

MAKING EVENTS MATTER
IN 2020 AND BEYOND

SEPTEMBER 2020

A New Game for *Virtual Events*

*Transforming your presence
from in-person to 100% virtual*

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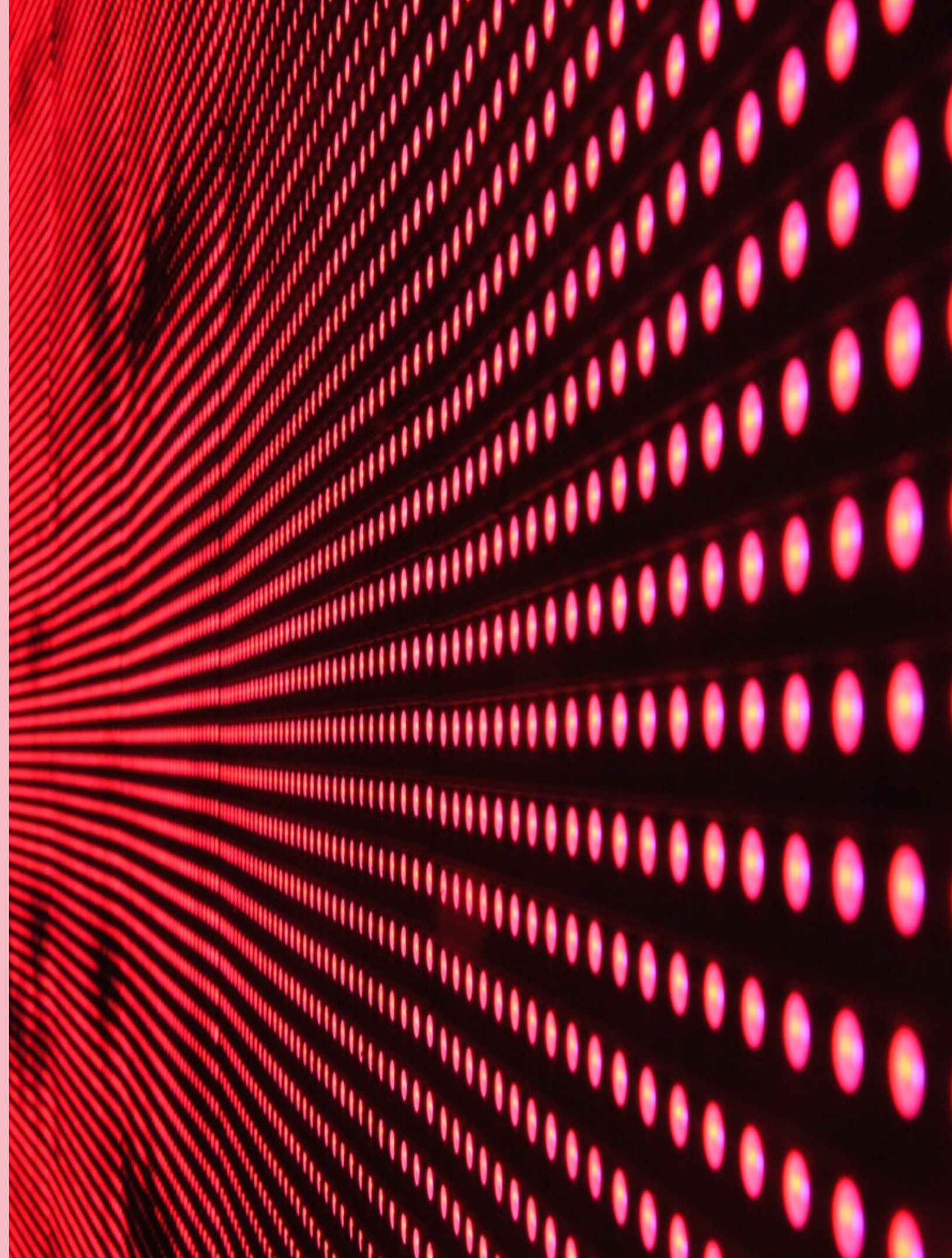
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CONTENTS

03	Introduction
04	2020: Virtual Event Year Zero
08	Behaviour Change Is Driving New Norms
12	Shared Principles; New Expectations
15	The Perfect Synergy for Event Success
22	Final Words

In 2020 and beyond, all kinds of events including trade shows will go digital. Which means if your intention is to impress clients and influence people, it's time to get (virtually) real when it comes to booths, presentations, meet-and-greets or entertainment.



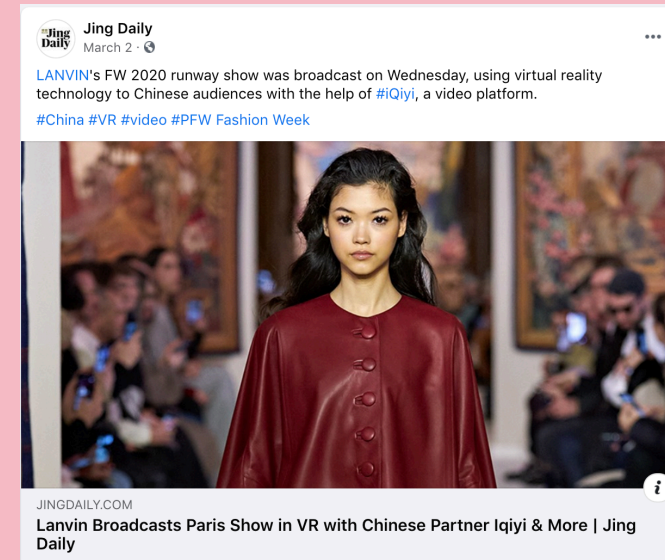
*2020: VIRTUAL
EVENT YEAR ZERO*



*2020:
Virtual Event
Year Zero*

From the CEO launching the company's annual report, to working out to your Zumba class, everything this year has switched from in-person to being online. In just a matter of months, there was a revolution of how events were being executed. Zoom turned into an internet sensation overnight, with over 62 million downloads in March alone; Facebook and Global Citizen partnered up to have their #TogetherAtHome; and Fortnite started integrating in-game virtual performances and partnered with artists like Travis Scott.

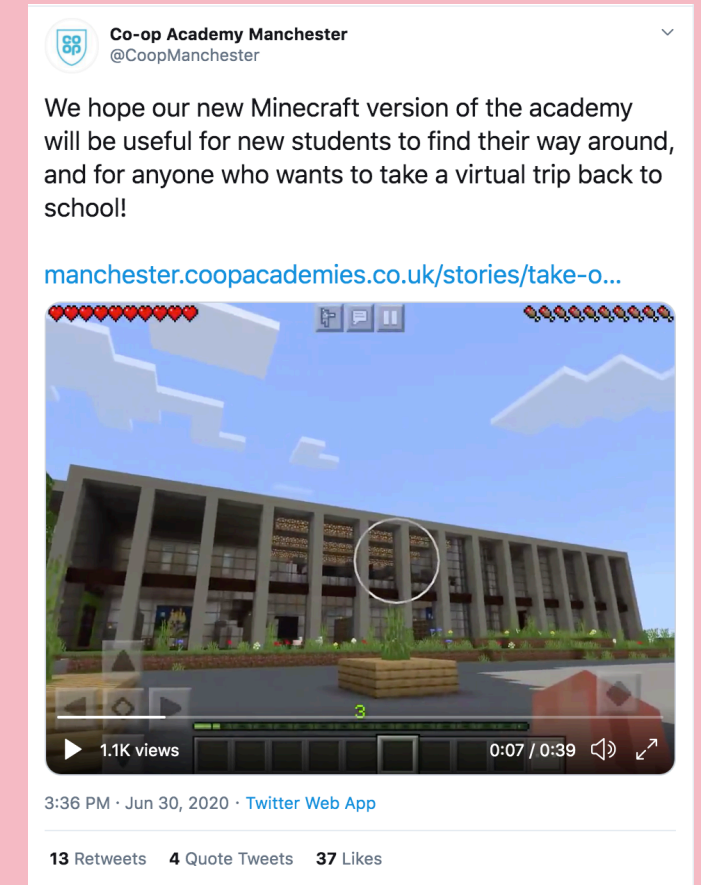
In the B2B space, trade shows have always been ground zero for new product launches, eight-figure business deals, and of course, networking and free booth gifts. Brands, both big and small, invest millions of dollars in their overall marketing budgets to be able to attend these events, have a presence, and make their company outshine its competitors. But the advent of Covid-19 has abruptly erased business norms and announced a Year Zero of reinvention for global communities, business, industry, and trade shows.



Lanvin, one of the oldest French fashion houses, has revamped itself at Paris Fashion Week by partnering with Chinese VR platform, iQiyi

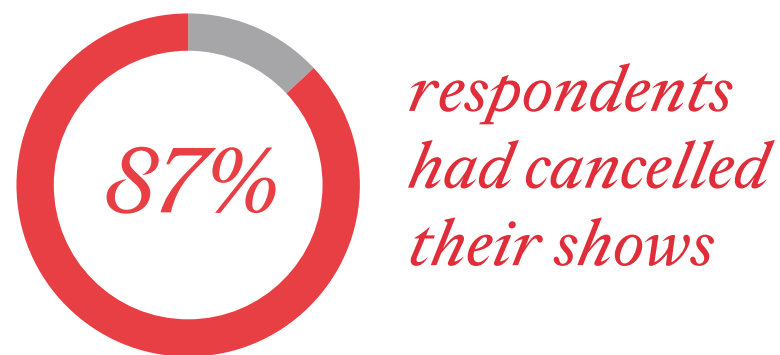


In just six weeks, The Faroe Islands welcomed more than 700,000 'remote tourists' via live video stream, demonstrating a new fledgling market for virtual travel.



Minecraft: A head teacher used the game to create a virtual secondary school tour for kids joining Year 7

We first saw the hit with Mobile World Congress Barcelona in February, when the [GSMA decided to cancel the 100,000+ person event](#), having reached the conclusion that it was not possible to guarantee a safe environment and prevent further infection. Many others quickly cancelled. A survey by the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) showed that [87 percent of respondents had cancelled](#) their shows. We know that it will be necessary to avoid large gatherings well beyond 2020 and we are now seeing more trade shows shift from in-person events, to digital. The Consumer Electronics Show, the world's largest annual consumer tech trade show, [announced in August that it will provide an all-digital experience for attendees in 2021](#).



(Source: PCMA Convene – Covid-19 Survey)

In the process it ushered in a new era for the virtual trade show, and don't think this is a purely tech industry phenomenon. The Unified Wine & Grape Symposium, the largest wine sector trade show in North America, [has gone virtual](#); Alibaba [has launched twenty virtual trade shows](#) for B2B sectors ranging from freight to home health; and China's largest trade show, China Import and Export Fair, or Canton Fair, [is now virtual](#).

Unified Wine & Grape Symposium
2021 Virtual Conference & Trade Show
January 26-29, 2021

January 26 - 29, 2021
Sessions: January 26 - 28
Exhibits: January 26 - 29

www.unifiedsymposium.org

Unified
WINE & GRAPE
SYMPOSIUM
PRESENTED BY ASEV & CAWG

Alibaba.com | US Online Trade Shows

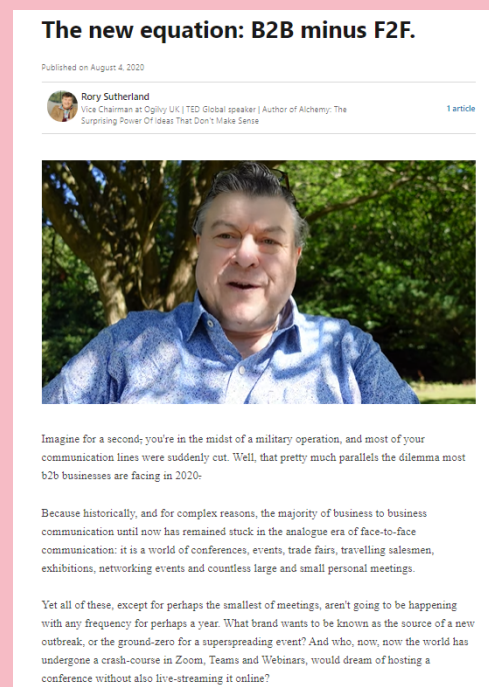
US Online Trade Shows | What to expect | Upcoming events | FAQs

ALIBABA.COM ONLINE TRADE SHOWS USA

Invite-only trade shows for US wholesale sellers and buyers to connect live online

So how will brands continue to drive business in a world of digital trade? Trade shows live or die on the concept of the *experience* for every attendee, the impact of booths and brand exposure to deliver the ‘WOW’ factor. So the question is - how to deliver that in the virtual world?

Crucially brands must move to a digital-first strategy for industry events which will pose challenges, especially for B2B brands. Rory Sutherland from Ogilvy Consulting shared some thoughts on the subject in a recent LinkedIn post titled [The new equation: B2B minus F2F](#). As he points out; “*The majority of B2B communications has remained stuck in the analogue era of face-to-face communication.*” That communication must continue and develop without the F2F context. For brand or cultural events, it will be about who gets to be more creative, more interactive and more immersive.



“

The majority of B2B communications has remained stuck in the analogue era of face-to-face communication.

RORY SUTHERLAND
Ogilvy Consulting

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*BEHAVIOUR CHANGE
IS DRIVING NEW NORMS*

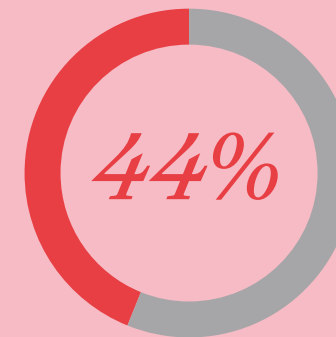


*Behaviour
Change is
Driving
New Norms*

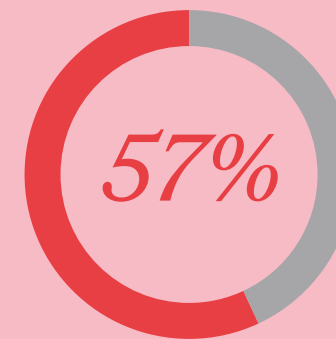
Ongoing research by the University of Southern California shows that 57 percent of respondents say they will continue to avoid large-crowd events. PCMA's study reveals 44 percent of respondents are hesitant to travel for the next year. People's behaviour has changed and there is a profound reluctance to travel or to attend trade shows or any sort of event.

Behavioural change goes beyond individuals to impact the behaviour of business decision making. Companies are engaging with the complex issues of facing the next fiscal year, and every company is re-evaluating their marketing and events budgets including whether to invest in event participation. Figures from the latest PCMA study show companies considering event budget cuts in the order of 20 to 50 percent— for many this is already a done deal.

We know that brands spend a nice slice of their event budgets on content, onsite production, staffing to handle business and communications inquiries and marketing presence at trade shows. As the shift in events continues to change, we know that a good chunk of that budget will need to be sliced away, and brands need to be smart about allocating budget to create new digital and virtual spaces.



of respondents say they will continue to avoid large-crowd events



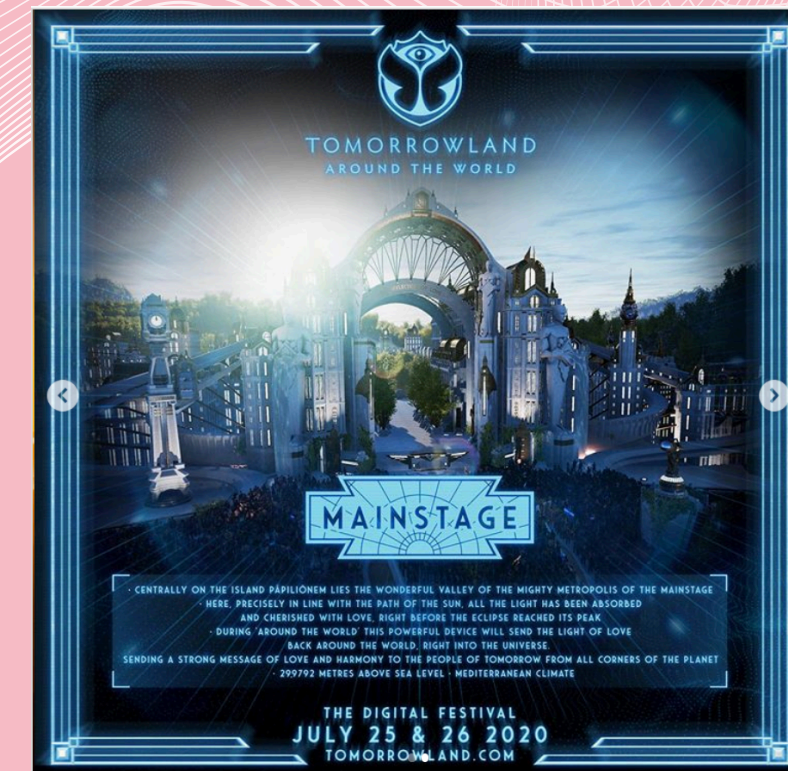
of people will be hesitant to travel



02 Behaviour Change Is Driving New Norms

As brands buff up their tech capabilities to make event components more digital, they are facing pressure to get digitally savvy at a much quicker pace. We've seen a behavioural change amongst brands, whereby they partner with external resources to provide new experiences and target new audiences for engagement. For example Fortnite, which is powered by Epic, partnered with Travis Scott to give an in-game music performance, drawing [more than ten million people](#). [Tomorrowland](#), which is one of the most world-renown music festivals, is setting a new standard for digital events. They've partnered with [stYpe](#) to bring six 4K cameras and 38 virtual cameras to make a virtual world for over 280,000 virtual festival-goers.

Companies are even starting to partner with virtual event creators, such as [Intrado](#), who have seen an increase in partnerships because of their capability to create immersive, virtual events. Choosing the right vendor to partner with will be key to making your brand stand out of the crowd at events.



While events are still essential, companies are being forced to tackle the challenge of recreating the intensity and freshness of the in-person experience in a virtual encounter. There are four things to consider in making a brand matter at events for the foreseeable future:

01

EVOLUTION AND ADAPTATION OF YOUR CONTENT TO THE DIGITAL AND SOCIAL SPACE

Video and TV content
Infographic
Article
Press release
Speech
Interview
Roundtable
Meeting

Adapt content for each different channel, platform and audience.

02

USE OF SOCIAL FEATURES TO RECREATE OFFLINE BEHAVIOURS

SOCIAL PROOF
making comments visible to other attendees, current or potential customers.

SOCIAL ADVOCACY
making it easy for people to share their experience with others

SOCIAL CASE/TOPIC
tapping into causes or hot topics for more relevance

SOCIAL CONVERSATIONS
creating spaces for people to talk about their experiences, preferences and ask questions

03

RE-IMAGINING PR INITIATIVES FOR AN ONLINE/SOCIAL STRATEGY

From your employee advocacy or influencer programme to your media relations, CEO & C-suite visibility or thought leadership.

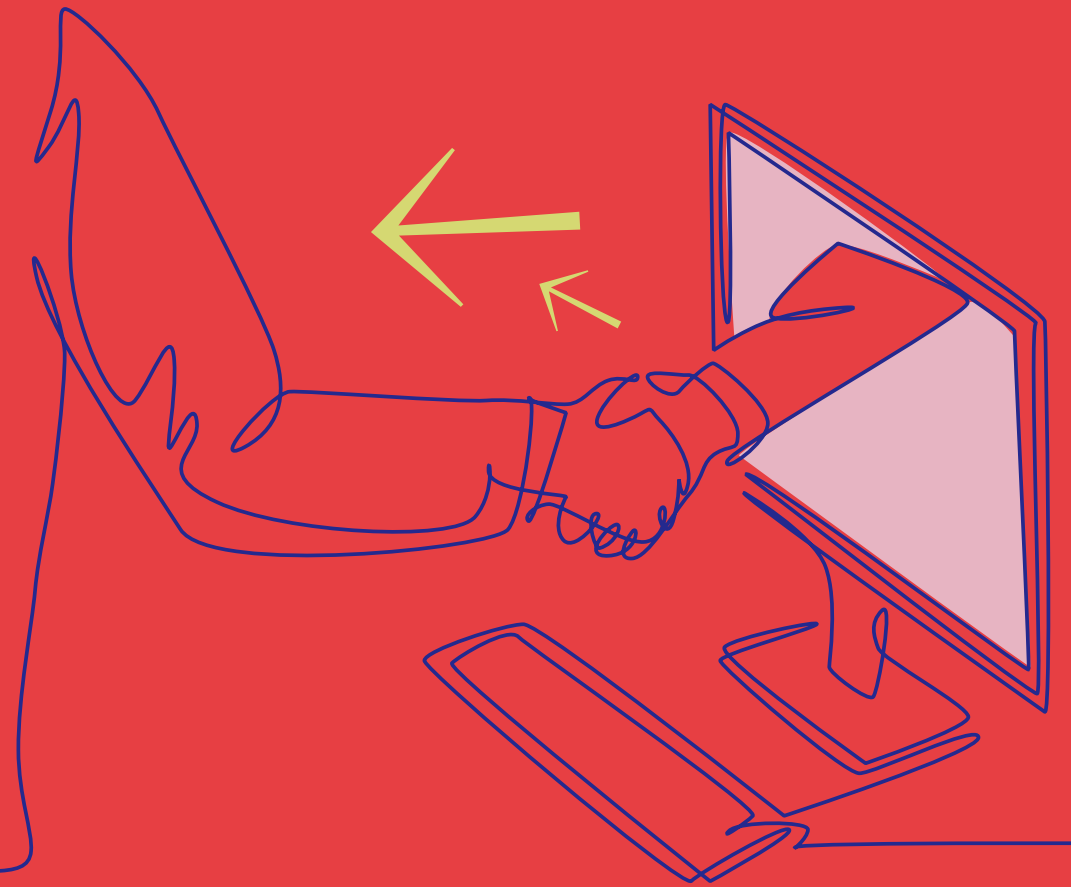
Determine how it can be used in the context of the event.

04

INNOVATION THROUGH ALLOCATING EVENT BUDGET TO MARCOM TECHNOLOGIES

Investment in event platforms, AR, and VR. Bolster your CRM and analytics system.

*SHARED PRINCIPLES;
NEW EXPECTATIONS*

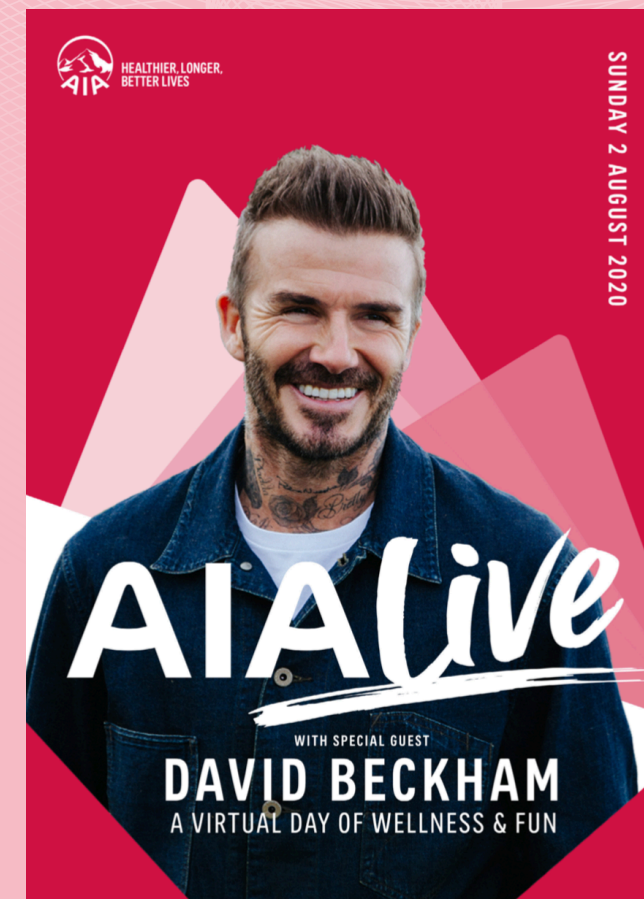


03 Shared Principles; New Expectations

Shared Principles; New Expectations

In June we had to quickly pivot Ogilvy's annual festival of behavioural science, [NudgeStock](#), from live to virtual. We knew that if people are not paying for a ticket, they're less likely to join the event – Eventbrite estimates around [50 percent of free sign-ups turn out to be no shows](#). So we incorporated a donation scheme to entice and engage while keeping the event high on their agenda. We created 'side tents' – break-out rooms focused on specific aspects of behavioural science, which provided both strong connections and lead generation. It helped that the event is one of the major events in the industry but going online also gave us the opportunity to take the event global. The Democratic National Conventions in the U.S. applied similar principles of setting new expectations, while incorporating behavioural science into their virtual event. During the live stream event, individuals could easily donate to the campaign during the various different speakers of the event.

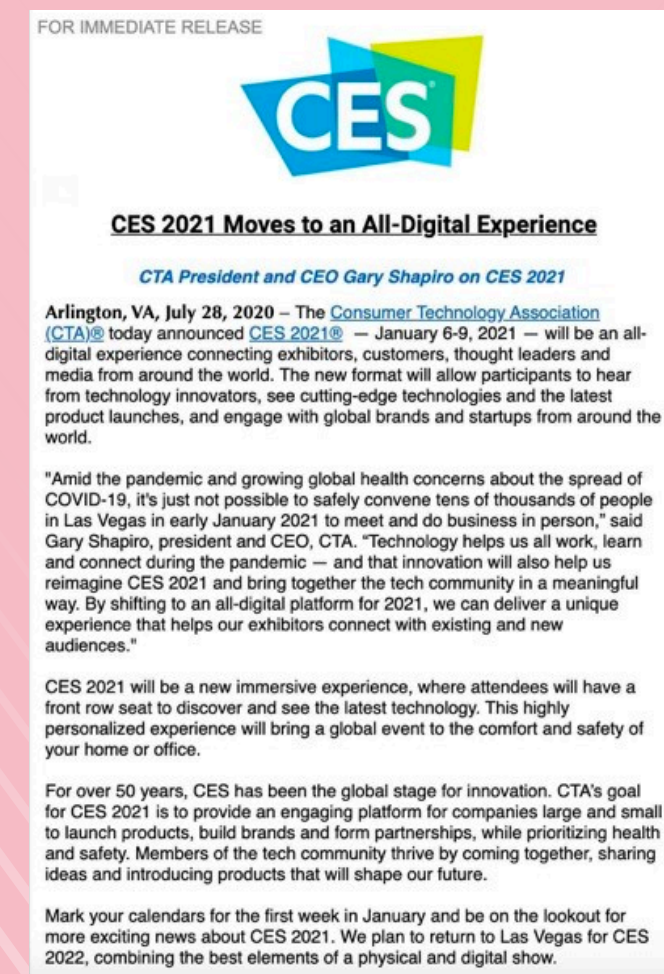
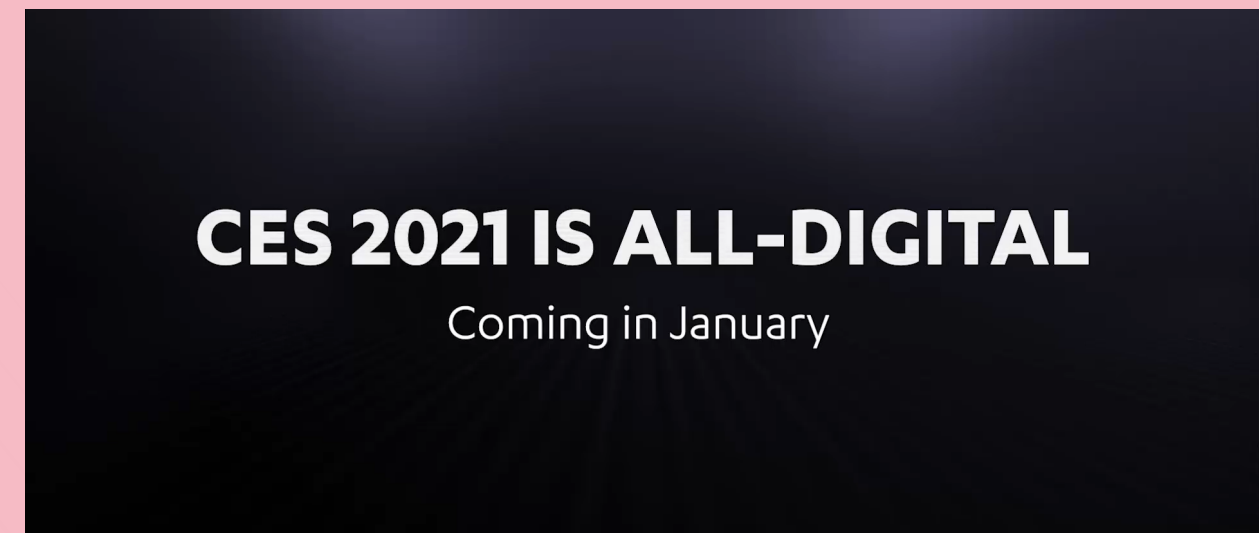
Many aspects of event organisation remain the same whether the event is physical or virtual. Planning, marketing, design and execution remain key. Success will always ultimately depend on whether you have successfully engaged with your audience.



03 Shared Principles; New Expectations

With CES 2021 moving to a 100 percent digital experience, there are expectations that VR will dominate presentations and the experiences created. A simple Zoom round table is not going to stand out after the events of this year and putting your press conference on Zoom is unlikely to spark the excitement you'll need to get people's attention. Focusing your communications around an executive's keynote may not be enough to grab the attention or viewership you're looking for. It's time to consider how to create executive thought leadership content and make it matter across both your owned and social channels.

If you're not willing to invest in doing something different there is a distinct risk that your brand's communications efforts will be drowned out by your competitors' content no matter the nature of your event, big or small.



*THE PERFECT SYNERGY
FOR EVENT SUCCESS*

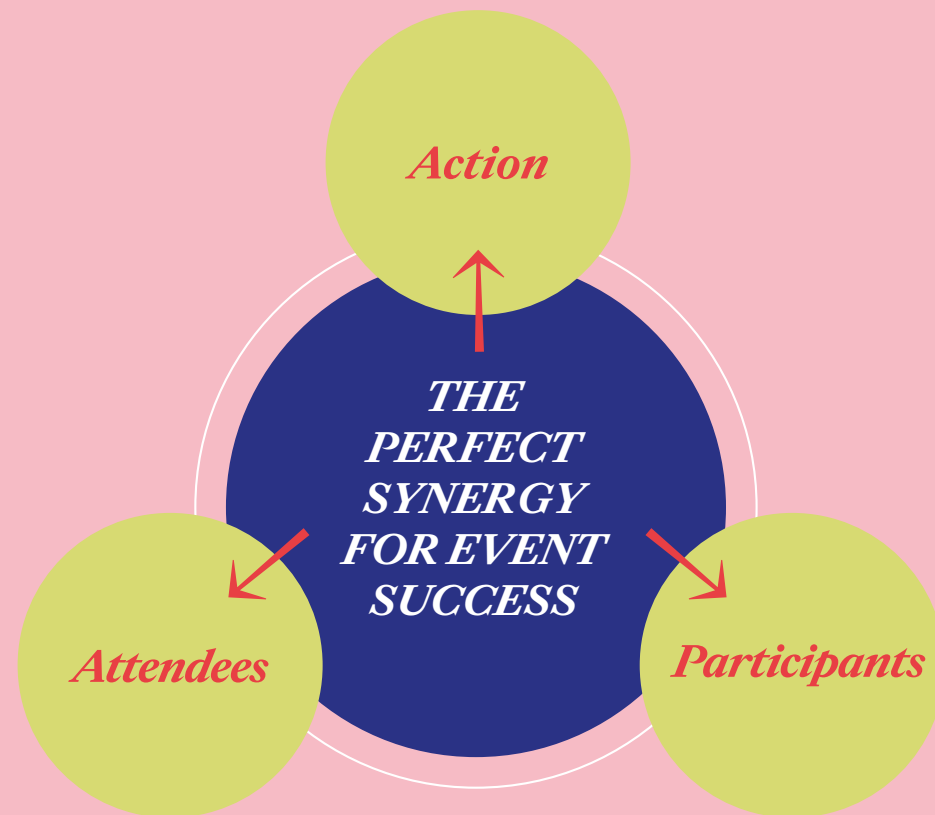


The Perfect Synergy for Event Success

Events are built on a time-honoured triumvirate; actions, attendees, and participants. We believe that any effective digital event strategy is dependent on successfully migrating each of these three parts online.

Before tackling each element in turn, first think about how the following apply to them:

1. Exploring new forms of content.
2. Identifying new ways of engagement and conversation.
3. Creating unique and memorable experiences.



Actions

<p>KEYNOTES, PRESENTATIONS <i>(Thought leadership content)</i></p>	<p>KIOSK VISIT <i>(Content + Conversations)</i></p>	<p>PRODUCT DEMO / TRIAL <i>(Experience)</i></p>	
<p>SALES PITCH <i>(Content presentation + Conversations)</i></p>	<p>PAMPHLETS, BOOKS, AND OTHER DISTRIBUTIONS <i>(Content for distribution)</i></p>	<p>INTERVIEWS <i>(Content + Conversations)</i></p>	<p>ARTIST PERFORMANCE <i>(Content + Experiences)</i></p>
	<p>MEETINGS <i>(Conversations)</i></p>	<p>PARTY, DRINKS, RECEPTION <i>(Content + Entertainment + Conversations + Experiences)</i></p>	<p>GIVEAWAYS <i>(Content)</i></p>

As most events go 100 percent digital, it becomes crucial to consider how to run a virtual experience, while maintaining the participation and engagement levels of participants and stakeholders. Denied the fall back of the tried and trusted, marketers will need to get creative in their quest to reproduce the experience in new ways, on new platforms, and with unfamiliar formats.



RONALD VAN LOON
Global AI & IoT Expert
(Twitter: @ronald_vanloon)

“

All large industry events will be virtual through July 2021. All parties are going to seize this opportunity to innovate and experiment with formats, with creating, managing and tracking the full funnel from digital events, driven by analytics.

Vendors I've worked with have already set the precedent for successful large-scale virtual events that exceed registration, and engagement targets.

Simply put, the industry will never return to its previous state.

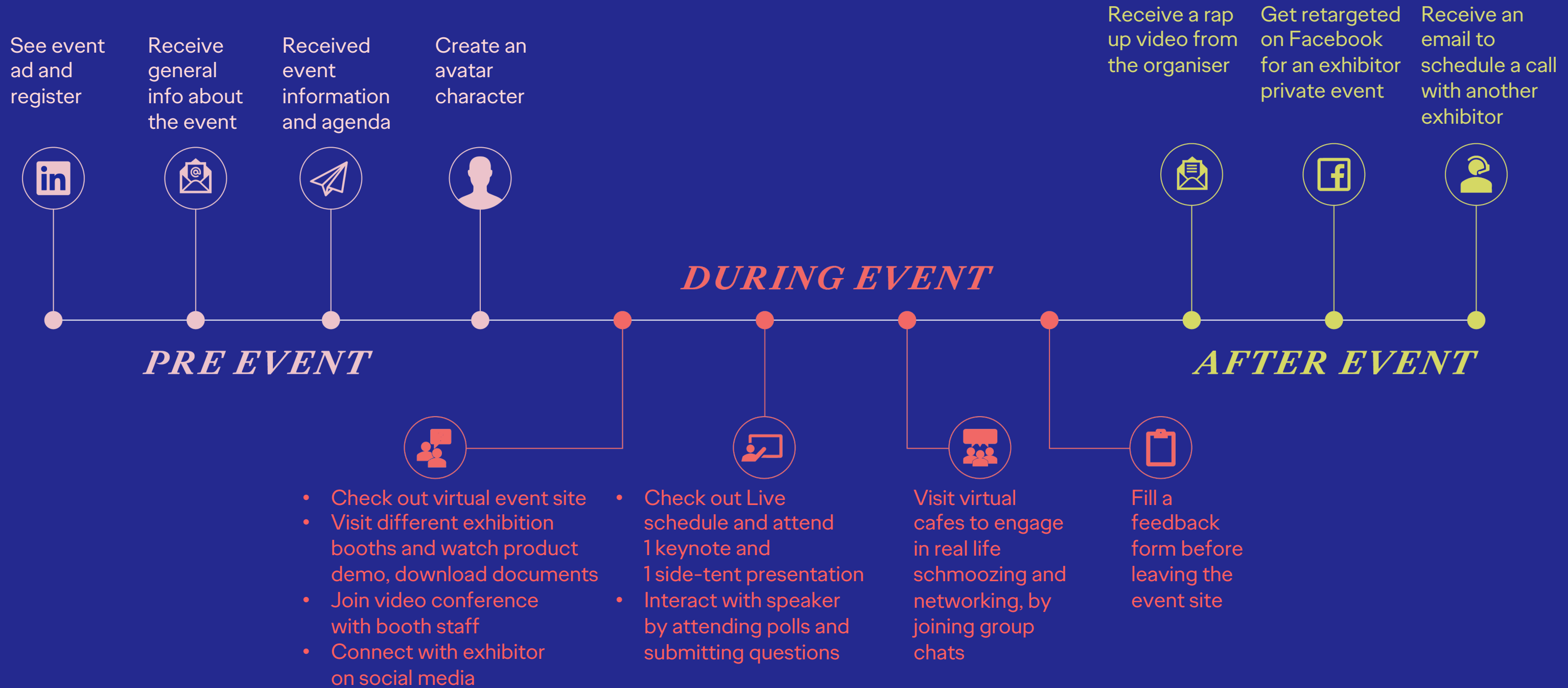
Physical events will be support for digital events, with smaller events supporting bottom of the funnel sales.

At the top of the funnel, B2B tech vendors can leverage their experts and partners, combining them with thought leaders and influencers in specific expertise domains, such as IoT or AI.

Virtual gated events can support lead conversion with everything from niche webinars to gated broadcasts for industry events.

”

What an industry event attendee journey looks like



*Attendees
(your target
audience)*

For product launches, it's worth investing in VR capabilities to bring the experience to the audience. An easy and affordable way to do this is through [Google Cardboard](#), but this is only one of a number of technology choices at your disposal. Another idea is to develop a video targeted at analysts and explain how you are evolving your business. This can be sent on demand, and after they request the content via a QR code that's published on the event website.



*How media outreach could unfold
in a full digital environment*

PRE

Reach out to a journalist via their social channels to get them excited with a taste of the keynote your CEO will present about the future of the industry.

DURING

During the event, the journalist would conduct Zoom interviews with your CEO and engage in a planned live tweeting session.

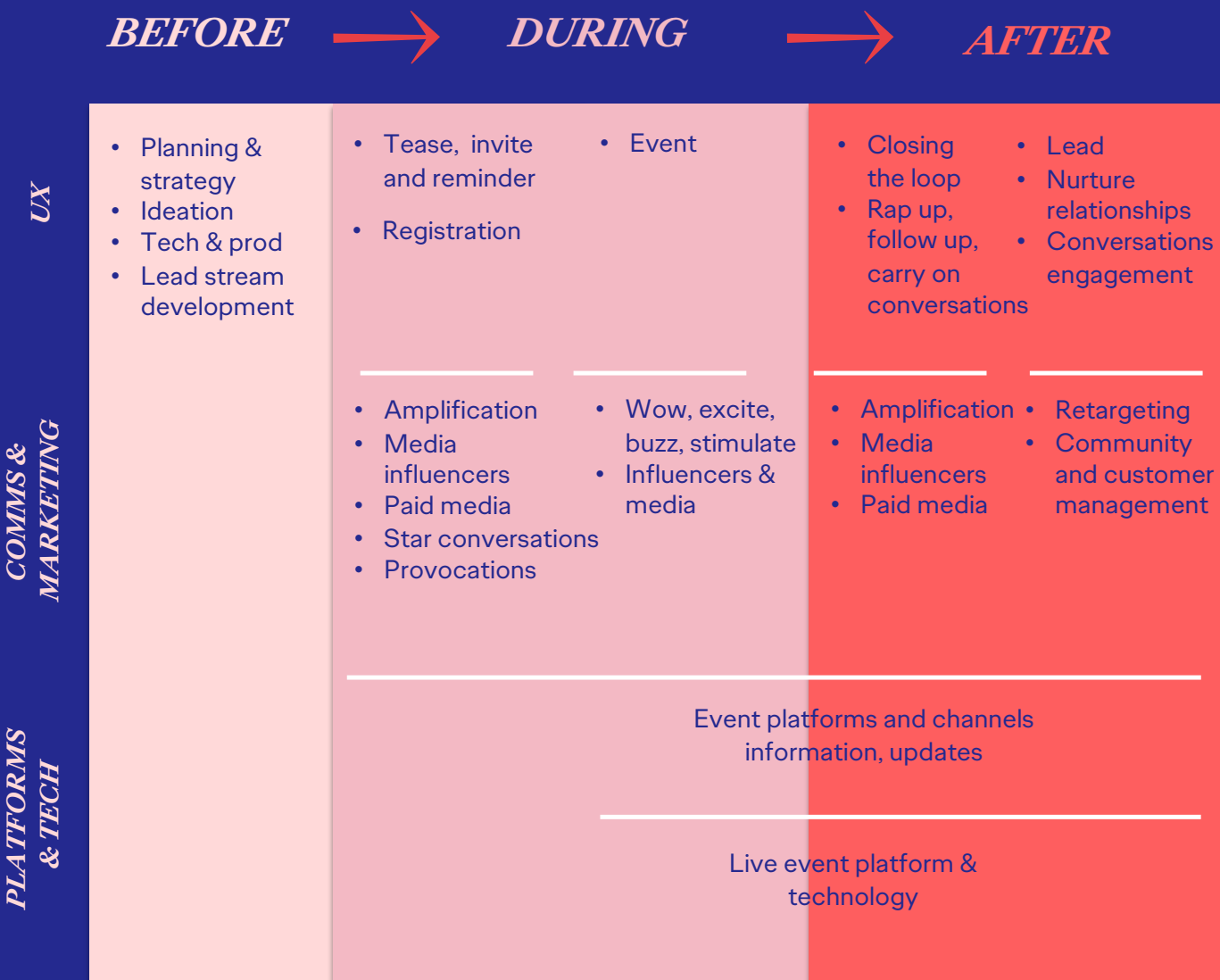
AFTER

One of the potential plus points of virtual events is that attendees can be given access to speakers or clarifications as it unfolds – although managing real time engagement takes some skill and planning.

There are many more opportunities to bring your PR and other communications tactics firmly into the digital domain for the virtual trade show. Successful implementation will require creativity, courage, and carefully chosen partnerships but while the tools and stage are changing, these underlying skills are ones that your team should already excel in.

Your team

Many of the time-honoured principles apply to your team whether you are a participant, an exhibitor or the organiser. Your executive, sales, product, and marcom teams should all have a role before, during and after the event in creating content, engaging in conversations and delivering the experiences.



The content you create, how you amplify it, and where you distribute and engage in conversations are important, but people will remember the immersive experiences that kept them hooked. Consider things like live games or competitions, on-demand content, AI-generated recommendations, virtual entertainment, or immersive environments.



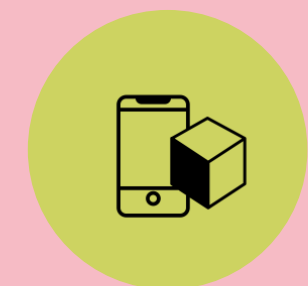
Live Games & Competitions



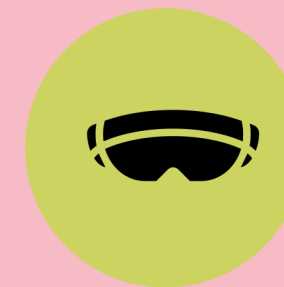
On-demand Content



AI-generated Recommendations



Virtual Entertainment

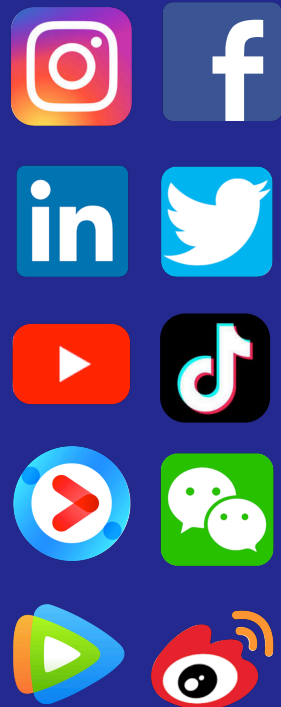


Immersive Environment

Brands that are able to bring in VR and AI technology partners along with good content will be able to make unique and memorable experiences for all participants.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Live streaming & live chat.
Content publishing



PODCAST HOSTING

[Anchor](#)
[Podbean](#)
[BuzzSprout](#)
[Blubrry](#)
[Transistor](#)
[Smart Podcast Player](#)
[Fusebox](#)
[Libsyn](#)
[SoundCloud](#)
[Spotify](#)
[Apple Podcasts](#)

MEETING/ WEBINAR

Presentation, meeting, roundtable, side-tent, breakout sessions.

[Zoom](#)
[Microsoft Teams](#)
[BlueJeans](#)
[GotoMeeting](#)
[Google Meet](#)
[Anymeeting](#)
[Huawei WeLink](#)

[Free](#)
[8x8](#)
[BigBlueButton](#)

VR/AR EXPERIENCE

Product launches, demo & entertainment

VR HEADSET

[Oculus](#)
[HTC Vive Cosmos](#)
[Homido](#)
[Valve Index](#)
[Windows Mixed Reality](#)
[Huawei VR Glass](#)

AR HEADSET

[Microsoft HoloLens](#)
[Magic Leap One](#)

PHONE BASED VR

[Google Cardboard](#)
[Samsung Gear VR](#)

LARGE EVENT

[Intrado](#)
[ON24](#)
[Bizzabo](#)
[Hopin](#)
[Kaltura](#)
[Intellum](#)

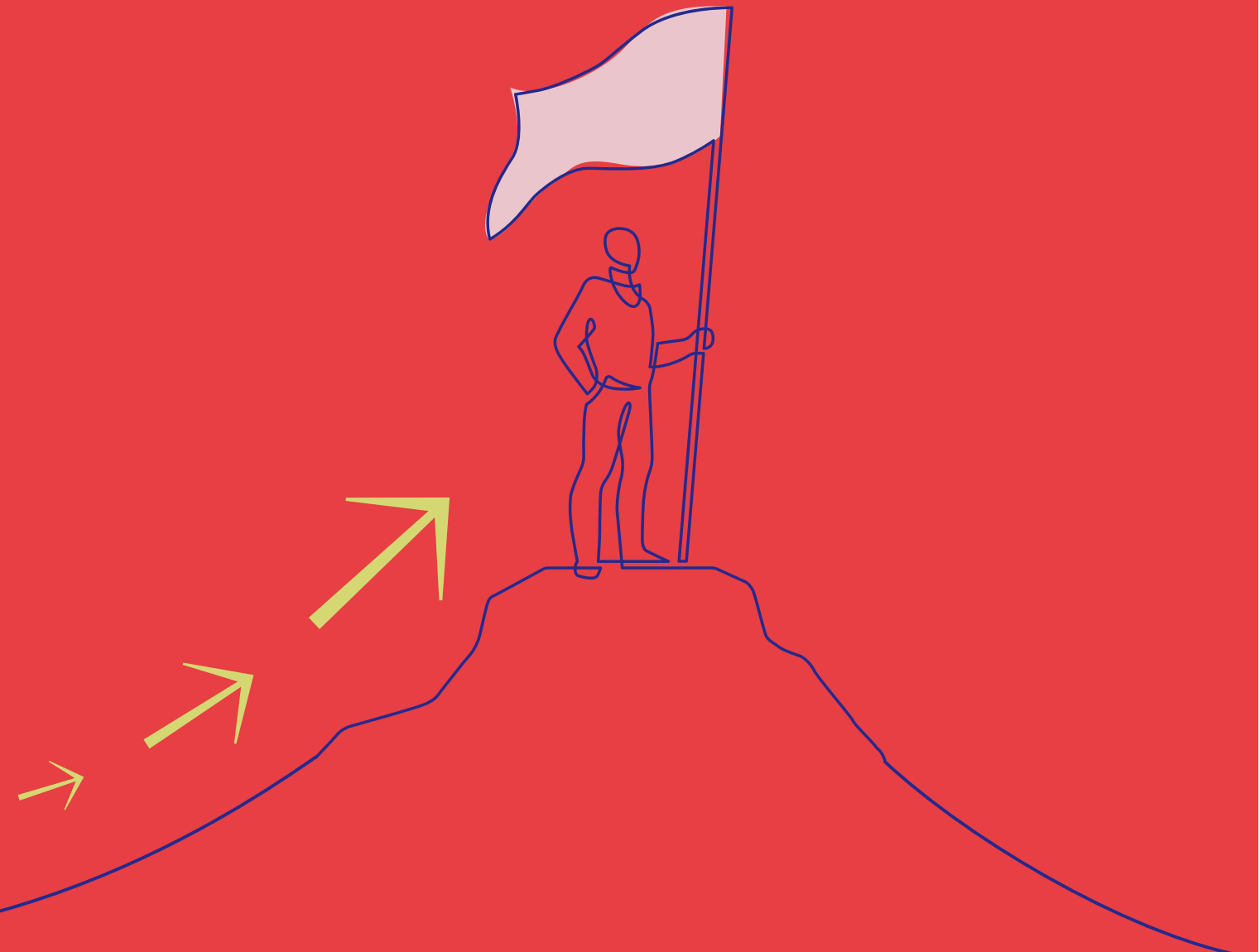
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

[Moot](#)
[Virtway Events](#)
[Walcon](#)
[VirBELA](#)
[Avianet](#)

CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT AND CREATIVE

[Adobe I/O Event](#)
[Verticurl Event Solution](#)

FINAL WORDS



Final words

Brands are all looking to survive and thrive during these turbulent times. Covid-19 has brought revolutionary change, not incremental evolution, and so businesses will have to be bold in their response if they are to seize the initiative in a post-Covid world. Covid-19 has accelerated the take up of any number of technologies and will continue to do so beyond the tool set of Twitter and Zoom. Techniques from the fringe of sci-fi will become staples of business. Avatar drinks receptions with AI hosts handing out digital business cards, and virtual handouts are no longer the stuff of fantasy the way they were only six months ago.

Whatever the extent of your participation will be, you will need to break it down into its component activities and goals and then build those elements back up in a digital world in order to achieve your objectives in a post in-person event era.

No matter what your event or your challenge is we can work with you holistically from idea generation to selecting the right platforms and technology to engaging your customer from registration all the way to a purchase. The event business is a new game now and requires creativity, innovation, partnership, some level of science and focus on performance.

We're not saying nobody will miss business trips and boozy receptions, five-star frippery, booth bling, and glitzy giveaways, but the *raison d'être* for all of these remains. The challenge is to generate the buzz and achieve the same goals in a totally transformed landscape. The opportunity is there for first movers and creative communicators to rewrite rules and create new brand leaders in the process, but you'll need good partners – like Ogilvy – who can make your brand matter for a new era in virtual events. It's time to get your brand in front by transforming its event capabilities.

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EVENTS

- (12) NUDGE STOCK: <https://www.nudgestock.co.uk/>
- (13) CES: <https://www.ces.tech/News/Press-Releases/CES-Press-Release.aspx?NodeID=321a27ba-86f2-4c8d-92d2-fb0f4580ed18>
- (14) AIA LIVE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRDtCekf-7o>

TECHNOLOGY

- (15) GOOGLE CARDBOARD: <https://arvr.google.com/cardboard/>
- (16) STYPE: <https://stype.tv/>
- (17) INTRADO: <https://www.intrado.com/>

*If you have an upcoming event
and need some help, contact:*

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