



B2B Conference & Exhibition Marketing **for Postponed Events**

Webinar - 20th March 2020

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Welcome!

Your webinar leaders...



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Who's in the room?



- 180+ registrants
- Approx. 50% marketers, 30% CEOs/MDs, 20% 'Other'
- B2B Media, B2B Events, Corporates, Freelancers, Vendors

A bit about webinars

- Hot topics are good
- 60 minutes works well
- A 2-day lead time is fine
- Apart from the lead time, it's very much like marketing a live event!

Thank you friends!



Collaboration is key!

- This is uncharted territory
- 1st: know what questions to ask
- Consider short, medium and long term
- Give yourself (and others) permission to change your minds & plans
 - based on changing circumstances
- Avoid 'knee-jerk' reactions
- Don't believe everything tech vendors tell you - beware the 'all in one' solutions!
- Keep calm and carry on...

Today's focus



Looking beyond the Covid-19...

- **Great opportunity to build new digital formats to complement your events:**
 - Between events: for year-round engagement
 - During events: for enhanced value
 - Immediately after events: for stronger retention
- **New marketing approaches to:**
 - Promote additional digital elements
 - Build & maintain engagement with digital learning and networking opportunities
 - Retain and grow revenue

Today's focus

Practical next steps

- **We're assuming...**
 - Many live events will survive coronavirus...some will go completely virtual
 - All remaining live events will need 'digital enhancement'
 - Most need to maintain focus on 2020 revenue
- **Additional resources on final slide**
 - Various considerations for event organisers
 - Decision making about running upcoming events
 - Info on digital tools for event organisers

Today's focus

For reading later...

- **Postponing your event?**
[10 things your marketing team needs to do NOW](#)
- **Running a conference or exhibition in 2020?**
[Your event marketers must do these 5 things](#)

Today's focus



Transfer the knowledge!

- Today we'll focus on postponed events
- **But most points relevant to all events - postponed or not!**

Today's focus



4 Key considerations

1. More lead time - what a gift!
2. But also more competition...
3. ...and shorter cycles for 2021 events (if you move your event back to original timing)
4. Perfect chance to try new things!

Today's focus



5 Important questions

1. How can I keep my delegates engaged & committed to attending my event?
2. How do I keep my sponsors & exhibitors committed and well-served?
3. How can I upsell/cross-sell to a subscription/membership (if this is in place)?
4. How can I start laying the foundations for a subscriptions/membership product?
5. How can I bring in more revenue to my 2020 event?

If your event is **POSTPONED**

Focus on lead generation - avoid 'book now' messages

- People may not want to book (yet). So convert them to a lead instead of a booking.
- Plan extra lead conversion activities closer to the event
- Consider sponsors' need for leads & how they can help
e.g. co-created webinars and whitepapers
- Optimise website with CTAs (calls to action) pointing to forms:
 - Register Your Interest
 - Subscribe For Updates
 - Download Agenda
 - Download Speaker List
 - Download Event Attendee Profile
 - Download Whitepaper(s)
 - Attend Webinar(s)
 - Access Webinar Content

If your event is **POSTPONED**



Grow your database - for 2020 event, future events and digital offerings

- Website forms - ask if they're interested in sponsoring/exhibiting, attending or speaking
- Do more data research - focus on top 100 / 300 / 500 / 1000
- Get more media partners on board - point comms via their channels to lead generation CTAs on your website
- Add more content to your website & share via social media to increase web traffic - make lead generation CTAs alongside content very prominent

If your event is POSTPONED



Build more value into your 2020 event

- Add digital content for live event attendees - e.g. video package to distribute after the event ([Binumi Pro](#))
- Add 'digital twin' alternative for those who can't attend (& charge a fee)
- Invite top speakers previously unavailable. Do it now, before your competitor gets her/him!
- Stand out from the crowd - pay for a 'celebrity/out of the box' speaker. Run as a livestream *into the event* to give you more choice and keep costs down
- Add '*subscriber/member only*' content or networking session(s) e.g. to present unique industry research

If your event is **POSTPONED**

Do more (better) content marketing

- If you don't already have a 'resource bank' - add one now!
- Coronavirus-themed content - can't avoid, enable the knowledge-sharing
- Include simple 'listings' - share other good resources already created
- Speaker Q&As/interviews - written, video or audio (podcasts)
- Webinars:
 - 'Live online' • Slide decks including questions answered
 - Recordings • Add synopsis 'in front of paywall' (e.g. as blog)
- Sponsors' white papers - add synopsis 'in front of paywall'

If your event is **POSTPONED**

Perfect time to start (or revive) an email newsletter!

- Start of a subscription?
- Make it valuable & unique - weekly at most
- Feature your marketing content and your event updates
- Ensure branding is strong: design, tone of voice etc.
- Send to all event stakeholders keep them well informed and feeling well served
- Keep it simple - create an easy 'template' e.g.
 - Event news (e.g. new speaker or digital feature added)
 - '3 things we learned this week'
 - 'Top industry news from the past week'
 - 'Speaker of the week'
 - Include sponsor info for extra sponsor value
 - Point to CTAs for lead generation (they will forward on)

If your event is POSTPONED

Grow revenue & goodwill by adding value

- Upsell/cross-sell to a subscription/membership: consider a 'free upgrade' for 6 months
- Offer 'family tickets' (4 for 3)
- Offer 2-year tickets e.g. buy 2020 ticket before x date and get 2021 ticket half price (make same 2021 offer to already booked delegates)
- If you have a 2 or 3-day event, offer an extra day for free to booked & new delegates
- *Offer free service for limited number of tickets e.g. 'next 10 tickets sold get 1 free day's consultancy/advice from X consultancy/law firm'
If it works - repeat!
*(*also provides leads and higher profile for sponsors)*

If your event is **POSTPONED**

Promote & sell subscriptions via your event

- **Booked delegates: run dedicated campaign to upsell to subscription - reference 'subscriber-only' content & privileges at event e.g.**
 - Fast-track registration desk for 'gold badge' holders
 - Invitation only breakfast/lunch
 - 'Behind closed doors' research/benchmarking report presentation
 - VIP dinner with speakers
 - Premium lounge use
 - Reserved seating

If your event is **POSTPONED**

Promote & sell subscriptions at your event

- **Plan onsite subscriptions marketing & sales push**
 - Schedule sales meetings - focus on enterprise opportunities
 - Networking zone - with large screen showing video
 - Videos & holding slides on stage between talks
 - Event app - run special 'at event only' offer
 - 'Gold badge' access - prominent signage

If your event is **POSTPONED**

Ongoing measurement & analysis is essential for 'test & learn'

- Monitor sources of delegate ticket sales and subscriptions purchases – channels & tactics
- Monitor engagement with & conversions from new types of content & digital elements
- Track subscriptions/membership sales numbers & revenue directly related to event – acquisitions & renewals. Work into lifetime value model.
- Monitor profile of delegates purchasing/choosing 'digital alternative'
- Monitor engagement with post-event digital assets e.g. recordings after event
- Etc... *dependant on what is important to future strategy*

If your event is **POSTPONED**

Lead time alert!

Beware the **2021 shorter event & campaign cycle...**

- Can your content team start on 2021 event program before 2020 event?
- Can sponsorship & exhibition sales for 2021 start before the 2020 event?
- How can you increase onsite rebooks of sponsors, exhibitors and delegates?
- If you're adding more 'digital' to the 2021 event:
 - How will you package digital and live elements to maximise revenue?
 - How should this flow into your event marketing?

If your event is **POSTPONED**



More questions...

- Can we get conference producers more involved in & contributing more to richer content marketing?
- Can we get producers and salespeople more engaged with social media channels during the upcoming 'quiet time'?
- Can we get ops people to help with marketing if they have a bit of 'downtime' over spring/early summer?
- Who will we train up/get on board to organise and run the digital elements of our events?

Longer term Strategy



How will this change my events and my business model?

- Will digital mean I can take my brand to a wider market?
- Can I accommodate more people at my event without increasing my costs?
- How will I help my sponsors get qualified leads? Do I need to build in a telemarketing lead qualification element?

Longer term Strategy

Other key investment areas - beyond the product...

- **Marketing:**
 - Digital infrastructure
 - Data
 - Brand
 - Messaging
 - Measurement
- **Making a 'test & learn' approach part of our DNA**
- **Key skills/people we need:**
 - Digitally-confident
 - Quick learners
 - Community-focused

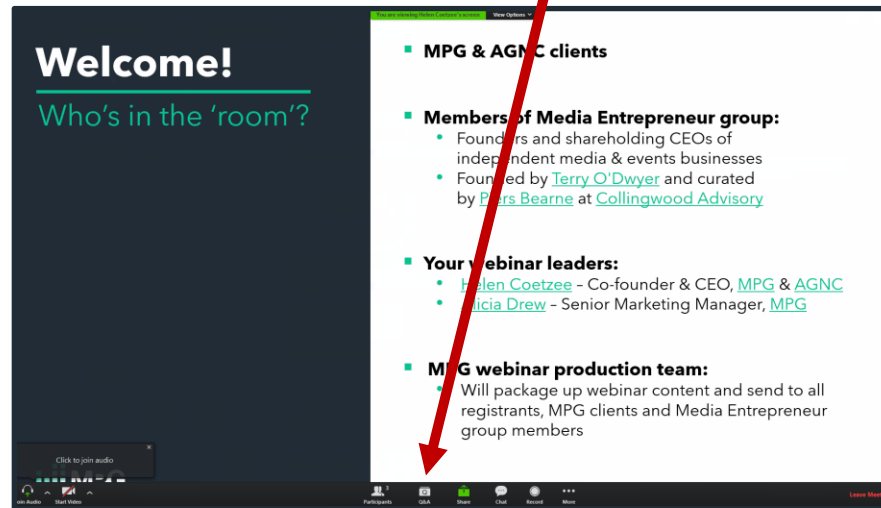
Longer term Strategy

Good resources

- CREO Manual [here](#)
- Collingwood Advisory
 - PPA event on 25th March [here](#)
 - Overall considerations for event organisers [here](#)
 - Decision process about whether or not to run your event [here](#)
 - Business model 'pivot to digital' [here](#)
- MPG blog [here](#)

Please send us your questions

- Submit your questions here:



- We will select those we think will be most relevant/useful for the audience and answer in this session
- All Q&A - including questions we cannot answer in this session - will be written up and added to this deck before we distribute it to all registrants

“Are there any standardised pricings for sponsored webinars? Should we charge sponsors 15k, 20k?”

- We've seen prices from £5k to £25k for a single webinar.
- **Your pricing strategy depends on several factors:**
 - Your audience - how relevant and valuable they are to potential sponsors, and how many registrants and attendees you generate.
 - The content of the webinar - longer, content-rich webinars with industry leading speakers and insights can demand a higher premium
 - Sponsorship packages - you may offer sponsors a lower rate for the webinar if they also purchase other elements, e.g. an email to leads and/or a feature on the website
- **To maximise the rate you can charge sponsors:**
 - Calculate your costs first - although the tech required for a webinar is relatively cheap, the formulation of the content and acquisition of speakers can quickly add up. Make sure you're confident of what you're investing in before you set sponsorship pricing levels.
 - Conduct a full marketing campaign to promote your webinar - the registrants will be valuable leads for your sponsors - so the more you generate, the more you can charge.

“We plan to postpone a June event. How do we communicate this?”

- As an immediate first step, pause all comms regarding your old event plans.
- Prepare a detailed statement that explains the decision you made and how you arrived at it. Feature this prominently on your event website.
- Concurrently to your statement being published, push out pre-planned comms on all your channels and contact your key stakeholders (speakers, sponsors, exhibitors, booked dels etc.) personally to inform them of the decision.
- Make sure you update your statement frequently and communicate any updates to your plan as soon as they happen.
- Create and share a contingency plan (including new dates and venue) for what you intend to do should the event need to be postponed again from the new date. Share this plan openly and include the date you intend to inform your community of the decision on postponement.
- [Read our blog post](#) to see more on the marketing actions needed when postponing an event.
- [***Here’s a great example from Money20/20 on communicating a stance on Covid-19***](#)

“We have an event in Singapore this June. We are experiencing a pause in sales; should we delay the event?”

- **The answer to this question should always be answered by your community:**
 - You should consult at least 50% of speakers and 50% of sponsors before you make your decision.
 - Also look for other signals of your event health. Do you still have a healthy number of leads coming in? This could signal a continued interest in the event, but a hesitancy to book given the current situation.
- **If your event is more localised, it may be more resilient to external factors.**
 - Travel bans can make international events unfeasible. Consider where your audience (as well as speakers, sponsors and other partners) are travelling from and how they could be effected.
 - Consult resources, such as the [CREO manual](#), to find info such as a list of companies that have travel bans in place.
 - Collingwood Advisory also [outline the decision-making process](#) event organisers are going through, so you can see how your peers are reacting.

“Is it better to align a new digital brand with the existing event brand, or create a new digital brand entirely?”

- **There is no one-size-fits-all answer for this, it will depend on:**
 - How strong your event brand already is, and how effectively you can leverage it in an online presence.
 - How you’ve been doing content marketing until now - do you have free content that people are already engaged with that people already see as a year-round resource? If so, you can leverage this existing brand equity.
 - If your event brand is clearly defined as an event, e.g. it contains the words ‘Summit’, or ‘Live’. In this case a new (or modified) brand may be necessary to avoid confusion.
- No matter what you do, keep everything closely aligned. You want to be able to share brand equity across your portfolio.
- You may consider re-branding your event to reflect the additional value proposition that a more digitally-led product provides. This will draw attention to the new, enhanced value of your brand.

“Is 14 weeks enough time to setup a livestream service for your event or should we delay?”

- **The key consideration here is your audience:**
 - Are they likely to get the value they need from a digital format? If not, you need to think carefully about how you serve your audience base.
 - More senior figures, like CEOs and VPs, would usually strongly favour to live events because of the ‘off-record’ discussions and deep, valuable networking opportunities that they’d struggle to replicate online. This could be replicated via smaller round-table style events or closed digital networking platforms. Consult your audience first to understand their needs.
 - Then consider how your sponsors and exhibitors can get the return they’re looking for some your event if it is livestreamed. What do you need to build in to your offering to ensure they get value for money?
- **Other considerations include:**
 - Your team’s capabilities - are they tech savvy and able to setup and test a new platform? Is there resource in your team to handle this? If not, you may consider bringing in the support of external digital specialists
 - Don’t just cut and paste your live event into an online format. There are resources and providers out there that will be able to advise you on all considerations needed when moving an event online. You will need to organise and present your content differently to how you usually would online.
 - Consider how well your event format translates to the digital space: a conference focused on educational sessions will probably need webinar-style formats, while an exhibition where products are usually demo’d will probably require video demos to be included in an alternative digital platform.

“What privacy considerations are there for providing webinar sponsors with attendee contact information?”

- **Privacy considerations for sharing registrant/attendee data with sponsors will be unchanged from a live event:**
 - First, you will need a basis for sharing the data AND the sponsor will need a basis for using that data.
 - To enable sponsors to make full use of the data, include the sponsor’s name at point of data (and if relevant, consent) collection (e.g. the registration form).
 - Where you have multiple sponsors, you may use wording such as “Sponsors of this event” with a link to the list of sponsors. This should be used with caution, especially when it comes to sponsors coming on board after someone has registered as a delegate. ICO states *“Any third-party controllers who will rely on the consent must be named - listing categories of organisation will not give valid third-party consent”*.
- (If you would like MPG’s help in navigating data privacy issues, please get in touch - info@mpg.biz).

Please note:

Marketing Pro Limited does not provide legal advice on regulatory compliance or business advice on the risk around regulatory compliance. Marketing Pro Limited will not be held responsible for any risk, financial impact or prosecution associated with the regulatory compliance of any organisation.

“Any initial thoughts on what to do if the situation degrades and 2020 H2 events are no longer feasible?”

- **Regardless of circumstances, we recommend all organisers planning on running an event in 2020 to take the following actions:**
 - Release a statement of your intent to run, postpone or cancel your event and share as widely as possible, with personally informing key stakeholders as a priority. Explain why you have made this decision and support with official government and medical guidance.
 - Create and share a contingency plan that clearly states what you plan to do in case of a situation the degrades further.
 - Maintain open and transparent comms, providing updates as soon as your plan changes or the external circumstances prompt a response.
- Don't assume 2020 H2 (or even H1 2021) events are 'safe'. You should be putting in place mitigation plans should a live event no longer be possible.
- Start planning now for how you can run your event virtually or switch your focus on to an online content platform you already have in place. Giving this attention now should not only mitigate any losses from a further postponed or cancelled live event, but also position your brand as an early adopter of the digitally-enabled communities of the future.

“How do approaches to marketing/sales differ between physical and digital events?”

- **The same principles of an effective physical event marketing campaign apply to a digital one; namely a robust strategy and a team of marketers equipped with the skills and technology needed to realise said strategy and achieve objectives.**
- However, copy/pasting your existing strategy from a physical event to your new digital offering will not work.
- As always, take a customer-centric approach. What are your audience’s expectations? What value will they find in a digital event that may not have found (or may miss) in a physical environment?
- Digital events offer a different set of benefits and drawbacks - your messaging strategy will need to take this all in to account
- Consider how your event website is now viewed. Does it reflect the quality and scope of your event content?
- If your event is free to attend, your conversion tactics (from registrant to attendee) will be even more important as it’s much easier for registrants to drop out without the ties of travel and accommodation commitments.

“To maintain revenue: wouldn’t it make more sense to make most events fully digital rather than postponing?”

- This depends on:
 - Your audience - what were they hoping to get from your live event? How can you replicate this value online? You may not be able to...
 - How would a virtual version of your event deliver the same level of value to your audience and sponsors/exhibitors?
 - What are the digital capabilities of your team? Do you need to invest in training or new (possibly external) resources to provide a seamless transition to virtual?
- If a large proportion of your revenue comes from spex sales, consider that the model for a virtual event is completely different. Face-to-face interaction and qualification of leads is imperative to many sponsors and exhibitors, so you need to ensure you’re re-creating this value with online formats to avoid
- If your event is free to attend, moving to digital is simpler and less likely to be met by protest from delegates.
 - You’ll still need to think carefully about how you translate the value of your event online. An exhibition that is about seeing and trying new products will need to be creative to recreate that experience in a virtual space. Videos of product demos will be definitely be needed.
- For paid events, you need to ensure the digital elements you are adding are providing real value for your audience - in lieu of physical elements that may be missed - otherwise you could face backlash.
- Premium events that offer networking opportunities for senior audiences will need to recreate the intimate, ‘off-record’ networking opportunities online. Also consider that senior audiences may be resistant to adopting new digital formats compared to junior counterparts, so small-scale localised events may be more suitable.
- Be careful not to think about live and digital as binary, there are numerous hybridised options in-between. Slowly transitioning to a fully virtual event over time may also be more effective for retaining your audience in the long-term.

“What were the online networking tools for events?”

- The [CREO Manual](#) is a great resource that lists several online networking platforms, as well as other tools you can use to build a virtual event.
- As always, consider your audience needs and expectations - as well as your team’s capabilities - before investing in a piece of technology.

“What would you do differently if your delegates are all health professionals who are on the front line of patient care?”

- For this, we are assuming the event has already been postponed to at least H2 2020 (if it was originally in H1).
- With high demand on your event audience’s time and attention, you need to closely consider the following:
 - **Ease of attending:** either a virtual event or a smaller, localised event would be best suited. Both options are also sympathetic of the need to limit large gatherings, which medical workers will be particularly wary of (this also of course depends on the government restrictions in force when the event takes place).
 - **Relevance of event:** ensure your event addresses the most pressing challenges the industry faces and think about how the format of your event can be used to overcome these challenges.
- Make sure your event content is available to access afterwards. Potential delegates may not be able to attend, so sharing content that they can access any time is essential.

“We are trying to put out more content however, like everyone, we also need revenue, so the sales team want content sponsored, which holds up what we can put out. Any experiences of this?”

- Just because a piece of content isn't directly sponsored, it doesn't mean it isn't useful in generating revenue. Content marketing is a key driver of event and subscriptions conversions and revenue that should be encouraged.
- Having said that, finding a balance is key. Pushing out only sponsored content could risk frustrating your audience with constant sales messages.
 - If a sponsor produces a piece of content, ensure it's providing value to your audience.
 - Consider a whitepaper that delegates can pay to download and consume (as long as the content is truly valuable)
 - Think about how new digital formats (e.g. webinars) can be opened up to sponsors to drive more revenue. Sales teams will appreciate this additional option they can offer prospects.

“How important is lead nurturing/demand generation in this? What would be some key areas to focus on for a digital team looking to keep leads hot until the sales team are ready to purchase?”

- **Content marketing:** Providing your community with relevant, valuable content (e.g. speaker Q&As, reports etc.) will keep them engaging with your brand.
- **Automation:** Someone downloads a report? Send them an automated email highlighting a session on the agenda that’s relevant. Thoughtfully implemented automations can keep leads warm and save your team time.
- **New event content:** Get new speakers on board, add new event content and keep building in more value. Stakeholders want to see that you’re aiming to deliver the best product possible.
- **Nurturing:** Hold off trying to sell them a ticket for now - focus on keeping them engaged so when the time is right, they will convert.
- **Communicate trust:** Make sure your community knows you are committed to delivering what you’re offering (via all of the above steps). Now is not the time for pushy sales teams to be chasing revenue.

“With increasing digital event content being published (needed to keep people engaged, or for new virtual events, appeasing sponsors or for lead gen towards postponed events), where is the balance for companies that are already selling digital products from publishing arms? Especially as businesses like ours are relying heavily on the publishing arm monetising more digital content to make up the event revenue shortfall?”

- If people are already paying for digital content, you need to be especially careful of how much you share.
- Also consider how event content could be an introduction to your digital publishing arm. Your event stakeholders may not be aware of your digital content, so this could be a good opportunity to introduce them to it while still benefitting your event.
- Event-specific content is needed. There are lots of elements of your event that wouldn't normally be included in publishing (speaker Q&A, polls, surveys), be creative and think about how you can leverage your event community to create new content.
- This content is likely to be more bitesize than what's going out in your other digital products. This isn't an issue. Short interviews and small reports will still keep stakeholders engaged.
- Think about what event sponsors can offer - they may be able to commission a whitepaper that's highly relevant to your event audience, and won't cost your content team anything.
- An event newsletter could be a good option. Simple updates and reminders of event USPs will build trust, nurture prospects and keep your event brand healthy.

“How much should I charge for a digital delegate pass for a hybrid event noting that the customer acquisition cost is the same for both?”

- The acquisition costs may be the same or similar, but also consider the cost of adding digital elements to your event. This should all translate in to perceived value in your stakeholders’ eyes.
- **The approach you should take depends on the format of your hybrid event, if the digital elements:**
 - Enhance the experience
 - Offer additional benefits (e.g. messaging other delegates)
 - Provide access to exclusive content...then you can consider adding digital elements as a premium add-on, like how some events offer VIP passes that provide an enhanced experience.
- **If the digital elements:**
 - Are the only place to access event content, like livestreamed talks and tech demos
 - Are where most of the networking will take place
 - Cover a significant portion of your event’s core value proposition (e.g. an event focused on learning and networking, but all workshops occur online)....you may need to price your tickets accordingly; consider the cost of the live/digital formats of your event as well as the value each offers.
- If you are adding digital elements to an event *after* registration has opened, make sure you’re offering a free upgrade to existing delegates to digital+live. Attempting to upsell would likely frustrate them, as a lot of the value they were promised for the live event is now locked behind a digital paywall.

“You mentioned ‘focus on lead gen and avoid the “book now” messaging’. When would it be appropriate to send that messaging in marketing campaigns?”

- As soon as you are confident your event will go ahead as planned, without any potential for further disruption or delay, or as soon as you have replaced the event with a virtual format - communicate this to your audience
- You can influence this by keeping them engaged with content and comms, but confidence will only be restored in live events once the global situation stabilises.
- If you’re approaching the time where you’re considering switching from lead-gen to ‘book’ messaging, you can trial this by appending a ‘book now’ CTA to a lead-only email, to gauge the response.

“How can you provide content on topics that feature on your agenda without spoiling the topic ahead of the conference date?”

- Done correctly, content has the opposite effect i.e. it can really whet the appetite for your event content. Producing and distributing unique and valuable content ahead of your event can generate more leads and revenue and keep your community engaged.
- **Here are some content types that enhance, rather than spoil your product:**
 - **Speaker Q&As** - where a key speaker is interviewed about the most pressing industry topics and provides a preview of what they'll be covering during the event.
 - **Reports** - where thorough research is conducted on a pressing industry issue. Not only does this position your brand as an industry thought-leader, it also provides a preview of what can be learned at your event.
 - **News articles** - serving your community with up-to-date news and analysis not only drives more traffic to your site, but also shows you are 'on the ball' when it comes to industry developments, giving stakeholders confidence in your event content.
 - **Videos** - provide access to past talks to give a real preview of what to expect at the event.

Get in Touch



Helen Coetzee



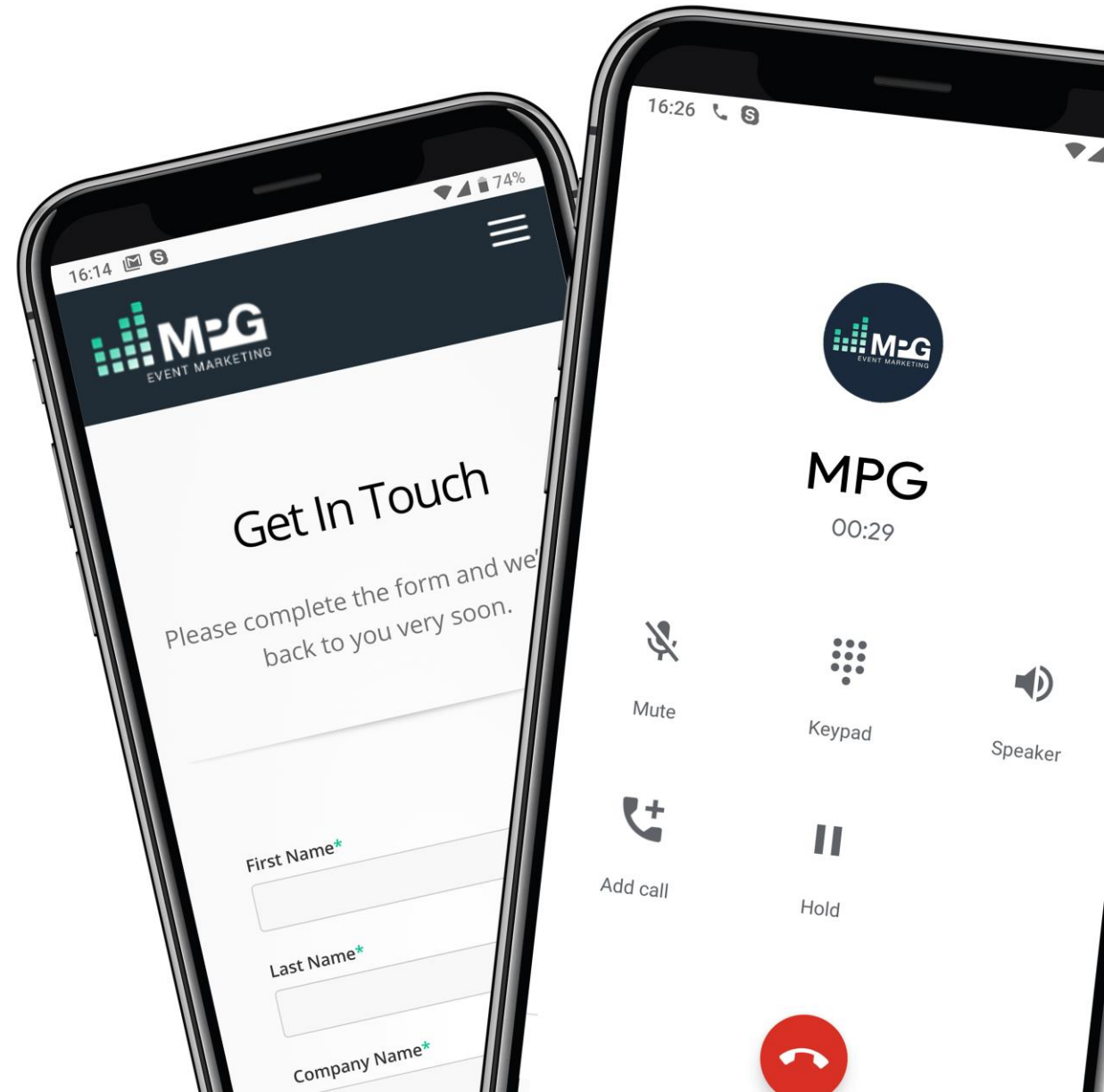
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THANK YOU!

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