

Connected hybrid events:

all the advantages of live and online – and a better experience

Hybrid events are the future. Especially connected hybrid events: events in which multiple physical locations are linked to each other and to the online audience. That is the firm belief of Faber's Manager Corporate Solutions Arjen Kijk in de Vegte and Jasper Steenkamp, Lead Creative Strategy at Creative Animal. Because combining physical and digital components offers fantastic new experiences. For the audience on location and the visitors online. An interview.

FABER
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NEP Live Events

THE VIRTUAL
CORUS BRAND SHOW
HOSTED BY PETER MELIS

New standard

Hybrid. It's pretty much the business hashtag of 2021. But what does hybrid mean for the corporate events market? What are the features and benefits that you, as an event manager, get with a hybrid solution? Arjen Kijk in de Vegte, Manager Corporate Solutions at Faber and Jasper Steenkamp, Lead Creative Strategy at Faber's Creative Animal division, have strong opinions on that. Before we go into more detail, let's dive into the recent history of the hybrid event. Jasper: "In the past year and a half, we have facilitated around 250 virtual events.

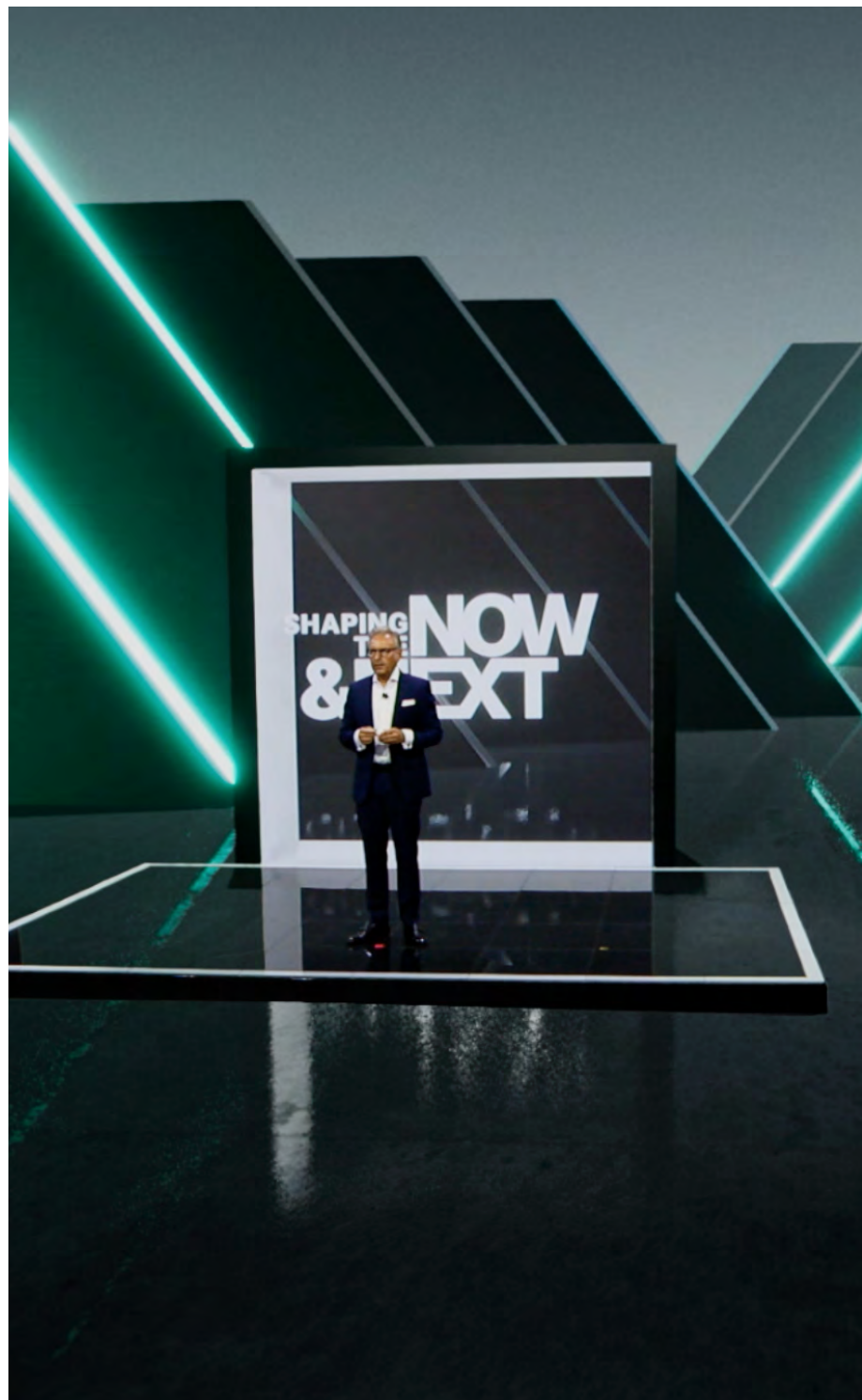
The corona crisis made our concepts an interesting alternative to 'real' events. What you see now is that we're moving back to normal. And so when you're tasked with organizing a corporate event, public event or business event, you have a choice. Go back to full live? Or continue to do it virtually, online only for the time being? Or something in between? For virtual events, at the beginning of the crisis we set a new standard. Now we're putting the finishing touches to setting a similar standard for hybrid events."

Connected hybrid: interaction between speaker, physical and online audience in multiple locations

First of all, both men think it's still important to emphasize what hybrid is not, specifically: just broadcasting an event via a live stream. In Faber's vision, combining physical and digital elements achieves tangible added value. Especially when organizing connected hybrid events: events in which multiple physical locations are seamlessly linked to each other and to the online audience. Jasper:

"We can project the speaker in Amsterdam live onto the stage of speakers who are in London, Paris or New York, for example."

"Speakers interact with each other directly. The live audience can ask questions. But the speaker can also interact with online viewers. And the people who are physically present can also benefit from the digital possibilities."



Concrete benefits and developments

Faber expects increasing demand for hybrid events. First of all because (international and intercontinental) travel can still be challenging. Apart from the fact that more and more companies and organizations contemplate how they can contribute to sustainability by travelling less.

And because you achieve that scale without a corresponding increase in costs, you'll improve the return on your invested budget significantly.

The good news is that Faber is working hard on features that will make hybrid and connected hybrid concepts increasingly attractive.



Also, events are easier to organize if the entire audience does not have to be at one physical location at the same time. Hybrid solutions offer unprecedented advantages when it comes to upscaling. The capacity of the physical location determines the maximum possible size of the live audience. Online, these limitations are virtually absent. If you combine online and physical, there are practically no limits to the size of the audience that can participate in your event.

Arjen says: "We are busy developing central event control rooms for connected events and with AR solutions that project the online audience so the presenter can see them live on stage. The hybrid situation Jasper outlines offers so many opportunities to provide additional content, before, during and after. And really special is that everyone can interact with each other: live speakers with the live and online visitors and vice versa."

Visiting expos physically and virtually

Event managers increasingly opt for a hybrid solution because it combines the best of both worlds. Arjen: “During the crisis we developed a virtual event platform. An environment where you arrive at an event online, and which feels like a physical event. With a lobby for reception, networking rooms – you name it. You may wonder why you would still want to do that once we go back to normal. Yet, in our opinion, there are good reasons to do so.”

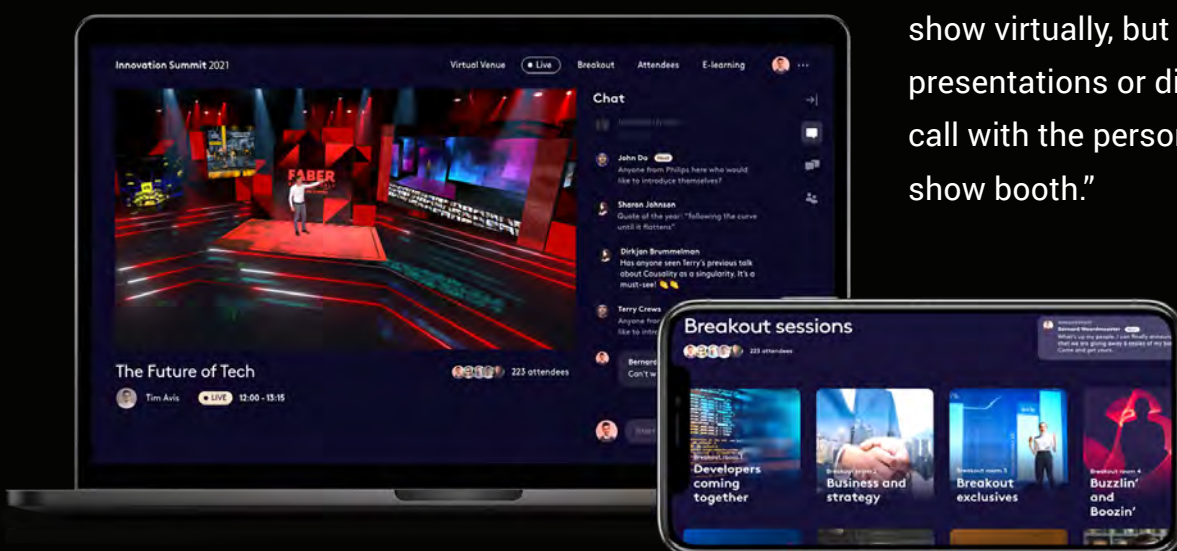


“Because with hybrid events you combine physical with digital components. To create the most attractive experience for the audience at the physical location and the people online.”

Compared to live events or virtual events, hybrid solutions offer tangible added value.

Jasper: “We’re thinking ahead. Imagine you’re organizing a hybrid trade show. Visitors can visit stands physically and virtually. We ensure that our Virtual Live Events platform enables video communication between visitors and exhibitors, both online and in real life. So you can

not only walk around the trade show virtually, but also watch presentations or dial in for a call with the person at the trade show booth.”



Templates save time, effort and costs

The possibilities sound endless and fantastic. What does that mean for the cost? Jasper: “If you really want to do something completely customized, that’s always possible. But of course that’s always a bit more intensive to conceptualize and create. That’s why we have developed templates. You can set them up so that they have the look and feel of your brand. In addition, you can opt for what I now call a playground package: a hologram or online platform added, connectivity with other countries.” Some customization is inevitable, because everything is built on sites that have their own requirements.

Nevertheless, this works faster and saves on development costs. Arjen:

“The templates offer you a basic package that you can purchase as standard.”

“A turnkey studio, with support plus the technical crew. This gives you the opportunity to go all out, but at the same time it is still affordable.”





New business models

So, as for the future, in a nutshell? Jasper: "As a client you can make a conscious choice. For either a live event or a virtual event or a hybrid one. I think that the solutions we're developing and which we will soon be presenting will make connected hybrid events particularly attractive." And perhaps the real breakthrough of the crisis is something even more essential: the new insights that have emerged. Arjen: "Before, you had a room and it could fit 1,000 people."

"Thanks to corona you see that people are thinking differently. New business models are being thought up."

"What if we had a physical audience of 1,000 and another 10,000 online? Where the physically present audience enhances the experience of the online audience. At the beginning of the crisis, the limitations of the market were felt above all. We saw all kinds of possibilities early on and now the customer often opts for them. Faber and Creative Animal are working hard to translate this innovation into solutions that make our clients happy."