



# Technology and Stress: **Can Tech Tools Improve Planners' Lives?**

Presented by  
CrowdCompass by Cvent  
and  
BizBash





## TECHNOLOGY AND STRESS: CAN TECH TOOLS IMPROVE PLANNERS' LIVES?

When the **technology we depend on** to do our jobs doesn't perform the way it's supposed to, it can create a **stressful situation**.

**All of us depend on technology**, and for event professionals, those digital connections to company headquarters, clients, attendees, and other stakeholders are absolutely vital.

As a result, when the technology we depend on to do our jobs doesn't perform the way it's supposed to, it can create a stressful situation. And, despite our best efforts, these instances do happen: Three quarters of event professionals in a new BizBash/CrowdCompass survey said they've had a program or device freeze or crash while using it, and more than one in five have sworn off a tech tool entirely because they had such a bad experience with it.

Fortunately, technology's rapid evolution is delivering advances today that improve the experience. In particular, there are two major developments that have led to a sea of change in the way professionals interact with the devices, management platforms, and apps we use on a daily basis.

“

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”

– **Respondent**

*Technology and Stress in Planners' Lives Survey*

The mobile revolution has untethered us from the desktop computers on which we once depended, and the shift from storing information in hard drives to the always-accessible cloud holds the promise of making both on- and off-site work easier and more productive for event planners.

### Tech and Stress: Both Part of the Job

While most event planners appreciate new technology, there are some pain points, and some tools demand a learning curve, as well. More than two in five survey respondents characterized their relationship with technology as one that is generally good but can sometimes be frustrating, and nearly one in five are early adopters, who enjoy being on the cutting edge and trying out new apps or devices.

Technology has come so far, so fast, that even programs like Microsoft Excel or other spreadsheet tools, traditionally the workhorse of any managerial or organizational task, are now considered the “manual” way to complete a job.

New innovations promise speedier, more accurate results, provided that the learning curve is not too steep. While about a quarter of survey respondents needed a month or longer to master a new tech tool, the majority were able to come up to speed more quickly.





Both *Forbes* magazine and CareerCast.com ranked event planner as the **fifth most-stressful job** out there.

The rapid ability to master new skills is an important one in the event planning profession, since today's professionals need all the help they can get in what is regularly listed as a high-stress profession. Both *Forbes* magazine and CareerCast.com ranked event planner as the fifth most-stressful job out there.

The survey responses reflected this high-pressure atmosphere; nearly half of respondents said their job was above-average or high stress, and nearly as many said the almost-constant need to multitask — sometimes due to staff cuts or other reductions in resources — was the root of the problem.

"I'm a one-person department and share an admin with five other people, working on more than one meeting at a time all year," one survey respondent said. "There is never a slow season or down time. I'm never caught up and always overwhelmed."

This is where the promise of new technology really shines. Technology that helps automate regular or routine tasks can make a huge difference to a busy event planner with limited team resources.

Tools can automate things like importing registration information, managing travel and housing bookings, aggregating data from multiple systems, managing budgets and processing payments, submitting surveys and tallying the results, capturing leads, and more to deliver freedom from the drudgery of spreadsheets and manual entry and reduce the risk of human error.





### Shift to Mobile Requires Integration

With hectic travel schedules and an increasing need to be connected at all times, event professionals rely more than ever on mobile devices, and we're seeing traditional office stalwarts like desktop computers fade in importance.

"A lot of people are on the go these days, including myself. I need my tools to work to the best of their abilities," one survey respondent said.

Consider this: 86% of survey respondents said they require a smartphone to do their jobs, and 76% said they need a laptop. By contrast, fewer than half — just 45% — said they have to have a desktop computer to get their job done. When it comes to on-site management, mobile devices are even more important: Nearly nine out of 10 survey respondents said their smartphone is the most important technological tool they have at an event.

However, integrating cutting-edge mobile technology with legacy systems — such as marketing, lead management, and C.R.M. platforms — at the home office is a top challenge for event professionals today. More than a third of survey respondents said this was their biggest cause of technology-related stress at work.

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*Technology and Stress in Planners' Lives Survey*

“Our in-house reservation system is very old and not intuitive. It does not ‘talk’ to our Salesforce database, so work must be duplicated,” one frustrated survey respondent said.

One of the ways that technology providers are trying to solve the integration pain point is by offering fully integrated, end-to-end platforms that are self-contained and don’t need to be “plugged in” to an older, possibly less robust system, while other tools can function as a “bridge” between systems to make the connection seamless.

### Mobile Apps and Cloud Services Redefine the Management Process

As the benefits of native mobile apps become more universally understood, the role they play in event management is evolving and expanding. They have become a simple, real-time method for delivering vital information, program details, and changes to attendees.

Since they can be tailored to work with devices across multiple operating systems, attendees, event staff, presenters, and other key stakeholders can all be on the same page, so to speak, whether their devices run on iOS, Android, or Windows. In a market where B.Y.O.D., or “bring your own device,” has gained prominence, this flexibility helps achieve productivity. Push notifications also improve productivity by delivering real-time updates to participants exactly when they need it.



One respondent said their **most valued tech tools** are “any collaborative software pieces that allow me and my team to work on documents **simultaneously with instant updates.**”



Once installed, native apps store some information on the device, so even if a user doesn't have a connection to the Internet, breakout session schedules, show floor maps, and other information is at his or her fingertips. Even offline, they can deliver the information needed in the moment and be updated once connectivity is restored.

Loss of connectivity — a key challenge for planners — and the delays that can result can be mitigated through the use of cloud-based and S.a.a.S. (software-as-a-service) solutions. Since there is no need for software installation and maintenance, downtime is minimized because a planner or presenter can simply switch to another device and continue.

What's more, because multiple people can access cloud-based tools at the same time, they help facilitate collaboration and content sharing. Cloud-based event management solutions, along with image-sharing platforms like Dropbox and chat apps like WhatsApp, let planners stay in touch and on top of everything, regardless of location.

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### Conclusion

Although technology occasionally frustrates, savvy event professionals know its benefits far outweigh any drawbacks. As the tools evolve so that mouse-clicking becomes touch screen tapping, users have more solutions than ever to solve their top tech stressors, improve productivity, and engagement. ■

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*Written by Martha C. White for BizBash and CrowdCompass*





### About CrowdCompass

CrowdCompass by Cvent creates awesome mobile event apps ([www.crowdcompass.com/app-features/](http://www.crowdcompass.com/app-features/)) that increase attendee engagement and produce a strong return on investment. As the premier event app developer, they provide mobile apps for conferences, tradeshow, meetings and events that range in size from 50 to 50,000 attendees. Their solution is an integrated component of Cvent's event management platform ([www.cvent.com/en/event-management-software/](http://www.cvent.com/en/event-management-software/)) – the most comprehensive in the industry.



# BIZBASH

### About BizBash

In the dynamic live gathering industry, BizBash is the largest media source for both event pros and “hidden planners” with nearly 225,000 monthly users. Live Gatherings serviced by the BizBash suite of products include: exhibitions, conferences and meetings, training and learning, marketing and PR, fund-raising and galas, celebrations and weddings, incentive and travel, and government and ceremonial.

