



Going virtual – your show can go on



the**newsmarket**



Introduction

When the pandemic hit, trade shows were quickly cancelled, and new product launches were put on hold. But, as the old saying goes, 'necessity is the mother of invention'. The business world – including the automotive sector – went virtual. Zoom, Microsoft Teams and working from home quickly became the norm.

Fast forward to today and virtual and hybrid events have proliferated and become ever more professional. Lockdowns and social measures may well be easing, but it seems virtual events will be with us for some time. In fact, a recent report* found that over 90% of event marketers plan to incorporate virtual events into their strategy in 2021.

So, what exactly are virtual and hybrid events and who should be using them? In this eBook we'll seek to demystify the terminology, the technology and the creative formats on offer, and explain why they're suitable for almost every company and every industry sector and institution.



The benefits

Virtual events are 100% online and 100% Covid-safe. They can be live or pre-recorded. They feature all participants in remote locations. Hybrid events offer a mix of in-person participation and online discussion. Both can feature video reports, graphics and pre-recorded soundbites to enhance engagement. They can both offer flexible audience interaction elements.

The format choices are endless and can include everything from product launches, business roundtables, trade shows and press conferences to media Q&As, CEO fireside chats and award ceremonies.

According to the same report*, the majority of event marketers believe that their 2021 event budgets will decrease.

With marketing budgets still tight for the automotive sector, virtual and hybrid events can help save money, time and resources. Participants and moderators no longer need to travel to locations, saving on flights and accommodation. The media and the public can also join from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

They work. For example, Toyota Gazoo Racing received a record media audience for a recent press conference that featured a live Q&A.

Depending on the complexity and duration of the launch or the event, going virtual can suit almost every budget.



How do they work?

It may sound intimidating, but the process of producing virtual events is relatively straightforward. However, planning and pre-production are essential to guarantee great results.

Ask yourself the following questions: What format do you require? Do you need a moderator? Who is the audience? How long does it need to be? What is your budget? Can you afford 'bells and whistles' such as video reports, animations and graphics? Does it need to be live, or can it be pre-recorded? Which channels do you want it streamed on?

Once you have settled on a creative format and a budget, the rest is simple.

To begin with, all participants should be briefed, and their connections tested in advance. If needed, they can be trained in online presentation techniques to ensure their on-screen performance is confident and professional.

A script for the moderator should be written and approved. Any production elements required should be edited ready for play-out. If necessary, journalists can be invited to attend, and the event can be promoted to the chosen audience. The final 'show' will then be either recorded and supplied as a VOD file or streamed live to the chosen channels.

Go interactive

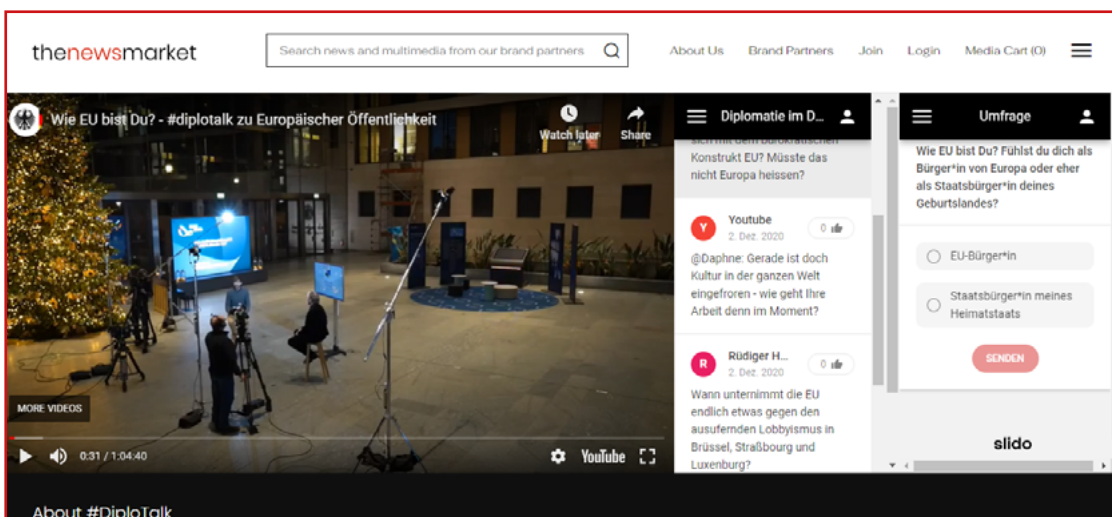
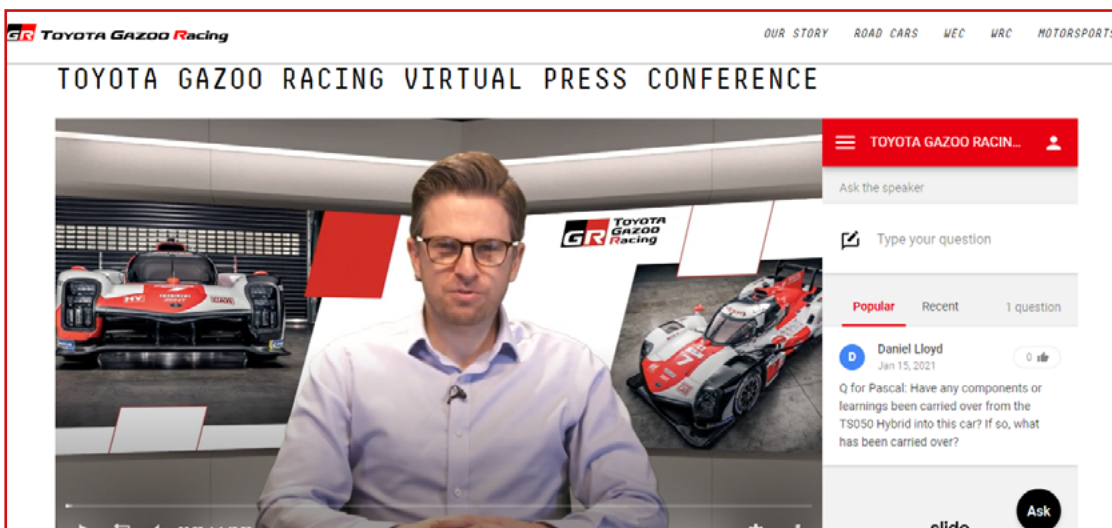
Real-world events, trade shows and press conferences offer in-person engagement that is hard to replace. The Bizzabo report* found that most event marketers agree that the in-person experience is irreplaceable. But virtual formats have developed swiftly over the last year and now offer tools designed to engage the audience, whilst remaining contact-free.

The internet is a two-way platform and that's one of the big benefits of virtual events. Journalists and/or the public can be invited to join launches or business roundtables and offer their opinions and ask questions of the key players. Live polls

and word clouds can be added. Live Q&A can also be added via chat boxes. Questions submitted via social channels – either live or gathered in advance – can be answered by the participants.

They work. For example, a recent series of virtual events for the German Foreign Office featured great levels of interactivity, including live chat boxes, audience polls, word clouds and questions from Twitter.

Post-event, to keep the conversation going, short highlights videos can be edited and repurposed for channels such as IGTV, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.



Embrace the change

The ability to adapt to new challenges and embrace changes are the signs of a strong company or institution. The automotive sector is bouncing back strongly and is rapidly adapting to the new normal. In fact, with virtual technology it may never go back to the old ways of working.

In-person trade fairs, exhibitions and press launches may very well recover and bounce back in 2021 and beyond, but they are highly likely to be hybrid events.

Business travel for participants may be restricted for some time. The media and the public may not want to leave their offices or their homes, or they may be concerned about sustainability or costs.

Virtual and hybrid events featuring broadcast-quality production and interactivity offer a way forward and are here to stay. They're cost-effective creative solutions for businesses of all shapes and sizes. And they allow your show to go on.



Our platform

TheNewsMarket, and its parent company DMA Media, have a long tradition providing broadcast services and editorial excellence for global brands. To this end, our technical team has developed a cloud-based, virtual broadcast platform that goes way beyond Zoom and Teams-style meetings and webinars. It offers broadcast-grade production that has been road-tested and is now trusted by our clients to deliver a robust, high quality and contact-free service.

Moderators can present events from either of our fully robotic broadcast

studios in central London or Brussels, or from a remote location. Participants can join using their laptops or smart phones. Video clips, music and graphics can be added using our platform. Events can be streamed live across multiple channels or they can be delivered as a VOD file for publishing at a later date.

Major brands and institutions are now taking advantage of our virtual broadcast platform and production services; they include the German Federal Foreign Office, PwC, Cubic Telecom, Toyota Gazoo Racing and Continental Reinsurance.

*Source: Bizzabo – Everything you need to know about hosting high-quality virtual events in 2020 and 2021, November 2020.



To find out more about our virtual broadcast solutions, click [here](#).
If you have an upcoming event or launch, then get in touch and
we will set up a call.

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