



Ashfield
Meetings & Events

**TRANSFORMING A LIVE
EVENT TO A VIRTUAL
MEETING SUCCESS IN ONLY
FIVE DAYS**

THE CHALLENGE

The annual EMEA product team meeting for one of our global clients in healthcare had been planned to take place in a European location in mid-March 2020. This was to provide crucial updates, planning and education to an audience of 150 participants. Yet the fast-developing COVID-19 pandemic situation quickly made it apparent that meeting face-to-face would be an impossibility. Transforming the live event to a virtual meeting would be the only option for this essential gathering to still take place. This is when the unrivalled experience, agility and adaptability of our delivery team truly came into play.

“From the point of the decision to cancel the face-to-face meeting, we had **five working days** to convert a full service two day face-to-face meeting to an online platform,” explains Ashfield Meetings & Events Account Director, Jan Witkopp.

“Besides proposing, adapting and re-developing content for the virtual platform, and creating a streamlined and **condensed agenda**, the new solution also required updated participant communications and detailed **speaker briefings** to ensure a slick event experience.

Our client was also keen to make the meeting remained **engaging and motivational** within the virtual set-up, which required further research and development around extending the **participant-engagement** function of existing online delivery platforms.”

THE SOLUTION

Our approach to virtual meetings is identical to the 'live'. Purpose, messaging and content lead are ahead of the 'How'. Just as with a live meeting we don't start with screen size or staging, we begin with 'what do you want to achieve?' In this case we already had the 'Think, Feel, Do,' so we started with the existing creative and content. The technology, the platform, selected for its ability to deliver, and where possible support and even enhance the meeting outcomes

Using the creative assets already prepared for the face-to-face meeting, a **detailed project plan** was put into place to cover the re-development. A full schedule of **participant communications**, in the form of slide reviews and daily morning **speaker briefings** ensured that presenters were comfortable with the new content format and virtual set-up. This attention to detail went down to advising presenters on modifying their set-up at their home or office to provide the best possible visual and audio.

The meeting's narrative line was reconsidered and the agenda streamlined to create two three-hour broadcasts, split across two consecutive days. Scheduled to start each day at a time to allow for time zones and the additional pressures of working from home such as home schooling.

All aspects of the meeting were **managed centrally** by the Ashfield Meetings & Events team. Technical management, show calling, directing and queuing **22 presenters across 2 continents** managing the presenters' sound and camera settings, slide decks, VTs and participant interaction, as well as providing **back-up for any eventualities**. This was all managed by a team of four, all of whom had worked on the 'live' meeting from inception.

THE RESULT

Despite the challenging timescale of turning an originally intended live event into a virtual meeting within 5 working days, the outcome was a **smooth meeting experience** which made the content accessible, **engaging** and enabled the client to update and educate an even wider audience.

The **feedback** from the main clients, presenters and participants was exceptional, and the format allowed the meeting's lifespan to be extended by providing **digital content** after the meeting, including recordings from the presentations and converting the content into **podcasts**.

“My congratulations for the excellent management of the meeting, we keep receiving super feedback from the countries and in a sense, we opened the way” - EMEA Product Manager

“Fantastic! Great team! Great meeting!...Honestly I don't know if it's me, but the format was super... maybe we should consider blending this with F2F in the future!” - EMEA Strategic Projects Director





THANK YOU