

The future of the event manager

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These are moments of questioning and change for the event manager: in addition to the inevitable Covid that forces to a reflection on the future role of events, the permanent transformation of marketing, its growing integration, the digitization of society and business as well as social changes bring about a period of undoubted change for this professional profile. Change that may pose opportunities or threats, depending on how he takes charge of his future.

In various sessions and interviews, we discussed with event managers the situation and perspectives for this professional type. We present here the more important conclusions. More than a quantitative study, it is a qualitative and strategic reflection. More than a present picture of the situation, it is a projection exercise. It is about describing what the future of this position may be and helping event managers to make the future one of relevance and recognition.

A word of warning: these are our conclusions as of today but as everyone will understand, it is no time to rest, on the contrary, the event manager has to be more restless than ever. Threats are important, all the way from outsourcing to emptying this position of strategic dimension to limiting it to production. But the opportunities are bigger as we will see. Only with a clear added value and always updated, this post will be regarded as essential to the business.

NB - This report is written in neuter-masculine (“the event manager”) out of desire for simplicity, but aware that it is a profession more female than male (and precisely because of this, of high professional quality!).

On the other hand we use the acronym EM to refer to event manager.

Executive Summary

We are in a world that changes at a pace probably never seen before, but the most serious threat to the EM is not new. It may seem that with the current crisis, the risk is the reduction of communication through events as traditionally conceived, but this risk is not the main one. In first place, because there is no doubt that onsite communication will return with intensity (although some substitution is likely); in second place because during this pandemic, the EM has led quite often the change of the events to digital formats. He has become, in many cases, the actor who has maintained important communications flowing, commercial activity going, group spirit high, all of it by integrating digital tools.

No, the risk is the same as always: to stay in a role oriented to production and logistics, to execute a strategy defined by others. Not knowing how to demonstrate the usefulness of his work, being an actor from the world of hospitality or production more

than from marketing or company strategy. The risk is not to evolve from the old perception of the EM: the person who generates those moments of communication (onsite) of the company.

What is new, and very promising, are the opportunities (both for the EM and for the entire sector). The relevance of tomorrow will be much greater than that of today, and is oriented in several directions, that we will see here, but before ... This crisis has

brought a fundamental change for the EM: from managing ONE format (the onsite event), he has started to manage a number of ones (webinars, online meetings, content generation to be broadcasted on various channels...). The pandemic has turned a “mono-tool” professional into a professional who had to meet several important company goals during these times. This new EM contributes with several types of values; we highlight here the most powerful:

- **The human being.** This knowledge has always been a strong point of the EM but fairly valued. Today, in a world where psychology and sociology take center stage (we have realized that understanding the human being was important), the EM, creator of experiences and observer of what causes kind and type of impact, of how people interact, of how to get to their feelings, of how to communicate, of how to motivate them... takes on considerable power. That also complements a world of data with a human touch.
- **The strategy.** The EM manages a series of moments of communication, experience, relations with the most important publics of the company. For this, without being the architect of the company's strategy, he has to understand it and contribute his opinion and ideas. In the end, the strategy of the company depends largely on its own strategy and ways of interacting with these essential audiences, that the EM understands so well.
- **The experience... now also digital.** It is the great change this year: today the EM manages a whole series of tools, codes of communication and interaction. He will contribute his knowledge to other departments (we see companies where the EM helps the commercial to develop a new B2B sales method that includes pre-meeting content, online meetings ...). This combination of online and onsite tools will turn the EM into an actor of first importance in the concept of relationship marketing (next point).
- **Relationship marketing.** The EM used to manage experiences that lasted a few hours or days. Tomorrow by combining online and onsite moments, and by integrating metrics in each of these two formats, he will think of relationships in time, with the various publics of the company. From D day to a series of “touch points.”
- **The content.** Another important change is that in a world in which ‘content is king’,

the EM has developed a culture of audiovisual communication that adds to his

traditional knowledge to generate memorable (and communicable) experiences. He becomes an expert in audiovisual creation, in broadcast platforms (Youtube is already old!), and will have a leading role in branded content.

- **Leads, data and CRM.** It has always been a result of the work of the EM in trade fairs type events ... but this dimension is growing and the EM sometimes becomes "lead generator", which implies several dimensions: successfully define content pre-event to generate interest, have culture and measurement tools (online, apps...), know how to offer experiences that generate interest that help generate interest in the product, know how to maintain post-event communication (and data capture). In the end, be an internal provider of qualified business opportunities. A tech company EM even told us "I don't have budget for events: as long as I can offer events that generate such a level of commercial leads, I can go ahead!"