this is that Sustainability & Connectivity was the 3rd most popular theme across all events.

Top 10 attended Events

EVENT	HOST	REGISTERED ATTENDEES	SECTOR
Innovation funding to scale and grow your business	DMU, UoL, LU	77	Resilient Innovation
Financing Your Business Growth	Midlands Engine Investment Fund, RSM UK	75	Growth
Leicester Graduate City - How we can close the skills gap	DMU, UoL, LU	62	People
Where Leicester Leads: 10 Years Of The City's Elected Mayor	1284	58	Growth
BID Leicester 23-28: Help us shape an exciting new era for the city centre	BID Leicester	50	Resilient Innovation
Uncover the Story - Why telling tales is good for your business and the region's tourism economy	Place Marketing, Leicester & Leicestershire County Council	50	Perception
Power of Love Leadership® - 7 proven strategies to increase resilience, productivity, trust and engagement	Sarah Higgins Corporate Coaching Ltd	49	People
Moving the needle on Transparency: Future Proofing Leicester's Fashion Industry	DMU, Justice in Fashion	42	Perception
Small and medium Size Enterprises - Starting Your CSR Journey	Embark CSR	38	Perception
Physical Activity and Sport - prioritising skills, wellbeing, digital, diversity and green recovery	Active Together	31	People

10 Sold Out Events

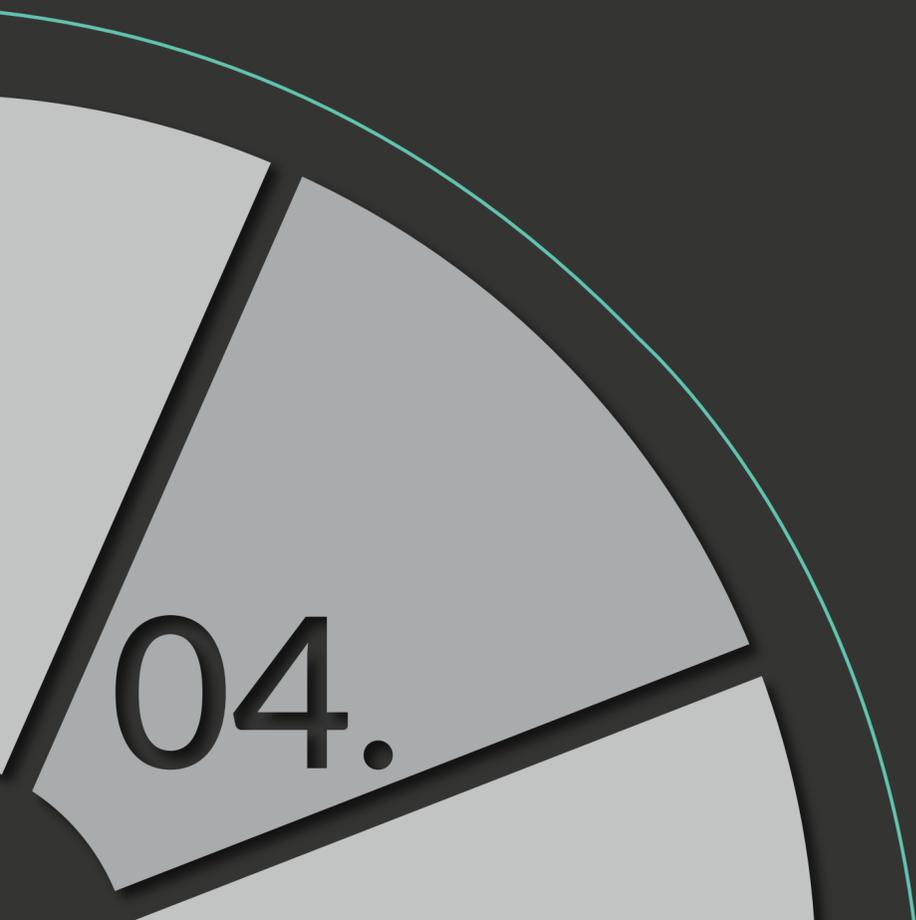
From the sold-out events we can see that Growth was the most common theme, covering 40% of the 10 sell-outs, this was equalled with 40% of the events covering the perception theme. Resilient Innovation and Sustainability & connectivity made up just 10% of the sold-out events and more surprisingly, People being the most popular theme selected across all events and making up 25% of the highest selling events, did not feature at all in the sell-out events.

Similarities were found in the sell-out events, with CSR, digital marketing tips and tools being popular subjects, events discussing the future of the city and county also proved popular, showing event goers care and interest in improving and supporting change in Leicester.

EVENT	HOST	REGISTERED ATTENDEES	SECTOR
Get your Marketing Strategy Sorted	LikeMind Media	10	Growth 
Raise your profile through business awards	FSB	30	Perception 
Write a Book: Learn the new way to grow your business	Ladey Adey Publications	10	Growth 
BID Leicester 23-28: Help us shape an exciting new era for the city centre	BID Leicester	50	Resilient Innovation 
Boosting your LinkedIn business account	East Midlands Chamber	29	Sustainability & Connectivity 
Uncover the Story: Why telling tales is good for your business & the regions tourism economy	Place Marketing, Leicester & Leicestershire County Council	50	Perception 
Instagram for Business – 5 things you need to know	Immortal Monkey	30	Growth 
Where Leicester Leads: 10 years of the city's elected Mayor	1284	60	Growth 
Moving the needle on Transparency	DMU, Justice in Fashion	40	Perception 
Small & Medium Enterprise – Starting your CSR journey	Embark CSR	38	Perception 



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!



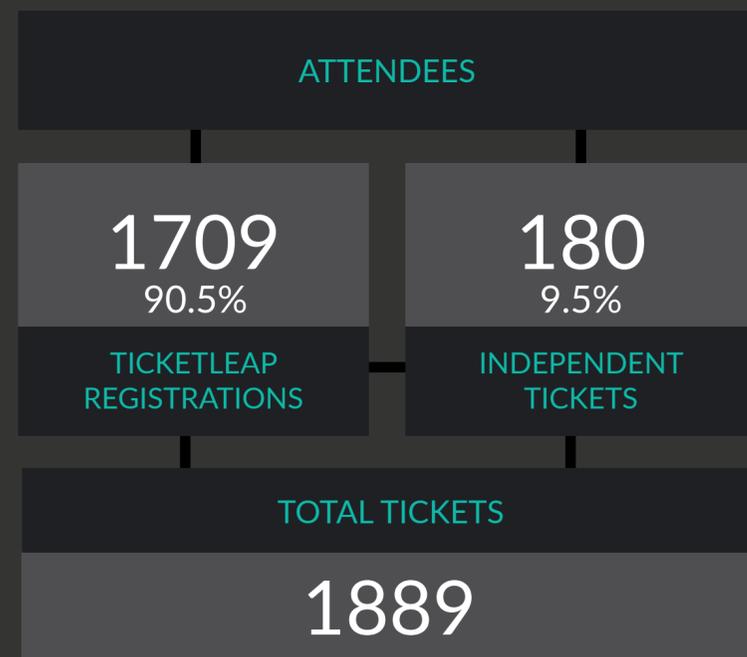
04.

Engagement

Official Festival Report Leicester Business Festival

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

Overview



There were nearly 1900 attendees registered for all events in the 2021 calendar. This is down by around 900 from 2020, but this year has been anything but 'normal' for most businesses. Combined with the reduced number of events, it is a great achievement to reach this level of 'sales'.

The number of Ticketleap registrations is measured by individual 'purchases' made via the official festival ticketing platform. The figure does not include those who tuned into the opening event via YouTube or joined the official closing event, as registrations were not taken for these events through Ticketleap. This figure is listed as 'Independent Tickets'. However, with online events, most hosts kept their events open so

joining links could be shared easily, meaning numbers were sometimes higher than official registrations, so unfortunately, we do not have the true value of attendees to some digital events.

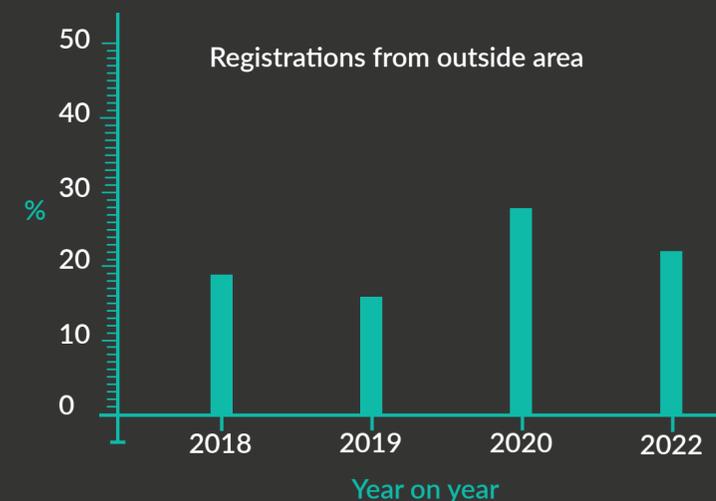
With in-person events resuming this year many organisers had to work with limited capacity due to venue guidance on health and safety, we also saw a decline in events in general and therefore the lower number of attendees was expected this year when compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Outside Region Engagement

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Registrations from outside area	19%	16%	28%	22%

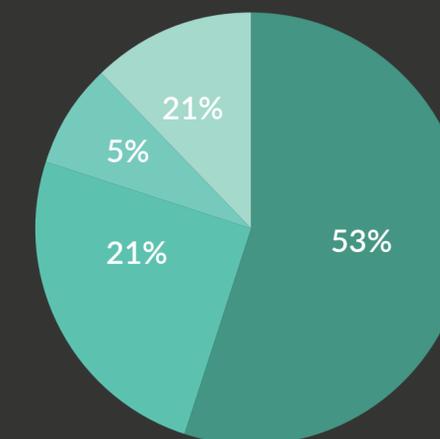
The festival saw 375 attendees from outside the area which, at 22% is equally in between 2020 and 2019 percentages. The much higher figure in 2020 would have been attributed to the fact the festival was a mostly digital offering, where on-line attendance is much more widely accessible than in-person events.

This year there were 22 international attendees who joined both in person and online from 11 different countries including Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Poland and South Africa.



Public vs Private Sector attendees

Attendees (based on online Ticketleap registrations)	No.
Private Sector	997
Public Sector	392
Third Sector	102
N/A or other	398
Total	1889

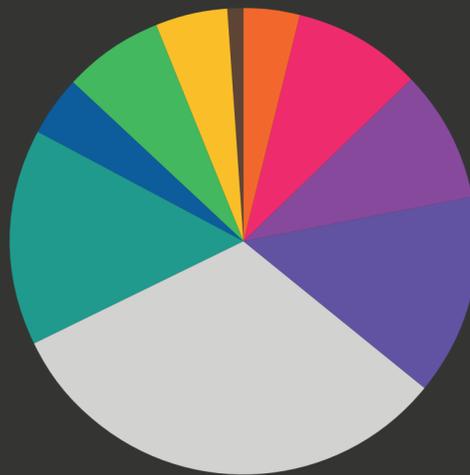


Over half of the LBF attendees were from the private sector, which shows that the LBF is having a positive impact on the business community. A fifth of the attendees are from the public sector, and only 5% being from the Third sector. Over 20% chose 'Not Applicable' or 'Other', (which could be students, not in employment or those who aren't sure or willing to answer) making up the remainder.

Official Festival Report Leicester Business Festival

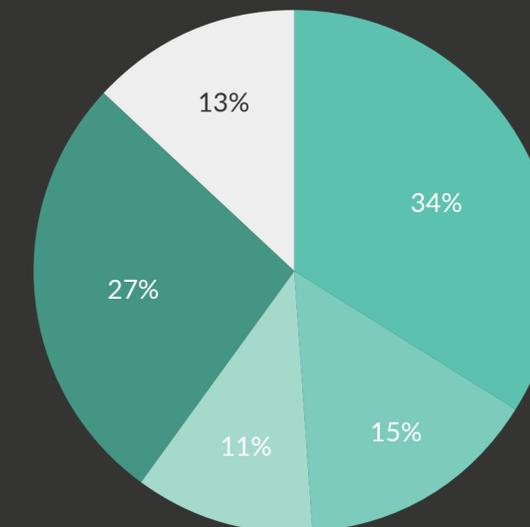
Buyer sector

SECTOR (Buyer)	ATTENDEES	%
Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	80	4%
Business support	177	9%
Communications, Marketing & Creative Industries	161	9%
Education & Skills	259	14%
Other	611	32%
Professional Services	281	15%
Property & Construction	71	4%
Retail, Tourism & Hospitality	136	7%
Science & Technology	91	5%
Transport & Logistics	22	1%
TOTAL	1889	100%



Business size

BUSINESS SIZE	ATTENDEES
Micro <10 employees	637
Small 10-49 employees	284
Medium 50 - 249 employees	215
Large >250 employees	513
Unknown	240
TOTAL	1889



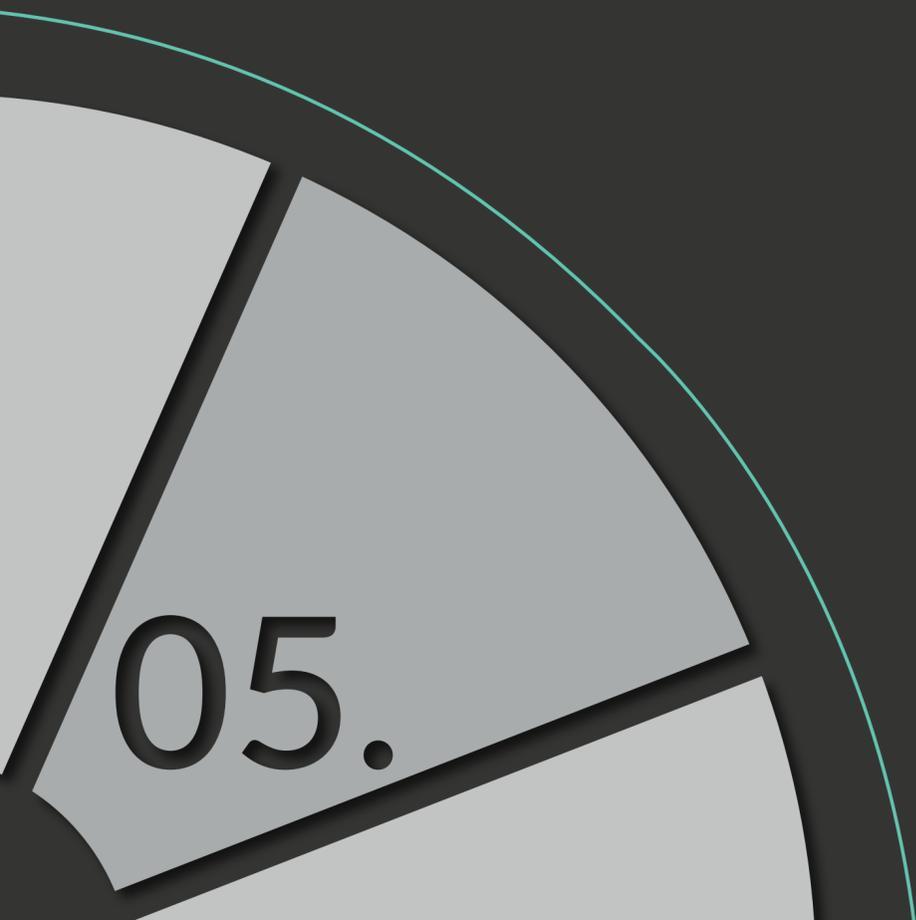
This is an important set of data, because it shows that the spread of attendees according to their business size is weighted at either end of the scale rather than SMEs as one might expect. The largest proportion were micro businesses at 34%, but interestingly the large businesses accounted for 27% of attendees, whilst combined, SMEs made up 26%. These figures were very similar to 2020 results.

Discounting the 'other' category which includes various areas such as those who were unsure of their sector, not-in employment, students, third sector etc. but also includes attendees from non-registered events where this question was not answered, the most popular sector for attendees was Professional Services, accounting for 15% of the ticket 'sales', with Education & Skills coming a close second at 14%.

Naturally as a business festival, it can be expected that professional services would be the most popular. It can also be assumed that the brilliant engagement by headline partner, DMU and other local universities could account for why Education & Skills was also popular, given the large number of events put on by the establishments.

There was very little engagement from the Transport & Logistics sector (at 1%) and Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering and Property & Construction (at 4%). As these three sectors had fewer events.





Publicity & Promotion

Official Festival Report Leicester Business Festival

Headline Partner



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

The business festival's total circulation exceeded 26.5 million and the reach, over 16.5 million, which whilst being marginally smaller than last year's circulation, still exceeds previous festivals by a considerable amount.

The numbers are reflective of the promotional work carried out pre and during the festival, whereby there was coverage on all main media outlets including BBC Radio Leicester and other local stations multiple times over the duration of the festival. The festival featured in local newspapers, on influential social media platforms and even in a podcast.

When looking at the figures from 2020 in the chart, these should be seen as an anomaly as the festival moved to a fully digital offering, a lot more had to be done to gather momentum and coverage.

	2019	2020	2021
Circulation	20,408,839	31,522,667	26,691,195
Reach	11,497,531	18,233,145	16,623,132



26,691,195

TOTAL MARKETING CIRCULATION



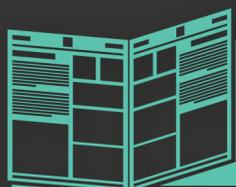
16,623,132

TOTAL MARKETING REACH

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.)



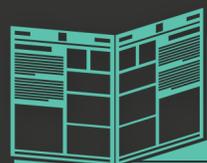
SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACTS



Official Festival Report Leicester Business Festival



Printed Media



Circulation
45,625



Reach
11,406

Web & online publicity



Circulation
21,500,902



Reach
15,050,631

Radio & TV



Circulation
560,000



Reach
168,000

Partner Communications



Circulation
38,050



Reach
11,415

In total, 8 press releases were issued throughout the duration of the festival year, with a combined ad value of over **£5,000.00**.

These figures include all LBF website activity, online media coverage and digital publicity including LBF mailouts via Mailchimp.

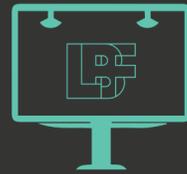
These figures relate to any sort of radio and TV coverage. They were boosted by brilliant interviews on Radio Leicester featuring Helen Donnellan from DMU and Alister de Ternant from Associate Events. Radio Leicester also covered speakers from the Official Opening Event including local Paralympic Gold Medallist Laura Sugar.

Partner communications is always a tricky category to report on as it only consists of what we are made aware of. We have seen fantastic engagement from key partners including Leicester City Council and East Midlands Chamber.

This year saw continued interaction and increased interest from local business support groups FSB, FUMedia, LBV, BID Leicester, LCB Depot as well as other businesses like the Lionheart Trust and Voluntary Action Leicester. In essence, there is probably way more communication than we can categorically report.



Brand Placement & Advertising



Circulation
4,147,500



Reach
1,078,350



This encompasses any placement of the LBF direct advertising campaigns that raise awareness of the LBF brand. Ordinarily there is usually a lot more in terms of print including pull-up banners, brochure placements, train station advertising etc.

Social Media



Reach
233,683

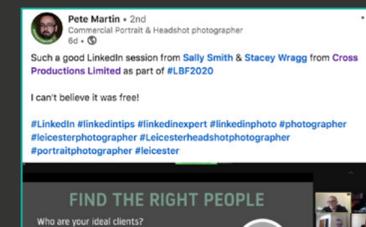
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM	REACH
Twitter	194,182
Facebook	5,600
Linked In	27,024
Instagram	6,877
Total	233,683

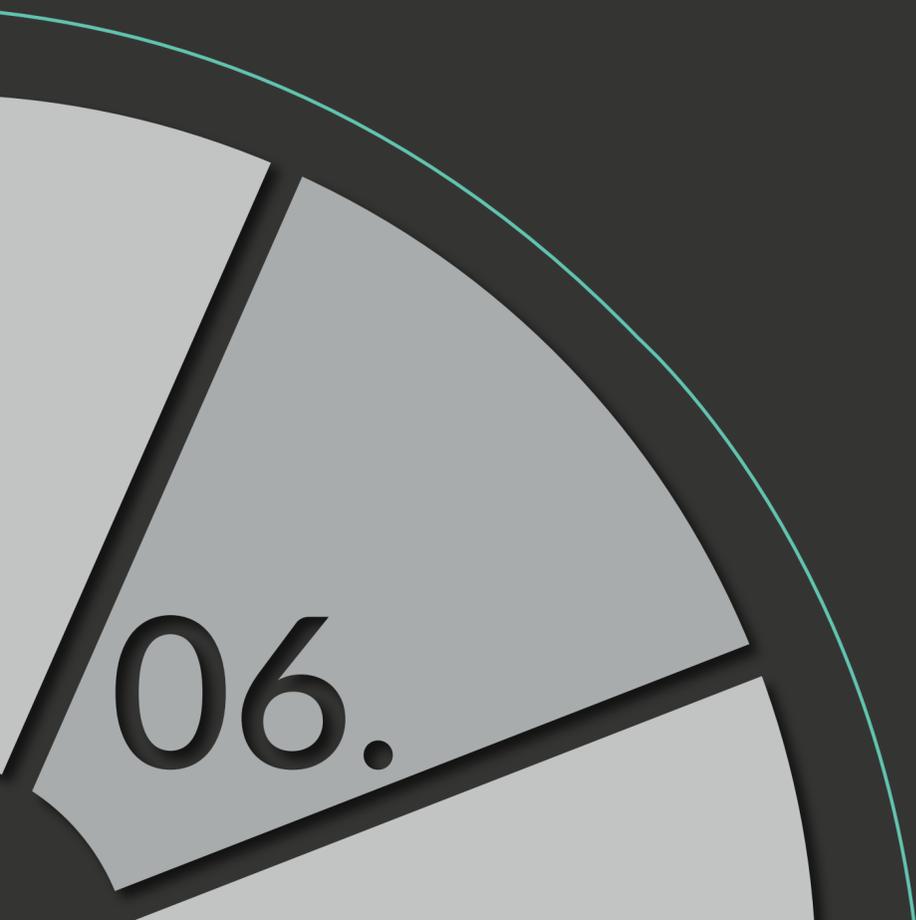
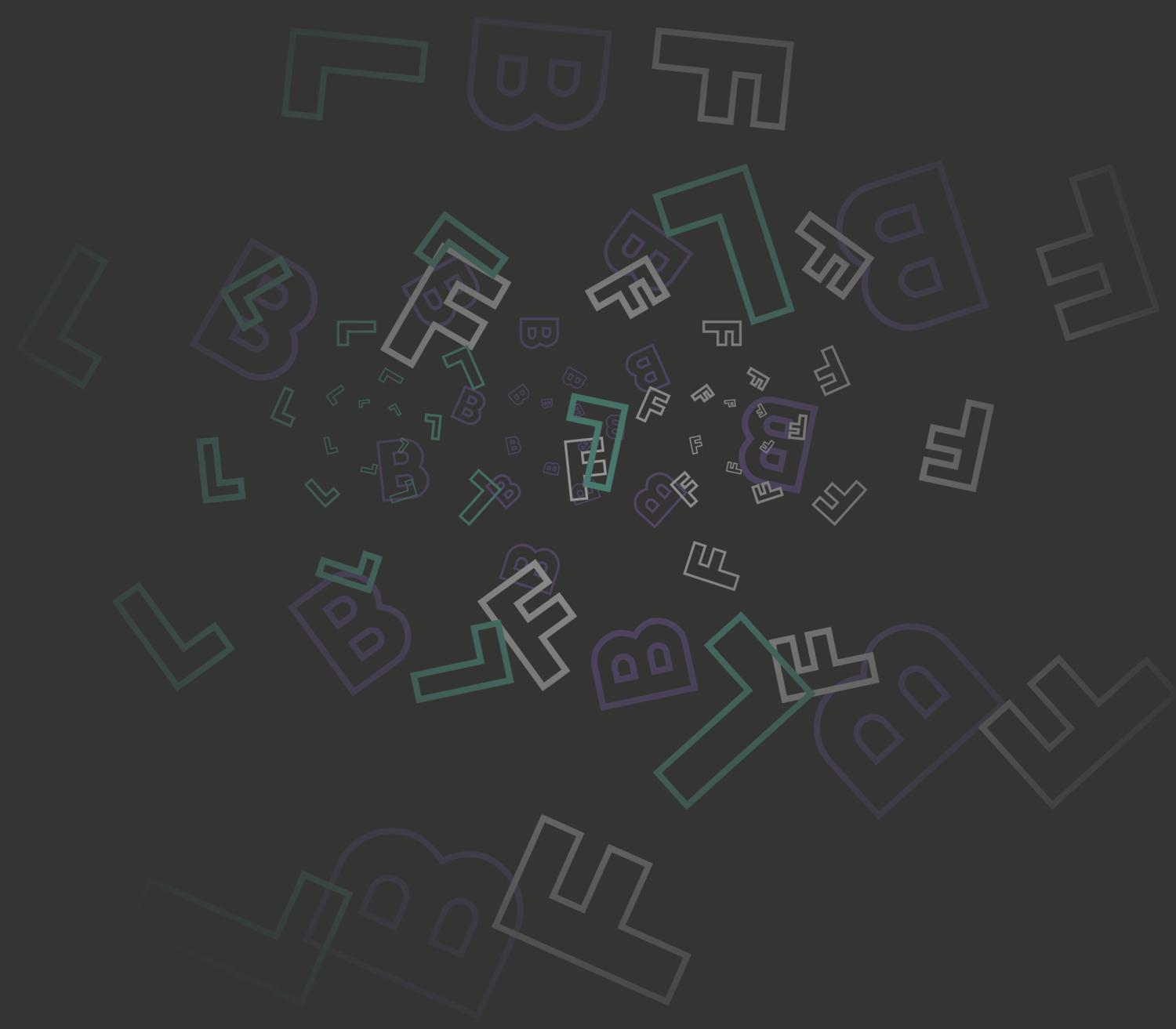
Twitter and LinkedIn were by far the most valuable platforms for LBF content. This is unsurprising as both are more business-focused than Facebook or Instagram, with businesses having a heavy presence and interacting with other businesses on Twitter and LinkedIn far more than the more Business to Consumer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

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

It would have been more positive, however, to see some more stakeholders get involved and share things they thought looked interesting or related to their sector. To increase engagement next year with sponsors, partners & supporters, the festival plans to educate stakeholders on the value of interaction with LBF platforms and posts at a much earlier stage in the run up to the festival.

Though we recognise these figures are slightly below last year's, this is to be expected with the lower amount of events, which usually tends to generate a higher engagement and 'buzz' on social media, as attendees are able to share their experiences online. This is heavily influenced by imagery, as participants struggle to capture attendance at online events in comparison to in-person. There is also evidence from this year that shows increased engagement on social media with people not directly involved in the festival when images and videos were shared. However, on the whole, the LBF events still performed very well on social media, obtaining a total reach of **233,683!**





Feedback

Official Festival Report Leicester Business Festival

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 the 2021 Festival has been very positive, despite some of the changes to the structure of the LBF. As seen as the statistics, over **83%** of attendees said that their business benefited from attending an event in the Festival. Over **93%** of attendees said that the quality of events was good to excellent, which has increased by **6%** since 2019 and **1%** since last year, suggesting that the switch to a hybrid festival has had a continually positive impact.

People felt the main benefits of the Festival were:

- Learning opportunities, nearly **70%** gained useful knowledge
- Generated relevant & helpful introductions within business community
- Offered networking opportunities that have been vitally missed over the last 18 months

What people said

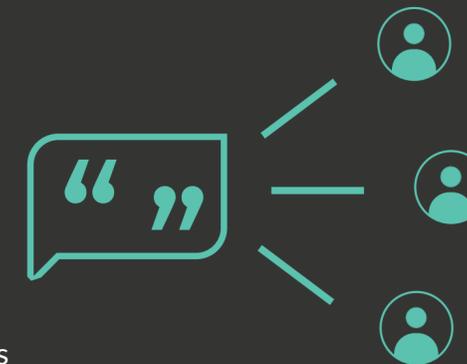
The LBF received a number of positive messages from people involved at all different levels, which really demonstrated the impact it has on the local business community. For some attendees, it allowed them to interact with people whilst working from home and gave them a sense of normality.

Improvements highlighted

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.

Improvements suggested in feedback:

- Allocate longer time to events to allow for more networking
- Fewer events, Bigger splash
- More in-person or hybrid events
- Earlier marketing of festival
- More opportunities to match businesses with funders, universities and other placement / workforce organisations
- Fewer events, but with a focus on higher quality/more relevant topics
- Try to reduce events where there is a sales focus
- Better distribution of the meeting links/passwords
- Clearer event titling and content



What people thought of digital events

As mentioned above, there is a lot of interest in keeping digital events in the programme with many attendees stating that they would like to see a mix of both digital and physical events in the future.

Benefits of Digital Events:

- More convenient to fit into the working day
- Able to attend more events and they were more accessible
- COVID-19 secure, attendees felt safe



Feedback from Twitter

“What a fantastic effort and such a worthy cause. Thanks to all the Leicestershire businesses who sponsored, organised and took part in this event. Your generosity is much appreciated.”

“Time has flown since last week’s Leicester Graduate City Project event at @LBFestival! Thanks to the team from @Leicester_News @dmuleicester & @uniofleicester who made it happen @SallyHack20 @adele_browne @dannytmyers.”

“2021 Leicester Business Festival fortnight draws to a close after welcoming almost 2,000 attendees” - Tom Pegden

“Great event last night at @BeaCitySixth as part of @LBFestival, sharing our vision to build reciprocal relationships with #businesses so together we can help secure the future of our students, who are tomorrow’s workforce.”

“#LBF2021 may be over, but the #Business-focused events keep on coming! Join @RutlandCycling at their @Everards1849 Meadows store on Tuesday for a Wahoo demo evening - perfect for blowing away those winter cobwebs.”





LEICESTER
BUSINESS
FESTIVAL

Headline Partner
DE MONTFORT
UNIVERSITY
LEICESTER

associate
events



Thank you



We look forward to seeing you in 2022!