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Julie Wilharm Clark



Unplanning

- Treat all parties with respect and kindness
- Look at all options, especially the “rebook clause”
- Reword the Force Majeure clause in addendums to include pandemics and epidemics, travel bans, etc.

Jump starting your events

- Network
- Revisit all policies
- Consult hotel or venue about extending cut-off dates

- Establish a “Crisis Communication Plan”
- Compose a “fluid” timeline and ensure those responsible for actions are aware of the deadlines
- External Outreach
 - Be transparent - discuss the attendee’s worries
 - Address event changes (if this is an annual event)
- Onsite Suggestions and Changes
 - Stagger registration lines - footprint clings on floor to keep people spaced
 - No buffets if possible
 - Go plated when you can or have hotel team serve the food (less hands involved)
 - Have hotel staffed water stations (where they sanitize handle between uses)
 - Sanitizing stations (more and closer together)
 - Staff a visible First Aid room

Alex Plaxen



Don’t just put a bandaid on it

- While the inclination right now is to resolve the current crisis and communicate the necessary messaging to our stakeholders, the fact that less than 10% of the events industry had crisis communications plans in place prior to this crisis should concern us all. We were woefully unprepared for this. Now is the time, while it is top of mind, to work with your teams and create a crisis communications plan that will work for you long-term. Right now we’re building the plane as we fly it. Let’s make sure that this doesn’t need to happen to us and our events again.

This is a level 4 Crisis

- Even if your event isn’t until the Fall or Winter, if you’re marketing it or registration is open, you have to say something now. Your stakeholders, attendees, sponsors, exhibitors, and vendors, are all looking to you for information and reassurance. The goal is to be as clear, concise, and consistent as possible. Act with empathy and care.

Crisis Communications is not a Mad Lib

- Check your emails right now and you’ll see many, many, many emails from companies regarding their COVID-19 responses and plans. So many are cookie-cutter, copy and pasted responses and they make us feel that little effort was taken to craft a personal response. Consider creative alternatives to stand out from the crowd. Have your CEO film a heartfelt video. Create a late night talk show style “Top 10 List” and infuse a bit of humor. Make it personal by showing pictures of your team’s work from home set-ups. Sign your emails with a name to show that we are humans talking to humans and we’re going to get through this together.

Leahe Murphy



You don’t have to completely cancel or postpone your meetings

- With the expanding technology landscape, better and more user-friendly devices and technologies have begun to emerge. Gone are the days of having to miss an important meeting because of travel delays or restrictions for example. Additionally, virtual meetings extend the shelf-life of your meetings. People can still access and replay your recorded virtual meetings, thus increasing their value.

This is still a hands-on approach

- Virtual meetings does not negate the need for a production or technical team, in any case it requires it to make your meeting run more smoothly than ever. Our virtual meeting services provides you with a dedicated team of technical directors and program managers that will handle content, act as panelists and can even help you with Q&A questions and moderation. Our platform has enabled us to still be part of your team. Additionally, flexible registration management also allows you to brand forms and emails, and integrates directly with your CMS, giving you control over your meeting attendance.

You like numbers? We got numbers

- Reporting and analytics are very important for a meeting’s success, and we know this! Track performance with exportable user level analytics, engagement graphics, drop analytics, location analytics and more. The platform also allows for interaction through the use of Q&A and polling and audience engagement tools.