



Survey dates: June 10 - June 24, 2020

Can Virtual Events Really Replace Face-to-Face Meetings?

The coronavirus pandemic exposed many weaknesses and highlighted unexploited opportunities in the meetings industry. It seems that we finally found the solution; virtual events. These kinds of events existed before the global pandemic, but we want to know - Are live events really a thing of the past? All events have their upsides and downsides. In the sixth and final survey, we wanted to find out what you think about the future of events.

NUMBER OF ANSWERS:

693 respondents

PRIMARY BUSINESS OF RESPONDENTS:

- 30,4 % - Event agency
- 23,5 % - Agency (PCO, DMC)
- 13,7 % - Meeting planner
- 9,8 % - Destination Management Organisation
- 2,0 % - Venue

Other:

- AV service provider
- Communication Agency for MICE marketing
- Publishin
- Training organisation
- Association
- Local authority
- Event media

How many live events have you attended last year?





74,5 % attended between 0 - 25 events

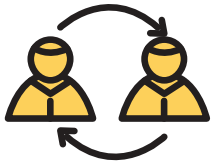
- 10 - 25 events - 25,5 %
- 5 - 10 events - 24,5 %
- 0 - 5 events - 24,5 %
- 25 - 50 events - 13,7 %
- 50 - 100 events - 7,8 %
- over 100 - 3,9 %

Have you ever attended a virtual meeting? If YES, what type?

- 63,4 % - Webinars
- 17,8 % - Virtual Conferences
- 3,0 % - Hybrid Events
- 2,0 % - Webcast
- 3,0 % - Virtual Trade Show
- 10,9 % - Other (please write)

In my work, I use the following tools on a regular basis:

-  99,0 % - E-mail
-  77,5 % - Videoconferencing
-  60,8 % - Webinars
-  59,8 % - Online shared documents



Are you going to switch your live events to virtual after coronavirus?

- **65,7 %** - Only partly
- **28,4 %** - No
- **5,9 %** - Yes completely

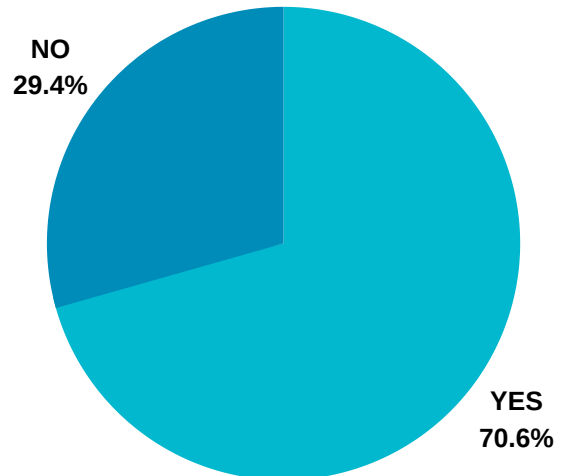
Do you see virtual events playing an important role in reaching a younger audience?

- **49,0 %** - Yes
- **38,2 %** - Not sure
- **12,7 %** - No

How would you monetize virtual events?

- **62,7 %** - Registration fee is lower
- **38,2 %** - Sponsorship
- **35,3 %** - Through a virtual exhibition hall
- **21,6 %** - It would not be revenue-generating
- **12,7 %** - Registration fee stays the same
- **2,9 %** - Other
- Hybrid model, revenue generator
- Fees according to the extent of the virtual venue
- Still working on it

Did attending a virtual event make you want to attend a live event?



How do you keep attendees of virtual events engaged?

- **41,2 %** - Great Content
- **37,3 %** - Audience engagement
- **10,8 %** - Gamification
- **10,8 %** - Other
- Mix of one and two with a touch of 3
- Gamification is the driving force to maintain interest
- Provide excellent content and high quality sound and video
- It has to be the joining of several different aspects.

LIVE

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V **S**



VIRTUAL



At what time of day should virtual events be held?

- **45,1 %** - 10 a.m. - noon
- **20,6 %** - 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.
- **16,7 %** - 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
- **8,8 %** - 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
- **6,9 %** - 7 a.m. - 10 a.m.
- **2,0 %** - noon - 1 p.m.

Which AI tools can help improve virtual events?

- **53,9 %** - Meeting minutes summarisation
- **34,3 %** - Expert Suggestion
- **34,3 %** - Opinion Mining
- **30,4 %** - Sentiment Analysis
- **28,4 %** - Text generation
- **23,5 %** - Voice recognition
- **13,7 %** - Gestures recognition

What skills should meeting planners poses after COVID-19?

- **72,5 %** - Flexibility
- **64,7 %** - Online marketing
- **56,9 %** - Event planning
- **56,9 %** - Organisational
- **52,0 %** - Customer services
- **47,1 %** - Digital-user interface
- **15,7 %** - HTML skills
- **6,9 %** - Other

OTHER

- Trust and solidarity
- Take care of Interaction!
- Strong contract negotiation
- Problem solving skills
- Ability to explain tech in user-friendly terms

Why should we organise LIVE EVENTS?

Final mark for LIVE EVENTS: **4,02**

- 4,65** - To strengthen relationship
- 3,92** - To influence others
- 3,78** - To make important decisions
- 3,73** - To solve problems

Why should we organise ONLINE EVENTS?

Final mark for ONLINE EVENTS: **3,02**

- 3,15** - To influence others
- 3,03** - To make important decisions
- 3,19** - To solve problems
- 2,70** - To strengthen relationship



What makes **LIVE** EVENTS successful?

Face to Face meetings are essential. People engage more. Interact more, network more.

Networking and Face2Face communication

- Nothing is better than being face to face.
- Virtual events don't create the same engagement
- Being part of it and the experience of living it!
- No matter how good the platform is, it is very difficult to network
- Live engagement is key to building and strengthening relationships
- Strong psychological component when we share experience with others

Connections & Relationship building

- Great people
- Genuine connections, nuanced reactions
- Emotions and relations
- Direct exchange of opinions, controlled focus
- The use of all our senses

Personal contact and Overall Experience

- Human presence
- Meeting people in person is the most important part of any business
- Building and maintaining relationships is possible
- Contact with people, live information exchange, smiles and hugs
- The overall experience: relevant content, attendees, good venue

Content

- Appealing content, reliable and relevant speakers
- Better management of time, themes and atmosphere
- Inspirational environment
- Opportunity to come across new things, new people, unexpectedly

What makes **ONLINE** EVENTS successful?

Time saving, cost saving, people listen more carefully making the exchanges more effective.

Sustainability

- Eco-responsibility re: flights/consumption
- Time and cost efficient for the participants
- No travelling, hotel rooms, or eating out.
- Flexibility, sustainability
- More affordable, less time consuming
- Full recording immediately after

Problem solving

- Quick problem solving and sharing of ideas
- Stay in touch with your audience even in a crisis situation
- You can join from anywhere
- Easiness
- It's possible to record and watch the whole content again

Audience

- Broader audience and a much bigger reach
- Flexible timetable
- Often free of charge
- The ability to attend for folks who are not comfortable with travel but don't want to miss out on the opportunity

Costs

- Lower costs
- The budget aspect
- Virtual events are much cheaper
- Time and travel savings

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VIRTUAL

What makes **LIVE** EVENTS successful?

” The energy and excitement that happens when people come together can't be recreated through a computer screen. People want to experience a moment, an environment that is different than their usual surroundings - whether it's an event in a different destination or a chance to get out of their home/office - and live events offer this. Meeting people in person is, in my opinion, still the strongest way to develop relationships.

” The place, the environment, the service, ample space and facilities, easy to reach, low cost travel opportunities ... and the event itself, top level speakers and content, latest technology features and no issues with it. Of course your communication and promotion.. everything! No loose threads!

” The key to making Live events a success are Human Personal Interaction, networking, meeting key decision makers who are available only during these events. Post event gathering helps not only to socialize amongst fellow colleagues, but also gives an opportunity to know them on a personal level. These events give us a chance to know much about destinations, tourism boards, property owners. It also provides you a platform to meet fellow travel agents from all over the world.

What makes **ONLINE** EVENTS successful?

” Virtual events are not made to replace live events forever, but to complement them. I foresee that in the future there will be a purpose for both live and virtual events. Both will exist side by side. Budget, financial power and travel cost/restrictions may play an important role. I'm happy to chat about it.

” The transfer between the different presenters or panels should be done smoothly by a dynamic presenter who knows how.

” The only benefit I see is saving time and other resources (less people involved, there is no need for a bigger meeting venue ...)

” Virtual events, as a stand-alone format, can & will not satisfy the complexity of business events, as a marketing & communication tool. However, the virtual element will be an integral & necessary part in the future of business events.

” They can deliver a larger audience than a live event might. It's easier for people to attend as they don't have to make any effort other than sitting in front of their computer.

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VIRTUAL

How high is the possibility of face-to-face meetings and travel being replaced with virtual?

46,1 % - Low possibility
35,3 % - Medium possibility
18,6 % - High possibility

If you had voted in your company, what would you choose?

48,0 % - LIVE meetings
45,1 % - HYBRID meetings
6,9 % - VIRTUAL meetings

STATEMENT: The use, and related marketing strategies, of VIRTUAL meetings in our organisation, positively contributes to our goals.

64,7 % - Fully agree and somewhat agree
45,1 % - Somewhat agree
21,6 % - Somewhat disagree
19,6 % - Fully agree
7,8 % - Disagree
5,9 % - I Don't know

STATEMENT: The use, and related marketing strategies, of LIVE meetings in our organisation, positively contributes to our goals

91,2 % - Fully agree and somewhat agree
69,6 % - Fully agree
21,6 % - Somewhat agree
6,9 % - Somewhat disagree
1,0 % - Disagree
1,0 % - Don't know

STATEMENT: The world is becoming a better and more sustainable place with virtual meetings

64,7 % - Fully agree and somewhat agree
52,9 % - Somewhat agree
21,6 % - Somewhat disagree
11,8 % - Fully agree
9,8 % - Disagree
3,9 % - I Don't know