

Crisis Management and Recovery for Events

Supplementary questions

7: The future of events will be hybrid

Tim Brown

1. Provide a definition for virtual events and hybrid events.

Virtual events can be defined as “events represented on the internet” (McLoughlin, 2014, p. 242), Virtual events are events which create an effective online environment for people to engage with the content and each other.

A hybrid event “involves a mixture of physical events with elements of virtual events usually running simultaneously and with overlapping content and interactive elements” (Sox et al., 2017, p. 946) Technology is integral to hybrid events which connects all participants digitally across multiple locations.

2. What are the key considerations for designing virtual and hybrid events?

- Technology:
 - Broadcast platform
 - Camera
 - Microphones
 - WiFi / broadband speed and stability
- Quality of content and programming
- Interactivity:
 - Polling
 - Q&A
 - Chat functions
- Ability to link event platforms to social media
- Audience needs
 - Mapping the audience journey

3. What are some of the benefits and disbenefits of virtual and hybrid events?

Benefits:

- Lower costs
- Ability to connect with a larger, global audience
- More environmentally friendly:
 - Lower CO2 footprint
 - Less marketing collateral
 - Digital programmes and information
 - Less travel required
- Ease of use for the technology
- Increased familiarity with virtual technologies
- Enhanced accessibility

Disbenefits:

- Lack of audience engagement (distractions, multitasking etc)
- Zoom fatigue
- Issues with connectivity (broadband / wifi failure)
- Lack of social engagement
- Limited networking

4. What are the potential future trends for virtual and hybrid events?

- A growth in ephemeral content
- Enhanced gamification incorporated into virtual and hybrid events
- Increased use of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) into events
- An emergence of hybrid event ambassadors
- A significant growth in hybrid events
- New training and techniques which enhance event professionals' capabilities to deliver virtual and hybrid events
- Greater investment in developing new platforms and applications for enhancing the consumer experience
- A focus on improving event content