

# FLASHES & FLAMES

THE GLOBAL MEDIA BUSINESS WEEKLY



## MONETISING B2B 2025

**POST-CONFERENCE REPORT**

# Starting to redefine B2B

It was (literally) standing room only at the inaugural **Monetising B2B** conference, organised by Flashes & Flames, at London's historic Stationers' Hall on 20 May. The birthplace of copyright was a fitting venue for a day of smart insights, bold ideas and visions of reinvention.

For B2B executives, it was a conference with a difference, focused not on the difference between pureplay events and information companies but on the data-fuelled intersection and growth potential between them. The breadth and depth of the day's content echoed the mission of Flashes & Flames and of the change underway in B2B companies in the era of AI and revenue diversification.

It was a full day of panel discussions, fireside chats and networking sessions facilitated by 25 industry leaders from the UK, EU and the US and enhanced by delegates' 73-page exclusive eBook of case studies.

The energy in the room reflected the urgent relevance of the themes discussed: monetisation, innovation, data strategy, AI, content and how events are being re-imagined. More than half the participants used our meeting platform, Conversation Starter, to pre-book one-to-one sessions. By the end of the day,

177 structured meetings had taken place, totalling over 44 hours of focused exchange.

What did our delegates most want to talk about?

- ▶ **Monetisation strategies** – 18.2%
- ▶ **Events and exhibitions** – 17.0%
- ▶ **Partnerships and collaboration** – 14.6%
- ▶ **Advice or mentorship** – 14.2%
- ▶ **Data strategies** – 11.7%
- ▶ **Information and content** – 11.3%
- ▶ **AI and tech** – 10.5%

This report distils the most compelling insights, case studies and conversations from the day. Whether you joined us at Stationers' Hall or you're catching up after the fact, we hope these chapters serve as a blueprint – and a challenge – for building the next generation of B2B.

Please enjoy – and share – this report and we hope to see you at **Monetising B2B** next year:

**Wednesday 13 May 2026 in London**



**Colin Morrison**

*Founder, Flashes & Flames*

*Organiser of Monetising B2B*

# CONTENT

4

## AI'S PROFIT POTENTIAL

*How B2B's application of AI is moving to commercial reality*

9

## DATA WITH PURPOSE

*Why proprietary data can define the future of B2B*

14

## EVENTS RE-IMAGINED

*From trade shows to festivalisation: Why the future of events belongs to those who curate memorable (and valuable) experiences*

19

## GROWTH BY DESIGN

*The art of innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership*

28

## TRANSFORMATION

*Rewriting the rulebook: strategy, risk and change*

35

## THE STATE OF B2B INTO THE FUTURE

*From silos to ecosystems, B2B businesses are converging across media, events, data and insights*

# AI's profit potential

**HOW B2B'S APPLICATION  
OF AI IS MOVING TO  
COMMERCIAL REALITY**



**F**or an industry long preoccupied with protecting intellectual property, the conversation at London's **Monetising B2B** conference marked a stark pivot – from defending the rights to content to deploying it strategically through artificial intelligence.

AI consultant Paul Hood moderated a standout session with FT Strategies' Adriana Whiteley and Alvarez & Marsal's Amir Malik led a discussion on how AI is already reshaping the commercial logic of B2B media. "This isn't about chatbots anymore," Hood declared. "It's about margin. It's about growth. It's about value."

Whiteley warned that publishers who treat AI as an experiment are already being overtaken by those who bake it into

*"The companies that act now are the ones who'll own the next five years."*

Amir Malik, Alvarez & Marsal

core workflows. "The biggest returns are already appearing where AI is integrated into real business models," she said.

Malik agreed: "AI isn't a miracle, but it is a multiplier." It can help bypass costly SaaS rollouts or fast-track product development. The point isn't to dabble. It's to deploy with purpose."

That deployment, however, depends less on tools and more on mindset. "If you don't know your desired outcome, AI becomes dangerous," Whiteley warned. Malik added: "The companies who act now are the ones who'll own the next five years."

### REPUTATIONAL AND COMPLIANCE RISKS

The panel struck a sober tone on risk. Nearly half of some firms' employees (46%), Malik revealed, are already using generative AI tools on work devices without employer oversight. "That introduces reputational and compliance risk," he said. "And it



reveals a cultural gap. Leadership is debating AI while staff are already using it.”

To manage this challenge the Financial Times has introduced a structured, auditable access system for AI tools. “If we don’t approve fast enough,” Whiteley explained, “people will use it anyway – and that’s when content risk spikes.” The key message? Don’t block innovation. Guide it. “AI has democratised transformation,” said Malik. “It’s not just for the tech teams anymore. But you need frameworks.”

Colin Morrison echoed this sentiment in his closing remarks later in the afternoon:



## NO IRONY LOST



The AI session ‘HOW AI CAN GENERATE REAL PROFIT FOR B2B MEDIA’ took place under the vaulted ceilings of Stationers’ Hall: the headquarters of the 622-year-old Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers, the guild which once regulated printing, locked down licensing and helped invent modern copyright. It was here that Monetising B2B discussed how machines scrape, remix and serve up copy in milliseconds without credit or byline. The irony was not lost on anyone, but if there was ever a time to confront irony with strategy, this was it.



Charlie Kerr, CEO, With Intelligence (right), in conversation with Rory Brown, former CEO and co-founder of AgriBriefing

“There are two things: One... we’ve got to do something, not nothing. You’ve got to be involved in this. The other is seeing if there’s an AI solution at work somewhere and learn from that...”

Over the course of the day AI surfaced repeatedly, even when it wasn’t the headline act. In a session on proprietary data, Leon Saunders Calvert, of The Economist Intelligence, distilled a key truth: “Not all data needs to be unique – but it must be indispensable.” AI, in this context, doesn’t just streamline workflows; it amplifies the value of structured, original data (read more on this in Chapter 2).

Neil Bradford of General Index shared how his company uses large language

models (LLMs) to integrate over 225 proprietary data sources into its pricing benchmarks, processed by algorithms rather than journalists. “We’re small,” he said, “but we now license our data into AI models.” The future, it seems, is not about fighting AI, but feeding it.

## DIGITAL MONETISATION

Charlie Kerr, CEO, With Intelligence, reinforced this link between data and pricing power: “We rebranded media products as data to command higher prices.” For B2B firms, where editorial value can blur with analytical insight, such a repositioning can be transformative.





Simon Cook, CEO, Cannes Lions in discussion with Colin Morrison.

Elsewhere, the implications of AI flickered beneath the surface. Hugh Jones, CEO of RX, didn't use the term "AI" directly, but spoke about lifetime customer value, digital monetisation and rebuilding products around data workflows, all of which are fertile ground for AI.

Tracy De Groose of William Reed Group spoke of data as "insight and knowledge about people," and stressed the need for cultural empowerment before technological transformation. AI, she implied, isn't a plug-in. It's a mindset.

Simon Cook of Cannes Lions revealed that 30% of the festival's revenue now comes from digital subscriptions tied to awards data: a rich, structured dataset with vast AI potential.

If there was one thing about AI that became glaringly apparent during the day, it is that AI is not a standalone trend. It is embedded in pricing strategies, talent decisions, data governance and product design. Treating it as a bolt-on means missing the point and by extension, the profit.

Malik's parting advice? "You don't need to build it yourself. But you do need to start. See it working somewhere. Get involved."

In the words of Colin Morrison: "We're sometimes confusing AI for content with the business of running a business." But that confusion is fading fast. What's emerging instead is an understanding that AI – properly integrated – is not a threat to B2B media. It's its most powerful new lever. ■



# Data with purpose

**WHY PROPRIETARY  
DATA CAN DEFINE  
THE FUTURE OF B2B**

**W**hat stood out in every discussion about data at **Monetising B2B** was that the focus wasn't on how much data you have, but how deliberately it's built, how intelligently it's refined and how purposefully it's applied.

Speaking on dedicated panel on proprietary data, How (and why) proprietary data can transform B2B values, Leon Saunders Calvert, president, Economist Intelligence, explained why the media industry's obsession with quantity must give way to value.

"Data isn't all equally valuable. You need to assess whether your data is commoditised or differentiated. Value comes from making data consumable: standardised, homogenised and integrated into user



*'When data is not just available but relied upon, it stops being content and becomes infrastructure.'*

Neil Bradford, General Index

workflows. Success lies in identifying your place in the value chain and ensuring your data is usefully transformed."

This view was shared by others on the panel. Charlie Kerr, CEO of With Intelligence, emphasised the importance of starting not with the data, but with the end-user's need. "The goal is to become critical to a client's process," he said. "If our coverage helps a fund manager raise \$30 million, that justifies a price increase." Journalism, he noted, can enrich proprietary data, but only if the output becomes truly indispensable.

The same principle applies in insurance, said Mariana Valle, CEO of Insurance Insider. Her team began with 15 data-led ideas and whittled them down to three or four based not only on feasibility, but on whether they could solve real market problems. "We had to ask what people were willing to pay for," she said, reinforcing that proprietary data needs to earn its keep through direct relevance and utility.

While integrating into client workflows has long been regarded as the main aim, Leon noted that even when a company doesn't "own the workflow," it can still add value by making data easily embeddable.

### WHEN DATA IS PART OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Neil Bradford, CEO of General Index, offered a clear example. Where others still rely on journalists to make market judgment calls, General Index has replaced the subjective with the systematic.

"We get 14,000 daily trades, directly from 225 data contributors," he said. "Our coders run the algorithms. It's more compliant, consistent and efficient. And we can embed that data into enterprise tools and contracts, not just reports."

Bradford's point wasn't just about automation. It was about integration. True value, he said, emerges when data moves from being read to being relied upon; from dashboards to decisions. "Our clients don't just look at our data. They build their operations around it."

In this context, he explained that proprietary data becomes powerful not because you have it, but because you make it part of the operational infrastructure of an industry: used in contracts, trading systems

and benchmark pricing. "When data is not just available but relied upon, it stops being content and becomes infrastructure."

This shift wasn't confined to a single discussion. Across the conference, a quiet revolution in data strategy was underway, highlighting the shift from monolithic data products to targeted, embedded insights. From LexisNexis Risk Solutions reinventing their business to (Reed Exhibitions) CEO Hugh Jones' vision of exhibition analytics delivering ROI to exhibitors, the message was clear: data has to work. It has to move and it has to mean something.

### VALUE-BASED PRICING

Mark Kelsey, CEO of LexisNexis Risk Solutions, emphasised this during an earlier discussion with Colin Morrison. He said Reed Business Information (RBI) needed to transform itself by exiting the magazine business and building data platforms (Read breakout – From print to platform: RBI's data reinvention).

The same rethink of data strategy was central to Hugh Jones, CEO of RX (Reed Exhibitions)'s fireside chat. He explained how they stopped thinking about themselves as event organisers and started seeing themselves as data and connection platforms. That meant investing in analytics not just to sell sponsorships, but to prove value.

“We’ve built a \$100 million data business over the past five years with 80% margins,” he said, explaining how RX eliminated third-party systems to build secure, compliant, in-house data products. “We don’t give data away. We build products over a central data lake.” Their flagship offering, the Exhibitor Dashboard, shows clients real ROI – comparing visitor profiles, dwell time and product interest. “It’s real ROI insight, and it’s based on our own tech stack.” When you get it right, says Jones, the data becomes a product, not a by-product.

This also influences value and pricing, he said. By tracking the success of each exhibitor, RX has moved toward value-based pricing for key clients. “You can’t do value pricing for every exhibitor,” Jones noted, “but you must do it for your bellwethers and rising stars.” Smaller exhibitors are served through bundled offers, but the principle holds: pricing is now informed by data, not just square footage.

In a session ‘What’s so special about Cannes Lions?’, Simon Cook, CEO of Cannes Lions,

### FROM PRINT TO PLATFORM

When Reed Business Information (RBI) faced collapse in 2008, it had to make some hard decisions.

With print in decline and advertising unreliable, RBI exited the magazine business entirely, selling 331 titles and divesting 70 businesses across 14 countries. Led by Mark Kelsey, the focus shifted sharply to embedded data services that customers would pay for because they added value to operational decisions.

RBI invested in acquisitions like Accuity, a provider of information-based analytics and decision tools. It also built tools that integrated directly into client workflows.

The result? By the time RBI merged with LexisNexis Risk, it had become a \$4.2 billion data powerhouse with 99% of revenue from digital sources.

The RBI story shows that data alone isn’t enough. It only becomes commercially valuable when it’s trusted, integrated and built with a clear purpose and user case.





offered a compelling example of how awards data, traditionally treated as static content, can become a dynamic, monetised asset.

“Traditional awards entries are designed for the jury’s benefit,” he explained. “But if you also think about the broader performance of a campaign, why it worked, where it ran, how it engaged audiences, then that data becomes valuable.” By structuring entries to extract insight, Cannes Lions has built a thriving intelligence business.

The event’s rankings and indexes, derived from 27,000 annual entries, are used not only for recognition but also as benchmarking and recruitment tools, offering clients a competitive advantage. “They help companies find the best partners and

talent,” Cook said. The result? Roughly 30% of Cannes Lions’ revenue now comes from digital subscriptions and consultancy services, showing how even legacy creative data, when standardised and repackaged, can be embedded into products clients are willing to pay for year-round.

As Colin Morrison noted in his closing remarks, the real power of data lies not in uniqueness but in outcomes. “Even if it’s not unique data, if it does the job for somebody, then it’s valuable.” What matters most is not volume or exclusivity, but fit-for-purpose design. Data that’s embedded into workflows serves critical decisions and creates actionable impact. This view, echoed across **Monetising B2B**, enables data to be more than content. It becomes an asset. ■



Mariana Valle (right), CEO, Insurance Insider, in discussion with Neil Bradford (2nd from right), CEO-founder, General Index, Leon Saunders Calvert, president, Economist Intelligence and Charlie Kerr, CEO, With Intelligence

# Events re-imagined

**FROM TRADE SHOWS TO  
FESTIVALISATION: WHY THE  
FUTURE OF EVENTS BELONGS TO  
THOSE WHO CURATE MEMORABLE  
(AND VALUABLE) EXPERIENCES**



A decade ago, the B2B event world was dominated by traditional trade shows: predictable formats, rigid floor plans and transactional encounters. But at **Monetising B2B**, it became clear that those days belong to history. Today, the industry is in the throes of ‘festivalisation’: a sweeping reimagination of what B2B events can be, fuelled by technology, changing audience expectations and the need for year-round engagement.

Despite scepticism about the so-called ‘festivalisation’ of events, and Colin Morrison touched on this with some humour in his closing remarks (“‘Festivalisation’?



*“If you’re walking around a massive exhibition hall with just a handful of business cards, hoping for serendipity, you’re stuck in the 1980s.”*

Hugh Jones, CEO, RX

*We’ve all heard about that until the cows come home. It’s probably not even a word.”*), the concept is being treated as one of the most urgent transformations in B2B events today. No longer can exhibitions be confined to grey halls in trade centres and business cards exchanged over coffee stands.

A new model is emerging. One that borrows from the world of music festivals, entertainment and community building to deliver immersive, hybrid and monetisable experiences.

An impactful example of this came from Hugh Jones, CEO of RX (Reed Exhibitions), in his fireside chat with Morrison, titled ‘The 21st Century lessons of information and events’. At RX, he explained, the shift has been strategic. They have moved far beyond selling exhibition space: “If you’re walking around a massive exhibition hall with just a handful of business cards, hoping for serendipity, you’re stuck in the 1980s.”



### DYNAMIC PRICING

RX now applies dynamic pricing, curates high-impact networking experiences (think Snoop Dogg headlining a jewellery show), and uses proprietary tech to deliver real-time exhibitor ROI dashboards: all built atop a \$100 million data business. Jones's outsider perspective from RELX's Acuity division helped RX see events not as logistics, but as value exchanges. Done right, not only do exhibitors pay to be at the event, but visitors will pay for it too.

Morrison called this a 'seismic shift': "For Hugh Jones to say that in a few years, up to 50% of his revenue will come from visitors is a big thing." It suggests that visitor-centric monetisation, once an afterthought, may soon rival or exceed traditional exhibitor revenue. This rebalancing paves the way for events that are not just showcases, but destinations – experiences worth paying for.

In a standout panel discussion, 'How (and why) events are changing and what comes next?', Lisa Hannant, CEO of Clarion Events, noted a similar evolution. At the forefront is human connection, she said. Therefore, events are now more data-driven and more curated. That curation is key to the new model, where attendees pay not just to attend, but to experience something personal, insightful and shareable. "Today's 'Now Generation' expects personalised experiences," Hannant



explained, "pre-show planning tools and content built around their needs."

### GENERATIONAL SHIFT

CEOs Paul Miller of Questex and Greg Hitchen of Terrapinn both underlined how this shift is generational. The retirement of older audiences during COVID made room for a new cohort with fresh expectations. "They want curated serendipity," said Miller. "Think of it like curating a Taylor Swift experience."

Hitchen described how Terrapinn empowers local teams to own regional event strategies while leveraging global infrastructure. Miller emphasised how



Questex has restructured for daily, digital engagement with its communities, not just three-day spikes of activity.

In a fireside chat, Simon Cook, CEO of Cannes Lions, reinforced this transformation from the awards sector. Cannes Lions is now an all-year-long business with four integrated pillars: events, awards, intelligence (subscriptions and consulting) and learning. “The awards provide recognition,” Cook said, “but they also feed our rankings, benchmarking tools and consultancy. Those become year-round revenue streams.”

Meanwhile, UK-based William Reed offers another model for transformation. From its publishing roots with The Grocer magazine, the 162-year-old company now earns over 60% of its revenue from events. “It’s all content-driven,” said CEO Tracy De Groose. “The two feed each other.”

De Groose highlighted the success of the World’s 50 Best: a brand that started as a restaurant ranking and grew into an internationally recognised platform across food, drink, and hospitality. “These awards are judged by the industry, for the industry,” she noted, pointing to the brand’s

### WHAT WOULD TAYLOR SWIFT DO?

Festivalisation isn’t about gimmicks. It’s about crafting moments that feel personal, immersive and unforgettable. As younger audiences replace older cohorts, expectations have shifted. It’s not enough to ‘attend’ an event; today’s audiences want to feel it was designed just for them.

Or as Paul Miller, CEO of Questex, summarised it to some applause. “They want curated serendipity. Think of it like curating a Taylor Swift experience.” The new event playbook is emotional, curated and always on. Friendship bracelets anyone?



authenticity and resonance. While William Reed hasn't yet harnessed the full data potential of its awards like Cannes Lions, it recognises the opportunity. "Developing a better data strategy around it is definitely something we're working on."

### THE 'GREY MIDDLE'

Throughout the **Monetising B2B** conference, Colin Morrison wove a unifying thread. "What we've seen today is how fluid it all is... Exhibition people did one job. Publishing and information another. Now the grey middle is much larger."

That "grey middle" is where the most exciting innovation is happening: events that draw on media, data, experience design

and digital platforms to create something more than the sum of their parts.

The new B2B playbook requires organisers to think like festival directors, data strategists and community architects. It means making events memorable not by adding glitter but by aligning purpose, content and experience. Whether on a beach, in a palace or a purpose-built venue, the future belongs to those who make their audiences feel like they are part of something meaningful, immersive and valuable.

As De Groose summarised: "If we want to monetise B2B, we need to humanise it."

Festivalisation, then, is more than a trend, it's a business imperative. And it's rewriting the rules of engagement in B2B media. ■



Tracy De Groose,  
CEO of William  
Reed Group, in  
conversation with  
Colin Morrison

# Growth by design

**THE ART OF INNOVATION,  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
AND LEADERSHIP**

**S**tories about long-term commitment, purposeful leadership, deep sector focus and the courage to reinvent captured delegates' attention throughout **Monetising B2B**. While many of the examples of innovation shared were in response to economic headwinds, platform disruption and changing audience expectations, each case study shared a common ethos: strategic vision, resilient leadership and a willingness to think differently.

### THE ACCIDENTAL ENTREPRENEUR

#### MARK ALLEN

Mark Allen's story stands apart for simplicity, grit and enduring commitment to quality journalism. A former journalist and Reed and Thomson executive, Allen was made redundant

*'Technology can enhance trust, but it can't replace it. Our job is to ensure we stay useful, reliable and trusted. That's what keeps our community coming back.'*

Kerry Parker, CEO, SelectScience

and used his severance to acquire two magazine titles he had previously run. From this precarious start, he built the Mark Allen Group into one of the UK's most successful family-owned media companies, with revenues approaching £77 million across a dozen sectors.

"I'm an accidental entrepreneur," he told the **Monetising B2B** audience.





“I don’t even like the word ‘entrepreneur,’ let alone ‘serial entrepreneur.’ That term gives me the shivers.”

Yet Allen’s journey exemplifies classic entrepreneurial traits: resourcefulness, risk tolerance and a long-term view. “We started with nothing. Literally nothing. I was rejected for a £10,000 loan by my local bank in Somerset,” he recalled. “But I used my redundancy money to buy two magazines. One of these was a free publication for 35,000 hospital doctors, which we turned into a paid subscription title overnight. That alone generated £230,000 in revenue with no marketing spend.”

In the years that followed, adversity came early and hard. “Year two and three were far rockier,” he said. “I ended up in the High Court over a publishing agreement dispute. We won the case and damages, but lost £525,000 in the process, money I didn’t have. But I was determined to pay back every single penny and I did.”

This commitment to values – doing the right thing regardless of cost – set the tone for what followed. Allen and his team built momentum by launching niche healthcare journals, selling subscriptions upfront in a B2B market still dominated by controlled circulation. “We were doing subscriptions when almost no one else in B2B publishing was,” he said.

A turning point came with *The Probe*, a dental magazine he never intended to own. “It was meant for a friend who backed out the day after I bought it for £5,000,” he explained. “But we built it up and four years later, sold it for £2.2 million.” That single transaction gave the company its first significant financial cushion and set the stage for an ambitious programme of legacy acquisitions.

Since then, the company has grown steadily through opportunistic acquisitions, focusing on undervalued heritage brands. “We’ve been buying legacy brands – many that others had given up on,” he said. “Titles like *The Engineer* (168 years old), *Farmers Weekly* (101), *Optician* (133), and *Community Care*, which I helped launch at Reed 51 years ago. I’m incredibly proud of giving these titles new life.”

Allen also acknowledged his unconventional leadership style. “We’re not systematic; we’re opportunistic,” he said. “Honestly, I’m not a data scientist or a digital native. I came into this because I love words. I love magazines. I’m a journalist at heart, and I’ve always been curious. That’s what’s driven me more than anything else.”

Even the company’s physical space reflects its distinctive approach. “We’re based in a deconsecrated church, St. Jude’s. He’s the patron saint of lost causes. So I hope

we're not one!" Allen quipped. "It's quirky, but I think it sets us apart. Some people love it, some don't but I enjoy walking into that building every single day."

Today, the Mark Allen Group is one of the UK's top three family-owned media companies, alongside Haymarket and William Reed. But its founder remains grounded, uninterested in tech jargon or short-term wins. His business strategy is rooted in instinct, resilience and a deep love for his craft.

In a conference full of digital pivots and data dashboards, Allen's success reminded delegates of something more timeless: the enduring value of integrity, perseverance and believing in what you do.

### A LAB COMMUNITY, NOT JUST A PLATFORM

## SELECTSCIENCE

If Mark Allen represents the analogue soul of B2B reinvention, Kerry Parker of SelectScience offers its digital counterpoint: methodical, tech-forward and deeply community-focused. Often likened to the "TripAdvisor for scientists," SelectScience has quietly built a reputation as one of the most trusted peer-review platforms in laboratory science. But Parker is quick to draw a distinction between her platform and casual

## HOW GROWTH STRATEGIES CONVERGE

Across radically different paths – family-owned or VC-backed, born in print or native to digital – these businesses revealed surprisingly aligned foundations for modern B2B success:

### • Mission over model

Whether it's the Mark Allen Group, SelectScience, or Business of Fashion (BoF), each case proved that clarity of purpose outlasts any specific channel. Staying true to mission allowed them to pivot formats without losing direction.

### • People drive change

Leadership wasn't about top-down vision statements. Mark Allen repaid debt before taking dividends. SelectScience's tech overhaul was led from within. Tracy De Groose made culture her top priority. Strategy became personal.

### • Platform agility

Both BoF and SelectScience moved away from bespoke systems toward modular, cloud-based stacks. The shift wasn't just technical. It enabled faster iteration, richer data use and scalable product innovation.



Kerry Parker (right),  
CEO, SelectScience  
talking to Natasha  
Christie-Miller



review sites. “We don’t do holidays,” she said dryly, eliciting laughter from the **Monetising B2B** audience. “This is serious science – we’re talking about oncology, food safety, drug discovery. Credibility is everything.”

That credibility is grounded not in content volume or clickbait, but in community. “Scientists can often feel isolated,” she explained. “They’re working in specialised fields, often under pressure, and don’t always have people around them to ask, ‘Have you used this piece of equipment before?’ We provide that peer voice. That sense of: ‘you’re not alone in your lab’.”

It’s an insight that elevates SelectScience beyond content to something more enduring: a global knowledge network powered by trust. Reviews come from working scientists vetted and supported through a dedicated editorial process. “We don’t leave reviews

to chance,” said Parker. “We interview scientists. We validate their input. We make sure it’s relevant, accurate and useful.”

This same rigour underpins their business model. Unlike many B2B platforms that rely on aggressive ad sales or passive lead generation, SelectScience monetises through long-term relationships with suppliers: lab equipment manufacturers and service providers who want to reach scientists with relevance. “The more trusted our platform becomes, the more valuable it is,” Parker explained. “It’s not about scale for scale’s sake. It’s about quality.”

Under Parker’s leadership, the company recently undertook a sweeping technical overhaul. “We replaced the entire tech stack,” she said. “We moved to a new CMS, implemented a modular architecture. It was a huge project. But it

means we can be more agile, personalise experiences better and evolve faster.”

And evolve it will. SelectScience is already experimenting with GenAI to improve internal workflows, streamline operations and prep its data for future applications. “We’ve got 20 years of user-generated content. Until recently, it was scattered and unstructured. Now we’re cleaning it, tagging it, turning it into a structured asset,” she noted. “It’s giving us new opportunities to personalise content, surface insights and even explore AI-assisted product development.”

Parker, however, insists that AI must remain subordinate to human judgment, especially in a field like science. “Technology can enhance trust, but it can’t replace it,” she said. “Our job is to ensure we stay useful, reliable and trusted. That’s what keeps our community coming back.”

What sets SelectScience apart isn’t just its digital maturity or clean data. It’s the clarity of its mission: build a global scientific community based on trust and help the right technologies reach the right people, faster. It’s not flashy, but it’s effective.

In the broader context of **Monetising B2B**, where festivalisation and flashy reinvention often dominated the agenda, Parker’s presentation reminded delegates that sometimes the most powerful transfor-

mation is quiet, deliberate, and deeply rooted in service. SelectScience doesn’t just distribute information, it cultivates connections. And in doing so, it exemplifies a new kind of leadership in digital B2B media: purposeful, precise and persistently useful.

### DIGITAL-FIRST, MISSION-LED, INVESTOR-BACKED

## BUSINESS OF FASHION

If Kerry Parker exemplifies scientific precision, then Nick Blunden of *The Business of Fashion* (BoF) brings the lens of scale, digital acumen and global ambition. Blunden detailed how BoF has grown into one of the most influential voices in fashion media, without sacrificing depth or integrity.

Founded in 2007 by Imran Amed, a McKinsey consultant turned blogger, BoF’s journey began as a side project on a sofa. “Seventeen years in the making,” Blunden called it, tracing the arc from blog to a VC-backed, global platform with 3 million Instagram followers and over 100,000 monetisable members. “We’re arguably the largest global community of fashion and beauty professionals,” he said.

What makes BoF distinctive isn’t just its reach, but the clarity of its mission. “At the time, creatives read *Vogue* and businesspeople read *Drapers*,” Blunden



explained. “BoF was the first to unite both sides. That’s our guiding principle.” This fusion of creativity and commerce also shaped their hiring strategy: analytical thinkers with creative fluency. As Blunden put it: “Left brain and right brain.”

BoF’s business model mirrors this duality. From the start, the company embraced a vertical focus, fashion and beauty but with global scope. “Fashion is a \$2.5 trillion industry,” said Blunden. “So ‘niche’ takes on a different scale when viewed globally.” Events, content and communities now span continents, with activity in cities like New York, LA, Milan, Mumbai and Abu Dhabi.

Their revenue model is just as layered. While early monetisation was limited, BoF now earns from subscriptions, advertising, events, recruitment (BoF Careers), advisory and educational services. “Two-thirds of

our revenue is now subscription-based,” said Blunden, pointing to the success of *BoF Professional*, which launched in 2016. “We see news – what’s happening – as free. What we charge for is analysis and advice: why it’s happening and what to do about it.”

The pandemic proved a defining moment. With advertising and events revenue collapsing overnight, BoF leaned into its editorial strength. “We redid our *State of Fashion* report with McKinsey to reflect COVID’s impact and made it free,” said Blunden. “That positioned us as a voice of clarity, and subscriptions surged.” It showed that strategic editorial leadership during disruption could drive growth.

Another unique approach is BoF’s focus on platforming its journalists as trusted voices. “We invest in building their profiles,” said Blunden, highlighting



Nick Blunden (right), president, The Business of Fashion. With Natasha Christie-Miller



### Grilled: Panellists are challenged by the audience

sustainability editor Sarah Kent as a case in point. “It’s great for our brand, great for the individual and crucial for our value proposition. If you’re charging for insight, that insight needs credibility.”

The company has also evolved in how it uses technology. “Early on, we called ourselves a tech company and built everything in-house,” Blunden said. But now, BoF is more pragmatic. “We’ve transitioned from custom builds to third-party tools, and shifted our differentiation to product and data.” This pivot

has improved scalability and profitability while enabling experimentation with AI.

The culmination of that evolution is BoF’s proprietary large language model trained on 17 years of content. “It lets users interrogate our archive for strategic insights,” said Blunden, positioning it as a new service layer for clients like LVMH.

Amid macroeconomic turbulence and rising global tariffs, BoF has leaned into its role as a source of clarity and connection. “We’re at peak disruption,” said Blunden, referring

to challenges around global trade. “It might ease slightly, but we won’t go back to the old normal. That’s where we can help – by providing analysis, advice, and insight.”

BoF’s story is ultimately one of focus, fluency, and flexibility. It proves that B2B publishing can scale without diluting its mission, and that editorial excellence, if paired with operational discipline and smart product strategy, can be the foundation for sustainable global growth.

### UNDERLYING THEMES

While the examples of Mark Allen, Kerry Parker and Nick Blunden capture varied paths to growth, the underlying themes of reinvention, discipline and community persist in other corners of the B2B landscape.

The story of RELX’s transformation, as told by Mark Kelsey, CEO of Lexis-Nexis Risk Solutions, is already told in part in previous chapters of this report. It offers, perhaps the most dramatic example of large-scale transformation through entrepreneurial strategy. Under Kelsey’s

*‘Niche takes on a different scale when viewed globally.’*

Nick Blunden, The Business of Fashion

leadership, what began as a struggling print and advertising business was reimagined as a high-margin, global data platform.

At William Reed, transformation took a more gradual, values-led route. CEO Tracy De Groose credits long-term vision, mission clarity and brand trust. “People first,” is how she summed up her approach to empowering teams while scaling internationally and repositioning legacy brands like The Grocer. William Reed’s embrace of events, internationalisation and storytelling-driven content mirrors broader trends.

### A CLARITY OF PURPOSE

Together, these case studies reinforce a core insight: growth in B2B is no longer about scale alone, but about strategy, agility and staying close to your audience. Whether it’s family-run resilience, digital-first reinvention or investor-backed boldness, the leaders shaping B2B’s future are united by a refusal to stand still. Innovation comes in many forms: simplifying models, elevating editorial voices, restructuring legacy businesses and/or rethinking what a membership can mean. Some were born digital; others rebuilt from print. But all understood that real growth demands clarity of purpose, an understanding of audience value and leadership teams willing to make bold, sometimes uncomfortable, choices. ■



# Transformation

**REWRITING THE  
RULEBOOK: STRATEGY,  
RISK AND CHANGE**

**A**cross **Monetising B2B**, a quiet thread of transformation ran through many of the stories told on stage. Some businesses pivoted out of crisis, others re-engineered around purpose. But nearly all of them succeeded not through one-off reinventions, but through deliberate, often painful transformation processes guided by data, leadership and very often, experimentation.

### FROM FLOORPLANS TO FESTIVALS

#### RX

When Hugh Jones took the reins at RX, he brought a mindset shaped not by exhibitions but by data. As the former head of Acuity, RELX's data business, he entered the trade show world without legacy assumptions. That, he says, was an advantage. "I didn't know how exhibitions were run or who the key players were," he told the **Monetising**

*'Event directors are expected to place four or five high-risk bets a year. If none of them fail, they didn't aim high enough.'*

Hugh Jones, CEO, RX

**B2B** audience. "It allowed me to make significant decisions quickly because I wasn't beholden to relationships or traditions."

He found a sector long overdue for disruption, characterised by siloed operations, under-leveraged data and pricing models more suited to the 1980s than the digital



era. Jones likened exhibitions to pop-up cities: complex, high-value ecosystems generating billions in economic activity but still dismissed as ‘business tourism’.

His transformation strategy focused on three core levers: community engagement, data monetisation and pricing reinvention. At events like the PGA Show and JCK Show in Las Vegas, RX began blending entertainment and commerce, booking headline acts like Snoop Dogg and creating exclusive events to prolong attendee engagement and boost exhibitor ROI.

“You can’t do that with stale floor plans and rigid pricing,” Jones said. “No airline or hotel operates that way. Why should we?”

Instead, RX invested in centralised data infrastructure, with a \$100 million data business now driving 80% margins. Its Exhibitor Dashboard benchmarks brand performance across metrics like attention share and dwell time, while also serving as a guardrail against indiscriminate data sharing. “We don’t feed anything to LLMs,” said Jones. “Our data is secure, compliant and ours.”

Talent has been a key enabler. RX now hires aggressively from outside the industry- FedEx, BCG, RELX- and enforces integration on every acquisition. Event directors are expected to place four or five high-risk bets a year. “If none of them fail, they didn’t aim high enough,” Jones said.

## TRANSFORMATION THROUGH INSIGHT

### TRANSACTION ADVISORS INSTITUTE

While RX’s shift was driven by scale and infrastructure, William Jefferson Black took a more organic route. The chair of Transaction Advisors described his journey as one driven by personal frustration: “I was offered a role in investment banking, didn’t know what I was doing and went looking for the M&A playbook. It didn’t exist.”

That gap became a business. What started as a journal soon morphed into a conference series and membership platform. Transaction Advisors doesn’t employ journalists. Its members – executives from Microsoft, ExxonMobil, and others – generate the content, on stage and in conversation. “They love telling stories, and the rest of the community loves listening,” Black explained. That feedback loop built a content model without traditional overheads. Growth followed: 45% revenue increases for three consecutive years, a 50–55% margin and \$300–350K revenue per employee. AI is now used to atomise long-form content into actionable snippets across digital formats.

“People want to have conversations,” Black said. “The journal became a conference. The conference became an education platform.”



## QUESTIONS, NOT CONTENT

### ► What happens when your customers become your content?

For William Jefferson Black, Chair of Transaction Advisors Institute, the answer is a lean, high-margin B2B model where members don't just consume value — they create it.

### ► From impostor to insight engine

Black's journey began not with strategy, but survival. "I moved to California, bought a Land Rover, rented a house on the beach... and had no idea what I was doing." That gap in Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) knowledge became the foundation of his business.

### ► The 'anti-publisher' model

No journalists. No editorial staff. Just

practitioners from the likes of Microsoft, Exxon Mobil and Sony sharing deal-making stories with peers who are hungry to learn. "They do it for free. They love telling stories. And the rest of the community loves listening."

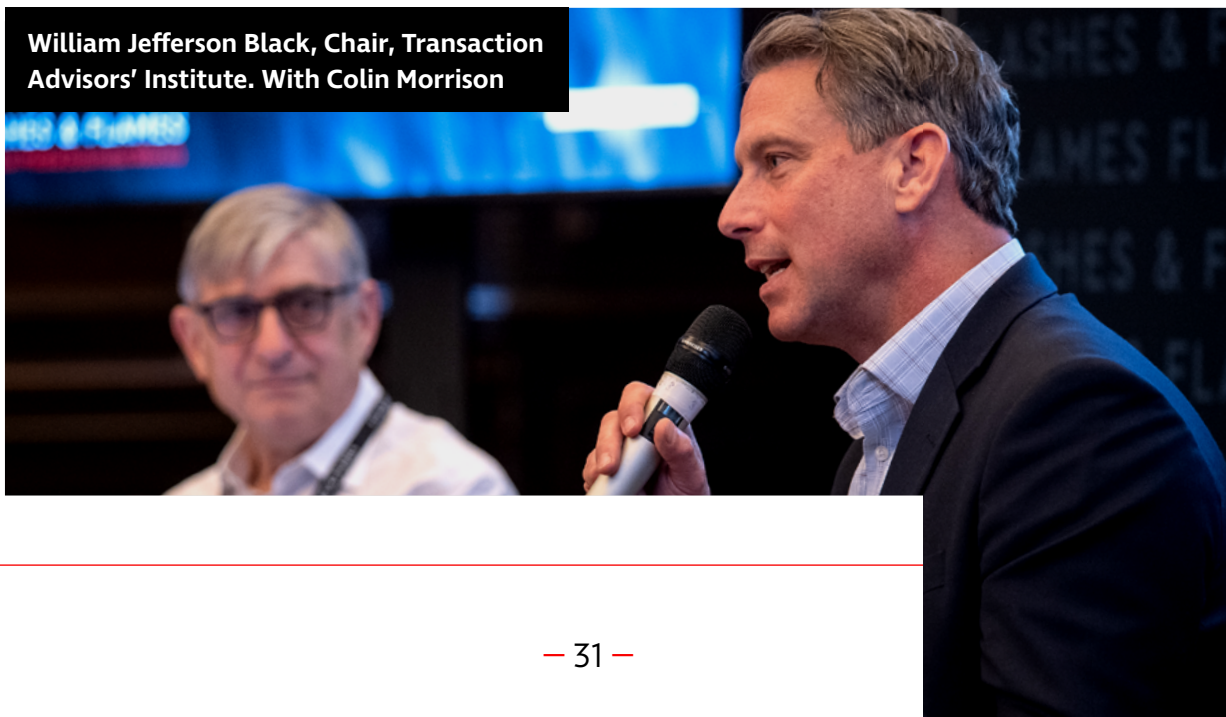
### ► AI-enabled, story-powered

Today, AI breaks hour-long discussions into minute-long clips of insight. But the engine is still community storytelling. The model thrives on diversity, churn and fresh perspectives.

### ► The takeaway?

You don't need to know everything to build something useful. But you do need to ask the right questions – and create a space where others are eager to answer.

William Jefferson Black, Chair, Transaction Advisors' Institute. With Colin Morrison



Mark Kelsey, CEO  
of Lexis-Nexis Risk  
Solutions

### FROM PRINT DRAG TO DATA-DRIVEN VELOCITY

## THE RELX TRANSFORMATION

Transformation isn't just a phase. It's a persistent state of evolution. For the most successful B2B media and events businesses transformation is more than adapting to survive. It's about intentionally redesigning culture, strategy and value to thrive in a landscape defined by digital acceleration, shifting customer needs, and data opportunity.

Few stories illustrate this better than RELX's remarkable reinvention of Reed Business Information.

Mark Kelsey's fireside chat with Colin Morrison opened the conference with a masterclass in radical reinvention. When Kelsey took the helm of Reed Business Information (RBI) in 2010, the division was floundering. Still largely reliant on advertising and print, with two-thirds of revenue anchored in legacy media, it had just been pulled from a failed sale process.

The 2008 crash had stopped a private equity breakup in its tracks, and the



business was haemorrhaging: revenues down 18%, profits down 40%.

RELX CEO Eric Engstrom handed Kelsey a tough brief: return to growth, hit a 20% margin target, and deliver a compelling shareholder story. Kelsey began by assembling a leadership team from RBI's digital pioneers - "people who had been doing online since the late '90s" and launched a strategic rethink grounded in ruthless segmentation and data value. The business reviewed 20 verticals to ask: could this segment move to online data services? One-third had clear potential. One-third never would. The rest needed time.

Then came the big moves. RBI divested 70 businesses across 14 countries, sold all 331 magazines, and exited advertising. That revenue was replaced by focused investment in data services, beginning with the acquisition of Accuity, a US-based provider of bank data. "They were so good

I asked their CEO, Hugh Jones, to run the whole thing,” Kelsey recalled. “It delivered double-digit growth for a decade.”

Workflows, not web pages, became the organising principle. Take Flight International: once a flagship magazine, it evolved into a real-time data platform tracking 900 airline schedules, aircraft configurations, and global commercial flights. Customers didn’t just subscribe — they embedded it into their operations. That kind of integration made Flight International indispensable rather than just informative. These deep integrations into customer processes became new moats.

Internally, Kelsey emphasised the importance of cultural clarity. Innovation was protected from disruption: “Dominic, Jim and Jane focused on value creation; the rest of us handled disposals.”

By 2013, RBI had hit its 20% margin target. It soon merged with LexisNexis Risk in the US, turbocharging its data infrastructure. Today, the division (now LexisNexis Risk Solutions) boasts 3,500 technologists and 1,500 data scientists, with £3.2 billion in turnover and 99% digital revenues.

Crucially, Kelsey warned, transformation demands psychological safety. “People must feel free to take risks and not be punished for failure. Innovation doesn’t happen in fear-based cultures.”

## REINVENTING MEDIA THROUGH STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION

### THE BUSINESS OF FASHION

While *The Business of Fashion* (BoF) has often been framed as an editorial and commercial success story, its transformation into a global B2B powerhouse is rooted in deliberate, tech-enabled reinvention. What began as a personal blog in 2007 has evolved through multiple strategic pivots, into a diversified information and advisory platform for the \$2.5 trillion fashion and beauty industry.

As President Nick Blunden explained, BoF’s early digital-first advantage became the engine for global scale. But the real transformation lay in how the business redefined its technological and organisational backbone. “We’re now a technology-powered business, not a tech business,” said Blunden. That meant moving away from costly proprietary builds to modular, third-party systems, allowing the team to shift focus from code to product strategy, customer experience, and insight delivery.

A particularly bold transformation move was BoF’s investment in a proprietary large language model trained on 17 years of its own content. “We call it the Brain of Fashion,” Blunden said. This generative AI platform is already powering BoF’s



advisory services, giving clients like LVMH on-demand access to strategic intelligence previously buried in editorial archives.

Crucially, BoF transformed its organisational model, too. It platformed its editorial talent, such as sustainability correspondent Sarah Kent, as subject-matter experts to drive subscriptions. It also upended its technology assumptions, shifting value creation from backend control to front-end integration. And when COVID cratered events and ad revenue, BoF pivoted decisively, leveraging its thought leadership to drive record subscription growth and consolidate its role as a critical industry guide during peak uncertainty.

## TRANSFORMATION AS A DISCIPLINE

Across RX, RELX, BoF, and the Transaction Advisors Institute, transformation was not a single moment but a multi-year discipline, enabled by strategic vision, risk tolerance and a focus on value creation. Whether it meant shifting from print to predictive data (RELX), embedding festivalisation and pricing innovation (RX), or reimagining a content archive as an AI-powered service (BoF), each organisation broke with legacy logic in favour of forward structure.

Above all, these transformations succeeded because they embedded change into daily operations, not as a project, but as a permanent posture.



# The state of B2B into the future

**FROM SILOS TO ECOSYSTEMS, B2B  
BUSINESSES ARE CONVERGING ACROSS  
MEDIA, EVENTS, DATA AND INSIGHTS**

**W**hat we have seen emerging from the convergence of media, data and events within B2B business isn't just a new business model, it's a new mindset. That mindset was on display at **Monetising B2B**: optimistic, innovative and impatient with legacy boundaries.

The traditional pillars of B2B: publishing, exhibitions, data and consultancy are no longer operating in silos. They are converging into a multi-touchpoint value ecosystem. The conference clarified what it requires to monetise from B2B businesses and where it may go next.

We highlight specific themes that echoed the loudest.

### IN-PERSON IS BACK – AND IT'S PERSONAL

If the pandemic forced B2B into an awkward digital sprint, the return of in-person events has sparked something more meaningful: reinvention. CEOs from Clarion, Questex, and Terrapinn all agreed: what's roaring back isn't just attendance, but enthusiasm. Not just connection, but conversion. Business now gets done at events, not despite their format but because of it.

"The in-person boom isn't nostalgic. It's generational. Younger professionals crave

*'What we've seen today is how fluid it all is... Publishing, exhibitions, data, consultancy – they're no longer separate. We've helped create a gathering of the B2B clans.'*

Colin Morrison

experiential engagement, 'curated serendipity'," as Paul Miller CEO of Questex put it. That's shifting the design logic from trade floor to festival ground.

### 'FESTIVALISATION' ISN'T FLUFF – IT'S STRATEGY

From RX's PGA concert to Clarion's scented walkways and Cannes Lions' Riviera reinvention, events are evolving into high-engagement brand platforms. "Excitement isn't optional." And it's no longer enough to measure square metres sold or badge scans. Leading organisers are rethinking value in terms of emotional impact, time spent and memory created.

Greg Hitchen, CEO at Terrapinn, summed it up: successful events deliver four things: showcasing, content, fun and networking.

That's the new benchmark. And as Colin Morrison reminded the audience, this transformation isn't just for show: "The sexiest events are not trade shows, it's about excitement and involvement."

### VISITOR REVENUE IS THE NEW FRONTIER

Trade shows have long leaned on exhibitors for income. Not anymore. CEOs reported that visitor revenue already accounts for 15–25% of total income and projections suggest 50% isn't far off.

Colin Morrison called it a "seismic shift," citing RX's prediction that half of its future revenue may come from attendees themselves. This evolution not only rebalances the financial model but opens the door to richer experiences, deeper personalisation and a new era of curated value.

As Lisa Hannant, CEO of Clarion Events, put it, this shift demands we "really get under the skin" of what visitors want and are willing to pay for.

### CONTENT IS NO LONGER A SIDE DISH

Events now expect to feed their communities every day, not just once a year. Content has become the connective tissue between

exhibitions and data platforms, between newsletters and face-to-face meetings.

Questex, for instance, blends trade shows, digital media and content subscriptions into a single, data-rich customer experience. Cannes Lions' award entry data powers year-round subscriber insights. Across the board, publishers-turned-event-owners are investing in journalism, analysis and subject-matter expertise, not just stages and booths.

Colin Morrison highlighted Cannes Lions as a good example: "(It) started with an award ceremony, and what has it become? Isn't that a magic business?" He highlighted the unique value awards data can provide, suggesting, "Most people haven't thought about this... but awards as data gathering? We should all take that seriously."

### DATA IS THE GLUE – AND THE GOLD

B2B's most transformative edge lies in its ability to own, enrich and embed proprietary data. Whether it's General Index pricing benchmarks, LexisNexis flight tracking or Cannes Lions' creative intelligence, successful businesses think beyond content and embed actionable insights into workflows.

Colin Morrison emphasised that the uniqueness of data isn't the only marker of value:





Part of the conversation: From top left, clockwise: Greg Hitchen, CEO, Terrapinn, Neil Bradford, CEO-founder, General Index, Lisa Hannant, CEO, Clarion Events, Paul Miller, CEO, Questex, and Paul Hood, AI consultant.

“It’s the end case that matters... if it does the job for somebody, then it’s valuable for them.”

And the real Holy Grail? “Get your information into the workflow,” he said. “That means: I’m doing my job, I need that number every Tuesday morning. That’s in the workflow.”

### AI IS A STRATEGIC MULTIPLIER – BUT REQUIRES A MAP

AI is everywhere – but not everything. The dedicated sessions about AI made this clear: AI won’t rescue a bad strategy but it can supercharge a good one. Real-world applications ranged from workflow automation to AI-driven trend analysis

tools. But caution was also voiced. Publishers must protect their data from being scraped and misunderstood. And they must remain actively involved in AI implementation, ensuring human oversight, ethical guardrails and accuracy at every step.

Mark Kelsey, CEO of Lexis-Nexis Risk Solutions, reminded us that psychological safety is the foundation for innovation. Without it, teams won't take the kind of AI-enabled risks that drive transformation. Colin Morrison echoed this, noting RX's bold practice of asking, "What have you tried that hasn't worked?" – a formalised encouragement of learning through failure.

### TRANSFORMATION IS NOT A DEPARTMENT – IT'S A CULTURE

Across sessions, the stories of successful reinvention shared something in common: clarity of vision, long-term discipline and leadership that trusted its teams to rethink everything.

Whether it was Mark Kelsey's radical exit from print, Kerry Parker's mission-led tech stack or Nick Blunden's shift from custom CMS to smart product-based services, each case showed that transformation is a series of bets. Each bet guided by data, strategy and people who believe in it.

## THE CONVERGENCE IS REAL

Colin Morrison's closing insight captured the mood: "Exhibition people did one job. Publishing and information another. Now the grey middle is much larger."

If **Monetising B2B** proved anything, it's the future belongs to those who can operate across formats, channels and revenue models, and remain coherent while doing this. That coherence comes not from doing everything, but from knowing why you're doing it.

In the words of Colin Morrison, "I hope we've helped create a gathering of the B2B clans." What comes next may be hard to categorise but it's exciting, engaged and unmistakably B2B.

*"The sexiest events  
are not trade shows,  
it's about excitement  
and involvement."*

Colin Morrison

## MORRISON'S WRAP-UP OF MONETISING B2B



### EVENTS



Many exhibition visitors will pay and organisers are increasingly getting them to do it. Major organisers are currently generating 15-20% of revenue from visitors (presumably, including conference delegates) and some expect it to get to 50% within five years. Just a few years ago, visitor revenue (notably outside the US) was negligible for trade shows.

'Festivalising' and making events fun means creating memorable moments that visitors can't experience anywhere else. The festival approach also helps to captivate a new generation of business leaders. "The

sexiest events are not trade shows, they're 'festivals' amped up conferences with lots of networking". "A Florida beach (location for some events) is more exciting than a beige exhibition hall". "Excitement isn't optional".

Even traditional trade shows should create unique excitement, using, for example, music, colour, fragrances and experiences.

### DATA



"Data about oil is the new oil! The most valuable proprietary data actually are prices aggregated from trade information collected from the industry that you then calculate a price."





They're wonderful because what's happened over many years is that, within the energy industry especially, where you have such a volatility, those prices are used really in three ways. They're used massively within a company to do analysis, to calculate value at risk, to do transfer pricing, so they're really embedded within a company. But what's brilliant about this proprietary data is it's also used in contracts between Firm A and Firm B. Someone will buy oil from another company on an index basis. That secondary usage puts you right inside the network of the industry you're serving."

Integrating data, particularly pricing data, into subscriber workflows is the holy grail for data publishers. Data doesn't have to be unique. Its value is based on the user case. Data needs to be useful and you need to get it into people's workflows for it to be particularly useful. "

All data is not equally valuable but – in the era of AI which commoditises so much information – proprietary data can be increasingly powerful. Many B2B awards events could use entries to collect original data. Up to 30% of Cannes Lions' total

revenue comes from subscribers which pay to access data on the success of advertising campaigns, product launches etc. Cannes Lions is more an integrated information and events business than you may guess: only some 50% of revenue comes from the event; the other 50% is digital.

"I think the most important thing is to ensure that your data is used as regularly as it possibly can be. Somebody once said to me that 'we're in the legal addiction business' – and getting people to use your content and data as much as possible, as daily as possible, is really important."

### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



Three vital points for the use of AI were made:

**01** You need to devise a roadmap in order to

ensure that you use AI to meet your overall strategy requirements, not develop it in isolation. What value can it add to your chosen strategy? Look at real world applications of a proposed system, see it working somewhere else.

**02** B2B publishers (many with valuable data and information) must take action to protect their content from being scraped by bots because the value can easily (and permanently) be undermined by large language models.

**03** Publishers need to manage the risks inherent in AI because these large language models are stochastic and have an inherent (and intentional) randomness in which they don't provide the same answer twice.

Publishers must be aware and "keep a human in the loop" to make the most of the tech but also of their human expertise.

### STRATEGY:



Don't miss the opportunity to make acquisitions whose value is enhanced by the new people and talents they bring.

Take smart risks. Learn from fails. Play to win but don't play not to lose. Long-term success is down to innovation so you (and your people) need to get comfortable with taking risks and experimenting."

People have got to feel comfortable with taking risk and not worry about the risk of being persecuted."

"You win when you go niche". Well defined, narrow niche businesses enable deep involvement, diversified revenues, the build-up of unique expertise and the development of formidable market leadership.

B2B media can change the character of a market sector. The Business of Fashion is well established as a global B2B information and events brand (65% subscriptions revenue) in what was once a market of individual national publication brands; it helped internationalise the market.

Membership can be better than subscriptions because members like to share information, providing valuable content – without payment. Membership sharing builds relationships and generates valuable content.

Revenue diversification is invaluable and protects companies from downturns.



## PARTNERS



We build data products that help our clients survive and thrive in the AI- and data-driven world. We've been working in the information industry for nearly 20 years and are a trusted partner to a roster of clients that includes The EIU, Manufacture 2030, IWSR, Everway and The BMJ. Our core focus is working with data, content and media businesses to grow their value, increase retention and unlock new revenue.

We've built everything from AI tools that create engaging podcasts, forecasting and data visualisation products, to full-service content and data platforms that drive key decisions in a variety of industries. This year, we are shortlisted for 'Consultancy of the Year' in the British Data Awards, as well as the awards for 'Data For Good Initiative of the Year' and 'Generative AI Initiative of the Year'.



A global strategy consultancy with more than 2,000 employees in 31 countries, focused on unlocking better growth that drives measurable revenue and profit for our clients.

We have carried out commercial strategy projects with 40+ clients within B2B data,

information and events, focused on pricing, product, innovation, marketing, and sales.

Our expertise also extends to advising private equity investors and corporates on investments; our team has carried out commercial due diligence on 60+ deals within B2B data, information and events.





### PARTNERS (cont.)



We have spent over four decades developing specialist software for publishers. Our flagship product, Advantage, helps medium to large publishing and membership organisations manage subscriptions across online and print content, books, products and memberships in any combination.

The integrated solution handles everything from eCommerce and customer service to marketing, analysis, conferences and events. It offers sophisticated business intelligence capabilities, providing the data

needed for informed decision-making. The system is multi-language, multi-currency and serves clients globally.

Implementation follows a proven methodology that ensures successful installations. The company adds 60,000 hours of new development annually, with clients updating at their preferred frequency. We pride ourself on being a trusted partner with highly experienced staff who understand the software and the industries they serve.



Established in 1986, Air Business is an award-winning market leader in global mail, fulfilment, distribution, subscription management and e-commerce. In 2011, we acquired global subscription management bureau Quadrant Subscription Services, with over 50 years' experience in its field.

Our unique end-to-end service portfolio includes subscriber acquisition and

marketing strategy, worldwide postal and courier distribution, digital and mail fulfilment solutions and warehouse and freight logistics, all with exceptional and seamless customer service at its heart.

We are a wholly-owned subsidiary of An Post, the Irish Post Office, one of the world's leading postal services renowned for its quality of service and infrastructure.



### PARTNERS (cont.)



## CONVERSATION STARTER

[link](#)

This platform helps event organisers facilitate impactful conversations between participants at conferences, exhibitions, community meet-ups, and more – in-person, online, and hybrid. Through a simple, user-friendly web interface, participants can browse profiles, request meetings, and receive a personalised schedule – all before the event begins.

Fully GDPR compliant, client-branded

and supported by a team with experience of 1000+ events and 250,000 meetings, Conversation Starter makes it easy to set up valuable one-to-one conversations that drive business outcomes.

Attendees receive an email to set up their profiles on the platform. From here, they arrange meetings with other attendees. For more information, follow this link:

[www.conversationstarter.net](http://www.conversationstarter.net)

[link](#)

Our attendees, exhibitors, and organisers connect via personalised, real-time assistance and natural conversations. Message Matrix enables events to meet demand for instant answers, smart navigation and deep engagement.

Attendees are guided effortlessly through the event journey. Exhibitors benefit from better-qualified leads. Organisers gain valuable insight, increased efficiency, and powerful new revenue streams.

Our AI Concierge already powers shows worldwide – providing measurable impact through strong data and new monetisation models.

AI-driven interaction will become standard across the events industry within two years. Message Matrix is uniquely positioned to lead this shift – combining proven technology, deep sector expertise, and a clear vision of what's next. We don't just improve events. We unlock their full potential.



# Social credits



# Parting shot

**W**hen Flashes & Flames launched the first **Monetising B2B** conference, we hoped to spark conversation. What happened exceeded expectations: a sold-out venue, standing-room-only sessions and an audience that stayed until the last post-event drink.

Our distinctive event, spanning every aspect of B2B information and events with an emphasis on discussion (not speeches), on substantial pre-reading and on networking among industry leaders and learners, has proved to be timely. Never before have pureplay events organisers been so keen to explore the opportunities of information services and data that were once the exclusive preoccupation of publishers. And all B2B companies share an appetite for the changing shape of events and customer relationships, fuelled by technology.

**Email:** [colin@flashesandflames.com](mailto:colin@flashesandflames.com)

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**SAVE THE DATE**  
**MONETISING B2B**  
**RETURNS**  
**13 MAY 2026,**  
**LONDON**

That's the fluid, dynamic, multi-channel international market served by Flashes & Flames and, now, by **Monetising B2B**.

That's why Flashes & Flames is now arranging the second **Monetising B2B** Information & Events. It takes place in London on Wednesday 13 May. To register your interest in booking for **Monetising B2B 2026**, please email [colin@flashesandflames.com](mailto:colin@flashesandflames.com).

Let's keep talking, sharing insights and charting the exciting future of B2B. See you next year.

## FLASHES & FLAMES

THE GLOBAL MEDIA BUSINESS WEEKLY

Flashes & Flames, 'Monetising B2B' and MediaVoices are part of Flashes & Flames Media Ltd.



THE LAST WORD



*“A room filled with super-senior leadership from B2B companies”*

Vanessa Lovatt, FT Events

*“An event which really showcased the advantage of sharing knowledge across B2B data, insight and events”*

Paul Robinson, Rule of 40

*“Lots of great insights and connections”*

James Cooper, The Business of Apps

*“A superb event with so many interesting speakers and attendees”*

Alec Kingham, Vitruvian

*“A fantastic gathering of the industry”*

Florent Jarry, Stax LLC

*“Such a great programme”*

John Barnes, William Reed

*“Excellent content and an amazing audience”*

Simon Middelboe, Legal TechTalk

*“An outstanding event. The speaker quality was peerless and the ideas abundant.”*

Greg Hitchen, Terrapinn

*“A real privilege to attend a great event”*

James Cape, PartnerWise

*“Really insightful day, with a cross-section of the media world who don’t usually intersect”*

Paul Woodward, exhibitions consultant

*“Proof that senior business people will always want to connect in person”*

Paul Hood, AI consultant

*“Enjoyed it – met good people and learnt a lot.”*

Tracy De Groose, William Reed Group

*“A terrific, informative and inspiring event”*

Douglas McCabe, CEO, Enders Analysis

