



Powering the sales pipeline through virtual event technology

49%

more new & existing deals
influenced

\$509M

total influenced TDCV across 682
influenced opportunities

200%

increase in attendance for
virtual event

When Fidelity Information Services (FIS) found their events program affected by the start of the global health crisis in March, they knew it would directly impact their sales pipeline. With up to five major hosted conferences each year, as well industry trade shows and internal events like sales kickoffs, the events team needed to find a creative solution to keep the sales funnel active. Cynda Covert, Events & Trade Show Advisor Senior, saw virtual events as the best path forward.

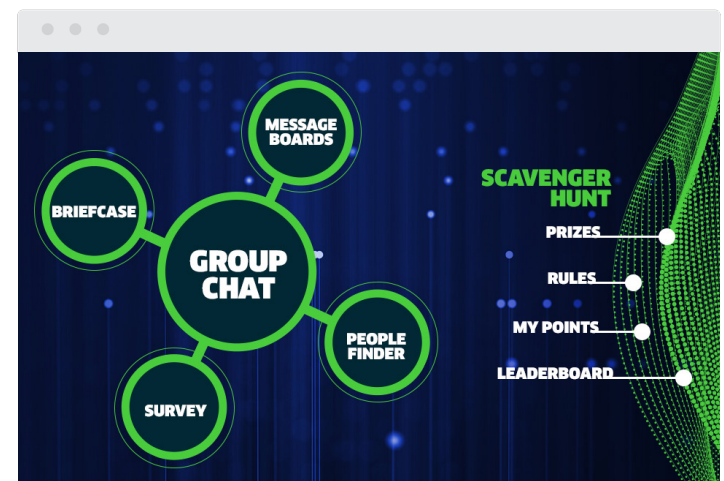
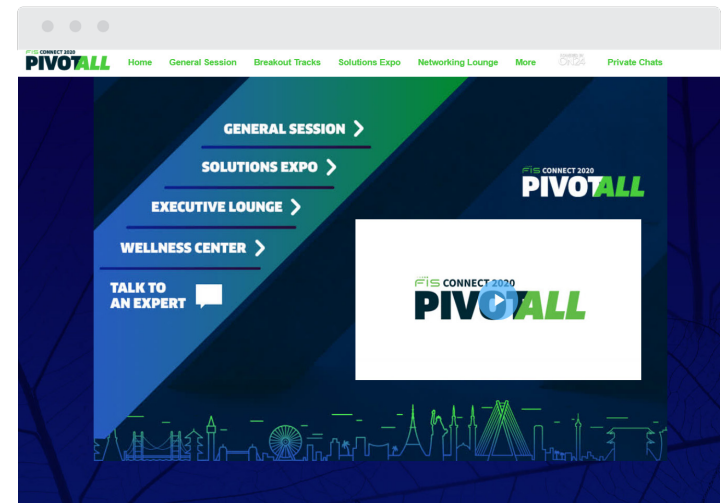
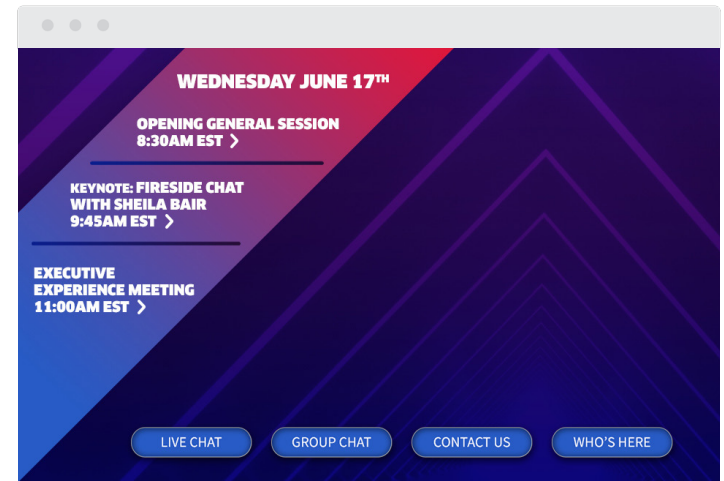
Understanding the Value of Virtual Events

“At the end of March, we were supposed to have our first client conference, but obviously we couldn’t really host in-person events at that time,” explains Cynda. The Financial Services organization wanted to move their planned event to August with the hopes of an in-person experience, but the worsening crisis made it impossible. In April, they made the decision to move forward with a fully virtual InFocus event in June. They also decided to move a second client conference, Connect, to a virtual event in June. The key to the success of both these events was in convincing stakeholders of the value of the planned virtual experience to engage customers and prospects. “We took the time to really show our stakeholders the importance of keeping events moving as virtual events, which I really appreciate,” Cynda notes. With only eight weeks to convert their in-person event to a virtual experience, Cynda knew she needed the right technology in place.



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*- Cynda Covert,
Events & Trade Show Advisor Senior*



In looking at the needs of her prospective attendees, Cynda saw several key factors that could affect the virtual experience for the large base of banking clients. “We provide them the software and technology they need to move money quickly, safely, and globally,” explains Cynda. “They come to our events to see new innovations, learn how to use our technologies, talk with their peers, and discover what’s happening in the industry.” Realizing that the audience would be working from home with potential distractions, they decided to retool the planned content for a virtual viewing experience. They shortened each day to a half-day and offered on-demand content throughout the event. They also extended the availability of their virtual event to remain open for two weeks after the live event, thereby ensuring additional attendees for their sales leads.

Building on In-Person Event Success

The easiest part of the process, says Cynda, was trusting the Cvent solutions already in place. FIS had seen great success using Cvent for their in-person events. For example, their 2019 InFocus Conference saw measurable improvements from 2018 in proving ROI, mapping the attendee journey onsite, and using data to show attendee insights. For this and other internal conferences, they leveraged a host of Cvent solutions including Event Management, CrowdCompass, Onsite Solutions, Abstract Management, and Passkey to automate processes. For the InFocus conference specifically, the events team added session tracking to their conference in order to provide real-time data for sales teams, and modernized the mobile experience with the CrowdCompass event app. The two-way integration with Cvent registration allowed them to track engagement points and attendance data across the conference. Coupled with the quick and painless check-in and badge printing process through OnArrival, the tools gave attendees the high-tech experience they craved. On the backend, the Marketo integration gave them valuable insights into their marketing campaign performance, moving contacts further down the funnel for their sales teams. As a result, they increased lead volume by 38% over the previous year and influenced \$750M in existing TCV, a 300% increase over the previous year. They also saw 68% increase in new deals created and 131% increase in existing deals created, as well as an 89% increase in sponsorship revenue.



Using Cvent to Power Digital Engagement

With such impressive success for their in-person events, Cynda knew their virtual events would need to garner incredible results. Her team relied on best practices from her in-person events in planning the digital experience. “Because all of our events were already hosted in Cvent, it was an easy jump to move the virtual event to Cvent,” Cynda explains. “We used the microsites and were able to whitelist the URLs, which I really like for our brand, and made it easy for people to find us.” She could use weblinks and reference ID’s to target user behavior. She sent targeted invites through Cvent’s eMarketing tool through segmented contact lists. By syncing her campaigns through Marketo, she could track campaign performance in driving registrations.

To execute a virtual pivot under tight timelines, the FIS team created a new registration site in Cvent with a dedicated virtual pathway. They were able to re-register existing registrants while simultaneously expanding their reach to target a broader base of prospective invitees. They integrated the Cvent Event Management solution with the chosen virtual platform to host over 200 breakout sessions with a mix of pre-recorded and live content. The Solutions Expo Hall was grouped into six different product ecosystems for easy navigability. Attendees could network through video conferencing or chat functionality, and could contact exhibitors through their virtual booths. They also created networking lounges for attendees to enjoy a sense of community amongst their peers and colleagues. “We wanted to make sure we had that sense of community in a new virtual wellness center as well. So we had a space where people could go to relax, do yoga, and we even had cycling videos in there,” Cynda adds.

Scaling Virtual Marketing Strategies for the Future

Across the conferences, Cynda’s team was able to track engagement and session attendance to provide valuable metrics for her stakeholders. “Another aspect that really helped us show event success was the on-

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Events & Trade Show Advisor Senior*

demand reporting in Cvent,” Cynda adds. “We knew it was important to show our stakeholders that virtual events were here to stay and they were worth the return on investment.” Cynda’s team had previously estimated roughly 1,000 attendees for their in-person Connect event, and therefore expected the same number for their virtual attendance. “I thought we were going to have to fight pretty hard for each of our 1,000 attendees, and I was expecting no more than that in the virtual environment,” she says. Incredibly, the virtual conference garnered three times as many registrations as expected. “Never in my wildest dreams did I think we’d get more than 1,000 clients to attend. We ended with over 3,000 attendees, so we tripled our expected attendance for the virtual event,” Cynda says. With over 45 different countries represented across the attendee base, the global event was a resounding success for FIS.

With integrated session and registration data synced between Cvent and the virtual hub, Cynda’s team was able to provide key attendee insights for their sales teams. For the InFocus event, Cynda says the average viewer spent 300 minutes within the hub. “That more than hit any sort of benchmarks I’ve seen,” she insists. For the Connect event, attendees spent an average 136 minutes in the hub and her team tracked 46,000 social impressions. Even more impressive, they tracked another 1,000 attendees

who logged in during the on-demand period after the close of the event. “That was pretty fascinating to me that people are either coming back to consume more content or spending their first time with us on their own time,” Cynda observes.

Proving Virtual Event ROI

Using this data to drive users further down the funnel for their sales team, the events far outpaced the previous year’s already impressive performance. “When everything was said and done, we had 14% more new deals created in the virtual event in comparison to the in-person event last year,” she explains. “We also influenced 35% more existing deals and had 682 influenced opportunities, or a total TCV of \$509 million. We tracked 119 MQLs and 57 SQLs as well.” The incredible metrics only further proved the value of the virtual environment and expanded marketing reach for FIS. “Needless to say, our events and sales teams were really thrilled with those numbers and they spoke for themselves,” Cynda adds.

What would Cynda advise others to do in shifting their event marketing strategy to virtual? “You’re never going to over communicate with your attendees,” she insists. “Create easy pathways to access the virtual content and find those ways you can help your attendees engage, which will help you in the long run as well.” She also stresses the importance of fostering community within the virtual environment, particularly for relationship-building. She says creating those shared experiences amongst attendees is key to engaging them across the event lifecycle to drive pipeline and keep leads active for your sales team.

Cynda foresees a bright future for hybrid events, with the opportunity to tailor two exclusive experiences for in-person and virtual attendees. “It’s going to be important to treat those attendees at two different groups, so we can really focus on what those regional communities want to see in-person,” she explains. For virtual attendees, she looks forward to expanding her marketing reach to create valuable connections across the

globe. Cynda’s team is looking forward to applying these lessons learned to their next virtual event, which will be held on the Cvent Virtual Attendee Hub®. “We’re really excited to see it come to light because we know Cvent and it’s going to be a super easy user experience with the Virtual Attendee Hub,” she says.

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