



HILTON GLOBAL HYBRID EVENT

Pivoting to a Global Hybrid Event Model

Overview

This case study will examine the drivers for the Hilton team to pivot to a hybrid event for a global customer audience, how the project was executed and the valuable lessons learned relating to planning, technology, engagement and content.

Background

In 2020, Hilton Worldwide Sales decided to resurrect a premier customer event for the first time in 10 years. This “**Hilton Summit**” was scheduled for May in Puerto Rico. The goal of the summit was to bring together Hilton executives, hotel and corporate leaders, as well as key customers, for a business update, networking, idea exchange and to give back to the Puerto Rican community.

Due to the pandemic, the event was eventually cancelled when it became clear that customers and hotel Team Members could not safely attend. After much consideration, the Hilton team agreed it was still vital for Hilton’s leaders to address their customers, answer questions and provide their thoughts on the state of the industry.

The Hilton team decided to host a new Global Hybrid Event in October, inviting customers to join in-person wherever possible, and encouraging virtual customer participation for all other attendees.

Method

Due to budget and resource limitations, the hybrid event scope narrowed the live, in-person events to locations where our executives were located: McLean, VA, and London, England.

However, as this was a global event, the ability to include Asia Pacific (APAC) was also key, resulting in pre-recording segments with all of the APAC speakers.

The following objectives drove the content creation and event decision making:

- Demonstrate onsite safety
- Showcase engagement in a hybrid environment
- Deliver messaging on the past, present and future state of the industry
- Create a blueprint for customers to follow when hosting their own hybrid events

After objectives were identified, engagement goals were defined. Peer-to-peer was the original intent, but due to the volume of attendees, staff and budget limitations, the planning team decided on a one-way engagement plan, with in-person attendees in two locations and live viewing parties across the world hosted by the hotel teams. The planning team also decided to remove the interactive chat feature for virtual attendees, as staffing resources were too limited to accommodate chat moderation.

The team then proceeded with planning/finalizing the following (refer to the case study resources for workstream, invitations, event viewing tips and planner schedule examples):

- Budget
- Venue selection
- Determined workstreams
- Confirmed speakers
- An internal & external communication plan
- AV selection and destination management partners
- Drafted run of show
- Drafted production schedule
- Pre-recorded speakers
- Collaborated with executive communications team
- Scheduled pre-conference call with all stakeholders

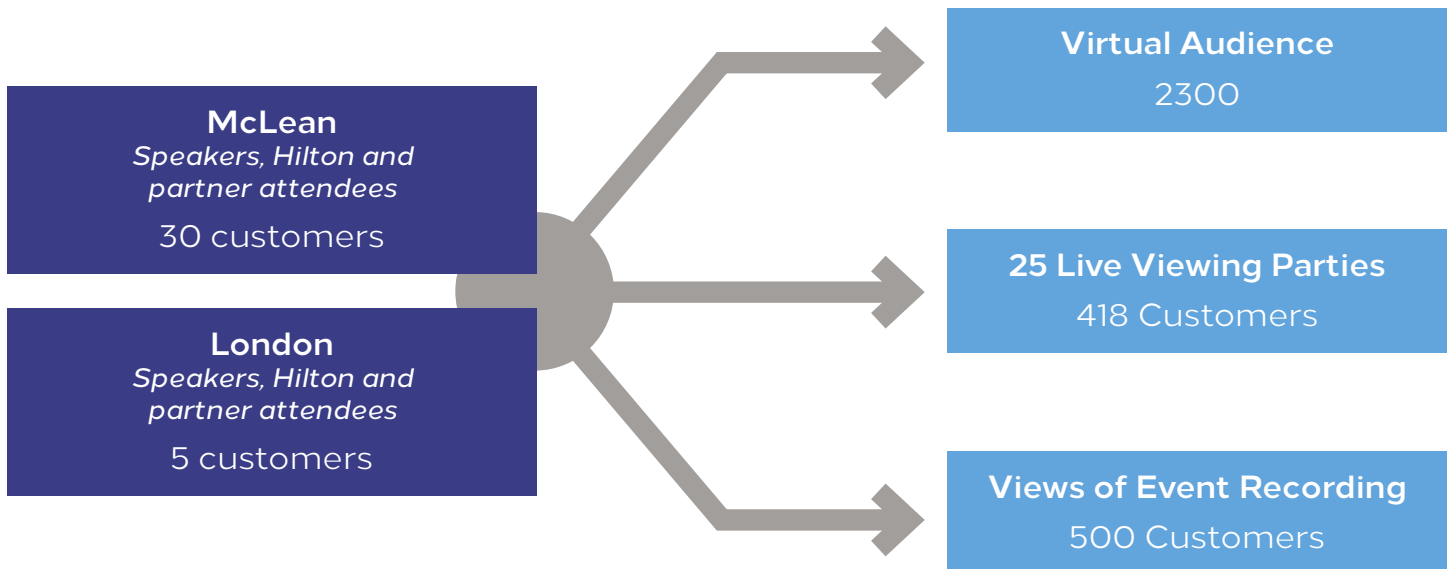
EVENT OVERVIEW & EXECUTION

The event team simultaneously executed the two live events—one in McLean, VA, and one in London, England. Virtual viewing parties with proper physical distancing were organized by several Hilton hotel teams. The viewing channels and event overview can be found below:

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20	VIRTUAL	HILTON MCLEAN	CONRAD LONDON
10:00 AM EST	Virtual Pre-Event Engagement	ONSITE REGISTRATION <i>Virtual pre-engagement on screens in foyer</i>	ONSITE REGISTRATION <i>Virtual pre-engagement on screens in the meeting room</i>
10:30 AM EST		GS Doors Open	GS Doors Open
11:00 AM EST	Keynote & Panel	Keynote & Panel	Keynote & Panel
12:00 PM EST	N/A	Lunch	N/A
1:00 PM EST		Optional Hotel Site Visit	

SINGAPORE AREA OFFICE
Pre-recording of message played during live event

To view the pre-event engagement recording, click [here](#). To view the live event recording, click [here](#).



The event execution is pictured above, featuring the different live-streaming locations and the attendees present—both virtually and in-person.

Results

The event team collected data during and after the event, measuring total unique views from virtual attendees, virtual attendee locations, average time watched, post-event views of the event, anecdotal feedback and overall event sentiment:

- Virtual attendees: 4,269
- Live viewing parties: 25 globally [Americas: 17 | Asia Pacific: 1 | EMEA: 7]
- In-person attendees: 63
- Live event broadcast (post event views): 423
- Pre-event broadcast (post event views): 498

Virtual attendance was a global affair, as audience members joined from India, Turkey, France, Argentina, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, the United States and Canada.

In the post-event survey, customers—both virtual and in-person—rated the pre-event engagement and live event a 4.4 out of 5. Comments regarding the overall experience were positive, while also giving the event planning team valuable insights on lessons learned:

- *“Thought the whole setup was excellent, very professionally done.”*
- *“Excellent event—it will be interesting as we partner like never before to bring great events, learning and experiences to our customer/members. Thank you for leading on this, Hilton!”*
- *“The event was well organized and it was great to see the extent of cleaning and preparation to host guests. The virtual portion of the event was excellent in the beginning, but halfway through the panels the video lagged the sound by about 8 seconds. Nevertheless, the content was excellent. Thank you for the opportunity to participate!”*
- *“Just wanted to say how engaging the Hilton event was this week, really enjoyed it. I was on for both sessions, two hours in total. You can really see the efforts and work that Hilton are putting in for their employees and their clients.”*

The [Global Hybrid Event](#) also produced press mentions, including an article in [Meetings & Incentive Travel](#), highlighting the Hybrid model and [Passaporte News](#).

Conclusion

Overall, the event was very well received both by virtual and in-person attendees. Survey results revealed the audience found the event professional, informative and engaging.

Though there were multiple lessons learned as the Hilton team navigated new Hybrid event territory, the “**pivotability**” of both the event model and the Hilton team allowed for quick fixes, providing customers with a seamless event experience.

Upon post-event debrief, the following were identified as WINS:

- Customers were able to view a hybrid event live, in a safe and socially responsible environment.
- Comprehensive technology redundancies—the team was overprepared for technological disruptions on site
- Professional look and feel of the broadcast
- Pre-recording content mitigated onsite risk and was well received by attendees
- Managed event expectations to available resources

The following were identified as LESSONS LEARNED:

■ PLANNING

- » *Begin the planning process for an event of this scope as soon as possible; six months out would be ideal, although this event was planned and executed in two months*
- » *Determine attendance numbers as soon as possible, as the number of virtual guests could change what platform you use. Be prepared for in-person and virtual counts to change, should local regulations regarding in-person gatherings shift.*
- » *Review platform options that are best suited for your event. For this event, due to the extremely high volume of invitations, it was decided to forgo a virtual platform that offered live engagement, as the live portion of the event was only an hour long and comments in the feed would be quickly lost or missed*
- » *If it is a one-day event, schedule for mid-week to ensure time for recordings, rehearsals, technical reviews and testing*
- » *If it is a multi-day event, schedule additional lead time for recordings and rehearsals*
- » *Confirm resources of both the planning team and the chosen partners (e.g. staffing, budget, partners, platform)*
- » *Pre-record segments well in advance of the event to allow for proper editing*
- » *Arrange for all planners to be directly connected at each live site if you have multiple live broadcasts*
- » *Involve IT as early as possible in the planning process*
- » *Stagger breaks and meal periods*

■ INVITATION/INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- » *Plan for RSVPs to be tailored to in-person and virtual attendees*
- » *Have a dedicated scribe/repository for notes during the event duration*

■ ROOM/AV SET UP

- » *Understand camera setup before creating a staging guide*
- » *Be cognizant of stage height for in-person attendees, as cameras and monitors can impact their viewpoint*

■ **SPEAKERS**

- » Provide a detailed event brief to speakers, including room setup, preferences for delivery and estimates for virtual and in-person attendance
- » Encourage speakers to speak in a casual, “less scripted” tone
- » Remind speakers to look at the camera as opposed to the in-person audience
- » Audition moderators comfortable in front of both in-person and virtual audiences
- » Discuss with speakers their need/preference for confidence monitors or teleprompters

■ **REHEARSALS**

- » Provide guidance/recommendations on what to wear and best practices for the event team, speakers and staff
- » Include additional rehearsal time for all in-person speakers
- » Create Run of Show for rehearsal

■ **CONTENT**

- » Include more interactivity—for example, a chat feature for questions
- » Balance content for global partners
- » Include a countdown clock to avoid repeating messages related to time remaining

■ **STAFFING**

- » With limited time to execute an event, make sure to staff appropriately, especially in areas unfamiliar to the event team

CASE STUDY #1 RESOURCES

Workstream Examples

Event Strategy	Pre-Event Engagement	Live Engagement	B2B Promo Recording	Internal Comms	Customer Comms
[insert name of team members/ and or partners]	[insert name of team members/ and or partners]	[insert name of team members/ and or partners]	[insert name of team members/ and or partners]	[insert name of team members/ and or partners]	[insert name of team members/ and or partners]

Online Registration	Onsite Registration	Onsite Lunch	IT Support	Budget	Branding
[insert name of team members/ and or partners]	[insert name of team members/ and or partners]	[insert name of team members/ and or partners]	[insert name of team members/ and or partners]	[insert name of team members/ and or partners]	[insert name of team members/ and or partners]

Planner Schedule

LONDON		MCLEAN	
Saturday			
		All Day	PSAV Move In
Sunday			
All Day	PSAV Move In & Testing	All Day	PSAV Testing
		All Day	DMC Move In
		Afternoon	Special Events Arrival
Monday			
All Day	B2B Promotional Photo/Video Recording	All Day	B2B Promotional Photo/Video Recording
All Day	Hotel Set Up	All Day	Special Events Set Up
		8:00 AM	Pre-Con
		10:00 AM	Pre-Event Engagement: Emcee Filming
4:30 PM	Rehearsal Keynote/Panel	11:30 AM	Rehearsal Keynote/Panel
		1:00 PM	Pre-Event Engagement: DMC Filming
		1:30 PM	Pre-Event Engagement: F&B Filming
		2:00 PM	Pre-Event Engagement: Emcee Filming
Tuesday			
All Day	B2B Promotional Photo/Video Recording	All Day	B2B Promotional Photo/Video Recording
2:00 PM	Rehearsal Keynote/Panel	9:00 AM	Rehearsal Keynote/Panel

Invitations



Join us for an Exclusive Global Hybrid Event TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2020

Hilton in partnership with PSAV invites you on an experiential journey during our exclusive global hybrid event. As an industry, we are *Ready to Rise* and experience the resurgence of travel! Spanning the globe with teams joining from McLean, London and Singapore, the event features industry and Hilton updates, a live panel discussion, and a look at Hilton EventReady with CleanStay.

Join us virtually from the comfort of your home or office for this live global hybrid event.

WHEN
Tuesday, October 20, 2020

OPTIONAL PRE-EVENT ENGAGEMENT

Join the event early and experience Hilton EventReady and Hilton CleanStay firsthand! Explore our unique room sets and creative food & beverage, hear from industry leaders, and virtual pre-event engagement.

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (New York, NY)
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (London, England)
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (Paris, France)
7:30 PM - 8:30 PM (New Delhi, India)

VIRTUAL EVENT

Industry and Hilton update with Chris Nassetta, President & CEO
Executive Panel Discussion

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (New York, NY)
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (London, England)
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (Paris, France)
8:30 PM - 9:30 PM (New Delhi, India)

PANEL MODERATORS

Shawn Parker
Executive Director
Corporate & Strategic
Accounts
McLean, VA
HILTON

Tanya Clifford
Vice President
Hilton Worldwide Sales
Europe, Middle East & Africa
London, England
HILTON

Pariva Rustagi
Groups, Meetings & Events
Enablement Lead Asia Pacific
Singapore
HILTON

PANELISTS

Danny Hughes
EVP & President
Americas
HILTON

Laura Fuentes
EVP
& Chief HR Officer
Americas
HILTON

Chris Silcock
EVP
& Chief Commercial Officer
HILTON

Simon Vincent OBE
EVP & President
Europe, Middle East & Africa
HILTON

Alan Watts
EVP & President
Asia Pacific
HILTON

Ben Erwin
President
& Chief Executive Officer
PSAV

WHERE

Join virtually.

Registered participants will receive the log in details via a separate email prior to the event.

We look forward to reconnecting with you during this exclusive global hybrid event—our chance to engage, listen and *RISE* to the possibilities of travel.

Please respond by clicking one of the buttons below:



Questions? Please contact specialevents@hilton.com



Join us for an Exclusive Global Hybrid Event

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WHEN

This event will be live on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 11:00 AM (New York, NY).
Due to the time difference, we are pleased to offer a delayed viewing on demand.

ON DEMAND
Tuesday, October 20, 2020
Wednesday, October 21, 2020
Thursday, October 22, 2020

VIRTUAL EVENT

Industry and Hilton update with Chris Nassetta, President & CEO
Executive Panel Discussion

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WHERE

Join virtually.

You will receive a link to view the event on demand on Tuesday, October 20, 2020. The link will be available for viewing until Thursday, October 22, 2020.

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Questions? Please contact specialevents@hilton.com



Invitations



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Spanning the globe with teams joining from McLean, London and Singapore, the event features industry and Hilton updates, a live panel discussion, and a look at Hilton EventReady with CleanStay.

HILTON HYBRID EVENT

Join us in person for this global hybrid event at the Hilton McLean Tysons Corner!

WHEN
Tuesday, October 20, 2020

Optional Pre-Event Engagement
10:00 AM – 11:00 AM ET

Arrive early and experience Hilton EventReady and Hilton CleanStay firsthand! Explore our unique room sets and creative food & beverage, hear from industry leaders, and pre-event virtual engagement.

Live Event
Please arrive by 10:30 AM
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM ET

Industry and Hilton update with Chris Nassetta, President & CEO
Executive Panel Discussion

Luncheon to follow.
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM ET

Parking is complimentary.
Please note if joining, in person a face covering will be required.

LOCATION
Hilton McLean Tysons Corner
7920 Jones Branch Dr.
McLean, VA 22102

Shawn Parker
Executive Director
Corporate Group & Strategic
Accounts
McLean, VA
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We look forward to reconnecting with you during this exclusive global hybrid event — our chance to engage, listen and RISE to the possibilities of travel.

RSVP
Please RSVP to Ashley.eubanks@hilton.com

If you are unable to attend in person, we invite you to join virtually.
We will share access details for the live webcast.

Questions?
Please contact Ashley.Eubanks@hilton.com



WHAT IS A LIVE VIEWING EVENT?

Hotel team gathers along with customers to view a virtual event together at the hotel.

HOTEL SETUP TIPS

Below are some tips for preparing for your viewing event.

- Ensure your event space is setup to meet Hilton EventReady guidelines and local physical distancing protocols.
- Consider asking your DMC partners to help execute the event with unique furniture or additional décor.
- Host a breakfast, luncheon or reception to showcase your EventReady food and beverage offerings.
- Prepare to showcase additional room set ups to highlight the ways your hotel is EventReady.
- Have a guest room ready to show customers our CleanStay protocols

HOW DO YOU INVITE CUSTOMERS?

- Open and complete the GWOE Viewing Event Invitation and Confirmation Templates with details specific to your hotel.
- You are responsible for managing your invite and RSVP process and lists.
- If a customer cannot attend the View Event there will be a link in the invitation for them to join virtually from their home or office.

TECHNOLOGY TO CONSIDER

Hotel AV partner should consider the following for best viewing:



Streaming Party Tips

Best practice is to use a Hilton AV laptop and do a dry-run to make sure all special fonts are installed. Make sure Team, Outlook, Skype for Business is not signed in to prevent untimely pop ups.



Use Google Chrome

This browser is recommended for the most optimal viewing experience.



Make sure your internet connection can support video (e.g. YouTube)

Download speed of at least 1.5Mbps is required to watch Medium quality video. Download speed of at least 5Mbps is required to watch HD quality video.



Adjust audio controls

Volume is adjusted by hovering over the speaker icon on the bottom right corner of the video player. To unmute, simply click the speaker icon.



Adjust video quality if you experience buffering

The default video quality selection is "Auto." Please do not increase the quality of the video as this will cause buffering. If you experience excessive buffering, please select a lower quality.

**We will be sending the instructions to log in prior to the event.
Stay tuned!**

