

10x Point DEO Action Plan

Who is Marketing to the Machines ?

(or how to build a competitive
advantage with DEO)

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Incentivise LIVE 2026
W Hotel Sydney

How to use this Action Plan

This Action Plan turns the ideas in the DEO presentation into practical work your organisation can use.

The 10 topics build on each other. Together they help you understand how decision engines see you, decide what you want to be recommended for, expose the judgement behind your work and strengthen the evidence supporting it.

The objective is simple: make it easier for a decision engine to understand why you are a credible choice and explain that choice to a human.

Work through the topics in order

Complete the topics in order the first time.

Each topic moves from principle to action to output, then tests the thinking in MICE before you move on.

Start with what matters most

Focus first on the briefs, customers and opportunities with the greatest commercial value.

Where would becoming easier to understand, trust and recommend matter most?

Use those situations for your first pass through the Action Plan.

The test

Is it becoming easier for a buyer, an intermediary or a decision engine to understand why we are the right choice for this brief?

1. Ask the Engines

Find out how decision engines currently understand, compare and recommend your organisation before trying to change the answer.

THE POINT

Most organisations know what they would like to be known for. Fewer know what decision engines currently associate them with.

An agency may see itself as a specialist in leadership participation, yet an engine may describe it only as a general full-service events business.

You cannot improve the recommendation until you understand the current answer.

DO THIS

1

Ask realistic buyer questions

Use shortlist, comparison and evidence questions that resemble a real client decision.

2

Test branded and unbranded versions

See whether you enter the answer naturally and whether the engine can build a credible case once named.

3

Record recurring patterns

Capture how you are described, who appears instead, what evidence is used and what is missing or inaccurate.

Produce a DEO Baseline

Create an honest snapshot of the current recommendation picture.

Record six things

Where we appear

How we are described

Why we are recommended

Who appears instead

What is missing or wrong

Three priorities

See it in MICE

The agency believes: “We are particularly strong at leadership events that create participation and ownership.”

The engine says: “A full-service creative events agency delivering conferences, launches and brand experiences.”

The shortlist test reveals: Competitors appear because they have visible cases connected to participation, ownership and stakeholder management.

Conclusion: The agency has a visibility and meaning problem, not a capability problem.

KEEP IT HERE

A shared DEO working file used by leadership, marketing and business development.

USE IT AND PUBLISH HERE

Positioning, website planning, case-study priorities, proof gathering and future engine tests.

Completion check: Do we understand the current answer well enough to know what must change?

2. Decide What You Should Be Recommended For

Choose the buyer situations in which your organisation should be an especially credible choice.

THE POINT

Broad capability does not automatically create recommendation relevance. “Full-service” identifies the category. It does not explain when you are the right choice.

A recommendation becomes easier when your organisation is connected to a specific buyer need, tension or brief.

You do not need to be recommended for everything. You need to be obvious for the right things.

DO THIS

1

Choose five valuable situations

Start with the briefs you want more of, where your contribution is commercially and strategically meaningful.

2

Name the buyer tension

Describe the choice, risk or competing need that makes the brief difficult.

3

Explain why you fit

State what you understand, notice or decide particularly well, then connect it to evidence.

Produce Five Priority Recommendation Situations

Each one should be specific enough for a buyer to recognise their own brief.

For each situation, capture

The situation

The buyer tension

Why we fit

Reasons to recommend us

Evidence we have

Gaps to close

See it in MICE

Recommendation situation

We should be recommended when leaders already understand the strategy, but the organisation needs to turn that understanding into ownership and action.

Why the agency fits: It designs participation around the organisational outcome rather than making production spectacle the default answer.

KEEP IT HERE

A shared recommendation-position document maintained by leadership, marketing and business development.

USE AND PUBLISH IT HERE

Website positioning, proposals, case studies, sales conversations, thought leadership, customer interviews and future engine tests.

Completion check: Could an informed outsider clearly explain the five situations in which we are a particularly good choice?

3. Expose the Decision Making

Make the judgement behind the finished event visible.

THE POINT

The finished event shows the stage, venue, audience and production. It rarely shows what your team noticed, challenged, prioritised or recommended.

For many MICE intermediaries, that thinking is the most valuable part of the work. When it stays invisible, buyers and decision engines see execution without understanding why the intermediary mattered.

Don't just show what happened. Show the decision that made the difference.

DO THIS

1

Find the consequential moment

Choose a project where your thinking changed the format, reduced a risk, redirected the budget or improved the likely outcome.

2

Capture the decision in four parts

Record what the client asked for, what you noticed, what you recommended and why that choice was better.

3

Connect it to evidence

Support the decision with an outcome, customer comment, repeat engagement, participant response or delivery result.

Produce a Bank of Decision Stories

Short examples that show how your judgement materially changed the solution.

Use this structure

What the client asked for

What we noticed

What we recommended

Why that choice was better

Evidence available

See it in MICE

The client asked for: A high-impact plenary launch for a new organisational strategy.

We noticed: Leaders already understood the strategy. The unresolved issue was ownership.

We recommended: A concise shared plenary followed by smaller facilitated cohorts.

Why it was better: It traded some production spectacle for greater participation, interpretation and commitment.

Evidence: Leaders created practical team commitments, and the client repeated the engagement.

KEEP IT HERE

An internal decision-story bank containing the fullest version of each example and the supporting evidence.

USE AND PUBLISH IT HERE

Case studies, proposals, pitch decks, capability statements, articles, award entries, sales conversations and customer interviews.

Completion check: Can a buyer see a clear example of where our thinking materially changed the solution?

4. Write for the Concierge

Help a decision engine explain why your organisation fits a particular brief.

WHAT WE MEAN BY “THE CONCIERGE”

A good concierge does not simply hand over a directory. They listen to what the person needs, narrow the options and explain why one choice may suit them better than another.

Decision engines increasingly do the same thing. They are not only trying to find suppliers. They are trying to answer:

Who is a good fit for this particular brief — and why?

THE SHIFT

Directory writing

Here is who we are.

Here is what we do.

Here are our services.

Concierge writing

Here is when we are relevant.

Here is why we fit.

Here is what supports the choice.

**A directory helps people find options.
A concierge helps them choose
between them.**

Make the Recommendation Easy to Explain

Recommendation-ready writing starts with the buyer's situation, not the supplier's adjectives.

Don't just describe your business. Help someone else recommend it.

DO THIS

1

Consider us when...

Name the client situation, brief or tension that makes your organisation especially relevant.

2

Because we...

Explain what you understand, notice, decide or deliver particularly well in that situation.

3

Supported by...

Attach a relevant decision story, case, outcome, operational fact or outside voice.

From generic to recommendation-ready

Generic: "We create unforgettable leadership events tailored to every client."

Recommendation-ready: "We are particularly well suited to leadership events where awareness is already high, but ownership and practical commitment remain low."

Information now participates in the decision — not just the discovery.

Produce One Clear Explanation for Each Priority Situation

Give the concierge enough information to match, explain and defend the recommendation.

See it in MICE

Consider us when: Leaders already understand the strategy, but the event must turn that understanding into participation, ownership and practical commitment.

Because we: Design the format around the organisational outcome rather than making production spectacle the default answer. We combine shared direction with smaller-group interpretation so leaders can define what the strategy means for their own teams.

Supported by: Leadership programs where clients replaced a major plenary-led format with facilitated cohorts, creating clearer commitments, strong stakeholder feedback and repeat engagements.

USE AND PUBLISH IT HERE

Website overview and sector pages	Proposal introductions
Pitch and capability materials	Case-study openings
Association and speaker profiles	LinkedIn and industry commentary

KEEP THE LOGIC CONSISTENT

Different channels do not need identical wording. They should point to the same conclusion: when we should be considered, why we fit and what supports the claim.

Completion check: Could someone unfamiliar with us explain why we belong on the shortlist without having to join the dots?

5. Answer Decision Questions

Answer the questions that materially change whether you make the shortlist.

THE POINT

Most organisations already answer plenty of questions. But many describe the business rather than help a buyer choose it.

Decision questions reveal fit, limitations, trade-offs, experience and evidence. They help a buyer or decision engine compare options and explain why one deserves the recommendation.

The goal is not more FAQs. It is better answers to the questions that change the decision.

DO THIS

1

Find the questions buyers use to separate options

Ask what creates hesitation, what needs explaining and what makes one option feel safer, easier or more suitable than another.

2

Prioritise what changes the recommendation

Put suitability, experience, limitations, trade-offs and evidence ahead of low-impact descriptive questions.

3

Answer clearly enough to be used

Give the answer, explain the judgement behind it and support it so a buyer or engine can repeat it accurately.

Produce a Bank of Decision-Critical Questions

Start with 10–15 questions that genuinely influence whether you make the shortlist.

For each question, capture

The question

The clear answer

Decision it affects

Why it matters

Proof

Priority

See it in MICE

Descriptive vs decision question

Describe: How many delegates can you accommodate? **Decide:** When does this venue suit 300 delegates?

Useful answer: When plenary, breakout and networking stay in one compact footprint — reducing movement and making transitions easier.

KEEP IT HERE

A shared, prioritised question bank maintained by marketing, sales and business development.

USE AND PUBLISH IT HERE

Website FAQs, sector pages, proposals, capability materials, sales conversations and intermediary briefing tools.

Completion check: Have we answered the questions that materially influence the buyer's choice - not merely the questions that describe our services?

6. Publish Evidence

Make every important reason to recommend you easy to verify.

THE POINT

Most organisations make claims such as experienced, flexible and trusted. The problem is often not the claim — it is that buyers cannot easily verify it.

Recommendation requires confidence. Buyers and decision engines need proof they can find, understand and connect clearly to the claim it supports.

Relevant · Specific · Visible · Connected

DO THIS

1

Audit the claims you most want believed

List the reasons customers should choose you, then ask what evidence someone could actually find to support each one.

2

Turn internal proof into visible proof

Bring useful project results, customer feedback, operational data, repeat bookings and specialist experience into public view.

3

Connect proof to a reason to choose

Make the logic explicit: Claim → Evidence → Why it matters. Do not leave the buyer or engine to make the connection.

Produce a First-Party Proof Library

Turn important claims into evidence that buyers and decision engines can actually use.

Use this structure

The claim

The evidence

Source

Public location

Decision relevance

See it in MICE

The claim: “We are experienced in delivering major incentive programs.”

Weak support: Another paragraph saying the destination is highly experienced.

Strong support: Delivered a 1,200-delegate international incentive across six venues and 18 off-site experiences.

Operational detail: Airport movements managed across four arrival waves.

Why it matters: “Experienced” is now evidenced capability, not another adjective.

KEEP IT HERE

A shared first-party proof library containing the strongest evidence behind each important reason to recommend you.

USE AND PUBLISH IT HERE

Case studies, websites, bid documents, capability pages, customer stories, project pages and operational fact sheets.

Completion check: Can every important reason to recommend us be supported by evidence that is specific, relevant and publicly visible?

7. Create Third-Party Commentary

Create outside evidence that supports the exact reasons you want to be recommended.

THE POINT

What you say about yourself matters. What credible customers, partners and industry voices say can matter more because it gives buyers evidence that did not originate with you.

Generic praise adds reassurance, not decision value. Useful commentary explains what you contributed, why it mattered and what changed.

The strongest outside proof does more than praise you. It explains why you were a good choice.

DO THIS

1

Ask for commentary about the value you created

Instead of asking whether the customer was happy, ask what you understood, changed, solved or made easier.

2

Capture substance, not just sentiment

Prioritise comments that reveal judgement, specialist capability, outcomes, reliability or a reason the customer would choose you again.

3

Make the outside voice easy to find

With permission, connect useful commentary to the relevant case study, recommendation situation, capability or proof point.

Produce a Third-Party Commentary Bank

Build a collection of outside voices that validate the reasons you want to be recommended.

For each example, capture

The source

What they said

Reason it supports

Decision it affects

Permission

Public location

See it in MICE

Generic praise

“Fantastic agency. Great people and highly recommended.”

Positive - but difficult for a buyer or decision engine to use.

Decision-useful commentary

“They challenged our original plenary-heavy format and moved senior leaders into facilitated cohorts.

It created much stronger participation and gave every group clearer actions to take back to their teams.” That supports a far more valuable conclusion:

The agency contributes judgement, not simply event delivery.

KEEP IT HERE

A shared bank of customer, partner and industry commentary tied to specific reasons to recommend you.

USE AND PUBLISH IT HERE

Case studies, website, proposals, capability materials, reviews, LinkedIn recommendations and industry profiles.

Completion check: Do our strongest outside voices explain why we are a good choice - or merely say that people like working with us?

8. Don't Waste the Conversation

Live work has disproportionate power to be believed. Use it.

THE POINT

MICE has an unusual DEO advantage: it constantly creates live, witnessed proof. Every event puts your decisions, delivery and outcomes in front of people who can see them happen.

Live evidence is harder to dismiss as marketing. The problem is that most of it disappears when the room empties. Capture the moments that prove why your agency mattered.

Your strongest proof points are already happening in front of you

The event ends. Your evidence shouldn't

DO THIS

1

Plan what you want to prove

Before the event, identify the capability, judgement or outcome you want to make visible.

2

Capture the live moment

Record the decision, evidence and outside voice while the experience is fresh and witnessed.

3

Turn it into durable proof

Convert useful moments into case fragments, quotes, clips, images, metrics or stories that can travel.

Produce a Live Proof Capture Plan

Decide before the event what evidence you want to leave with.

For each event, capture

What we want to prove

The live moment

Evidence to capture

Outside voice

Why it matters · Where it can be used

See it in MICE

An agency is running a 600-person leadership conference.

600 delegates move from plenary into 20 facilitated working groups, with senior leaders participating alongside them.

After the morning response, client and agency adjust the afternoon format. Groups finish with practical commitments.

The client says participation is stronger than the prior year. Capture the live moment, decision, evidence and outside voice.

One live event has now produced multiple highly believable proof objects.

KEEP IT HERE

A simple live-proof plan prepared before important events and completed immediately afterwards.

USE AND PUBLISH IT HERE

Case studies, proposals, website, LinkedIn, sales conversations and award entries.

Completion check: Did this event leave behind proof that can help the next buyer choose us?

9. Kill Generic Language

Replace broad adjectives with specifics a buyer can use.

THE POINT

Words like experienced, innovative, flexible, world-class and full-service feel safe because they are familiar. But competitors can say exactly the same thing.

Specifics help a buyer compare. Name the situation, judgement, capability, evidence or trade-off behind the adjective.

If anyone can say it, it is not helping you get chosen.

DO THIS

1

Find the generic language

Audit the pages, proposals and profiles that matter most. Circle words any competitor could credibly use.

2

Ask what you actually mean

Translate each adjective into the behaviour, decision, capability or evidence sitting underneath it.

3

Replace it with specifics

Use language that helps a buyer understand when you fit, why you fit and what proves it.

Produce a Generic Language Replacement Guide

Turn vague claims into language that carries decision value.

For each phrase, capture

Generic phrase

What we mean

Specific replacement

Evidence

Where it should be used

See it in MICE

Generic: “We are an experienced, innovative, full-service events agency.”

Problem: It says almost nothing about when the agency is the right choice.

Specific: “We specialise in leadership events where awareness is high but participation and ownership are low.”

The agency combines shared plenary direction with facilitated cohorts so leaders turn strategy into practical commitments.

Now the language gives a buyer a reason to shortlist the agency.

KEEP IT HERE

A shared replacement guide for recurring generic phrases in core sales and marketing copy.

USE AND PUBLISH IT HERE

Website, proposals, capability materials, case studies, profiles, sales decks and LinkedIn.

Completion check: Have we replaced the words everyone uses with information that only we could credibly say?

10. Keep Decision Information Current

Freshness matters when it affects suitability.

THE POINT

Outdated decision information can be worse than missing information because it creates false confidence. When facts conflict, buyers and decision engines must guess which version is true.

Not every fact needs the same attention. Prioritise information that changes suitability, credibility or the shortlist decision.

Keep what (information) changes the decision current.

DO THIS

1

Identify decision-critical facts

Find the facts buyers use to judge fit: capability, markets, scale, availability, experience and current proof.

2

Give each fact an owner

Create one source of truth and name the person responsible for verifying and updating it.

3

Review by decision impact

Check high-impact facts most often. Do not spend equal effort on information that rarely changes a choice.

Produce a Decision Information Register

Give important facts an owner, source and review rhythm.

For each fact, capture

Decision fact

Source of truth

Owner

Last verified

Review cadence

See it in MICE

An agency website says: “Operating across 12 Asia-Pacific markets.”

Its proposal template says 14 markets. Its LinkedIn profile says 10.

None looks disastrous alone. Together, the conflicting facts create doubt.

Fix: one verified fact, one owner and one date. Update every place the claim appears.

Decision engines now find one current answer instead of three competing versions.

KEEP IT HERE

A shared register for the facts that materially influence suitability, credibility and shortlist decisions.

USE AND PUBLISH IT HERE

Website, proposals, capability materials, profiles, case studies and sales tools.

Completion check: Could a buyer verify our most important decision facts today without finding conflicting or outdated information?

Put the Work to Work

DEO only works when the right information is available where decisions are being made.

Do not think simply in channels. Think evidence environments.

A decision engine may build its recommendation from information you publish, information others publish about you, industry ecosystems, technical sources and evidence created through the work itself.

01 · Owned decision environment

Website pages · Sector pages · Capability pages · Case studies · FAQs · Team profiles · Project evidence

Its job: Explain when you fit, why you fit and what proves it.

02 · Independent authority environment

Reviews · Client commentary · Awards · Association profiles · Media coverage · Industry commentary · Partner references

Its job: Add credible support that did not originate with you.

03 · Buyer + intermediary environment

Industry directories · Supplier databases · Procurement platforms · Preferred supplier lists · Partner networks · Relevant marketplaces

Its job: Keep your recommendation story visible outside your own channels.

04 · Machine-readable environment

Crawlable text · Structured data · Clear page hierarchy · Internal linking · Consistent entity information · Metadata · Transcripts

Its job: Help machines understand who you are, what you do and which evidence supports which claim.

05 · Live evidence environment

Event outcomes · Client commentary · Participant response · Project reporting · Operational proof · Industry conversations

Its job: Turn today's work into evidence for tomorrow's recommendation.

The publishing test

Can a buyer, intermediary or decision engine find the same clear and credible story wherever they encounter us?

Brief the Organisation for DEO

DEO is not a marketing optimisation exercise. It is an information management discipline.

The organisation needs to agree on what information matters, who owns it and how it stays accessible and current.

Brief the tech team differently

Do not ask them to “optimise the website for AI”.

Ask them to: **Make our most important decision information easy to find, understand, verify and keep current.**

That means:

- important information exists as crawlable text
- critical facts are not trapped only in PDFs, images or videos
- important pages can be discovered and indexed
- headings, structure and metadata clearly describe the content
- relevant pages are logically connected
- structured data is used where appropriate
- conflicting facts are identified and corrected
- important information can be updated quickly

Give everyone a job

Leadership owns what you want to be recommended for.

Marketing owns clarity, publishing and consistency.

Sales + BD owns buyer questions and objections.

Operations owns the truth behind capability claims.

Technology owns accessibility and machine readability.

Customers + Partners provide outside corroboration.

Create one source of truth

For every decision-critical fact, establish:

What is it? · Who owns it? · Where is the master version? · Where does it appear? · When was it verified? · What triggers an update?

The final test

Could a buyer, intermediary and decision engine all reach the same confident conclusion about why we are the right choice for this brief?