

# The New Normal and Next Normal of Business Events

A look at what is working now and where we are headed next

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**Beyoncé reached 164X more people via live stream than she did in person at Coachella in 2018**

## There is a Big Opportunity in The Next Era of Events

For years many brands have been experimenting with virtual and finding great success. In 2018, Coachella's YouTube livestream brought Beyoncé's Homecoming to more than 41 million people in more than 232 countries, rather than just the hundreds of thousands in attendance in person.





# **\*\*Not All Business Events Are The Same, Or Affected In The Same Way**



**Brand Events:** Events like Dreamforce, Connections, Adobe Max, Inbound, which are put on by brands as marketing events. They do not generate revenue directly, and sponsors are used to help share costs, not drive revenue. These will be impacted differently.



**Industry Events:** Events like Content Marketing World, CES, SXSW, are for profit events put on by event companies. These events have a different goal, revenue model, and goal. They are not affected in the same way as revenue is generated from sponsors.

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# The New Normal of Business Events

What is working now





“We're canceling any large physical events we had planned with 50 or more people through June 2021.”

-Mark Z on Facebook



“I have asked they postpone it to at least 2021”

-Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe



## The New Normal in Events

The “New Normal” is the period of time that the country is on social distancing guidelines. This begun in March and is likely to continue for at least some time as public gatherings are going to be affected for at least a year.

**\*\*The new normal will be followed by the “Next Normal” which will be the transitional state of recovery.**

**\*\*The New Normal will likely last until the end of 2020 and possibly through the middle of 2021.**

# What is working now with Events

There are four key trends which brands are leveraging which are helping them to create amazing virtual experiences.

1. They repackaged content to meet their viewers' new perspective
2. They reconfigured the breadth of coverage and/or length of the event.
3. They brought the event experience directly to audiences in new ways.
4. They focus on creating community







# Reimagine The Experience

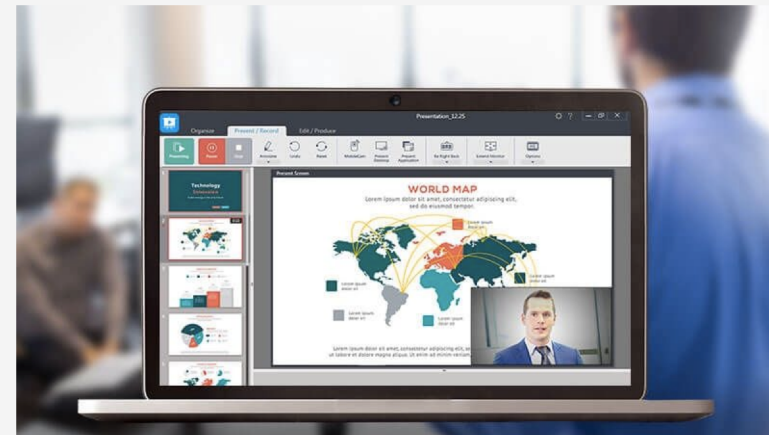
From Stage to Screen

# Stage to Screen: Imagining A New Experience

We've long designed events to be live productions on a stage. This creates a specific dynamic between the audience and the speaker. There is visual communication, real time feedback, and a captive audience. As we transition to screen based events we must reimagine the experience from a new angle.



- Captive audience
- Speaker can read the room
- Speaker gets feedback
- Immersive Experience
- Show Flow mimics classic stage craft
- Audience walks from session to session



- Audience likely multi-tasking
- No feedback from audience
- Speaker is disconnected from audience
- Individual Experience
- Show Flow is more akin to TV show
- Dead Air time between sessions

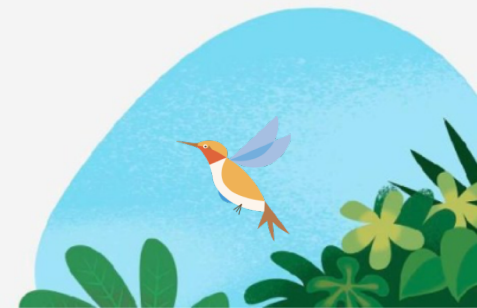




Ever content library has been opened up and our audience is in front of a screen more than ever before. Virtual events must be more than just a library of content.

# Failure to Reimagine Has Consequence

The Adobe Summit had a high bar for creativity, energy, and excitement. The 2020 Adobe Summit had minimal interaction, and that left a 'hole' for folks feeling more like they attended a "virtual library" instead of an interactive event filled with excited, engaging conversations/sessions with Adobe personnel, amazing announcements and incredible product launches.

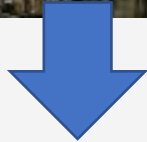


salesforce world tour

## Pivoting Our Largest In Market Event in 10 Days

Our flagship in market event which would have had 10k physical attendance was able to pivot in just two weeks to become fully digital. **The effort reached 1.5 Million Online Views!**

How we did it, and what we learned.





# We Reimagined The Customer Experience

We had to think about the core purpose of attending such an event and how we could meet the needs of all stakeholders in a digital environment. Specifically analysts, customers, and partners.



**Viewing Parties:** From creating a fully digital experience, to watch parties in offices across the region.

**Executive Experience:** We create separate events for executives to offer exclusive content, and combined this with a direct mail experience.



**Expo/Sponsors:** We created a virtual trade show floor staffed by sponsors able to give live demos.

# We Reimagined Programing

The program was for a 10,000 person event with many tracks, and multiple keynotes. With a 10 day pivot it was not possible to transition all of this content so we had to reimagine what we would deliver.



**Shortened Content:** Normal breakouts would be 45-60 min, we decided to cut that time down to 30 min max. We will be going even shorter in the future.

**Looked to TV:** There is a lot of dead time in between sessions, so we put a new role in place. The role was to keep the audience engaged between sessions, just like a TV anchor.

**Different Levels of Production:** We set up multiple studio's with various levels of production from a mic and a computer, to a full TV crew. This allowed us to scale the number of events we needed with out incurring greater costs.

# Our Key Learnings

We had to think about the core purpose of attending such an event and how we could meet the needs of all stakeholders in a digital environment. Specifically analysts, customers, and partners.

## Sales Teams

- Kept sales in constant communication and ensured they had a say in what we did.
- Created viewing parties
- Shifted budget to allow for them to buy and send swag to clients
- Opened up budget for catering to create viewing parties in customers offices
- Created “how to” guide for engaging customers in new format

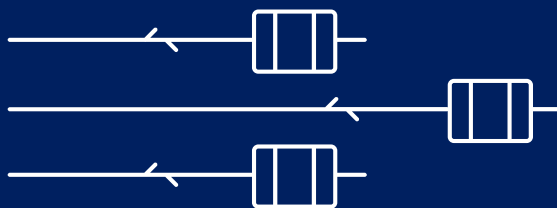
## Vendors

- Created an online expo
- Created staffing schedule for online experience
- Worked with vendors to create live demos, and host downloadable content
- Set up special rooms for vendors to run live content to be streamed inline with the event.

## Internal

- Relaunched a KickOff Call with the start of the pivot.
- Created an internal information hub. Posted daily to the hub with updates for all to see.
- Worked with PR to come up with new talking points and goals to share with media.
- Broke out into teams focused on key items, like technology, programs, and ran daily standups
- Decentralized decision making





# Deconstructed And Reconfigured

How To Get People Engaged



# NYT Is Putting on 5X More Events Per Year Now

NYT Had 40 Events planned for 2020 pre-COVID. Post their digital transformation they are putting on many smaller events. They are putting on an average of 15 per month.

*After the change they had a 5X increase in volume and currently they are reaching 28X more people reached via digital compared to in person.*



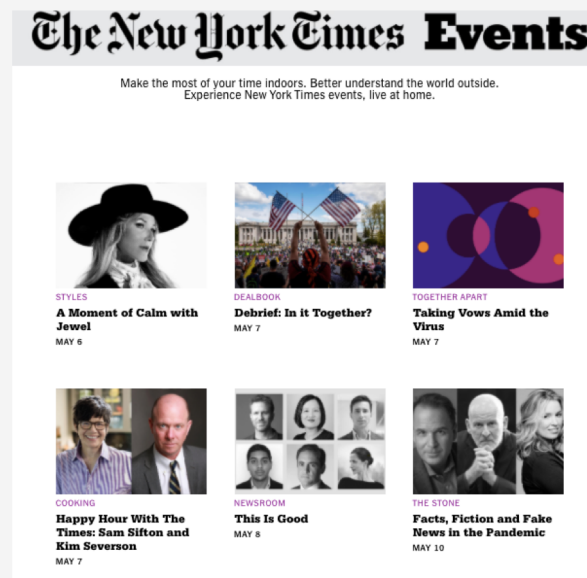
# NYT Plans for 9X Increase YoY of Events

NYT has deconstructed a large event and reconfigured it into a short digital experience. They have increased the frequency by 5X, with the goal of 9X.

*Pre-COVID 40 Events Planned  
for 2020*

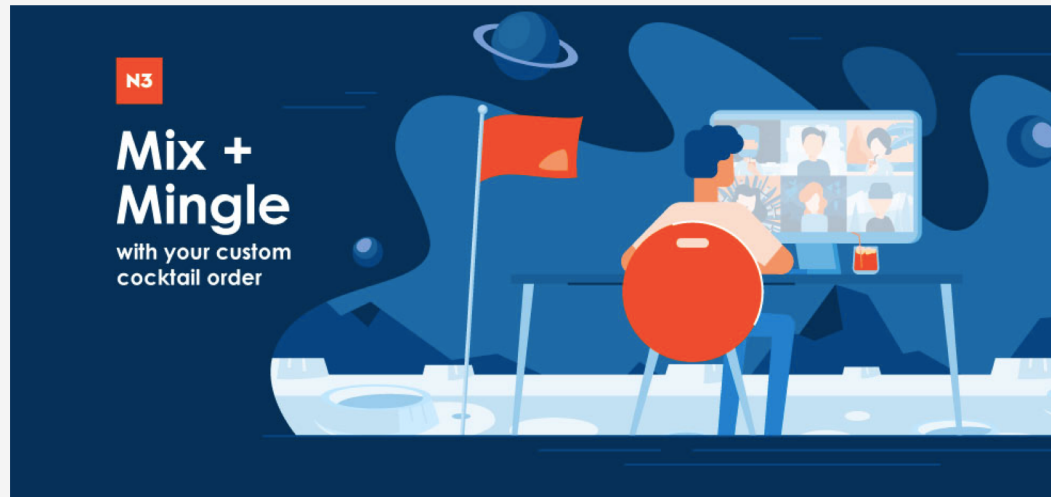


*Post COVID Goal – 1  
Per day*



*How They Plan to  
Meet That Goal*

- Task Force made of 6 cross discipline team members. They meet once a week.
- Transitioned production into 3 person team pods. A Pod is responsible for a series, or event type
- The Task Force created a playbook of beset practices to be shared with all pods



# New Types of Events Are Taking Place

N3 is putting on a series of 'Happy Hours' which they are promoting.

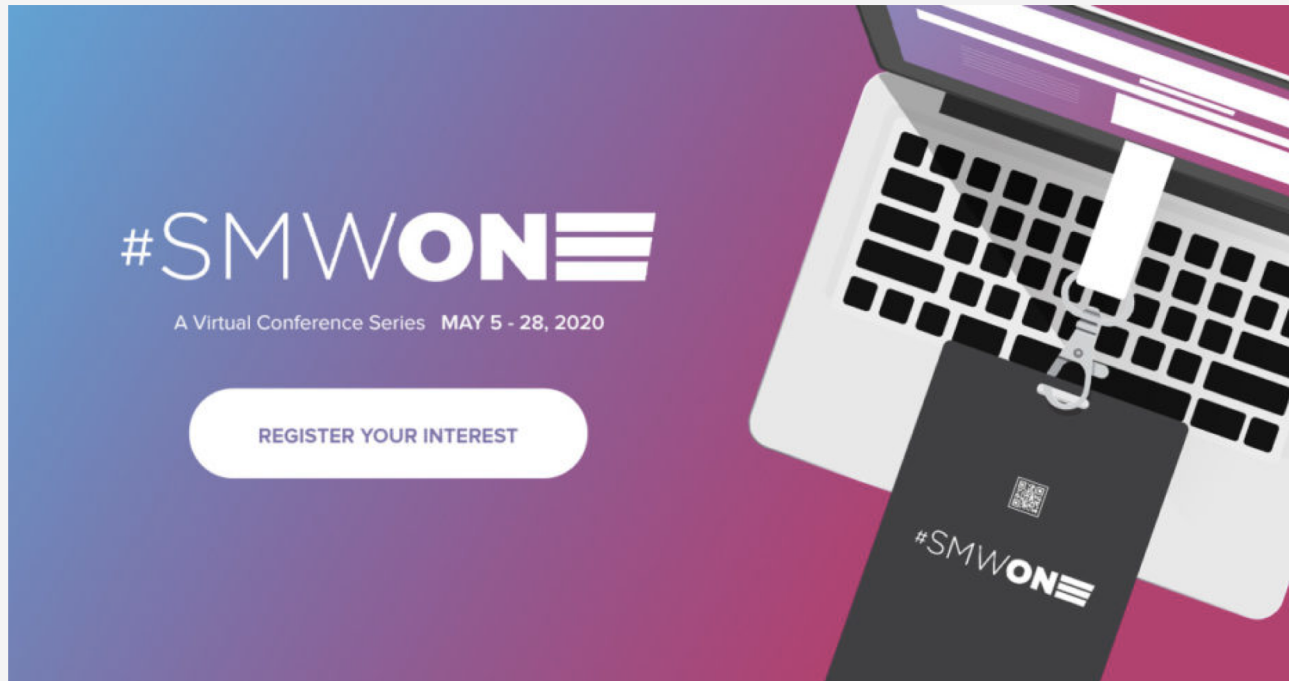
The event is a virtual happy hour and you pick a drink ahead of time. The drinks are then shipped to you and you join the call together, mix, and enjoy.

While this used to be a standard part of events, it's now an event on it's own, as well as can be folded into a larger event experience.



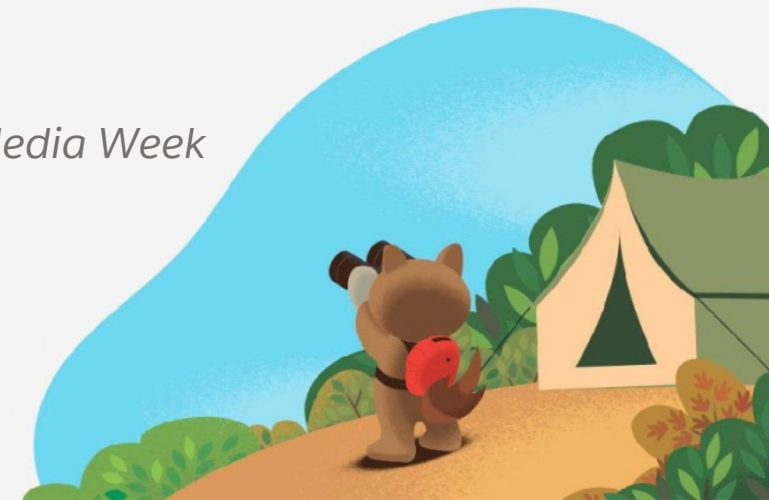
# Some Events Become Longer Too

There is the flip side happening as well. Social Media week used to have two flag ship conferences, one on the East Coast, one on the West. They have combined those to be a single conference. That conference is now 125 sessions, spread out over 15 days.



*“We imagine attendees will be multitasking and scheduling #SMWONE sessions around their daily schedule. We believe that this is going to become the new normal.”*

*Toby Daniels,  
CEO Social Media Week*

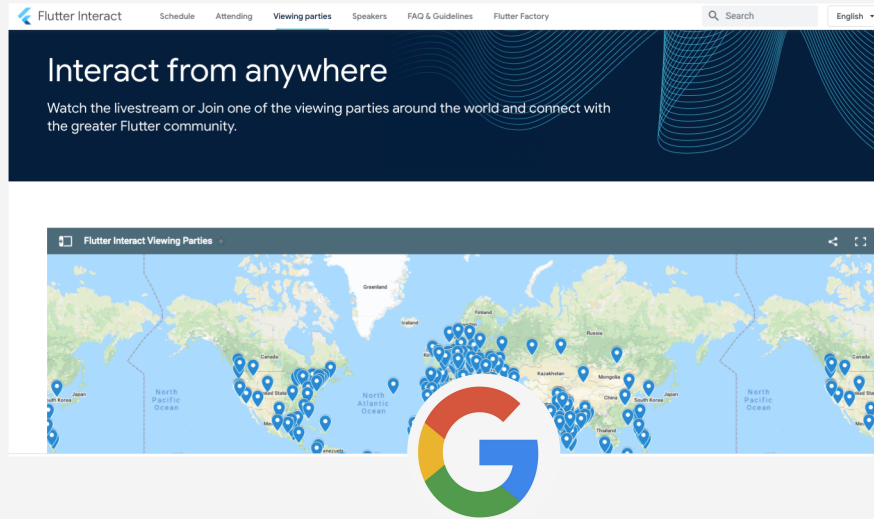




# Bring Events To The People

Events at Distance





# Viewing Parties Bring The Event To Them

There was already a trend of companies creating view parties for their large brand events. Like the image below from Google Flutter Interact with a map of all of the viewing parties you can join in. This was PRE-COVID.



Salesforce has also leveraged these with our Sydney World Tour. As social distancing eases these will become very popular with teams as they give sales a reason to engage with prospects in a new way.



# Direct Mail Is Back

Direct mail is now being used to remind people of upcoming events, as well as becoming a part of events themselves.

**Pre Event** – I've heard of people sending reminders and bags of popcorn for upcoming webinars.

**Part of Event** – The Example from N3 is where direct mail is supplying an activity a group takes on together.

**Post Event** - By matching the attendee list with internal data, brands are able to deliver hyper-personalized experiences to attendees prior to, or just following the event.





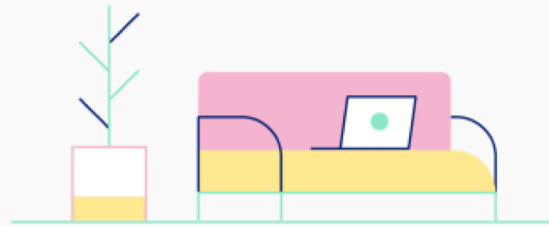
# We Must Create Community

More than content, connection

# Creating A Virtual Community

One of the few potential drawbacks of virtual events is the lack of community. Here are some learnings from an event which has been virtual since 2018.

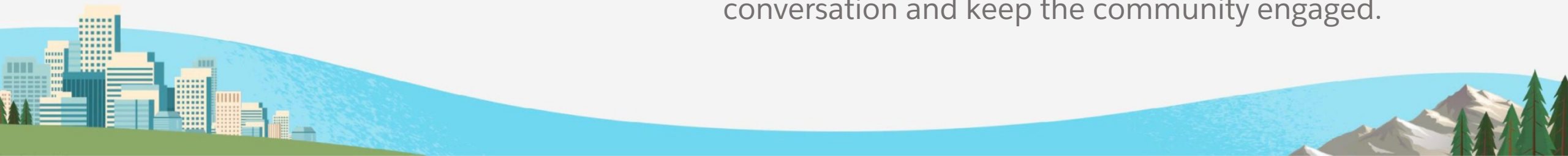
- Create **slack channels** for groups so communities can form before, and have during, and post the event.
- Offer a **Free Lunch**, but only to those who take some the of action. For Couchcon they had to take a pic of their couch set up and tweet it out with a hashtag.
- Make sure you have **staff to man the chat's** to spark conversation and keep the community engaged.



## CouchCon

August 14, 2018

 **WISTIA**



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# The Next Normal of Events

What the future holds



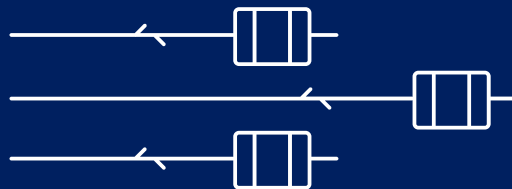


# The Next Normal in Events

The "Next Normal" will begin at different times for different industries, but it is at least 6-12 months away for most of us. While the future is very uncertain here are a few things we believe we should be preparing for.

1. Hybrid Events and Multi-Tiered Pricing Models
2. Distributed & Deconstructed Events Continue
3. New Ways To Make Connections
4. A Different Role For Sponsors





# Hybrid Events Become The Norm

All events become hybrid

# All Events Will Be Hybrid Moving Forward

Events have been trending towards hybrid yet it was not the norm, yet. It will be in the Next Normal as the cost of livestreaming, and the technical hurdles will be overcome. Expect all events to have three components in the Next Normal.



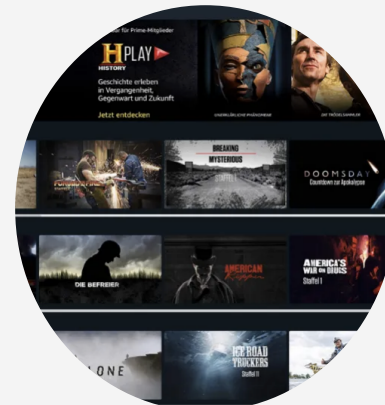
## Live & Virtual

- Increased Reach
- Great Exposure
- Free/Low Cost



## Live & In Person

- Exclusive Offer
- Small Attendance
- High Ticket Price



## Access To Content Library

- Additional Revenue Stream
- Access can be sold separately or added to package

# Hybrid Events = Smaller Physical Footprint

With the ability to scale via virtual methods, in person aspects of events are likely to become premium experiences. This will require events to host smaller more personal experiences, giving premium access to speakers and other peers.



Events like The Uprising have already been testing smaller footprints and more exclusive content in opposition to large conferences. It is selling out 6 months in advance.

## Exclusive Experiences = \$\$\$

Many events will opt for a smaller physical footprint. These smaller footprints put in person access at a premium allowing for high ticket prices.

These exclusive experiences also may be limited and attendees must apply and be selected.

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# Distributed & Deconstructed Continue

The Next Normal Isn't Normal



# Distributed Events Continue Forward As New Revenue Stream

Now that events have found out how to break up events into smaller pieces, manage the increase in producing many more events, and have found new revenue from these new experiences we expect many of them to continue.

TUES, MAY 19, 2020 | 2:00PM EDT

## “Ask My Anything” with Reid Blackman, AI Ethics Consultant, Philosophy PhD, and CEO, Virtue

The “Ask My Anything” or “AMA” format is a one-hour opportunity to ask our guest any questions you’d like. Take advantage, and come prepared with questions. Get creative and have fun! Join the AI4 Slack community below to join this AMA as well as meet other like-minded people who are applying AI to industry.

### BIO

Reid Blackman, Ph.D., is the Founder and CEO of Virtue an ethics consultancy. In that capacity he has worked with companies to integrate ethics and ethical risk mitigation into company culture, the development and deployment of emerging tech products, and employer branding. He is also a Senior Advisor to Ernst & Young and sits on their AI Advisory Board, and is a member of IEEE’s Ethically Aligned Design Initiative. His work has been featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, he has been quoted in numerous news articles and appeared on *Inside Edition*, and he regularly speaks at various venues including The World Economic Forum, Cannes Lions, Forbes, NYU Stern School of Business, and Columbia University. Prior to founding Virtue, Reid was a professor of philosophy at Colgate University and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. His research appeared in numerous prestigious professional journals including the *European Journal of Philosophy*, *The Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, and *Erkenntnis*. He also founded a fireworks wholesaling company and was even a flying trapeze instructor. He received his B.A. from Cornell University, his M.A. from Northwestern University, and his Ph.D. from The University of Texas, Austin.



## New Event Formats Add 50% More Revenue to Bottom For Some Industry Events

Talking to a producer of a midsized industry event I was told their experimentation with many smaller events has created a new revenue stream from sponsors. They plan to continue these smaller and more frequent events and expect it to add an additional 50% to their bottom line.

# Active and Passive Experiences

With events becoming deconstructed brands must be focused on the context of how their audience wants to consume those experiences. This means events must be repacked in multiple ways to increase engagement.



## Events to Podcast

For those who want to simply consume the content audio recordings of the events will be standard offerings allowing consumers to passively consume the content.



## Videos to Stories

A single recording will also need to find higher value by allowing consumers to actively navigate the content in real time. So from videos, to immersive experiences which allow the viewer to choose their own adventure.



## Content To Skill

Finally content is going to need to be connected to the skills that are learned. So engagement adds those skills to the users public profile creating a new form of value from engagement.



# Omnichannel Experiences Are Critical

There will be more virtual events creating a competitive landscape for consumers time and attention. To break through and drive attendance it is critical for each brand to create omnichannel experiences for each person, in each moment.

Additionally following up with a prospect from sponsored events must be as contextual as possible. Expect events to begin sharing data, which will require you to be able to leverage that data and connect it to your existing customer record.



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# New Ways To Make Connections

Connections Get Technical

# Personal Connection Is A Major Value

A major value of events are the connections made. There are now new innovations taking place from a process, and a tool perspective to facilitate these connections in more effective ways.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW 1:1 MEETING PROGRAM!

For years, Ai4 has manually set up meetings at our events to help both buyers and sellers achieve their AI goals. With the need to implement AI being greater than ever and no in-person meetings for a while, we've decided to do our part to make sure industry's AI progress doesn't slow down.

We've selected the top AI companies from our community for you to choose from below. These companies are vetted by Ai4, and we'll do the work to set the video meeting for you. Our goal is to provide you value by narrowing down the vast AI vendor landscape and removing the tedium of the initial outreach to a potential partner. This is a free service for the qualified buyers in our community.

**Once you submit the form below with your choices, we'll get back to you in ten days with times for 20-minute video meetings.**

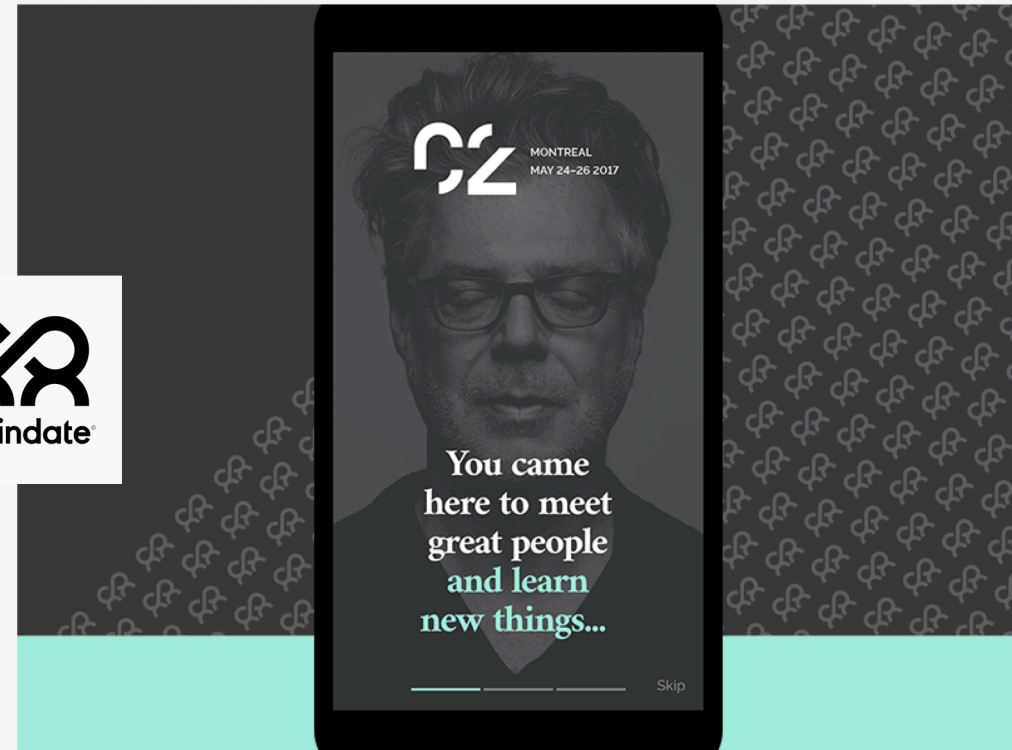




# Braindate is a new tool we'll see more of

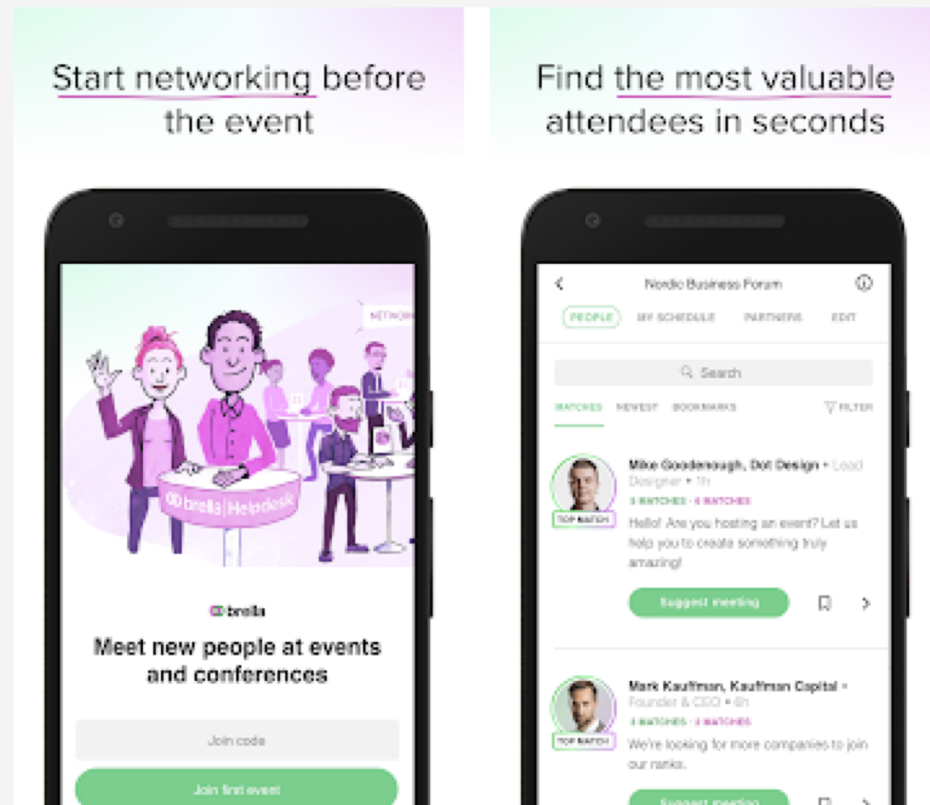
Facilitating connections via technology is a major piece of both online and in person events in the next normal. This allows people to know who they are connecting with before hand and ensure they are getting the value they need from the event.

*"Braindates made the entire conference worthwhile for me! I did 6 small group conversations about things that were most important to me and walked away with much-needed connections!"*



# Brealla.io is another tool we'll see more of

Facilitating connections via technology is a major piece of both online and in person events in the next normal. This allows people to know who they are connecting with before hand and ensure they are getting the value they need from the event.



*"Brealla turned our participation into \$350,000 of ROI via close-in meetings with potential clients and distributors."*

*Chris Augeri  
CEO at Drive Spotter*





# New Role(s) For Sponsors

New roles to play for sponsors at the  
new events

# Sponsorships Will Evolve

Sponsorships of virtual events in the New Normal is currently averaging 1/4-1/2 of live sponsorships. Meaning revenue for events is between 50%-75% depressed under old models.

## Data Sharing

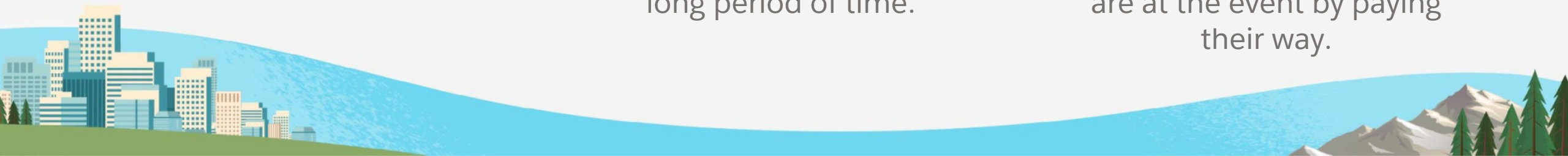
As 3<sup>rd</sup> party cookies go away 2<sup>nd</sup> party networks will rise up and events are uniquely positioned to have specific set of data that would be highly desirable to sponsors.

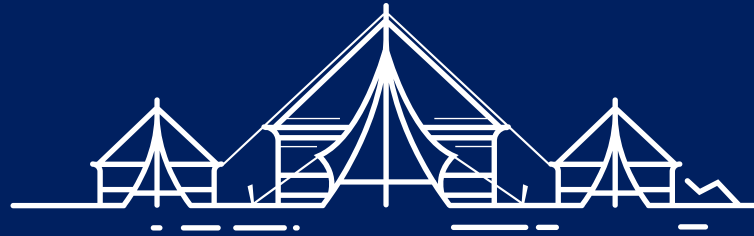
## Networks of Influence

As events become deconstructed and more frequent, and smaller sponsors will have to engage the network not just put their logo on the screen. This means Event teams will have to add engagement to their work load and likely over a long period of time.

## Attendee Sponsorship

If in person events become smaller and limited people may have to apply to attended. This gives sponsors the ability to pick people they want to spend time with and ensure they are at the event by paying their way.





# Conclusions

Let's sum it all up





**They Sydney world tour reached 100X more people virtually than it would have in person.**

## There is a Big Opportunity in The New Era of Events

- If you can reimagine the experience from a new perspective
- Re-Format the content to meet the new normal
- Increase frequency of events
- Bring the experience to them
- Focus on connections and community building



# The New York Times Events

Make the most of your time indoors. Better understand the world outside.  
Experience New York Times events, live at home.



STYLES

**A Moment of Calm with Jewel**

MAY 6



DEALBOOK

**Debrief: In it Together?**

MAY 7



COOKING

**Happy Hour With The Times: Sam Sifton and Kim Severson**

MAY 7



NEWSROOM

**This Is Good**

MAY 8



THE STONE

**Facts, Fiction and Fake News in the Pandemic**

MAY 10



TOGETHER APART

**Taking Vows Amid the Virus**

MAY 14

## The Next Normal in Events

The "Next Normal" will begin at least 6-12 months into the future, and in that new period of time brands must focus on.

1. Hybrid Events and Multi-Tiered Pricing Models
2. Distributed & Deconstructed Events Continue
3. New Ways To Facilitate Connections At Events
4. A Different Role For Sponsors



# THANK YOU