



The Future of Events

What a 16 months it's been. Putting to one side the horrific number of deaths and serious long term effects from this dreadful virus, the terrible toll it's taken on mental health and the loss of simple freedoms we once enjoyed and focussing for a moment on the devastating impact on our industry. An industry that is full to the brim of hard working, people first, creatives has been brought to its knees and those that are still here are mightily grateful to be seeing glimmers of normality returning to businesses up and down the country.

With this in mind, can we, if anyone, predict what the future of events looks like? Feels like a tall order when we are at the mercy of following the science but here at Nobody Knows we are starting to feel the most optimistic we have in well over a year. The vibe on the street is that after an elongated period of isolation people want face to face experiences more than ever before and the good news is, whether it be for private gatherings or business events the last quarter is looking strong, stronger than the lead up to Christmas usually is, and that's saying something.

We have couples that have postponed their weddings (sometimes THREE times) desperate to finally say their vows in front of their loved ones, we have families throwing parties for their friends and loved ones to celebrate big milestones and actually just see each other in the flesh again, and as for businesses... well the amount of creativity and productivity that's been lost through people working from home means CEO's are desperate to get their people back to offices and incentivising their talent through interactive events is becoming a growing trend. They desperately need to see their clients in person and remind them of their product ranges and show their worth in a cost-cutting market and they need to re-establish relationships with intermediaries, journalists, suppliers and third parties like never before.

But what do these events look like? It's safe to say that they are vastly different from the events of old. Although it's likely that after what feels like a lifetime of schlepping to your kitchen table-come-office-desk in the

same pair of leggings you've been wearing for a fortnight, with a splodge of your elevenses down your jumper and the heating turned up to the max, 'cause even though it's July we've had approximately 12 hours of sunshine all year, people would be grateful just to escape the throws of home schooling or that partner you used to love but is now driving you insane by just daring to breathe for a simple glass of fizz and 2 hours of general chatter with someone that isn't the Amazon delivery guy. However, that's not what companies are offering their talent any more.

We used to bounce from lunch, to meeting, to early evening cocktail, to dinner, to late night networking without batting an eyelid and be up again at 5:30am. Not anymore. We've lost our stamina. And many offices can't feasibly expect their people to return 5 days a week. Many are looking at more remote solutions, meaning staff may get together just once or twice a week in person. The knock on effect of this means that we need to up our game when it comes to organised fun, with talent teams opting for out-of-town overnight trips to build the chemistry in their teams, induct newbies and create new cultures.

When it comes to meeting up with clients and external contacts, we are seeing a trend of smaller, more targeted, strategic, bespoke events replacing large-scale conferences. We are talking quality, well thought-through gatherings with better speakers, more considered agendas, using everyone's time more effectively, combined with bigger spends on more exciting venues and F&B to satisfy even the most refined palates to entice people into the city to attend. And we are talking quantity too. We are seeing many bookings for the same companies broken down into different or smaller audiences, so that guests can feel comfortable attending and companies feel more confident that the bookings will go ahead despite regularly changing rules.

'Immersive', 'interactive', 'experiential' are the buzz words you can expect to hear around the boardroom and bright, impactful, high-octane images of exotic venues, class entertainment and yummy eats will be flooding a social media feed near you.

In our opinion, events should have always been this way. Involving your marketing department, being extremely clear on your brief and the desired outcome, but for many years events, like so many other things we have lost, were taken for granted. We thought we'd always be on that mad dash from one mediocre meeting to the next. But now we want

more. We are demanding more. And as event planners, the heat is on to deliver our most creative work yet.

Burn the leggings, put on your best heels, your brightest lipply or your snazziest tie and let's do this.