



## **Marketing Event Management in 2022 – which platform is right for you?**

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In my discussions with marketing executives about their investments in digital marketing programs, one of the most important challenges they are currently facing is understanding how their events calendar should, or could, develop for the next planning phase, resulting in these questions:

**Are live events totally dead now, or will they return?**

**What is a hybrid event and how do they choose which format to offer?**

**Plus, most importantly, what Marketing Event Management (MEM) platform(s) will be the most suitable for them in 2022.**

When many companies ran virtual events in the first months of the COVID-19 crisis, the immediate goal was to cover an already-planned live event with an online alternative or work-around. Many executives made short-term decisions about the platform -- optimization wasn’t yet part of their strategy, just getting it done.

And the event participants were so-easily pleased to be able to log in to any platform and be able to connect with business topics at all. As they were usually juggling the new world of working from home, the near presence of other family members to their home office desk, possibly the parallel process of also teaching/caring for their children; they were not too discerning about the event platform and willing to put up with a lot of kinks. That was certainly true for myself as I learned to make presentations on dozens of new platforms, all of which used different language and methods to even the basic functionality of screen-sharing or presenting.

Whether organizing an event or presenting at one, our overall experience was that most of event platforms deployed were not purpose-built for virtual events; they were originally designed to provide other services—such as webinars, e-learning course management, or event registration. However, through 2021 many Marketing Event Management (MEM) platform providers have been releasing new, dedicated software, to better support virtual events of all sizes. This has been fuelled, of course, by massive injections of venture capital into several of these vendors. The most famous story in this market sector was probably Zoom with its successful IPO valuation, but there were numerous other financial transactions that stayed under the radar.

I have now applied our Vendor Selection Matrix™ research methodology to this topic and the survey results are in. Companies have been working this year with multiple MEM solutions as most did not have a centralized procurement strategy for this topic – the survey showed that nearly 70% of the respondents were working with more than six MEM vendors.

But as we enter the next wave (routine?) of virtual events, businesses will want to collect the relevant information and guidance to be able to optimize the experiences they offer to prospects, partners and customers. I expect investments in MEM platforms to be a major investment category in 2022 and marketing executives will want to be well informed about the choice of platforms.



**The survey discovered this vendor landscape of the Top Twenty MEM vendors as scored by the 1,500 survey participants, and I am currently going through the briefing program to talk to them and then add my scores. This is the list of vendors discovered in our global survey across many industries:**

*6CONNEX, ACCELEVENTS, AIRMEET, BIZZABO, CADMIUMCD, CERTAIN, CIRCA, CVENT, HOPIN, HUBB/INTRADO/NOTIFIED, KALTURA, MEETYOO, MICROSOFT, ON24, RAINFOCUS, SPLASH, SPOTME, VFAIRS, and ZOOM*

**Always keeping you informed!**

**Peter O'Neill**