

Hybrid Event Best Practices:

From Onsite To Online Experiences



Our audiences are primed for an immersive **digital experience**, requiring an evolved approach to onsite experiences, and expecting innovative blending of **online and onsite** as we forge towards a new normal in the event world. The events industry is uniquely positioned to use technology to our advantage.



Now, in a time of unprecedented challenges, we cannot afford to hope that our traditional business models will bounce back from the brink. We must define a new model that sustainably supports our industry.

As venues were forced to close their doors to face-to-face events, we have seen many examples globally of venues finding new ways of utilizing their spaces, whether by offering their venue space to hospitals or by renting out co-working space to self-employed people or companies.

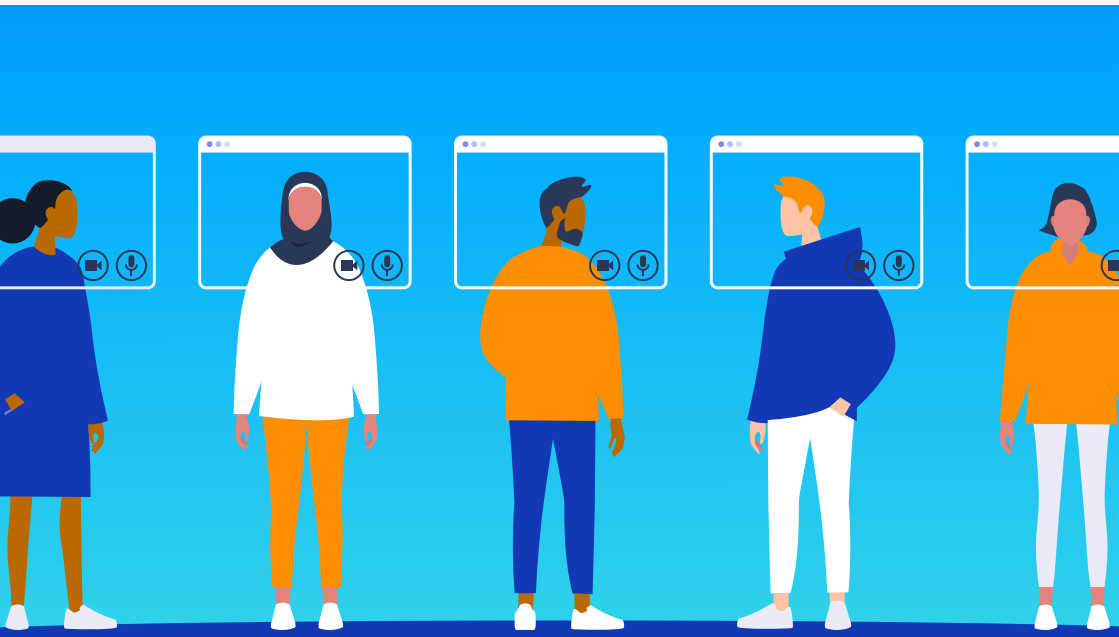
Venues have undergone significant transformations to adapt to the new events landscape. Social distancing, venue sanitation and visitor tracing are just some of the requirements venues are being challenged to implement to comply with local health regulations as they plan for the safe return of in-person events. Many of these safety measures are likely to become standard practice as global attitudes change regarding crowd control and cleanliness.



Hybrid events: what are they and how do they work?

As the world evolves, onsite events will only be one part of a much broader experience that combines onsite and online content like never before. Some venues have already come up with innovative ideas on how to use their space, taking more ownership when it comes to managing events in their venue spaces, leveraging technology and audio-visual resources to accommodate virtual and hybrid event experiences.

The entire events industry is preparing for **hybrid events**: a combination of an in-person event with virtual attendance. Online components for remote attendees are added to the concept of the onsite event. Via social media and interactive tools such as live chats, polls, and Q&A sessions, the remote audience can interact directly with the organizers and other attendees. Opening your in-person event to a virtual audience increases overall event attendance and gives event organizers the opportunity to generate additional revenue.



73%

of event professionals
have planned a hybrid
event concept in 2020*

* 2020 ETC.SURVEY OF EVENT PROFESSIONALS



It does not come as a surprise that many venues are now preparing themselves to welcome more hybrid events.

Venues On The Hybrid Route

Hybrid event formats are most likely going to change attendees' behavior. This will have an impact on attendee expectations, but also on the requirements for event organizers and venues when it comes to organizing engaging hybrid event experiences.

We have seen leading convention and exhibition centers across the globe reacting to the trend and starting to set up "TV Studio" like environments within their venue to deliver the perfect setting for virtual and hybrid events.

The service aspect is certainly playing an increasing role here. Organizers will appreciate venues that are able to offer everything through a one-stop-shop as they bundle services for hybrid events.

Key areas

impacting venues by changing events



Technology and AV
requirements within the venue



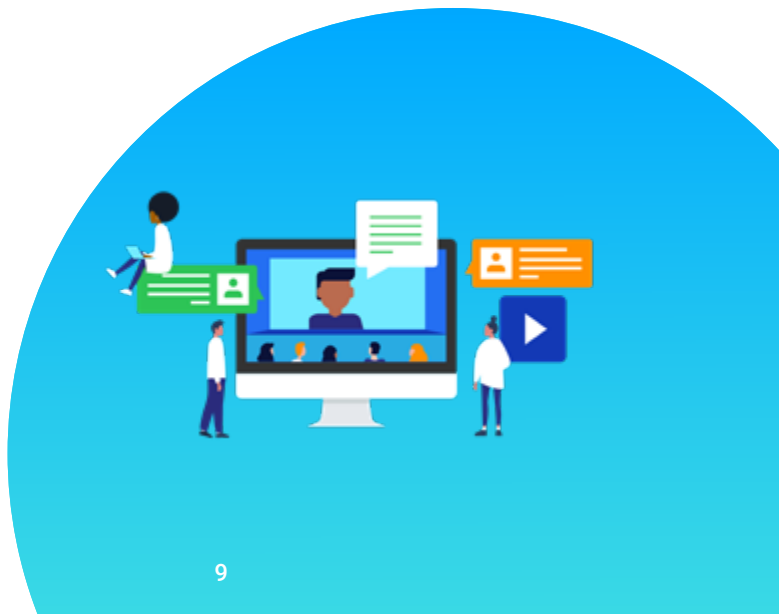
Technical expertise and consulting
services of venue staff



Flexibility and service orientation
towards customers & staff

Hybrid events are the opportunity for venues to attract new customers and extend their reach beyond their physical location by adding a virtual audience.

The new world of events will see more and more delocalized experiences emerged, where a single event may take place in different cities around the country (and the world) simultaneously. The constraints of physical boundaries are being lifted so that people have the chance to attend a single event from different locations, whether in-person or remotely. Venues are challenged to think proactively and partner with their peers around the world to facilitate these new formats of events and better support their customers.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: MANCHESTER CENTRAL, UNITED KINGDOM

In these times, venue leaders need to be pragmatic about their future strategy, in an innovative and creative way.

Steven Bennett, Head of IT at Manchester Central, is convinced that hybrid events are here to stay. As a consequence, venues need to be more flexible than ever in order to accommodate the ever-changing needs of the event organizer.

Thanks to their [new Virtual Event Solution: 'Live from the Auditorium'](#), Manchester Central and Sterling Event Group have teamed up and responded perfectly to the need for a solution that delivers professional, broadcast-quality content for virtual or hybrid events.

“Our ‘Live from the Auditorium’ experience provides the perfect alternative solution to a ‘live’ event, allowing businesses to reach their teams and customers with business updates, training sessions or product launches, from a professional studio setting. Content can be streamed in real-time via any existing virtual event platform. Alternatively, the content can simply be embedded into a website and/or pre-recorded for streaming at a later date.”

Steven Bennett, HEAD OF IT - MANCHESTER CENTRAL



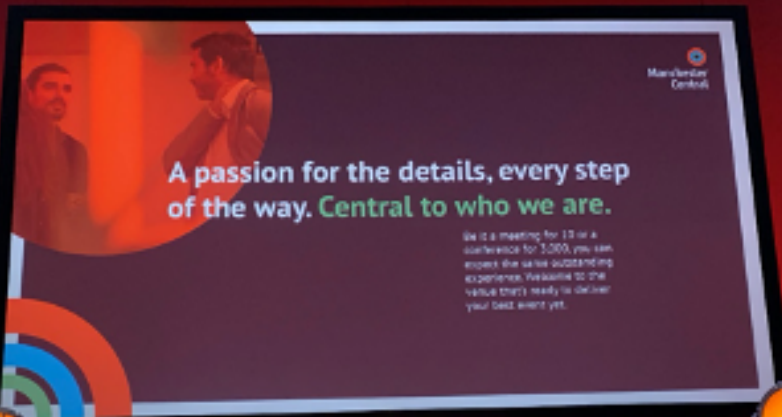
**'LIVE FROM THE AUDITORIUM'
MANCHESTER CENTRAL,
UNITED KINGDOM**

“We’re really excited about the launch of this experience, as we believe that now more than ever, it is vital for businesses to continue engaging with employees, customers and peers, and this virtual solution allows just that, within a professional environment and supported by a team of experts.”

Steven Bennett, HEAD OF IT - MANCHESTER CENTRAL

For more information visit:
[Manchester Central Live Auditorium](#)

“We’re confident that it will be a great addition to our live event services going forward.”





IN THE SPOTLIGHT: SWISS TECH CONVENTION CENTER LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND

When it comes to delivering engaging virtual event experiences, technical expertise is a must-have for successful venue managers and their teams. Venues and convention centers need to be up to date with the latest developments of digital and virtual event trends.

One of the leading convention centers in Europe with a focus on technical expertise, the SwissTech Convention Center (STCC) Lausanne, fully caters to new customer requirements regarding hybrid and virtual events by providing essential audiovisual equipment to turn all live events into hybrid ones and support worldwide broadcasting.

In addition to live streaming, the AV team provides assistance in the conception of an event, all the way to the execution through one single point of contact. For this purpose, [the Auditorium D \(“D” as for “Digital”\)](#) has been developed, a dedicated platform allowing for interactions in a virtual environment.

Located on the campus of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), which is ranked among the top five universities in Europe according to QS Global, STCC provides easy access to an important science and innovation hub.

EPFL is home to over 370 laboratories focused on disciplines ranging from mathematics to life science to architecture and engineering, led by internationally recognized professors.

The neighboring region hosts over 2000 tech companies and is recognized internationally in many areas of innovation such as Food Tech, Sport Tech, Trust Tech, health technologies, digital, drones and space.

SWISS TECH
CONVENTION CENTER
LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND



Not only does the SwissTech Convention Center Lausanne invest in technology, but it also values international partnerships and exchange.

On-going communication with other industry leaders and experts is key to success, as it allows for new solutions and ideas in this constantly changing world.

Learn more about the Virtual capabilities at [Swiss Tech Convention Center here.](#)

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: GOLD COAST CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE, AUSTRALIA

The iconic Centre has hosted thousands of business and entertainment events since opening in 2004.

The Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC) was designed with flexibility in mind and now more than ever, this ability is a crucial element of successful events in today's fast-changing environment.

Since reopening earlier this year under its approved site-specific COVID safe plan, every event delivered at GCCEC has incorporated a hybrid component, including remote presenters and speakers, multi-room streaming, real-time interactions with live and virtual audiences, and multi-site local and global conferencing.

Venue Transformation and Innovation

The Centre created a dedicated studio for recording and streaming, as well as the ability to build a mobile studio almost anywhere in the venue. GCCEC added to its technical and audio-visual inventory with additional broadcast cameras, studio lighting and streaming production switchers.

The in-house technology team has engaged in hardware specific and software platform training ensuring they deliver the best production outcomes in a hybrid environment.



**GOLD COAST CONVENTION
AND EXHIBITION CENTRE,
AUSTRALIA**

Although the convention centre is primarily in the business of hosting face to face events, the growth of hybrid activity has provided a platform to innovate and leverage opportunities for the client to expand reach and potentially gain further sponsorship from 'new' digital channels.

The technology team at GCCEC is solutions oriented and works hand in hand with every client to ensure a seamless, engaging and memorable event experience, whether in person, virtual or hybrid.



**GOLD COAST CONVENTION
AND EXHIBITION CENTRE,
AUSTRALIA**

“We’ve adapted to the current demand for event streaming by designing creative technical solutions that equally support the live and remote audiences. Giving event organisers comfort that they will meet the event goals has always been our priority – there’s just an extra layer now.”

Ben Morris, EXECUTIVE MANAGER - TECHNOLOGY,
GCCEC

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: AUCKLAND LIVE AND AUCKLAND CONVENTIONS, VENUES & EVENTS, NEW ZEALAND

Auckland Live and Auckland Conventions, Venues & Events is a leader in the live arts, entertainment, conventions and events industries, and an active contributor to the vibrancy and creativity of the city.

As custodians of Aotearoa New Zealand's largest portfolio of iconic venues, they present live local and international shows and conferences, arts and education programmes, and civic and community events across Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau.

The past eight months have been characterised by unprecedented disruption and uncertainty across Aotearoa New Zealand's live events and entertainment industry. With venues closed or restricted in capacity by the New Zealand government's ongoing Covid-19 response measures, activity has also been significantly curtailed, impacting event and performance partners immeasurably.

Several weeks prior to the initial lockdown in March, Auckland Live identified that assembling and communicating with the industry in such a scenario would be cumbersome and limiting, and that it would need to find new ways to engage with audiences should they be confined to home.

With all business teams coming together, [the organisation swiftly developed an award-winning* initiative](#) to support this, inspired largely by a determined team member who, hours prior to venues first being shut down, established a broadcast suite in their living room, anticipating the need for online support and access to equipment.

*Auckland Live Digital Services was awarded the 2020 HPA Innovation of the Year Award by the Entertainment Venues Association of New Zealand (EVANZ) for the initiative.

Next, with a need to continue engagement with both audiences and clients, an action plan was crafted to showcase established content and profile those in NZ and beyond.

The Live Online portal provided a connected platform to elevate artists and companies through Auckland Live's databases to increase visibility and encourage the public to make direct donations for these online experiences, in lieu of what would ordinarily be ticket sales.

With the uncertainty around the return to full capacity venues, the teams scoped a cost-effective digital services package to work across ticketed/free events and conventions, meetings, and events. They also developed a bolt-on package for hirers who wanted to engage in digital activation but who had limited budgets.

Over several months packages were tested in real-time, resulting in the capacity to deliver:

- ONLINE HUI (WEBINARS) IN VIRTUAL VENUES
- A DIGITAL STUDIO IN THE HERALD THEATRE FOR PRESENTATIONS AND CONVERSATIONS
- HYBRID CAPACITY TO DELIVER PRE-RECORDED OR LIVE-STREAMED EVENTS TO REDUCED CAPACITY AUDIENCES
- MULTI-CAMERA LIVE BROADCASTS EDITED IN REAL TIME, OF CONCERT REHEARSALS AND ACTUAL PERFORMANCES
- A TICKETING INTEGRATION PILOT WITH TICKETMASTER NZ TO PROVIDE CLIENTS WITH REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEIR PROJECTS

Auckland Live's general manager of Programming and Presenter Services, Bernie Haldane, says the initiative has enabled Auckland Live to reimagine events in its venues by taking the established position of digital activation and hybrid events for the conventions market as an in-venue experience, and translating it into a performing arts/ticketed event offer that starts at the development of the work and engages the audience post-event.



**AUCKLAND LIVE AND
AUCKLAND CONVENTIONS,
VENUES & EVENTS**

“Just as importantly, we’ve established a digital road map for creative industries and arts programming development that solves the issue of how to inspire audiences to build confidence in returning to live venues, and to engage and spark curiosity in the uninitiated with online activations.

Most of all, we are proud it has enabled us to support, promote, and continue working with our major presenters, stakeholders, and the performing arts community on a local and national level.”

**Ms. Bernie Haldane, GENERAL MANAGER OF
PROGRAMMING AND PRESENTER SERVICES,
AUCKLAND LIVE AND AUCKLAND CONVENTIONS,
VENUES & EVENTS**



The future of events is a smarter hybrid model. Venues have the technology to fully unify experiences across their physical spaces and a virtual platform. Event organizers and venues will need to be more agile and flexible than ever. Event formats may quickly shift from onsite to hybrid or virtual, and venues need to think how they can facilitate that transition to support their customers. The bottom line is that offering both digital and physical options makes you a leader in the field.

go.ungerboeck.com/hybrid-events