



# Safely Reopening Events & Exhibitions



July 14, 2020

***NEXTDIMENSION***

face-to-face marketing solutions

## INTRODUCTION

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The first six months of 2020 brought worldwide uncertainty in all aspects of our lives and will be remembered for the pandemic that halted our world. While 2020 sadly resulted in many businesses permanently closing, it also brought innovation and forced forward-thinking solutions.

At Dimension Display we specialize in Face-to-Face Marketing Solutions for our clients' needs at trade shows, conferences, retail spaces and presentations. We help our clients display every dimension of their business and historically, that meant creating tradeshow exhibits, booths & displays.

Once COVID-19 hit, it all stopped for us as well. With our primary business being tied to people getting together we realized that we needed to re-examine the landscape.

Like many others, we pivoted. We started providing signage, wayfinding, PPE and other COVID-related products to our clients. We quickly became aware that this was not a permanent nor sustainable business model and we had to look beyond.

As we reshaped our own operations, we assembled information from our network to bring our clients an insight into the mindset of the exhibits and events industry as it begins to resume activities. What will tradeshows look like in the future? Will we get back to "normal"? What timelines are we looking at?

Whether you're planning an event or attending one, it has never been more important to know what decisions and precautions are going on behind the scenes to ensure your safety and health.

Dimension Display has gathered this package to inform you on what is being discussed and what the future holds for face-to-face marketing, trade shows & networking opportunities. If you would like more information, please contact us directly at (204) 943-7551. We would be happy to share everything we know, as we learn it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Kemp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Rick Kemp**

President

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## WHAT WILL THE FUTURE OF FACE-TO-FACE MARKETING AT EVENTS AND TRADE SHOWS LOOK LIKE?

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COVID-19 has impacted attitudes and business revenue. With the absence of in-person marketing opportunities, over 90%<sup>1</sup> of surveyed businesses have seen a loss of revenue along with reduced brand awareness, and failure to launch new products.

It will be imperative that event organizers reassure the attendees that all precautions have been taken to ensure public safety, that all health regulations are being followed, and that it is safe to attend an event.

In late July 2020 “Together Again Expo” is being held in Orlando, Florida. The event is for trade show and event industry leaders, innovators, and professionals to showcase new strategies and tools to navigate how live events can be hosted safely and responsibly. We will update our clientele as information results become available.



Infographic courtesy of IAEE

## CAN WE STILL REACH OUR TARGETS THROUGH VIRTUAL EVENTS?

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Since mid-March, many of us have been working from home. While it was often thought of as a perk it became the new, temporary reality. It has shown unexpected benefits but also exposed inefficiencies. Many innovators used the opportunity to find ways of improving procedures and communication.

Our internal and external meetings took place using video-conferencing tech with Zoom, GoToMeeting and others suddenly becoming essential business tools.

*No matter what industry you work in, we are all in the people business. Regardless of how tech-savvy you may be, face-to-face meetings are still the most effective way to capture the attention of participants, engage them in the conversation, and drive productive collaboration – all of which are critical elements to successful partnerships and business success.*

Michael Massari, Senior Vice President of National Meetings and Events, Caesars Entertainment's ~ Forbes

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<sup>1</sup> Exhibitor Insight Report | Exhibitor Media Group May 15, 2020

In an effort to bring consistency to the visuals of a work-from-home video conference, some businesses equip their staff with a home office backdrop. This allows a “home office” to appear uniform with others in the company and extends privacy for the user.



*Home Office Environment Backdrop for video conferencing*

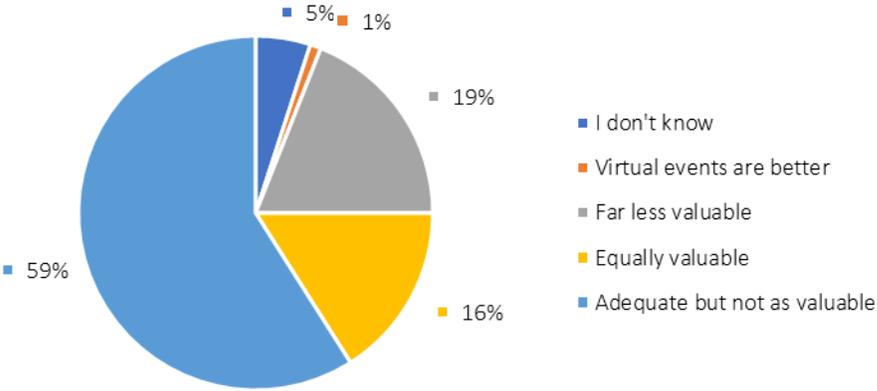
This adjustment also enables businesses to make their brand stand out and be top of mind, one of many innovations that evolved during the pandemic.

The Manitoba Chamber of Commerce released its Pandemic Business Revival Survey Report in which 55% of respondents said they had or would implement “more work from home arrangements”; 38% reported “technology upgrades”; and 34% reported “expanding online sales and other low contact customer interactions.”

Although online meetings are safe and often sufficient, marketing and sales teams have been finding it difficult to create strong interpersonal connections, and properly establish their brand, products and services virtually<sup>1</sup>.

Nonetheless, over 59%<sup>1</sup> of respondents consider virtual events to have somewhat of a positive impact and smart money is that they will remain an important part of doing business as we move forward. However, the value of in-person networking and business development continues to be

**Given your experience with virtual events, how do they compare to live events?**



considered a missing element as one-on-one dialogue is no longer present, specifically in group settings.

As restrictions are relaxed, we can expect one-on-one meetings to progress to smaller meetings of two to five people. With proper distancing it will become five to 10 attendees, then more.

While many people will continue to prefer in-person, others may question their personal safety at a larger event. What is being done by organizers to ensure safety and confidence of attendees?

## IS IT SAFE TO ATTEND LARGE EVENTS AND TRADE SHOWS?

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In its June 2020 report, Exhibitor Media Group shares the World Health Organisation's (WHO) support of attending international events and trade shows, with the following precautions:

- ❖ begin by exploring if your staff can attend virtually
- ❖ send the minimal amount of required staff
- ❖ confirm the event has a proactive plan to prevent attendees from contracting the virus
- ❖ confirm the event venue has proper digital and physical messaging in place to ensure safety guidelines are in place and respected

The WHO defines a mass gathering as “a concentration of people at a specific location for a specific purpose over a set period of time”. Organisers should be mindful of the capacity of the health care institutions in event host cities, to ensure they are able to accommodate a large influx of patients should a breakout occur.

Additional tips for event organizers include<sup>2</sup>:

- ❖ Use of distinct entrances and exits
- ❖ Controlled one-way traffic
- ❖ Touchless check-in
- ❖ Floor signage at registration and throughout the venue to maintain 6-foot distancing requirements
- ❖ Hand sanitization stations at key locations
- ❖ Use of face-covering masks
- ❖ Pre-event messaging to all event attendees outlining what to expect when they arrive, including any new local policy and health updates

## SHOULD YOU EXPECT TO BE TESTED WHEN ATTENDING PUBLIC EVENTS?

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Although it could be implemented for events, based on local requirements, the WHO does not expect this to be the case.

With the strain on testing kit supply chain and the trustworthiness of rapid testing, it is preferred that the health care institutions continue to lead and manage official COVID-19 testing sites. The use of common over-the-counter fever reduction medication can affect results and taking people's temperature prior to attending an event may not necessarily be effective. Also, asymptomatic individuals carrying the virus may not see a spike in their temperature when getting screened upon entry.

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<sup>2</sup> IAEE Essential Considerations for Safely Reopening Exhibitions and Events – June 5, 2020:

Testing attendees' temperatures at check-in may however serve as a manner to reassure your event attendees that some level of screening is in place, as long as it is accompanied with all other required and additional safety regulations. Encouraging the use of face masks is also a good practice if not currently mandatory in your region.



## COMMUNICATION IS KEY!

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Event organizers are being advised to build their stakeholders' confidence in the event's approach to safety by having a thorough communications plan in place that sets proper expectations to ensure a safe environment. If you are concerned about attending, ask to see their plan.

### ❖ Pre-Event Communication

- event website; details on safety measures in place
- email reminders to reassure attendees of steps taken to ensure safety
- provide any updated regional health notifications and requirements
- request an emergency contact name and phone number on registration form

### ❖ On-Site Communication

- visual / digital reminders to respect social distancing (rotating screens, posters, etc.)
- touchless hand sanitization stations located throughout the venue, distanced as per locally required
- speakers to repeat the importance of respecting physical distancing regulations and hand washing
- include safety measures in the event program

### ❖ Post-Event Communication

- consider sending a Thank You message to attendees for attending your event and for respecting the health and safety measures

### ❖ Immediate or Urgent Messaging System

- consider using a mobile app for your event, or other available system, to allow for immediate emergency messaging to all attendees

## ENSURING A SATISFACTORY ROI FOR EVENT EXHIBITORS & ATTENDEES

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Organizers are being encouraged to involve stakeholders in a conversation through surveys or pre-event registration. Asking what their main concerns are and committing to work with them to ensure a worthy ROI for exhibitors and attendees while ensuring everyone's safety is the best way forward.



Event sponsors, attendees and exhibitors rely largely on the in-person networking and traffic at their booths for business development.

The new physical distancing requirements may limit the number of people who can attend an event, or worse, the number of people you have time to engage with.

Time constraints can create a sense of urgency as exhibitors may feel they won't have enough time to talk with people. Below are a few tips for organizers and attendees to help you get as much face time as possible:

### ❖ Extend the exhibitor timeframe

- Sponsors and exhibitors want the opportunity to capture event attendees' attention, run through their value proposition and open the floor to questions.
- Consider creating designated groups and time blocks to visit exhibitors. This could be buyer groups, industries, member associations, etc.
- Perhaps a portion of the day could be by appointments only.

### ❖ Manage the group flow of your exhibitor hall

- Separate entrance and exit for your exhibit
- Directional and safety signage
- One assigned staff member to help control the flow and time

### ❖ Plan for larger exhibitor spaces

- Event organizers are experimenting with different scenarios such as larger spaces between booths and larger spaces for booths (15x15 for a 10x10)

- Many exhibitors are already purchasing larger booths to better control the physical distancing regulations. Please note: Dimension Display does not feel it will be necessary to purchase an entire new booth. We can explore methods of extending your current booth's dimensions and directional traffic to fill any space.



❖ Offer creative activation items

- Branded face masks
- Branded reusable takeaway cutlery
- Branded individual condiment packages
- Branded hand sanitization stations

## IN CONCLUSION

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Trade shows will be back. Conferences, expos, breakfasts and lunches will resume.

Face-to-face sales/marketing remains a vital element in doing business for a community that craves connection. In-person meetings create memorable experiences, build trust and are the foundation of how we engage in commerce. As we move forward we need to be more mindful of safety & health risks and ensure the necessary precautions are in place.

The trade show, events and exhibition industry is preparing so we can all feel safe the next time we get together.