The show must go on!

The loss of an event has a significant impact on your business and your community. With the Covid-19 (coronavirus) forcing events to delay or cancel in-person gatherings, what can we do?

As an event planner, you've likely worked months planning for an event that has now been canceled. What do you do next?

Your event likely has a mixture of the following elements:

- General Session (Keynote): The big room where everyone gathers
- Meeting Rooms (breakouts): Smaller rooms with more detailed presentations or panel discussions
- Expo Floor (Sponsors): A place for sponsors and exhibitors to reach your attendees
- Networking Mixers: Making new connections and keeping up with old ones

Here are a few different styles of virtual events

Smaller Physical Gathering:
> You may operate the same event plan but with the intention of a remote audience. This can be broadcast to the remote audience that would normally be present in person. A small 'in-studio' audience allows the presenters to be in a familiar setting.

Closed Studio Set:
> You may build a studio set and adapt your message to match. This could include space for traditional keynote style presentations, a talk show set for fireside chats or panels, and the ability to bring remote presenters in via video conference.

Fully Virtual:
> The conference takes place virtually, using technology to join the presentators into a seamless experience. This can be accomplished with professional equipment and staff deployed to the presenters location OR with webcams and headphones. Frequently a mixture of both is used. Your event can be then custom branded through an online platform.

Breakouts:

They can work the same, but likely you will have a remote presenter that is broadcasting to remote attendees. As the day progresses, you'll have breaks and move between sessions. Here are some production elements to include:

- Presenters slide deck
- Webcam
- On screen title graphics
- Videos during the breaks (great time for sponsor videos and a plug)
- A virtual room host to carry the program between presenters adds a curated feel

Community:

Conversation. When you walk through an event, it is obvious that people come to connect. That same hallway talk can also have a place online. The feeling of connection starts with your content plan. Include conversational content in your programming:

- 2 people having a conversation feels more connected
- Involve a warm welcome from the moderator who may ask some opening questions of the presenter.
- Wrap up a talk with questions that are verbalized from the community.
- Allow the moderator to jump in and ask a question during a presentation.
- Use chat rooms, slack, twitter, and other standard online engagement tools.

With a little technology, it is possible to bring in remote guests to ask questions and participate. The more interactive conversation you can include in your programming the more successful your content. There is a reason why most live studio TV is talk show style content. If you can't be in the conversation, the next best thing is to listen to friends as they engage in conversation.

Content and Community are obtainable with the online technology we use everyday. To all my event managers, I sound the battle cry: ***"The show must go on!"***