

Reloading Live

The live marketing industry is one of the sectors that has been hardest hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. Its operations were practically brought to a halt from one day to the next, and it will be one of the last industries to get going again – especially in view of the long lead times involved. This makes it particularly important for the MCH Group to be able to offer alternative services during the ban on staging events and to make preparations for the post-pandemic era.



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In March 2020, the management reacted promptly to the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions and bans imposed by the authorities, adopting a range of immediate measures. Fair solutions were found with customers and partners for the cancelled events, including for the costs that had already been incurred. Contingency plans were drawn up and continuously updated. Short-time working and the corresponding measures abroad were introduced to cut personnel costs. In line with the recommendations issued by the Federal Office of Public Health, employees switched to working from home to ensure they were protected, and the requisite protection and hygiene measures were implemented on site.

At the same time, however, there were issues that required urgent attention. What alternative services could be created and offered to customers? How should the MCH Group prepare itself for the “new normal”?

Preparing for the post-pandemic era

Against this background, future-orientated projects such as the Art Basel Online Viewing Rooms and the Swissbau Innovation Lab were taken forward at an accelerated pace. Initiatives were launched in other areas too in a bid to offer customers alternative services and provide safe infrastructure for staging events, where this was still possible. A digital platform was set up for the exhibitors at Giardina Zurich, enabling them to communicate their contents and generate leads. When it came to conferences, it proved possible to stage numerous events digitally, including the SAP NOW event and the DGHO physicians’ conference, where the full conference programme was livestreamed from the Congress Center Basel. The Congress Center Basel and Messe Zurich buildings were also offered to the local parliaments for their parliamentary sessions.

The Live Marketing Solutions teams implemented numerous digital events and virtual trade fairs in the course of the financial year, acquiring valuable experience with hybrid strategies and solutions for combined brand activation. The production companies switched their production at short notice to the manufacture and sale of protective equipment.



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With a view to the easing of the protection measures that had been expected in the autumn, but was then unfortunately short-lived, MCH Group drew up a detailed protection concept for staging larger-scale trade fairs and events in future. At the start of July 2020, the group tested its numerous protection measures in conjunction with different partners and around 600 guests in an actual showroom. This included participant registration prior to the event, on-site admission checks, the construction and live experience of the exhibition and information stands, and the operation of a catering area.

Safety, innovation and digitalisation set to shape the future

These and other activities, however, are only enabling the MCH Group to bridge the corona period to a limited extent. The group has nonetheless created a sound basis for its further preparations for the future. One thing is quite clear – the "pre-corona era" has gone for good. Protection concepts, innovative alternatives and digital solutions will continue to play a central role, both as the restrictions are eased and once the hopefully rapid return to normal is complete.

MCH Group is thus continuing to address these issues intensively, at both a strategic and an operational level. Graduated protection concepts for different pandemic scenarios, for example, allow a faster and more flexible response to changing situations. This also applies to the prompt development of creative alternatives that can be deployed should "Plan A" prove impossible.

In its further preparations, the MCH Group will be able to build on what it has created and attained over the past year under extremely difficult conditions. The group will not only be able to call upon its increased innovation capacity, it will also be able to rely on the fact that its customers are longing for encounters and experiences to be possible again and, at the same time, are eager to exploit digital potential to a greater extent. MCH Group will be able to benefit from both these factors in equal measure.