

# The Experiential Marketing Operations 'Pain Point' Index Survey

Creating safe, hygienic and effective event experiences in the COVID-19 era

#### In-depth data on:

- What's inside brands' live in-person event health, hygiene and safety plans
- + The biggest challenges and pain points when developing COVID-era plans and procedures
- + How event teams are addressing social distancing with space design techniques and technology
- + How operations budgets are changing due to these issues and changes

PRODUCED BY eventmarketer

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Introduction   | 3  |
|--|----|
| Executive Summary  | 4  |
| I. Live In-Person Event Health, Hygiene and Safety Plans     | 7  |
| II. Cleaning and Safety-Related Operational Issues and Tasks | 11 |
| III. Budgets, Costs for PPE and Venue Contracts              | 15 |
| IV. Communications and Contingency Plans                     | 19 |
| V. Initial Lessons Learned                                   | 20 |
| About the Respondents and Methodology                        | 22 |

### INTRODUCTION

# THE EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING OPERATIONS 'PAIN POINT' INDEX SURVEY: CREATING SAFE, HYGIENIC AND EFFECTIVE EVENT EXPERIENCES IN THE COVID-19 ERA

Nine months into the COVID-19 era, there are still many unknowns for the event and experiential marketing industry. What is known: The impacts of the pandemic are expected to be lasting, and so in-person events in the new reality will require a new roadmap. Event marketers are navigating uncharted territory as they develop reactivation plans related to creating safe, hygienic and also *effective* in-person event experiences in the age of social distancing. This new Experiential Intelligence Report digs into the specific operational and logistical issues impacting event teams and programs in order to identify the industry's biggest challenges and help event professionals work together to overcome them.

The report includes:

- + How brands are developing live in-person event health, hygiene and safety plans, and what's in these plans
- + The biggest challenges and pain points when developing COVID-era plans and procedures
- + How event teams are addressing social distancing with space design techniques and technology
- + How operations budgets are being funded to accommodate these issues and changes
- + Early lessons learned by brands
- + And many other key questions and metrics as well as comments from top event and experiential marketers

To develop the analysis, *Event Marketer* conducted a survey of leading event and experiential marketing executives. The survey was conducted in August and more than 200 companies responded. *Event Marketer* thanks all of the respondents for their invaluable contribution to the study.

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

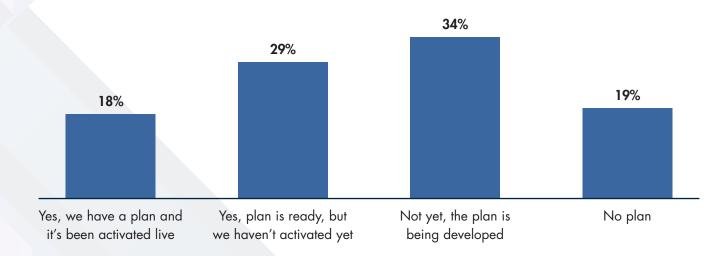
After the initial shock wave of the COVID-19 outbreak swept over the event industry and resulted in mass cancellations of in-person event and experiential programs, many event teams quickly pivoted to online/virtual events. But as cities began to reopen, and companies looked down the pike at what the future of experiential holds, event teams began developing reactivation plans to prepare for the new reality. This all-new Recovery Research study quantifies how event marketers are addressing operational issues, challenges and opportunities related to developing health, hygiene and safety plans and procedures for in-person experiences.

Key insights from the research:

# 47% of Event Teams Have a Live In-Person Event Health, Hygiene and Safety Plan in Place, But Only 18 Percent of These Companies Have Actually Activated the Plan

Not only are event marketers developing plans for the future, some have actually put those plans into action. Eighteen percent of event marketing teams say they have already developed, and implemented, a live inperson event health, hygiene and safety plan. And 29% percent say their plan is ready, but they have not activated yet. One-third (34%) have their health, hygiene and safety plan still in the development phase.

#### Status of Event Teams' Live In-Person Event Health, Hygiene and Safety Plans





### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# The Biggest Challenge and Pain Point Related to Developing and Implementing COVID-era Plans and Procedures

The different and constantly changing state and local rules, regulations and protocols represents the biggest challenge facing event teams in their planning processes. States across the country have adopted their own mandates related to PPE, travel quarantine orders and protocols for group gatherings (indoor or outdoor). It's a challenge for consumer brands, especially, according to the survey respondents. Other top issues: forecasting in-person attendance levels and accessing accurate information.

| Biggest Challenges and Pain Points Impacting Reactivation Plans   | All % |
|---|-------|
| Different and changing municipal rules, regulations and protocols | 64%   |
| Forecasting in-person attendance/participation levels             | 61%   |
| Accessing accurate information                                    | 60%   |
| Designing safe events with distancing                             | 56%   |
| Corporate travel bans and restrictions                            | 53%   |
| Liability risk  | 53%   |

#### The Majority of Funds for Hygiene and Safety Procedures and Protocols Have Been Shifted from Other Parts of the Event Marketing Budget

Fifty-four percent of respondents say their expected costs to implement health, hygiene and safety procedures and protocols at in-person experiences will be funded by shifting resources from other parts of the event marketing budget. Twenty-five percent say funds or resources have been, or are expected to be, shifted from other parts of the company. On average, 15% of event operations and logistics budgets are expected to be allocated to health, hygiene and safety.

| How the Event Operations Budget Has Been Impacted                                | All % |
|--|-------|
| Funds/resources have been shifted from other parts of the event marketing budget | 54%   |
| Funds/resources have been shifted from other parts of the company                | 25%   |
| Funds/resources have been shifted from other parts of the marketing budget       | 18%   |
| New funds/resources have been provided to cover these costs                      | 16%   |
| No impact/other  | 21%   |



### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Event Teams Weigh in on Early Lessons Learned

The survey asked what have been the most important operational and logistical lessons learned related to activating live in-person events during the COVID era. While it's still early in the reactivation planning process, some of the most important early lessons learned by event teams include:

- + Prepare to make changes and adjustments often and quickly
- + Develop a contingency plan
- + Have a digital or hybrid event backup plan
- + Stagger schedules and arrival times
- + Expect to have some people not follow protocols and recommendations
- + Consider working with an expert health and safety partner

#### About the Respondents

The survey was sent to leading brand event marketers at large companies in a range of categories including entertainment and media, technology, financial services, medical and pharmaceuticals, sports and recreation, automotive, consumer products and other key sectors. Sixty percent are with business-to-business brands and 40% work for consumer-facing brands.

The findings in this Executive Summary provide only a small portion of the insights from the study. The next sections provide additional insightful data, analysis and benchmarks.



### I. Live In-Person Event Health, Hygiene and Safety Plans

Event marketers have the challenging task of building pandemic playbooks from scratch, taking into account multiple sources of information and guidelines, in addition to accommodating the different and changing regulations across states and local municipalities. In this section, we provide an analysis of what's contained in live in-person event health, hygiene and safety plans, the most valuable sources of information, and the biggest challenges related to developing and implementing them.

#### Percentage of Event Marketing Teams with a Live In-Person Event Health, Hygiene and Safety Plan

Survey Question: Does your organization currently have a live in-person event health, hygiene and safety plan in place?

Eighteen percent of event marketing teams have already developed, and implemented, a live in-person event health, hygiene and safety plan. Twenty-nine percent say their plan is ready but they have not activated yet. Just over one-third (34%) say their plan is still in the development phase.

|  | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|--|-------|--------|--------|
| Yes, plan is ready, but we haven't activated yet | 29%   | 30%    | 26%    |
| Yes, we have a plan and it's been activated live | 18%   | 20%    | 14%    |
| Not yet, the plan is being developed             | 34%   | 35%    | 36%    |
| No   | 19%   | 15%    | 24%    |

### PLANNING

#### What's Included in Health, Hygiene and Safety Plans

Survey Question: If your organization has, or is developing, a live in-person event health, hygiene and safety plan, which of the following does it include?

Clearly, these are detailed and somewhat complex plans, as well as plans that have changed a number of times already. More than 70% of these plans include a communications plan for customers/attendees/ participants (as well as key vendors), written protocols for health, hygiene and safety, plans for signage and on-site messaging, and budget for PPE and on-site safety procedures/protocols.

|  | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|--|-------|--------|--------|
| Communications plan for customers/attendees/participants                 | 90%   | 90%    | 89%    |
| Written protocols for health, hygiene and safety                         | 81%   | 81%    | 79%    |
| Plans for signage and on-site messaging                                  | 81%   | 78%    | 87%    |
| Budget for PPE and on-site safety procedures/protocols                   | 74%   | 72%    | 74%    |
| Communications plan for key service providers/vendors                    | 72%   | 75%    | 66%    |
| Communications plan for exhibitors/sponsors                              | 69%   | 76%    | 53%    |
| Contingency and triage plans for worst-case-scenarios                    | 62%   | 64%    | 61%    |
| Plan for sourcing PPE and protective equipment                           | 61%   | 60%    | 61%    |
| Brand staff training plans   | 58%   | 50%    | 74%    |
| New location and venue contractual language or goals/<br>guidelines      | 56%   | 54%    | 63%    |
| Plan for technology to manage health, hygiene and safety                 | 52%   | 50%    | 50%    |
| Vendor staff training plans  | 45%   | 43%    | 50%    |
| New service provider/vendor contractual language or goals/<br>guidelines | 44%   | 42%    | 53%    |
| New agency contractual language or goals/guidelines                      | 38%   | 33%    | 47%    |
| Other  | 4%    | 3%     | 5%     |



### PLANNING

#### Separate, Customized Safety Plans for Various Participant Groups

Survey Question: Do you have a separate, customized safety strategy and plan for each of the following participant groups?

Most event marketers say they have separate, customized safety strategies and plans for not only attendees but also event staff and exhibitor/sponsor teams. More than 40% have separate plans in place for vendor staff and speakers.

|                                      | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|
| General attendees/event participants | 84%   | 82%    | 86%    |
| Event staff                          | 76%   | 75%    | 75%    |
| Exhibitor/sponsor staff and vendors  | 60%   | 64%    | 50%    |
| Vendor staff                         | 44%   | 44%    | 42%    |
| Speakers                             | 42%   | 51%    | 28%    |
| VIPs                                 | 28%   | 36%    | 14%    |
| Other                                | 11%   | 16%    | 6%     |

#### **Most Valuable Information Sources for Plans**

Survey Question: What have been the most valuable sources of information to help develop these plans?

Primary sources of health and safety information have been the CDC, event industry associations, the World Health Organization (WHO), and specific venues and locations.

|  | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|--|-------|--------|--------|
| CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) | 78%   | 82%    | 72%    |
| Event industry associations                      | 58%   | 62%    | 48%    |
| WHO (World Health Organization)                  | 46%   | 48%    | 39%    |
| Venues and locations                             | 44%   | 42%    | 48%    |
| Other major health or medical organizations      | 33%   | 33%    | 33%    |
| Travel and hospitality industry associations     | 31%   | 35%    | 20%    |
| General news and media                           | 27%   | 23%    | 33%    |
| Service providers/vendors                        | 26%   | 24%    | 30%    |
| Agencies   | 17%   | 16%    | 20%    |
| Medical experts hired by our organization        | 14%   | 11%    | 20%    |
| Event media organizations                        | 14%   | 11%    | 19%    |
| Other  | 6%    | 4%     | 7%     |



### PLANNING

#### **Biggest Challenges and Pain Points in COVID-era Planning**

Survey Question: What are the biggest challenges and pain points related to developing and implementing these COVID-era event marketing plans and procedures?

Indeed, the biggest challenge is the different and changing state and municipal rules, regulations and protocols, which especially impacts consumer programs, since they may be activated in multiple locations. The other top issues are forecasting in-person attendance levels and being able to access accurate information. Note that 12 of the challenges listed in the data table below have been selected by one-third or more of the respondents, suggesting the sheer number of major challenges and pain points facing event teams.

|   | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|---|-------|--------|--------|
| Different and changing municipal rules, regulations and protocols                 | 64%   | 59%    | 73%    |
| Forecasting in-person attendance/participation levels                             | 61%   | 60%    | 61%    |
| Accessing accurate information  | 60%   | 63%    | 55%    |
| Designing safe and appropriate event and experiential environments for distancing | 56%   | 50%    | 65%    |
| Corporate travel bans and restrictions  | 53%   | 63%    | 35%    |
| Liability risk  | 53%   | 56%    | 49%    |
| Designing safe and appropriate attendee journey paths for distancing              | 48%   | 43%    | 57%    |
| Designing safe and appropriate exhibits for distancing                            | 40%   | 37%    | 43%    |
| Budgeting   | 38%   | 40%    | 35%    |
| Additional unknown factors  | 37%   | 35%    | 41%    |
| Available space in venues for social distancing                                   | 36%   | 33%    | 43%    |
| Lack of staff experience in these areas   | 33%   | 35%    | 31%    |
| Cost of PPE and health and safety equipment                                       | 23%   | 21%    | 27%    |
| Cost of technology to improve health and safety plans                             | 23%   | 23%    | 24%    |
| Internal buy-in on the plan   | 17%   | 13%    | 22%    |
| Sourcing PPE and health and safety equipment                                      | 16%   | 15%    | 16%    |
| Changing company, brand and/or marketing strategies                               | 14%   | 13%    | 18%    |
| Other   | 7%    | 2%     | 14%    |



### **OPERATIONS**

### II. Cleaning and Safety-Related Operational Issues, Tasks

Cleaning and sanitation used to primarily take place behind the scenes. But in the COVID era, cleaning procedures are front and center—from planning to communications. We asked brands about their cleaning and operational plans, and how they planned to address social distancing with design and technology.

#### Top Cleaning and Safety-Related Operational Tasks

Survey Question: What have you done or are planning to do in terms of instituting cleaning and safetyrelated operational tasks or changes on-site at live in-person events and experiences?

The top five tasks that event teams have instituted or plan to provide related to cleaning and safety are: Adding hand sanitizer/cleaning stations, providing staff training, increasing cleaning staff and frequency, and adding signage related to cleaning procedures.

|   | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|---|-------|--------|--------|
| Adding hand sanitizer/cleaning stations/areas throughout the event                      | 90%   | 88%    | 94%    |
| Providing training and information for staff  | 86%   | 82%    | 92%    |
| Increasing cleaning staff and processes   | 81%   | 78%    | 85%    |
| Increasing the cleaning schedule frequency  | 81%   | 84%    | 77%    |
| Adding signage related to cleaning and related procedures                               | 78%   | 75%    | 81%    |
| Providing training and information for attendees  | 65%   | 60%    | 71%    |
| Increasing event footprint for social distancing/throughput/traffic                     | 64%   | 66%    | 60%    |
| Providing training and information for partners and vendors                             | 61%   | 60%    | 63%    |
| Adding additional cleaning measures beyond the venue's responsibilities                 | 55%   | 45%    | 65%    |
| Reducing/eliminating food and beverage services offerings                               | 47%   | 44%    | 50%    |
| Working with government, medical and public safety officials on new plans and processes | 39%   | 37%    | 42%    |
| Increasing security staff and processes   | 33%   | 32%    | 33%    |
| Other   | 8%    | 8%     | 8%     |

### OPERATIONS

#### Addressing Social Distancing with Design and Event Technology

Survey Question: How is your organization addressing new social distancing challenges with space design techniques and event technology?

This question asked respondents to provide write-in comments. The key themes in the many comments are provided directly below.

- + Touchless technology
- + Booking larger spaces
- + Using outdoor areas
- + Staggered event times and schedules
- + Temperature screening

Select write-in comments from respondents:

- + Following venue rules and procedures
- + Challenges related to different rules in various municipalities
- + Developing in-person and online hybrid approaches
- + "Adding barriers that were not in place before while, of course, making the barriers as unobtrusive as possible. Using new non-touch technology for interactives, etc."
- + "We are forecasting based on audience profile to determine space required for in-person vs. virtual attendance in a hybrid solution."
- + "Because situations are different per city/state/country, each event has its own plan. We also follow the venue plan and they vary greatly as well. It is a very fluid plan for each event."
- + "Choosing larger spaces or smaller attendance."
- + "Clear demarcation, signage reminder, one-way flow, capacity limits and space seating."
- + "Focusing on the individual stories behind the activation or campaign instead of scaling the experience for the masses."
- + "Leveraging on facial recognition temperature screening and safe entry app to monitor the flow of attendees. Have a set number or quota for the number of attendees that are able to enter the event premise."
- + "More monitors to broadcast activity to the crowd."
- + "Reducing headcount, spreading out, setting traffic patterns for consumers."
- + "Reducing seating to allow for social distancing; adding more clear barriers."
- + "Seating family groups together; creative table sizes and layout for receptions. Moving most events outside. Creating measured diagrams for events."
- + "Small groups, scheduled 'guided tours' through the event."
- + "Social distancing technology has been great. There are sensors that beep and flash when you get too close to someone. Experiences are more guided now rather than free flowing; we set up gatekeepers and group the event into smaller segments to be able to monitor where people are within the space and ensure one area doesn't get too crowded."
- + "Social distancing is difficult so masks and keeping mask on is required for entry and participation. Looking into touch-free technology and motion-activated."



- + "Timed entry for consumers, wider aisles, distance between booths, distance between seats for seminars and spectators of contests, online ticketing versus on-site."
- + "Touchless lead generation."
- "We need a huge increase in space to make it possible. Larger aisles are needed for ingress and egress of crowds."

#### Impacts of Regulations and Decrees by State and Local Municipalities

Survey Question: Have new COVID-related rules, regulations and decrees by state and local municipalities impacted your event strategies or planning?

A significant number (85%) of respondents say that different and often changing COVID-related rules, regulations and decrees by state and local municipalities are impacting their event strategies and planning.

|        | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| Yes    | 85%   | 79%    | 91%    |
| No     | 6%    | 10%    | 3%     |
| Unsure | 9%    | 11%    | 6%     |

Select write-in comments from respondents:

- + "Another level of detail to incorporate."
- + "Government guidance is limited and changing; so hard to plan."
- + "Local rules and regulations and getting 'buy in' from local Health Departments who are also learning can be trying."
- + "Mask mandates, venue capacities, uncertainty of the roll-out timelines for phases all add to confusion and misunderstandings."
- + "Requires a complete re-write of our portfolio; how we will generate both revenue and awareness under this new structure."
- + "State and local guidelines are unclear and vary."
- + "Varies by location and changes all the time."

**OPERATIONS** 



### OPERATIONS

#### Plans to Reduce Attendance or Staffing Density at In-Person Events

Survey Question: Have you reduced or do you plan to reduce attendance or staffing density at your live, inperson events and experiences?

Many health and safety plans and procedures rely on event teams having a clear understanding of how many people will attend the experience. In the COVID era, the fewer, the better. Just over two-thirds of event teams plan to reduce attendance or staffing density once live, in-person events and experiences are reactivated.

|        | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| Yes    | 67%   | 64%    | 66%    |
| No     | 6%    | 8%     | 4%     |
| Unsure | 27%   | 28%    | 30%    |

#### **Liability Waivers for Attendees and Participants**

Survey Question: Do you plan to require company liability waivers to be signed by event and experience attendees and participants?

A hot topic among event marketers, 33% of business-to-business event teams and more than half of consumerfacing brands plan to require company liability waivers to be signed by event and experience attendees. Many brands are still unsure if they will require liability waivers or not.

|        | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| Yes    | 39%   | 33%    | 51%    |
| No     | 13%   | 11%    | 16%    |
| Unsure | 47%   | 56%    | 32%    |



### CONTRACTS

### III. Budgets, Costs for PPE and Venue Contracts

In the COVID era, budgets are going to look different. In this section, we cover findings related to operational budgets, PPE sourcing and costs, and changes to venue and location contracts.

# How Operations and Logistics Budgets Have Been Impacted by Costs for Health, Hygiene and Safety Procedures and Protocols

Survey Question: How has your event marketing operations and logistics budget been impacted by new costs related to health, hygiene and safety procedures and protocols?

More than half of event teams indicate that their expected costs related to health, hygiene and safety procedures will be funded by shifting resources from other parts of the event marketing budget. Twenty-five percent say funds or resources have already been shifted from other parts of the company.

|  | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|--|-------|--------|--------|
| New funds/resources have been provided to cover these costs                      | 16%   | 16%    | 12%    |
| Funds/resources have been shifted from other parts of the event marketing budget | 54%   | 46%    | 66%    |
| Funds/resources have been shifted from other parts of the marketing budget       | 18%   | 25%    | 10%    |
| Funds/resources have been shifted from other parts of the company                | 25%   | 25%    | 29%    |
| No impact  | 8%    | 11%    | 5%     |
| Other  | 13%   | 16%    | 7%     |

CONTRACTS

#### **Budget Allocation Expectations by Event Teams**

Survey Question: What percentage of your event marketing operations and logistics budget is, or you believe will be, allocated to costs related to health, hygiene and safety?

|   | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|---|-------|--------|--------|
| Percentage of event marketing operations and logistics budget<br>event teams expect will be allocated to health, hygiene and safety | 15%   | 14%    | 17%    |

#### PPE and other Health and Safety Equipment Sources

Survey Question: Where are you sourcing key PPE and other health and safety equipment?

Select comments from respondents:

- + "Approved vendors and working with venues and agencies."
- + "Government approved suppliers."
- + "Large wholesale manufacturers."
- + "Local distributors."
- + "Local vendors and stores."
- + "Multiple domestic and international vendors for the expansive needs and environments."
- + "Online through our standard suppliers, but also branding the PPE to sponsor programs where possible."
- + "Several varying vendors, referrals from current event vendors."
- + "Some are from fabricators we are working with on general event design, PPE is customized/branded."

### CONTRACTS

#### Cost Ranges for PPE and Related Health and Safety Equipment

Survey Question: What costs, or cost ranges, are you seeing for the following PPE and related health and safety equipment?

A wide range of responses were provided by the survey respondents. It is important to note that this data is provided as a general guide only and not as the definitive cost benchmarks for these materials and services.

|                                     | Average  | High and Low               |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|
| Masks                               | \$2.77   | \$10; \$0.50               |
| Gloves                              | \$0.99   | \$5; \$0.01                |
| Plexiglass guards and barriers      | \$302    | \$1,500; \$6               |
| Hand sanitizer stations             | \$755    | \$2,500; \$50              |
| Cleaning company services           | \$4,131  | \$17,500; \$250            |
| Event security services             | \$3,767  | \$17,500; \$150            |
| Crowd control, fencing, gates, etc. | \$5,700  | \$1 <i>7</i> ,500; \$1,500 |
| Signage                             | \$2,383  | \$12,500; \$200            |
| Touchless technologies              | \$12,853 | \$35,000; \$2,000          |

#### **Changes to Location and Venue Contracts**

Survey Question: Have you made changes to your location and venue booking contractual language or business terms (i.e., cancellation policies and penalties, date change flexibility, etc.)?

More than three-quarters of the respondents say they have made changes to their location and venue booking contracts.

|     | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|-----|-------|--------|--------|
| Yes | 78%   | 83%    | 73%    |
| No  | 22%   | 17%    | 27%    |



### CONTRACTS

#### Location and Venue Booking Contractual Changes

Survey Question: If you have made important location and venue booking contractual changes, please describe what has been changed.

This was an open-ended question. Select write-in comments from respondents:

- + "Added information that the event needs to enforce social distancing measures."
- + "Allowing for cancellation due to local regulations around COVID."
- + "Cancellation policies updated."
- + "Clarity on force majeure clause."
- + "Contingency clause in the event that local authorities restrict in-person events."
- + "Credits if forced to cancel event. Refunds. No liability with consumers attending."
- + "Enhanced force majeure clauses to include illnesses and local city regulations that could impact size/ scale of event. Hotel deposit requirements need to be tied to venue; so if can't host due to venue, hotels can't hold liable."
- + "Ensuring COVID-19 is included in any cancellation verbiage or force majeure as well as liability."
- + "Force majeure clauses will allow us to exit rental contracts 30-days out from our event. Sponsor contracts allow them two options: to receive a significant portion of their investment back, or, to let us carry it forward for another year giving them an additional year of benefits."
- "More flexible with revisions, but higher non-cancellable deposits and fees."
- + "Pandemic insurance."
- + "Updating cancellation policies and force majeure language in all contracts as a company standard."



### COMMUNICATIONS

### **IV. Communications and Contingency Plans**

For event staff and attendees to feel safe and understand new policies in place related to COVID-19, communications will be more important than ever before.

#### How Event Teams Will Communicate with Attendees

Survey Question: How are you communicating, or plan to communicate, to attendees and event participants about new health, hygiene and safety procedures and protocols?

To get new health, hygiene and safety messages out to attendees and stakeholders, not surprisingly, the top communication methods are email, signage, website information and social media. Worth noting: 34% of event teams have or plan to develop demonstration videos.

|                            | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|----------------------------|-------|--------|--------|
| Emails                     | 92%   | 98%    | 84%    |
| Signage                    | 91%   | 90%    | 92%    |
| Information on our website | 80%   | 83%    | 76%    |
| Social media               | 63%   | 60%    | 66%    |
| Demonstration videos       | 34%   | 42%    | 21%    |
| Press releases             | 22%   | 19%    | 24%    |
| Webinars                   | 14%   | 17%    | 5%     |
| Other                      | 10%   | 8%     | 16%    |

#### **Contingency and Triage Plans for Worst-Case Scenarios**

Survey Question: Does your organization have a contingency and triage plan for worst-case scenarios?

Half of event teams have a contingency and triage plan ready for worst-case scenarios.

|        | All % | B-to-B | B-to-C |
|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| Yes    | 50%   | 51%    | 46%    |
| No     | 28%   | 22%    | 38%    |
| Unsure | 22%   | 27%    | 16%    |



## LESSONS

### V. Initial Lessons Learned

While there have been many lessons learned so far during the first months of the pandemic, not surprisingly, brands indicate they expect to learn more once a larger number of live in-person events are reactivated.

#### Most Important Operational and Logistical Lessons

Survey Question: What have been the most important operational and logistical lessons learned related to activating live in-person events during this challenging period?

Key themes in the write-in responses include:

- + Expect to make changes and adjustments to plans
- + Develop a contingency plan
- + Have a digital or hybrid event backup plan
- + Stagger schedules and arrival times
- + Expect to have some people not follow on-site protocols and recommendations
- + Consider working with an expert health and safety partner

Select write-in comments from respondents:

- + "Adaptability, training and willingness to embrace change is key for all parties involved (client, agencies, suppliers, venues, personnel)."
- + "Always plan a digital companion backup."
- + "Be flexible; adjust expectations quickly."
- + "Cleanliness is key, social distancing is key, but a sense of community and engagement cannot be forgotten."
- + "Compliance by event attendees."
- + "Everything has to be designed to, most likely, change."
- + "For however much you anticipate and plan, there is always an unknown that will come into play."
- + "How to keep people safe while not taking away all the social interaction for success."
- + "It is more about how customers feel about being out and about during this time, not just the actual regulations."
- + "It's so important to hire an expert in this. Staff is getting overwhelmed with all these health and safety precautions on top of everything else they need to do to produce the event. It's important to have a health and safety partner onboard who can work with our team and keep us up to date."
- + "Social distancing and touchless experiences."
- + "Staff support and buy-in."
- + "The client and attendees will not always comply with our, and venue's, protocols."



- + "The overall lack of safety consensus from leadership, authorities, and public has hobbled progress on every level."
- + "The unknowns around attendance and throughout make it difficult to predict staffing needs; time it takes to setup and breakdown."
- + "Things can change overnight! So you have to prepare for everything."
- + "Things change constantly. As soon as we think we have a solution, we have to re-think it. So need to remain nimble."
- + "Ticketed and timed arrivals work best."
- + "We are in uncharted waters and we need to proceed with extreme caution until these new protocols become habits."
- + "You really need to pay attention to the 'new' new. Will people be comfortable attending events? Will they follow the rules? If they don't, what is the preferred, diplomatic way to handle certain situations? Design has to truly pay attention to what they are creating in the beginning stages."

LESSONS

### ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

In August 2020, *Event Marketer* conducted a survey of leading event and experiential marketing executives with a focus on large companies in both consumer and business-to-business markets. The survey received 214 responses.

#### **Industry Sector**

|  | %   |
|--|-----|
| Entertainment and Media                | 31% |
| Information Technology                 | 19% |
| Financial Services                     | 7%  |
| Sports and Recreation                  | 7%  |
| Automotive                             | 6%  |
| Consumer Products                      | 6%  |
| Restaurants and Hospitality            | 6%  |
| Mobile Technology/Telecommunications   | 4%  |
| Education                              | 3%  |
| Food and Beverage                      | 3%  |
| Medical, Healthcare and Pharmaceutical | 3%  |
| Consumer Electronics                   | 1%  |
| Retail                                 | 1%  |

#### **B-to-B or B-to-C Focus**

|  | %   |
|--|-----|
| Business-to-Business events (over 50% of event budget) | 60% |
| Business-to-Consumer events (over 50% of event budget) | 40% |

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