

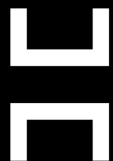
E BOOK

Restart 2021:

How to Unlock the Potential of
Experiential Virtual & Hybrid Events:
Insights from Restart 2021

PRESENTED BY

BIZBASH &



Hubilo

Introduction

On March 23 and 24, more than 4,000 events and marketing professionals from around the world gathered in a virtual format to learn how the industry is going to Restart. Event host Hubilo pulled together an impressive roster of innovators and thinkers in marketing, technology and futurism.

We were ready and eager to get back to work and — wow, did it ever show. The result was two days of interactive presentations, robust dialogue and a wide-ranging exchange of ideas facilitated by Hubilo's turnkey virtual and hybrid events platform. The results of one popular poll were especially illuminating. When asked what part of a virtual event is the most important aspect, 61% of us said "engagement."

Here is a glimpse into what we participants saw, asked and learned. Feel free to click through on any of the module titles or embedded hyperlinks for expanded graphics, audio clips and more.



Jeff Civillico

Welcome to Restart: Day 1 Keynote

Hubilo's Restart programming kicked off with a bang: The excitement generated by high-energy Emcee Jeff Civillico and Hubilo Co-Founder and CEO Vaibhav Jain was palpable, with attendees logging in from all over the world and a steady stream of shout-outs as people typed in their locations along with greetings to our fellow events marketing pros.

Key takeaway: Enthusiasm is a critical part of engagement — many of us remarked on Jeff's kinetic presentation and how he leaned into his role with gusto and verve. This session had the highest number of participants in the chat thread. The dynamism of the presentation was a great way to "show, don't tell" thousands of Restart attendees how critical the kickoff of a virtual event is to establishing a foundation for engaging content delivery. Watch Jeff's delivery to see and hear how an energetic emcee can set the tone for the rest of the event to follow.



Vaibhav Jain

Episode I: The Inception

The Inception: Overview

The content in this module centered around how we, as event experts and marketing pros, can reorient ourselves after a tumultuous year and reaffirm the power of brand messaging to change minds and move people, even when those interactions are facilitated by screens. Following a riveting introductory keynote, we went all-in on knowledge-seeking, leveraging the interactive tools Hublio incorporated into the Restart curriculum to ask questions of the presenters and register their comments via polls and other feedback tools. The result of one poll taken later that day is especially illuminating: A poll during the session titled, “The Year of Hybrid” asked attendees, “What format according to you generates the highest ROI from events?” An impressive two-thirds said the answer was hybrid events — a great indication of the role hybrid events technology platforms will have in shaping the future of marketing campaigns.

The Inception: Marketing: What’s Changed

This focused segment on marketing technology drew the second-highest number of views throughout the event. Presenter Scott Brinker, Vice President of Platform Ecosystem at marketing software company HubSpot grabbed our attention with a visually engaging overview of how — and how much — marketing technology has grown just within the past several years.

Take a look at this mind-blowing chart Scott included in his presentation [@3:50 in video] showed us the exponential growth of the universe of marketing technology tools in just under a decade, and watch as he illustrates how the number of programs and platforms exploded from around 150 in 2011 to a whopping 8,000 by last year.

Key takeaway: This leading poll question makes it clear that Restart attendees have a clear idea of where the future is heading — and we know content like this is critical for helping us get on board that train. In response to the question, “Do you think Marketing is moving towards creating more personalized experiences for a brand’s audience and virtual events are going to play a major role?” 81% of 110 respondents said “yes.”

The Inception: The Year of Hybrid

With the highest number of attendee questions directed at presenters Adam Parry and Will Curran (Co-Founder and Editor of Event Industry News and Founder and Chief Event Einstein at Endless Events, respectively), event industry professionals were eager to participate and hear how we can unlock the secrets of hybrid event success.

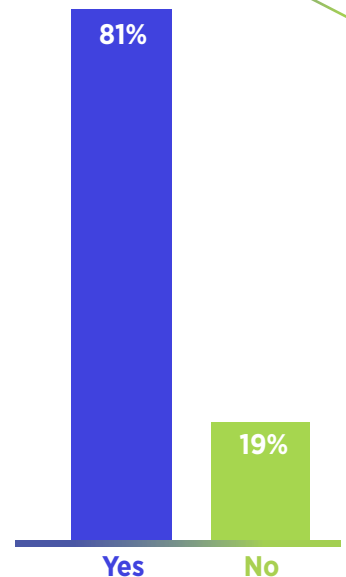
The most-upvoted question was a good one that prompted Adam and Will to unpack just how to measure our impact in this new medium. We asked, “What are the most popular KPIs for Hybrid events and the ROI?” [@17:59 in session video] Key takeaway: It’s important to be on the same page in how we’re defining “hybrid” — it’s infrastructure that connects people together in a room as well as those outside the room. Watch Adam and Will’s insightful dialogue for more detail.

The Inception: The Era of Experiences

Presenter Dietmar Dahmen, Founder and Managing Director of Dietmar Dahmen Brainkicks and a well-known name in Big Advertising circles, laid out a compelling case for making attendees part of the narrative in any kind of virtual engagement exercise. He meticulously charted the rise of the experience economy and the catalytic power of experience to leave an indelible impression on our audiences.

The poll results revealed a lot about what today’s event marketers want to know more about: When asked to name the most important part of the experience, 64% of us said it was a “user-friendly interface.” And results of another in-session poll showed that more than 40% of us want to learn more about “mixed reality.”

Key takeaway: A memorable experience is the trigger for eliciting an emotional engagement with a brand. The “gravitational pull” of an exciting experience facilitates an enhanced awareness of your marketing messaging. Check out how Deitmar incorporates and updates elements of traditional marketing for a 21st-century delivery model.



Do you think Marketing is moving towards creating more personalized experiences for a brand’s audience and virtual events are going to play a major role?

Episode II: The Showcase

The Showcase: Overview

Building on the excitement of The Inception, this module featured two all-star panel roundups including top thinkers from Amazon Web Services, Fast Company magazine and Harvard Business School — leading to some great exchanges of ideas and marketing philosophies — and was capped off with a keynote by Guy Kawasaki. The famous Silicon Valley marketing guru and Chief Evangelist at online design and publishing platform Canva galvanized the Restart audience in his dialogue-generating keynote. “We are not in a sprint — we are in a marathon,” [4:36 in video] Guy reminded us, and explained how the deceptively simple, two-word question, “Therefore, what?” [starts 23:05 in keynote video] can propel us into the next new big idea.

The Showcase: Brand Building Using Digital Tools

This dynamic panel discussed “Infotainment 4.0” — stressing the need to facilitate dialogue, not monologue, and meeting our audiences online on the platforms where they work and play. Robert (Bob) Safian, former Editor and Managing Director at Fast Company, made the point that we’re all in an “attention economy” — and if we can’t catch people’s attention, they’ll just click onto something else.

The gist of this session could be summed up by the results of one hotly-debated poll question: “When it comes to branding, what is it that you look for in a Virtual Event Platform?” There were two clear winners: 40% said the adaptability of the platform, while 31% said the scope of customization.

Key takeaway: “We’re all consumers, all the time” [17:46 in video if you want an audio clip] Bob made the point that, as event marketers, we need to get out of the B2B mindset that characterizes the approach many of us take to our jobs. Watch this engrossing discussion to see why thinking like a consumer is the best way to channel what will connect with our customers.

The Showcase: Essentials of Event Planning

The trio of presenters and the moderator dove into the strategy behind resource allocation. Janna Erickson, Director of Events at sales and marketing software platform Drift, brilliantly articulated what many of us learned very quickly over the past year: A “hybrid” event basically means running two events at once.

And the in-session polling indicates that most of us think that mastering that dual trajectory will not be an option going forward: 64% of us said we expect at least some virtual events to remain part of the event marketing pro’s tool kit even after in-person events resume, and 35% said there will be even more virtual events in the future.

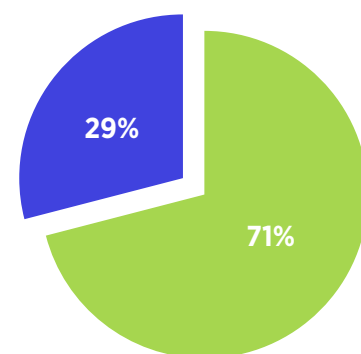
Key takeaway: The most-upvoted question in this session was, “What are the essential skills event planners should have in post-Covid era?” The TL;DR answer is benchmarking, but don’t shortchange yourself: Watch the full discussion to see what to measure and why it’s important to track attendance, views, downloads, ratings — and even negative metrics like attrition.

The Showcase: The Big Shift

The Big Shift? More like the Big Bang: Restart participants couldn’t get enough of keynote presenter Guy Kawasaki’s accessible insights in this expanded session that featured a presentation [maybe link to one slide with a compilation of his 10-point presentation? Or perhaps use it as a graphic or “click here to see a summary” type of thing] as well as a more free-form fireside chat with Hubilo’s Vaibhav Jain.

This session about why marketing is shifting to digital through the lens of Silicon Valley innovation was hugely popular, grabbing 10% of Restart’s total views and accounting for 25% of the entire event’s chat activity. Guy tackled this compelling, most-upvoted question: “As a speaker, what has been your biggest pain point presenting at virtual events?” Check out his answer here. [answer starts 37:30 in video] Also, we found out Guy’s secret for keeping track of how much time he’s spending these days on virtual presentations (take a guess, then see for yourself!) [21:24 in video]

“WE ARE
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—Guy Kawasaki”



Key takeaway: The poll results are in, and they couldn’t be more clear:

71% of us think digital events will be marketing’s go-to strategy, even after the pandemic has receded and in-person events can take place regularly again.

Welcome to Restart 2021: Day 2 Keynote

If Day 1 was all about strategy, Day 2's sessions offered us deep dives into the tactics and tools event marketers need to master this digital transformation.

Presenters from Silicon Valley heavyweights like Instagram, Google and SAP shared their insights, and we also heard from plugged-in writers, investors and influencers. We got a glimpse at what the future holds for virtual, A.I.-enhanced events — and we were introduced to the up-and-coming generation of learners and builders that are creating a new version of what hybrid events look like.

Episode III: Trends

Trends: Overview

If this could be summed up in a phrase, it would be, “What’s new, and what’s next.” Presenters dove in to talk about everything from what the new water cooler will look like in a hybrid real-life and virtual workplace to how virtual branding can pave the way for immersive real life experiences encompassing art, inspiration and innovation.

Trends: Future of AI in Events Keynote

Data Scientist and Artificial Intelligence Expert Severence McLaughlin schooled us in the distinction between artificial intelligence and machine learning. “Data is the true fuel of artificial intelligence,” Severence said. [3:07 in video] and this slide shown during his presentation [9:12 in video] handily breaks it all down.

Key takeaway: In-session poll results showed that 45% of respondents said data collection and analytics will be transformed by AI, and 38% said attendee management and engagement will take on new forms with the aid of this technology. 48% say AI will be the most crucial part of events in the coming years. Watch to see Severence’s insightful delineation of how artificial intelligence and machine learning work together, and why you can’t fully leverage the latter without the former.

Trends: Gen Z, Marketers & Events

The most upvoted question in this session gets at a common challenge, and a key quirk of the engagement experience when it comes to Gen Z. We were dying to know: How can we attract Gen Z participants to attend in-person events? Unlike the generations before them, these digital natives might be more comfortable in front of a screen. Presenters Justin J. Shaifer and Kristen Geez — two millennial futurists at the leading edge of identifying and distilling Gen Z preferences and behaviors — showed us how a strategic blending of content and format can reach the next generation of consumers.

Key takeaway: “Information is everywhere for Gen Z, but inspiration is not.” [8:03 in video] This astute observation from Justin dovetailed into an exploration of how and why storytelling is such an important part of connecting with young people. Check out the rest of their discussion on the role of storytelling in digital and virtual marketing.

Trends: Content is the King Maker

Instagram exec Jon Youshaie shared the insights he’s gleaned into what makes content clickable from his work growing the reach of video at the photo-sharing social network. He walked us through how to catch the attention of your target market in today’s information-saturated environment.

Key takeaway: It’s not always quality of content that matters most. You need a “headline” or “gateway.” This clever template Jon posted [7:22 in video], then broke down into its key components [8:37 in video] is must-see TV for marketers trying to break through the noise. Watch this session and you’ll come away with the secrets the savviest media brands use to draw you in.

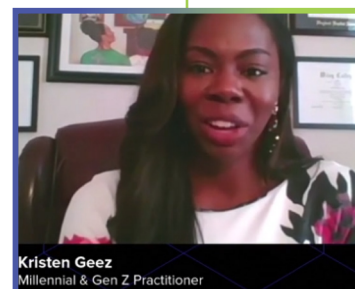
Trends: Get Set Go

In an era of real-time analytics and a laser-like focus on ROI, Restart attendees know that our relevance is only as current as our skill sets. In this module, presenters including journalist David Pogue, CEO and author John Brandt and futurist Rebecca Costa honed in on the best tools to develop that knowledge and experience.

Key takeaway: The in-session poll revealed how event marketing pros today prefer to approach upskilling: 43% said courses and seminars are their method of choice, while 33% prefer “microlearning” for absorbing new knowledge effectively. See how the engagement between panelists facilitates the kind of conversation that leads to intellectual discovery.

48%

SAY AI WILL BE
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Episode IV: Potential

Potential: Overview

This was the module that brought it all home. Those of us watching, listening and chiming in from our computers leaned into the insights and advice we had absorbed over the last day and a half, and saw how the transformative power of innovation plus technology dovetails into the development of business solutions for virtual and hybrid events. We saw real-life examples of how events technology platforms like Hubilo build capacity for event marketers to develop hybrid events and continue to expand the footprint of virtual events even after in-person meetings resume on a grand scale. We have just scratched the surface, and this module's presenters all emphasized how events technology has propelled marketing into an exciting new future.

Potential: The Responsible Eventeer

In this fireside chat, David Pogue and entrepreneur and impact investor Soraya Darabi discussed the meaning of "sustainability" in all its forms, and what that means for events marketing today.

Soraya noted that after a year of virtual events taking place out of necessity, it's becoming harder for many of us to preserve our soft skills. What happens to impromptu small talk and spontaneous brainstorming? Do we cultivate new skills or bring back the status quo? Similar to the questions and concerns raised in the previous module about the communication preferences of Generation Z, the most popular question upvoted by those of us watching was, "What can event managers do to prevent screen fatigue among virtual event attendees?"

Key takeaway: Virtual events are sustainable, and "sustainability" goes beyond environmental consciousness. Virtual events can also promote equity by facilitating accessibility. For instance, financial barriers are not the issue they would be for in-person attendance, while subtitles can translate content into any language for a global impact. You can dig into all of David's and Soraya's futuristic insights by watching this session.

Potential: Into the Future

The growing role of immersive virtual events technology was brought to life by presenter Matt Coleman, CEO of sports and entertainment gaming company Magnify World. Coleman's background integrating novel entertainment experiences like virtual and augmented reality, haptic responsiveness and the Internet of things and into virtual pop-ups and digital promotions made him a terrific tour guide through location-based entertainment concepts like dome environments, immersive mazes and projection mapping installations.

Key takeaway: "Like a planetarium... on drugs!" At least, that was the impressed, off-the-cuff response one of us typed into the lively chat feed during this session. Clearly, the technicolor visuals set to deep bass drops made a visceral impression, but Matt also spent some time walking us through the metrics and the monetization value that can be captured with these experiences. Words really can't do justice to this eye-popping presentation — you have to see it for yourself!

Potential: Expert Speak

This four-member panel on event strategy dug into the role that digital and virtual events play in a broader marketing and branding strategy.

Panelist Nicola Kastner, Global Vice President of Event Marketing Strategy at software giant SAP, urged event marketers to rigorously target their audiences and their objectives, and emphasized that events are part of a broader marketing strategy and should be aligned with those goals and benchmarks. Marty Pesis, Director of Cameo for Business at Cameo, which lets users create personalized videos featuring big-name entertainers, sports stars and other celebrities, said customized messaging can combat "Zoom fatigue."

Key takeaway: "A mouse click isn't a commitment." [4:35 in video] This gem of insight came from Nicola, urging event marketers to remember that virtual event attendees don't have the on-site experience to hold their attention. See how an exchange of ideas by key thinkers in different fields can yield a fresh outlook for marketers.

Potential: The Essential of our new Hybrid Reality: Better Videos

Presenter Phil Libin, Founder and CEO of AI startup All Turtles and virtual camera application mmhmm showed us how to improve our messaging now that video is our new reality. When asked for comments on this dynamic session, the concept of IRL+ rose to the top. So... what's IRL+? Phil showed us great examples of how video can enhance real-life experiences in our personal and professional lives.

Key takeaway: It's clear that we're eager to make screens part of the events marketing mix: 61% of respondents to an in-session survey want to see more video incorporated into virtual events moving forward. Watch this session — or really, don't shortchange yourself and watch the whole event — to learn how a video-based model can be leveraged to create transformative user experiences.

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Restart: Conclusion

Hubilo's virtual events platform brought together thousands of event marketing professionals from around the globe. With tools like real-time chat, Q&As, polling and robust dialogue both among presenters and between presenters and audience members, Restart attendees spent two days communicating and learning, immersed in interactive and thought-provoking content delivered by Hubilo. Hubilo's platform provided the technological foundation, and the company's trademark bold ideation bringing together some of the best and brightest minds in the business. To learn how Hubilo can take your events marketing engagement to the next level, [click here](#).

