

Situation

The Audience Crossover:

Understanding How Fans
Jump Between Sports, Concerts,
and Theater – and Why Their
Behavior Matters in 2026

A Situation Insights Report
November 2025

Why Now: A Market in Motion

Live experiences are entering one of the most dynamic eras in decades. Audience habits are shifting quickly: sports fans are attending concerts, concertgoers are sampling Broadway tours, and theater fans are as price-sensitive as anyone else. The lines between categories are blurring, not because people are attending less, but because they're attending differently.

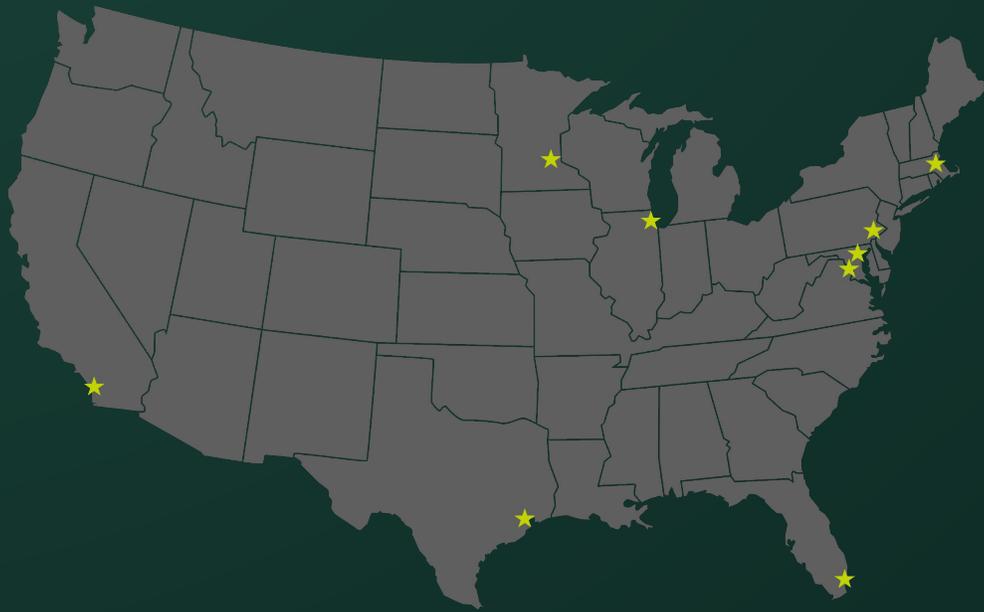
In 2025, Situation conducted a nationwide survey to track these shifts, uncovering a remarkable truth:

Audiences across sports, concerts, and theater are more alike than the industry believes, and they're more willing to cross categories than ever.

Who We Heard From

In October 2025, we fielded a national survey across nine U.S. markets, collecting 5,768 responses with an **82% completion rate**.

Respondents self-selected their preferred event type across three categories: **Concerts**, **Sports** and **Theater**.



Understanding these groups' differences, and their surprising similarities, reveals where growth potential truly sits.

The Four Biggest Trends

1. Sports Fans Drive the Highest Event Volume

Sports-preferred audiences attend more live events than any other segment.

57.5% attend sports 5+ times per year, far higher than concert or theater fans. They also attend concerts more regularly than theater-goers and show comparable attendance to concert fans for Broadway tours.

Sports fans already treat live events as routine: **64.1% describe attendance as part of their regular habit**. That frequency makes them a high-potential conversion audience for Broadway tours and other cultural experiences.

SPORTS PREFERRED	5+ TIMES/YEAR	3-4 TIMES/YEAR	1-2 TIMES/YEAR	LESS THAN ONCE/YEAR
Professional sports event	57.5%	22.0%	14.5%	27.5%
Concert in a large venue	18.3%	25.5%	41.0%	13.8%
Professional theater	7.3%	13.2%	34.9%	36.5%

2. “Meaningful” & “Classic”: Broadway’s Cross-Segment Core Values

No matter their preferred event type—sports, concerts, or theater—audiences consistently describe Broadway tours as “meaningful” and “classic.”

These values also define Broadway experiences for theater-preferred fans. Few attributes cut across all demographics this cleanly, giving Broadway a rare universal emotional identity.

SPORTS PREFERRED	ALL
Classic	39.9%
Social	37.6%
Meaningful	35.3%

CONCERTS PREFERRED	ALL
Meaningful	42.9%
Classic	41.3%
Expensive	31.2%

THEATER PREFERRED	ALL
Meaningful	52.8%
Classic	44.9%
Expensive	34.2%

3. Audiences Think Shows Cost More Than They Actually Pay

Across all segments, people overestimate the cost of tickets, both for their favorite events and for Broadway tours.

For favorites, respondents think tickets cost \$15–\$20 more than they personally pay.

This perception gap reinforces why “cost of tickets” remains the top barrier across all segments. It also highlights a clear messaging opportunity: **recalibrating expectations and emphasizing realistic price ranges.**

Average Cost per Ticket **Paid** for Favorite

SPORTS PREFERRED	OVERALL	UNDER 35	35 - 54	55+
Average	\$142	\$111	\$147	\$143
CONCERTS PREFERRED	OVERALL	UNDER 35	35 - 54	55+
Average	\$182	\$178	\$179	\$184
THEATER PREFERRED	OVERALL	UNDER 35	35 - 54	55+
Average	\$138	\$120	\$123	\$147

Average Cost per Ticket **Overall** for Favorite

SPORTS PREFERRED	OVERALL	UNDER 35	35 - 54	55+
Average	\$157	\$161	\$158	\$152
CONCERTS PREFERRED	OVERALL	UNDER 35	35 - 54	55+
Average	\$201	\$205	\$195	\$204
THEATER PREFERRED	OVERALL	UNDER 35	35 - 54	55+
Average	\$159	\$164	\$148	\$163

4. Attendance Motivation Is Shared, but Weighted Differently by Preference

Across sports-, concert-, and theater-preferred audiences, the same two motivations consistently rise to the top: **spending time with family and friends** and **seeing a spectacle or big event**. What differs is not what motivates attendance, but how strongly each motivation shows up depending on the category people favor.

Sports-preferred respondents most strongly anchor their attendance around social connection, with **77.1% citing time with family and friends** as a key driver—well above spectacle.

Concert-preferred audiences show a more balanced split, slightly prioritizing **spectacle (57.1%)** while still placing strong value on shared experiences with others (**55.7%**).

Theater-preferred respondents land somewhere in between, with **60.4% motivated by time with family and friends** and **52.7% by the scale of the event itself**.

SPORTS PREFERRED	ALL
Spending time with family/friends	77.1%
Seeing a spectacle/big event	55.4%

CONCERTS PREFERRED	ALL
Seeing a spectacle/big event	57.1%
Spending time with family/friends	55.7%

THEATER PREFERRED	ALL
Spending time with family/friends	60.4%
Seeing a spectacle/big event	52.7%

Turning Insights Into Growth

The data paints a clear picture:

Audiences across sports, concerts, and theater are converging. They share motivations, constraints, and habits, and they are more willing than ever to cross categories.

But capturing that opportunity requires smart, insight-backed marketing.

At Situation, we help partners:

- Bridge perception gaps around pricing and value
- Position shows and experiences as both meaningful and spectacular
- Build awareness through the channels that actually drive discovery
- Craft creative and media strategies for habitual event-goers
- Turn casual fans into loyal buyers across categories

We work with theaters, attractions, sports teams, concert promoters, and cultural institutions to build campaigns that move audiences and bottom lines.

If you're planning for 2026 and want to build strategies informed by this research: **Let's talk.**

hello@situationinteractive.com

We'd love to partner with you to bring your next chapter to life.

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