Virtual is Vital: Event Strategy, Design and Engagement

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Agenda

- Annual Conference: Keep or extend hybrid or flip to virtual only
  - Strategy and goals
  - Experience design
  - Timeline
  - Technology
  - Engagement
- Pivot Quickly: Less than a month to move a f2f conference online
  - Overview
  - Stats
THE WORST FIRST QUESTION
How will I do it?

And what platform should I use?
START WITH THE

WHY
Poll

If you did have to cancel and transition a f2f to virtual meeting, or if you are thinking of cancelling and pivoting, admit it, what was the first question you asked yourself?

- Why
- What
- Ok, I admit it, I asked How first
- What is even going on here?
DESIGN

THE EVENT
LIKE A FACE-TO-FACE
Define

1. Value propositions
2. Business outcomes
3. KPIs (how will we measure)

- Attendees
- Exhibitors/Sponsors
- MGMA Organization
- Other Stakeholders: Board/Loyalists
THEN PLAN THE WHAT
The Eight Phases of the Guest Experience

1. Announcing
   Capture Attention

2. Attracting
   Woo the Audience

3. Anticipating
   Eliminate Disappointment

4. Arriving
   Travel to Destination

5. Entering
   Reset the Intention

6. Engaging
   Environments of Engagement

7. Exiting
   Signature Moments

8. Extending
   Recall & Relive

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City-Wide Conference Timeline

Timeline: Keep the same, broaden hybrid or cancel completely

Planning both F2F with hybrid and virtual only event

- Governor of Texas expected to announce plans for phase 3 and possibly 4. Gatherings expected to be addressed.
- If prohibited, cancel and pivot
- If not prohibited, watch trend and FM minimums, keep planning both, apply social distancing into planning based on latest guidelines

90-day mark final decision
Regardless, plan for both an extended hybrid AND virtual only conference.

Those that have been most successful have spent 1-2 months designing and planning a virtual pivot before announcing cancellation and transitioning.
Considerations before announcing

What to ensure is planned BEFORE you announce cancellation

• How you will handle refunds? Exhibitors? Attendees?
• Is the Virtual product set up and ready to buy in your store?
• Are marketing materials and language ready to blast via email, social and web? (Crisis Communication strategies in place?)
• How will you handle any shifts in purchases? Moving from live to Virtual ticket sales? Who will do it? How long will it take them to process?
• Are your sponsorship and exhibitor offerings ready so you can retain already invested dollars but keep the value for your vendors? (Make sure you have a plan to cancel before advance warehouse opens!)
• What is the Virtual event you are now offering to buy? Make sure all the big rocks of the event such as schedule, dates, etc. are finalized so you can leave no gap in purchasing events. Utilize the cancellation amplification of your voice to offer the alternative.
• Are your speakers contracted in a way they can shift dates/times of presentations?
• What is the order in which you will communicate cancellation? Board? Speakers? Staff? Key Supplier Partners? Who will be communicating to each? Timing? Language to each? Action items from each?
• Ensure legal is involved from the start to help advocate for you.
• Make the process SEAMLESS and PAINLESS for your customers!
FINALLY, PLAN THE HOW
Technology, Engagement
Slidecast

Recorded from a face-to-face event

- Single to many
- Synchronized slides and audio
  - Usually asynchronous
Webinar/Seminar

**Standalone online event**

- Many to many, highly interactive
- Content: Slides, share screen, videos
- Engagement: Q&A, chat, notepad, polls, webcams, breakout rooms
- Repurpose: Links, Mp4 (highlights) and MP3 files (podcasts)
- Synchronous, recorded, simulive option
Webcast

Stream or recording from a face-to-face event

• Single to many
• Stream: video, slides, audio
❖ Synchronous, recorded, simulive option. Rich media content. Interaction is getting more robust.

• Streaming is not new: 3 decades of music.
• New: Cost has dramatically decreased; options have increased.
Simulive

Live standalone online event

- Pre-recorded webinar or webcast
- Live Q&A
Hybrid

Face-to-face event combined with online components

• Face-to-face streams
• Online sessions and networking
• Synchronous and recorded. Streaming player. Virtual environment.
Virtual Only Conference

Face-to-face event moved online or Virtual only

• Look similar? Right! It’s virtual either way to your attendees.
Polls: 2020-2021 due to COVID-19

Does your organization plan to move a f2f event online?
• Yes
• No
• Maybe

If you plan to move forward with your f2f event, does your organization plan to add or expand upon a hybrid event?
• Yes
• No
• Maybe
No cannibalization past or future

• **2008-2009**: recession fuels fear that online events will negatively impact face-to-face attendance

• **2011**: no drop in f2f attendance and even an increase
  • If people can afford to attend f2f they will.
  • Virtual drives people to attend f2f. *(Millennials: A little FOMO?)*

• **2020-2021**: f2f may be temporarily suspended or mitigated but will never go away
Just because it’s online, doesn’t mean it’s cheap or easy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team, Committee</th>
<th>Education, Information</th>
<th>Conference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Collaboration - a few tools | • Collaboration – large array of tools  
• Presentations – polls, chat | • Collaboration – all tools possible  
• Presentations – slidecast, webcast, webinars  
• Virtual exhibits |
| • Video conferencing | • Webinar conferencing | • Full environment > 12 week lead time! |
| • Facebook Live  
• Google  
• Skype  
• Zoom | • Adobe Connect  
• GoTo  
• ON24  
• WebEx  
• Zoom | • Freeman  
• Hubb  
• ON24  
• PSAV  
• Vfairs – sold out through Aug.  
• *Intrado (INXPO)* – sold out through Nov.  
• Digitell – sold out through 2021 |
Create and Grow a Hybrid or Virtual Event

• Broaden reach
• Extend brand awareness
• Increase community engagement
• Demonstrate innovation
• Rich content capture that you can monetize and/or repurpose
• Grow revenue
• Extend the value of the conference
• Continuity and trust when moving from f2f
Hybrid, Virtual Overview

Virtual convention center

• **Space:** Videos (welcome); virtual exhall; sponsors (logos, banners); networking lounge; social media spaces; game room; profile exchange; help center

• **Content:** General and concurrent webcasts (hybrid); exclusive sessions; breakout sessions (**network around content**)

• **Pilot new experiences but not all at once!** Yoga, game room, virtual badges; 360 webcams controlled by participants; “robots” that interact with f2f attendees
Technology Selection

• Selection committee. Budget.
  • Must have
  • Nice to have
  • Future needs
• Research: websites, social networks, RFP
• Evaluate and choose company: Research > email > demo > pricing > in-depth demo re product, integration w. current technology, pricing, reporting
Technology: Webcasts

Budget: start small, but create a seamless first experience

• Webcast platform: live and on-demand
• AV: mics; camera(s); lighting tree(s); drape
• Internet: dedicated bandwidth
• Conv Ctr or Hotel: riser for speakers and camera operator
Presenters and Moderator: Webcasts

• Speaker resources, communication, walkthrough
  • Room set – lights, AV, drape
  • Polling for both audiences
• In-room online moderator reminders
  • Introductions: Acknowledge the online audience
  • Look at the camera occasionally
  • Repeat questions using mic
  • Moderator will look for questions from the online audience and ask during Q&A via a mic
Technology: Exclusive Content

Studio room
- Webinar conferencing software
- AV: projector; screen; drape; phone
- Internet: dedicated bandwidth
- DIY: lights; web cam; speaker laptops

Person-on-the-street
- DIY: Camera and Interviewer

Additional
- Facebook Live, Twitter
Success: Engaging Content

- Panels, point-counterpoint, lightning rounds.
- Breakout sessions.
- F2F – Person-on-the-street.
Audience Engagement: Content and Fun

Content

• Chat, breakout sessions, networking lounge, information exchange – profiles
• Esp hybrid: Connect via twitter, FB, instagram

Fun

• Photo contest, games, virtual badges, robots, yoga/group activities with webcams
Offsite team: Big Bang for the Buck

One person registers and invites colleagues to watch session together. Note re CE.

Benefits

• Interaction with their colleagues in their time zone (might watch a morning recording together)
• Extra PD dollars saved from travel funds used for breakfast, lunch and receptions

Support

• A guide about how to host an event: remember to reserve the room, set up and TEST equipment
• A guide about how to facilitate a group discussion

Great for your meeting and organization! Increases exposure.
Prepare the Audience

When people pay, they expect the technology to work; the technology shouldn’t get in the way of the experience.

Pre-show ideas

- Tech page: System checks; printed guide; video tutorial; host a how to webinar.
  - Open the virtual environment up a week early; host networking events.
  - Webcasts: Not just a system check; run a LIVE webcast for testing.
- Hosting kit

Event ideas

- Welcome and overview: Before the entire program begins.
- My advice to the audience: Don’t wait until the evaluation to let us know you’ve got an issue. You can get help via email, in chat, via Q&A box, help desk.
Registration Fees

There is little to no consistency.

Models
• Free: subsidized
• Rates for a break-even budget
• Same fee as the f2f

Notes
• Research competitors
• Ultimately, price reflects what you think your content is worth
• You can monetize on-demand content
Quick Pivot
MGMA20 | The Operations Conference is going virtual.
F2F to Online in 3.5 weeks

Messaging
• Email; personal note
• Website change

Registration
• Refunded all f2f attendees (400 pd) and sponsors/exhibitors
• Opened a fresh registration site for online attendees; budgeted for 125 paid / 161 paid and 250 total

Dates and Program
• Slight date shift (don’t meet on a weekend)
• Time adjustments more in-line with time zones (11 am ET-5 pm ET)
• Kept program intact with 4 general and 3 concurrent sessions in 5 time slots; over 25 sessions (honorarium)
• Added sponsored sessions
• Speaker contracts, walkthroughs, scripts, training

Logistics
• Staffing hand-off and adjustment in your team

Technology
• Use what you have: Housed in the LMS and used webinar conferencing software
How many F2F converted to online?

Conversion Rate

Converted 12%

Did not convert 88%
Job Level – TOC vs VTOC

Conversions compared to total conversions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Level</th>
<th>F2F Only</th>
<th>F2F Conversions</th>
<th>Online Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C-Level</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Clinical Staff</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0%</td>
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<td>30%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP</td>
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<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</tbody>
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3 Audiences

**F2F Only**

**Online Only**

**Those who will attend either**

*Buying behavior unknown for F2F/Hybrid*
Attendance by Session - VTOC

Welcome: 48%
General Session: 49%
Sponsor Session: 51%
General Session: 46%
Sponsor Session: 47%
Concurrents (3 Rooms): 65%
Concurrents (3 Rooms): 49%
Concurrents (3 Rooms): 46%
General Session: 71%
General Session: 71%
General Session: 73%
Concurrents (3 Rooms): 54%
Concurrents (3 Rooms): 50%
Concurrents (3 Rooms): 49%
Welcome: 97%
Concurrents (3 Rooms): 99%
Concurrents (3 Rooms): 100%
Concurrents (3 Rooms): 99%
Closing Session/Prizes: 51%
General Session: 47%
Sponsor Session: 46%

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Another Org’s Conversion Rate
Automatically Converted to Virtual

CONVERSION RATE
- Retained: 93%
- Cancelled: 7%

ATTENDANCE RATE
- No Show: 38%
- Attended Live: 62%

EXHIBITOR/SPONSOR
REVENUE RETENTION
- Refunded: 40%
- Retained: 60%
It may feel overwhelming... but you’re not alone!

• Use AV and technology providers for advice
• Online resources; PCMA Digital Event Education

Don’t forget: Why and what are you trying to accomplish? Strategy and experience then technology.

Exciting! You’ve got time to design your own unique creative and innovative experience!
Thank you!

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