



KAIHAN'S

CONFERENCE & ASSOCIATION

INSIGHTS AND PERSPECTIVE

CONTEXT

- COVID-19 had a devastating effect on the conferences and associations industries. As of March 2020, organizations had to quickly pivot to virtual events.
- The lack of physical barriers, including travel, travel time, and travel expenses have created 80 percent growth in new and untapped audiences for virtual events (Source).
- As the world opens up, virtual events will continue, but there will be an increasing shift to hybrid events. Communities will begin to interact through a combination of virtual and face-to-face experiences that improve efficiencies of both models (Source).
- Associations face shifting demographics and an increased focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- The pivot to virtual events and education has changed the value proposition for the members of associations. While live events are coming back, members have now become accustomed to receiving virtual content and education. Members expect a blend of live and virtual



programming.

- The advent of virtual association programming has created an opportunity for associations to provide cutting-edge, current content to members and attendees on a regular basis. This is a unique opportunity for associations to become more relevant to existing and future members and audiences.

TRENDS

1. Hybrid Event Formats

- As COVID-19 vaccinations become more widespread, the world will begin to shift from virtual to hybrid events. Virtual formats are here to stay, but they will be supplemented by face-to-face interaction. “Post-COVID virtual events and webinars will be unrecognizable. It will be like comparing traditional TV with streaming, print magazines with tablets, or music CDs with Spotify.” (Source: Marco Giberti, Article)
- Organizations should invest in virtual event technology that allows for engagement across desktop and mobile and permits attendee-to-attendee and attendee-to-speaker interactions (Source).
- Because hybrid events are recorded, the content becomes evergreen. Associations and educational conference providers have an opportunity to grow perennial revenue by selling not only live event registrations and sponsorships, but also the recorded events for future audiences.

2. Data-driven Decision-making

- Across industries, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated digital transformation. Associations and conference organizations must adopt digital approaches to reach the right target audiences. Target audiences are evolving and include new

demographics. Prior to COVID-19, association events often attracted the same members and companies. Post-COVID-19, associations are engaging new members, companies and audiences who are finding associations due to their virtual value proposition. This is growing organizational memberships, sponsorships, and engagement.

- For organizations, a data management strategy is critical to capture information about members and potential future members and partners, and deliver a more personalized and engaging experience. Data can provide understanding of the target audience, what they want from the association, and how they want their content delivered (Source). While many organizations use association website technologies that have integrated membership and event databases, those without these tools should invest in such a platform (MemberClicks, etc.), or a customer relationship management (CRM) database, and both pre- and post-event surveys to collect feedback and data (Source).
- Security and data protection will continue to be a focus for leaders. A proper data management system will include safeguards for protecting customer data according to regulations. Because many associations and organizations are managed virtually, it is crucial that they invest in safe and secure cloud-based software to protect data.

3. New Sources of Revenue

- The global pandemic has heightened budgets for both companies and consumers. With tighter financial restrictions, potential members may need to make cuts in the number of organizations they can join. Engagement and value will become essential. Organizations have an opportunity to show value in a proactive, technology-driven way to meet their target audiences’ needs—in a current, relevant way.



- Associations must consider revenue opportunities outside of traditional membership dues. While traditional sponsorships such as meal, exhibitor and marketing sway will continue to exist, organizations must leverage and match their mission, vision and values with compatible companies with similar interests. Today’s corporate partnerships will reflect knowledge-sharing vehicles like podcasts, webinars, white papers, consensus statements, and live and virtual education that leverage expertise from the sponsor and organization.
- Digital advertising will become key to increasing revenue. Marketing teams will need to demonstrate ROI with data and results. Smart social media analytics are crucial to show member engagement and value to sponsors.
- Associations should view themselves as part of a broader ecosystem serving the same mission. Association management companies will have more opportunities to work with different types of organizations, including smaller groups and competitive associations ([Source](#)). Association management companies will lean more into their own niche (for example, health care), rather than representing an entirely diverse association customer base.

4. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Audience demographics are shifting, and association membership is changing. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that by 2050, the global population over 60 years of age will nearly double to 22 percent. Millennials and Gen Z make up the largest percentage of the current workforce. They are willing to join and stay with organizations that offer career development and easy-to-use, engaging virtual platforms. Associations need to consider strong mentorship programs, engaging content and branding, and unique ways to connect with younger members to show current relevance.
- Gen Z wants to work with ethical, value-based organizations ([Source](#)).

8PS

Leverage Point	“8Ps” of Strategy	Opportunity for Disruption	Recommended Leverage Points
<u>Position</u>	The core member or event guest served, what need you meet with what brand attributes	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has your target demographic shifted? • What diversity and inclusion initiatives have you taken to address shifting audience demographics? • What value do you provide to your members and attendees?

Leverage Point	“8Ps” of Strategy	Opportunity for Disruption	Recommended Leverage Points
<u>Product</u>	The mission you serve, where you outperform, and where you underperform	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With which smaller or competitive associations or companies with a shared vision might you partner to serve the same mission? • What is your plan for shifting from virtual to hybrid conferences? • What crossover opportunities do you have to address the “knowledge economy”? Do you offer virtual learning services?
<u>Promotion</u>	How you communicate with members and prospects, including marketing, sales, and PR	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your current budget for digital advertising? • Who are your current and prospective sponsors? • On a scale of 1-10, how integrated is your marketing strategy across web, email, and social?
<u>Price</u>	How much do you charge for membership dues and event tickets? How do you monetize?	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other sources of revenue do you collect beyond annual membership dues? • How are dues collected? Have you reviewed your membership benefits, and if they have changed after COVID, does your current dues structure support your programming and digital tool budget? • Can you offer different levels of benefits at varying price points?
<u>Placement</u>	How you deliver on your value proposition, and through what channels	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your plan for supplementing virtual events with safe, face-to-face experiences? • What does a personalized, engaging hybrid experience look like for your members and attendees? • Are you leveraging virtual platform recordings for future resale and perennial revenue?

Leverage Point	“8Ps” of Strategy	Opportunity for Disruption	Recommended Leverage Points
<u>Physical Experience</u>	The member experience: what they see, smell, feel, taste, or hear	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does a “hybrid experience” look like for your organization? • What methods do you use to make virtual events engaging and memorable? • Can you offer benefits of association membership or events packaged digitally? • Are your virtual events visually engaging and exciting? • Do your virtual events have an easy-to-use platform for all ages? • Does your virtual platform have an effective virtual exhibit hall and networking section?
<u>Processes</u>	Your operations and processes	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your method for collecting and analyzing member and attendee data to personalize the customer experience? • Does your organization have a strategic plan to ensure everything it does connects back to its mission, vision and values and tactics?
<u>People</u>	The choices you make regarding hiring, organizing, and incentivizing your people. Our values.	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have you invested in improving remote work systems? • What cloud-based tools do your teams have access to for collaboration? • Are you including effective culture-building activities and systems for your virtual team? • Does your cloud-based remote working system have effective data security?



- “Holoportation” is expected to grow and allow thought leaders to present themselves at conferences at a fraction of the cost ([Source](#)).
- Microsoft Mesh is a collaborative technology that allows users to have shared virtual experiences on a variety of devices, including VR, PC, and HoloLens ([Source](#)). Presenters can beam their avatars into a presentation space. Technology captures eye movements, facial expressions, and gestures ([Source](#)).
- Attendees are able to see, hear, and interact with the presenter while the presenter feels that they are in the physical space.

- A virtual events platform and video software startup valued at \$5.65B ([Source](#)).
- Hopin has become one of the fastest-growing software-as-a-service (SaaS) companies by capitalizing on disruption and redefining how virtual events operate. ([Source](#)).
- Hopin Founder and CEO, Johnny Boufarhat, considers using Zoom to be the equivalent of having an event in a conference room. Hopin wants to be an immersive, video-first platform for engaging virtual and hybrid events, especially for groups with more than 20 participants. ([Source](#)).
- The platform, designed to feel like an in-person experience, provides opportunities for networking and one-on-one conversations. Other offerings include virtual roundtables, keynote stages, backstage areas for speakers, and expo breakout rooms. ([Source](#)).



- Determined that their membership model was outdated. Dues were based on duration of membership, not how members interacted with the association.
- The group conducted qualitative and quantitative research to get to know their audience and the expectations that members have for their membership. They also interviewed potential members and found that they resisted joining because they did not have the necessary qualifications. By the time they gained those qualifications, they no longer needed the membership offerings.
- After the study, they shifted to a three-tiered

model, which is treated as a progression. In the “Learn” stage, potential members can access a number of resources for free. When they are ready to join, they move to the “Subscribe” phase, which includes additional resources, a digital magazine, and monthly speaker recordings. When a member commits to the “Join” stage, there are three membership levels to choose from, based on how they want to engage with the group ([Source](#)).