
Event Pulse MVP

Findings from the Senior PGA Championship Deployment

Executive Summary

Event Pulse was deployed at the Senior PGA Championship at The Concession Golf Club as a live test of AI-mediated event orchestration. The deployment produced five findings that reshape the product strategy:

01 Attendees use the platform in short, high-frequency bursts to resolve immediate uncertainty — not to browse features.

02 Users value reduced effort, not AI sophistication. The technology succeeds when it disappears into the experience.

03 The highest-impact problems in live events are operational — waste management, staffing, congestion, logistics — and largely invisible to attendees.

04 Event Pulse is not an event app. It is an AI-orchestrated event operating system.

05 The deployment validated a replicable research methodology for evaluating AI orchestration in live environments.

Context

Most event technologies are designed around feature accumulation — maps, schedules, leaderboards, notifications, ticketing. Yet attendee frustration persists. Users still struggle with navigation, uncertainty,

fragmented information, and the constant need to search for answers in environments where time, attention, and mobility are constrained (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Venkatesh et al., 2012).

Our hypothesis was that the core challenge is not missing features but accumulated cognitive friction. Attendees decide under incomplete information while navigating unfamiliar terrain, shifting schedules, congestion, and weather. Operators face a parallel problem: coordinating staffing, logistics, crowd flow, security, concessions, transportation, and emergency response in real time through fragmented systems. The Concession deployment tested whether an AI-mediated orchestration layer could reduce friction on both sides simultaneously (Rippe, 2026).

Method

We designed a mixed-methods observational study rather than a survey-based evaluation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The goal was not to measure whether participants liked the platform, but to observe how they used it under live conditions and what those interactions revealed about AI-mediated event systems. The framework combined:

- Behavioral telemetry
- Qualitative interviews
- Observational field research
- Operational debriefs

The framework was anchored in the Technology Acceptance Model, hedonic motivation theory, and Jobs-to-be-Done analysis (Davis, 1989; van der Heijden, 2004; Christensen et al., 2016).

The Senior PGA Championship was an ideal test environment: large outdoor footprint, variable connectivity, constant environmental distractions, and rapidly shifting information needs by context and location — conditions that controlled usability testing cannot replicate.

What We Found: Attendee Behavior

Telemetry surfaced a high-frequency, short-session interaction pattern. Users did not engage Event Pulse the way they engage traditional mobile apps. They opened it in rapid bursts to resolve immediate uncertainty — quick answers, immediate orientation, direct guidance — rather than browsing or exploring features. The most successful interactions were direct, intent-based queries: "Where do I go?" "How do I find this location?"

This validated a core architectural assumption: time-constrained, high-mobility environments fundamentally change interaction behavior. Users do not want layered menus or feature discovery. They want intent resolution. AI orchestration appears to replace traditional interface navigation entirely (Norman, 2013).

Field observation contextualized the telemetry. Researchers documented hesitation, directional confusion, and congestion points that raw analytics cannot explain. Semi-structured interviews then surfaced the strategic insight: participants described the platform in terms of reduced effort, not features. They were not excited about AI. They valued the mental load it removed. The technology succeeded when it disappeared into the experience.

What We Found: Operational Reality

The most consequential findings came from operators, not attendees. Conversations with PGA leadership revealed that the highest-impact problems in live events are largely invisible to fans but decisive for the overall experience: waste management, staffing deployment, congestion response, transportation coordination, logistical bottlenecks.

One example illustrates the scale of the gap. Experienced operators identified inadequate visibility into waste accumulation as one of the most difficult challenges at events like the Ryder Cup. Mundane on the surface — but trash directly shapes attendee perception, mobility, and satisfaction. This reframed Event Pulse from an attendee engagement layer to an operational intelligence system for the entire event ecosystem.

Many of the most valuable findings emerged through latent need discovery — workarounds, frustrations, and offhand observations rather than explicit requests. These pointed to a roadmap of adjacent opportunities:

- Predictive staffing and volunteer redeployment
- Congestion monitoring and alerting
- Operational intelligence integration
- AI-driven revenue optimization

The pattern is consistent with Christensen et al. (2016): the most important innovations emerge from observing friction, not from asking users to imagine features.

Strategic Implications

Live-event environments require a different technological architecture than traditional digital platforms. The evidence is consistent: attendees prioritize simplicity over feature density, immediate guidance over interface exploration, and contextual intelligence over static information. Operators need real-time orchestration that integrates fragmented functions into a unified intelligence layer.

These findings reposition the product. Event Pulse is no longer an event app. It is an AI-orchestrated event operating system designed to reduce cognitive friction across complex, time-bound environments.

Beyond the product itself, the deployment established a replicable methodology for evaluating AI orchestration in live environments — combining behavioral telemetry, qualitative observation, theoretical grounding, and operational analysis. The most meaningful insights did not come from isolated metrics or static surveys, but from interpreting behavior within its environmental and human context.

References

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