

5 trends changing the bar service and events industry

Issued by [Thirst Bar Services](#)

28 May 2021

Thirst co-founders Clyde Ackerman and Rael Lasarow identify five emerging trends propelling the industry.



The events and bar service industry, like many sectors, has undergone rapid and unparalleled changes over the past year. The pandemic has forever changed the way we plan events. But the industry responded with a raft of innovative solutions that enabled people and businesses to stay connected, celebrate, meet and network.

As we attempt to navigate our new post-Covid realities, certain key trends have started to emerge that show no signs of abating. [Thirst](#) co-founders Clyde Ackerman and Rael Lasarow identify five emerging trends propelling the industry into a new era:

1. Hybrid events the new normal

Hybrid events (where physical and virtual elements are present) were already on the rise before Covid due to decreasing budgets, busy lifestyles, globalisation and technological advancements. But the pandemic has turbocharged their growth and popularity, and cemented their place as a go-to eventing solution.

In a survey of event planners worldwide conducted by Global DMC Partners, 42% of respondents said a hybrid approach would be their strategy. They are viewed as the best way to deal with the string of uncertainties associated with our new realities, as well as cater to in-person and virtual attendees. We expect widespread adoption of hybrid events well into 2021 and beyond.

2. Bigger is not always better

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that bigger is not always better when it comes to events. We're seeing increasing demand for smaller, more intimate gatherings. People have become far more focused on keeping events simple, small and personalised and we expect this trend to persist long after the threat of the pandemic has subsided.



3. Tech to play a greater role

Personalisation is everywhere and events won't be any different. Thanks to daily interactions with brands such as Netflix, Google and Amazon, people now expect personalisation in all areas of their life. A traditional one-size-fits-all approach just doesn't cut it any more. Especially with advances in technology and artificial intelligence making personalisation far more accessible.

So we expect to see more businesses harnessing technology to enable personalisation to play a central role in the attendee journey at every event touchpoint. We also expect to see a greater presence of wearable tech that not helps attendees stay contactless and helps with contact tracing.

4. Virtual is here to stay

As video conferencing became ubiquitous as the primary way for workers, businesses and families and friends to communicate during the pandemic, it's clear this is not a temporary trend. Many people now prefer this new way of hosting events. This is evident in the industry's remarkable growth, with it poised to grow by \$269.20bn between 2021 and 2025.

As people become more accustomed to virtual events, we expect attendees to start demanding experiences that go far beyond simple video sharing or person-to-person communication. We, therefore, expect to see more robust solutions being introduced as event organisers try to replicate the in-person experience online.

5. Events go green

While sustainability has been an important issue for years, 2020 marked a turning point. This growing call for greater environmental consciousness is expected to filter into the eventing industry even further, particularly with 32% of consumers prioritising companies that are actively reducing their impact on the environment.

Opportunities for businesses include switching from paper to digital, replacing plastic with biodegradable or reusable alternatives, recycling, renewable energy power sources, and incorporating seasonal or local produce in event catering.

Looking forward

Now that 2021 is well under way, there is still much uncertainty ahead. But we are definitely starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Businesses that will set themselves apart in our new reality are those that are willing to be flexible. And while it will be a period of experimentation, it offers enormous possibilities to those businesses with their fingers on the pulse of changing consumer behaviour and expectations.

Thirst is using this time to consistently rethink and reimagine our offerings to stay competitive and adaptable in the face of rapidly changing environments.

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