



NXT247:

CORPORATE VIRTUAL EVENTS

IT'S ALL ABOUT GRABBING
PEOPLE'S ATTENTION

while your event is competing against work chats,
inboxes, smartphones, social media and perhaps
even children.

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**BORISH:
THE SMALLEST
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THE FUTURE OF EVENTS

Thank you for downloading our Yellow Paper. We are NXT247. Your partner when it comes to organising successful virtual events. Our mission is to create a smooth journey for you and your participants. We will assist you in creating a strong and engaging communications strategy while providing tailored and state of the art technology. Before you start reading, we would like to explain briefly our view on the future of events. Since our establishment in 2007 we played our part in many corporate events of our clients. For clients like Prosus, PayU, OLX Group, TNT and VEON we created event content and facilitated techniques like huge screen-projections to tell their story in the best possible way. In recent years live streaming was added to most of these events to reach a broader audience of stakeholders. Looking back this laid the foundation for what people are now referring to as a mixed model of live and virtual events. An easy statement now, but before Covid-19 hardly anybody claimed to go virtual and virtual only. Whether you call it voluntary or not, it is today's reality that urges us to change this perspective. If we want to creatively interact and engage with each other and share our knowledge on a global level, we need to start approaching things differently. Based on these progressive insights, our experience, the possibilities of technology and recent client requests we decided to dive deep into the space of virtual events. We summarised our learnings into this document. We don't believe it will always be like this, however we do believe that the pandemic accelerated the way we will set up and organise our events. Sometimes only virtual, sometimes only live and hopefully in the near future both live and virtual combined. Now that we are all getting a crash course in the new way of doing business, it is time to start laying the foundation. Can't wait? We'd love to drink a virtual coffee with you.

While we are working safely and remotely from home, please contact Floris Beets at floris@nxt247.com or Barth van Doorn at barth@nxt247.com.

**IT'S ALL ABOUT SMOOTHING THE JOURNEY.
FACE TO FACE INTERACTIONS NEED TO HAPPEN
IN A VIRTUAL SETTING NOW.**

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BENEFITS

The obvious benefit: you don't need to worry about Covid-19, basically the reason why "going virtual" became an even more relevant topic nowadays than ever before. But as you start investigating, other advantages pop up. Here are some benefits to consider. A virtual event...

- ...communicates a modern and innovative image for your company.
- ...is new and the potential is untapped, there is tons of room for creativity.
- ...distinguishes your company from competitors and attracts new categories of employees.
- ...enables more stakeholders to attend.
- ...increases the reach and flexibility of presented content and shared knowledge.
- ...captures data that shows the performance of your event.
- ...saves money on travel, venue and catering, decreasing the costs per participant considerably.
- ...reduces your company's carbon footprint and the amount of waste that comes with physical events.
- ...once set up, it's easy to copy to coming events.
- ...facilitates health & safety. Now and in the future.

Many benefits that make you wonder why you never considered this before, right?! Well, as a worldwide operating agency, facilitating content and technique at live events, we did for sure over the last few months. Of course, there are downsides as well. The biggest one: meeting in person creates connection, synchronicity and creativity, like at the coffee machine at the office. That is why we don't believe that all future events will be virtual, we are betting on the fact that we are heading towards a mixed model of connecting people.

**VIRTUAL EVENTS INCREASE THE REACH AND FLEXIBILITY
OF PRESENTED CONTENT AND SHARED KNOWLEDGE.**



SMOOTHING THE JOURNEY

When you think about the reasons for companies to organise events and for participants to join, some of the following aspects come to mind: knowledge, networking and team building and gaining new business leads. As this applies to live events, this is also true for corporate virtual events. Of course, the requirements for a virtual event to be successful are different than for a traditional event. First of all, it is essential to create a 'smooth journey' for everyone involved. This means offering the right tools and platforms and easing speakers, hosts and participants into this new virtual event world. And it all starts with the pre-event, from invite to registration and getting participants engaged.

Connecting people by networking is key to any event and part of engaging the audience. Face to face interactions need to happen in a virtual setting now, while the event is competing for the participants' attention against work chats, inboxes, smartphones, social media and perhaps their children. We are challenged to turn attendees into participants. Virtual events are a new experience for speakers, hosts and participants alike.

To get everybody on board we have to migrate event scopes, interactivity, agendas, speakers and communication strategies while minimising the loss of the overall event impact. That is why it is imperative to have a host who facilitates the event and creates a connection between speakers and audience. Participants must immediately be able to access current live elements. The user experience and interface should be intuitive. Right now, the technology is so advanced that there is almost an infinite amount of solutions for virtual events. It is critical to define the goal and priorities of the event and choose the tools that will help achieve this goal. Remember to keep it simple. While it is essential that the technology is flawless, the event will be unsuccessful if the content and experience underperform. Basically, one cannot live without the other.

FLAWLESS STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGY ALONE DOESN'T DELIVER A SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL EVENT, A STRONG ENGAGING COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY MUST GO ALONG WITH THIS.





TOOLS & INSIGHTS

There are many tools and insights into how to smoothen the participants' virtual journey. Some ideas from pre-event to post-event.

- Strong marketing strategy, concept & message.
- Physical mail pack including merchandise.
- A host that facilitates the event.
- Speaker & host training sessions or "how to" videos.
- Online agenda that automatically adjusts to participants' time zones.
- Q&As, polls and voting, surveys.
- Gamification by introducing games and quizzes.
- Interactive discussions related to sessions.
- Social chatrooms related to specific topics.
- Using (AI) matchmaking tools that match participants with similar goals and interests.
- Devoting part of the agenda for networking.
- Pre-arranging 1-1 networking meetings.
- Awards and sponsored giveaways.
- Badges to highlight attendee participation.
- After event, upload sessions and presentations to online portfolio.

CONTENT IS KING

Presentations are a main part of the virtual journey and need to be engaging in order to keep the participants' attention. Consider the following:

- Think about the story arc in presentations. Create a beginning, middle and end.
- Continuity is key, be intentional and to the point.
- Presentations should be visually appealing and help communicate the intended message.
- Select inspiring speakers and keep sessions short.
- Engage early and engage often. Ask questions in the chat, have votings or organise Q&As; anything to keep the participants' interaction high.
- High quality broadcast style will improve engagement.
- Implement well executed videos to keep the participants' attention and make their attendance worthwhile.
- The session titles and descriptions for your virtual conference programming should be descriptive and compelling.

PRESENTATIONS

A 60-minute keynote or breakout session at a face to face event is pretty standard and doesn't usually feel like a slog. But that is partially because participants have other stimuli and the ability to experience presentations in a three-dimensional environment. It is far more difficult to hold audience attention in a virtual event, compared to an in-person conference. Therefore, presentations at a virtual event should be combined with Q&As. While we propose to keep the presentations short and to the point, the Q&As that follow can be more extensive.

HOST

In a face to face event, the host's role is to contextualises the information presented throughout the conference, to keep up the overall energy and to deliver important housekeeping notes. Having a consistent face and voice that "stitches together" the virtual sessions for participants adds much needed familiarity and helps alleviate the isolated feeling that online events can sometimes produce. Having somebody guide participants through the agenda and communicate upcoming breaks, helps keeping the participants' attention and minimising their distractions.

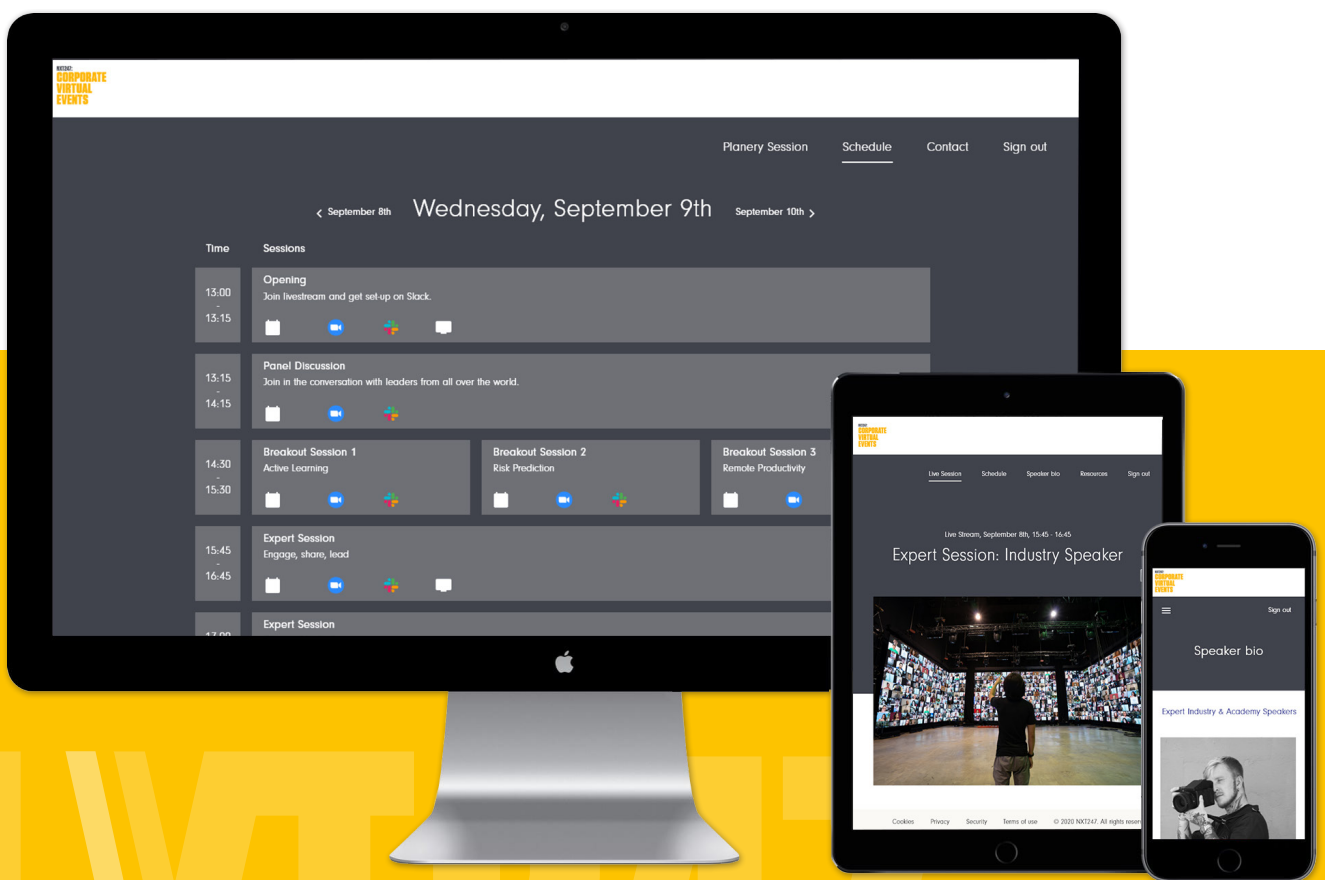
THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY

It's vital to migrate event scopes, interactivity, agendas, speakers and communication strategies all into one smooth journey. There are already numerous solutions out there like Zoom, Bluejeans, Slack, Slido, Workplace, and many more. However, the market is still young and evolves rapidly which means there is plenty of room for improvement. At Borish we propose only the best solutions that fit your budget, your target audience and your communication goals. To make your participants' experience as user-friendly and smooth as possible, we developed, in close cooperation with one of our clients, a central hub that ties all selected solutions together.



ABOUT THE NXT247 HUB

We built a user-friendly platform with features like a schedule section that automatically adapts to the participants' timezones, a resource page that gives information about the event, speakers and other participants, and a live session page where participants can watch the live broadcast.



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ONBOARDING

Not every speaker and participant is tech-savvy and some may have reservations towards virtual platforms. To create a smooth participant and speaker onboarding experience we advise the following:

PRE-EVENT

- Tell your audience that you are going virtual: what they need to know and how they can participate. Some tools to use: event pack, online videos, email marketing. The event pack could include: official invitation, all relevant event information and merchandise such as bottles, pens and badges.
- Organise speaker and host training sessions and run technical tests with each of them.
- Send a “how to” manual or video to participants to ensure they understand how to use the platform.
- Allow participants to make profiles and get accustomed with the event platform.
- Open your networking and matchmaking tools.
- Encourage participants to study the event agenda, schedule meetings and start chatting with other participants.
- Organise a run-through of all presentations with speakers and hosts.
- If despite the speaker training your speakers feel uncomfortable presenting live to a virtual audience, consider pre-recording his or her session.

EVENT

- Just like during a physical event you might face unexpected technical issues, especially when speakers are unfamiliar with the tools of a virtual event. To avoid this we propose the following: have a system check, the organiser needs to test live stream tools and get the links to embed them into the virtual event platform. Before going live the speakers need to check microphone, camera, browsers and internet speed. Have a Plan B. Ask speakers to download/open the platform they use on more than one device to have a backup. Prepare a backup session on a different platform that can easily be shared with the participants if the stream fails. Create content that the host can use to keep the audience engaged while solving a problem. This could be a quiz for example.
- Time zone adaptation. Creating an agenda that fits all time zones is challenging. Therefore: have session times that match as many represented time zones as possible and have speakers in different time zones. (Pre-)record sessions and make replay available. Publish the agenda on your event webpage and design it in a way that it automatically adjusts to the participants’ time zones.
- Regarding the duration of the virtual event there are a number of things to consider: think of the event from the participant’s perspective. Be in control of the narrative. Short sessions up to 30 minutes work best. A host can help with the journey and improve the transitions and flow of the presentations. Plan in breaks for relaxation and networking and have the host announce those breaks in advance to help minimise the participants’ distractions.

POST-EVENT

The journey continues even after the virtual event is over. Your company can still benefit from the platform's tools and re-purpose the event's content:

- Keep the networking section open after the event. This helps participants to follow up and connect with others they didn't get a chance to speak to before.
- Virtual event platforms allow to gather data. Assumptions can be turned into learnings. How many people participated during the live stream or networking sessions? Did they prefer long or short presentations? Etc.
- Hand out awards for participants with the highest participation rate.
- Anything you create before or during a virtual event can be shared online, e.g. recorded sessions can be uploaded to platforms like YouTube and Vimeo or shared as podcasts.
- Presentations can be uploaded as well. Make sure they are downloadable.
- The event can be a building block for upcoming events.

INTERESTED? JUST LET US KNOW.

We would love to have a virtual coffee with you.

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REVIEWS

Together with Prosus we organised our first official virtual event. The three-day event was attended by 250 employees around the world from all continents, except Australia. The event was hosted by Prosus and broadcasted from Prosus' HQ in Amsterdam. Everything in accordance with the current Covid19 regulations.

The event was rated 4.5 on a scale of 5 by all participants. The employees received an event pack upfront and lunch was delivered to their homes. Via the online event hub they could easily attend and navigate to all sessions.

Fay Fruet

International Events Manager, Prosus & Naspers



*Huge congratulations team! Wish I was with you at the office.
The image quality & sound, perfect! You set the bar for future online events!*

Paul van der Boor

Senior Director Data Science, Prosus



*I wanted to thank you and the extended team for their efforts in the run-up to the Marketplace.
It was good to know that there was a professional and dedicated team behind the scenes at all times! This was crucial to make it successful in the end. It was also a very pleasant collaboration.*

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