Upcoming Events
COVID-19: How to Prepare for

Jennifer Saphier Whitman | Founder, Saphier Events
Please submit all questions in the question box.

I am not a medical professional.

Use "COVID-19" instead of "Coronavirus".
Jennifer Saphier Whitman
Founder, Saphier Events
Setting the Stage - What We Know

- That the situation is changing by the minute
- Information, updates, communication plans and decisions on events are becoming quickly outdated
- Governor Baker declared a state of emergency on the afternoon of 3/10, which adds Massachusetts to a growing list of states that have done the same
- Your stakeholders are becoming increasingly concerned with each new headline

That the situation is changing by the minute
Options for Upcoming Events

- Moving forward as planned
- Postponement
- Cancellation
- Taking it Virtual
- Pivoting, and changing the type of event
Event Cancellations in Boston

- Harvard - all classes going online
- MIT - Gatherings over 150
- Cognitive Neuroscience Society Annual Event - Virtual
- Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections - Virtual
- The Power of Narrative Conference - BU
- Boston Directions Event - BCEC
- WeCode Conference - Harvard
- St. Patrick's Day Parade

Harvard - all classes going online
MIT - Gatherings over 150
Cognitive Neuroscience Society Annual Event - Virtual
Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections - Virtual
The Power of Narrative Conference - BU
Boston Directions Event - BCEC
WeCode Conference - Harvard
St. Patrick's Day Parade
Event Cancellations Nationally

- NBA, NHL, MLS close locker rooms
- BNP Paribas Open, Indian Wells, CA - Canceled
- NBA, NHL, MLB, MSL close locker rooms
- Ultra Music Festival in Miami is rescheduled for next year
- Pearl Jam Tour postponing the first leg of tour
- International Women’s Ice Hockey World Championships
- South by Southwest music, film, and technology conference
- 2020 UNICEF Ball
- HIMMS Conference
- HIMSS Conference
- F8 Conference (Facebook)
- Global Marketing Summit (Facebook)
- The Game Developers Conference (GDC)
Event Cancellations Internationally

- Tokyo Marathon - Elite runner restrictions
- Grand Prix in Bahrain - Closed to spectators
- Chinese Grand Prix - Postponed
- FIFA Asian Qualifiers for 2022 World Cup in Qatar - Postponed
- Geneva International Motor Show - Switzerland
- All public gatherings in Italy are prohibited
- Ireland’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade - Ireland
- Dalai Lama will no longer be making public appearances
- Venice Carnival - Italy
- OKinawa’s Azalea Festival - Japan
- Tomorrowland Winter 2020 Music Festival - France
- Tokyo’s Cherry Blossom Festival - Japan
- The Mobile World Congress
- Tomorrowland Winter 2020 Music Festival - France
- Tokyo’s Cherry Blossom Festival - Japan
- Ireland’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade - Ireland
- All public gatherings in Italy are prohibited
- FIFA Asian Qualifiers for 2022 World Cup in Qatar - Postponed
- Chinese Grand Prix - Postponed
- Grand Prix in Bahrain - Closed to spectators
- Tokyo Marathon - Elite runner restrictions
Trends in Events Scheduled for this Week

- Seeing cancellations for events with an international presence
- More cancellations in Cambridge than in Boston
- More events for youth cancelled
- Any events with travel outside of the US cancelled
- Proper international cancellations for events with an international presence
Events Moving Forward as Planned

- Update your timeline
- Opt for disposable service ware
- Consider the flow of your event, can you opt for smaller breakouts?
- Add signage to event alerting attendees to the measures taken to ensure a clean environment
- Rent additional handwashing stations and place hand sanitizer everywhere

Other Immediate Steps

- Keep in constant contact with your venue and vendors
- Ask if they plan to cancel upcoming events and when they plan to notify you
- Inquire about what extra precautions are being taken to sanitize the venue, arrange for more
- Rent additional handwashing stations and place hand sanitizer everywhere

- Create a message asking attendees with any symptoms to opt out of upcoming events
- Prominently displayed in event details
- If it is a paid event, be prepared to answer questions regarding refunds and have your policy
- Message attendees to let them know the event will still be taking place
Next Steps

What are your options?

- Rescheduled event - later this spring
- Rescheduled event - summer or fall
- Event cancellation
- Taking your event virtual
- Supplement with a new idea
Trends in Rescheduled Events

- Many events are being rescheduled for late spring
- Summer is still being avoided
- Fall is getting very full
Events NOT moving forward as planned

- Personally call your top stakeholders
- Message all other attendees, sponsors, vendors and any other stakeholders immediately with clear and consistent messaging
- Start feature them in blog posts and upcoming email blasts
- Continue to thank them on social media
- Sponsor logo and link placement on your main website
- Schedule a presentation to share your organization's mission with them
- Are you rescheduling or cancelling all together? It's ok to list date as TBD
- Be upfront about your refund policy
- Are you rescheduling or cancelling all together? It's ok to list date as TBD
- What are they willing to do or contractually obligated to do based on the date of your cancellation?
- Keep in touch with all of your vendors

- Come up with creative alternatives to honor sponsorship commitments
- Keep in touch with your top stakeholders
- Message them in blog posts and upcoming email blasts
- Schedule a presentation to share your organization's mission with them

- Continuously call your top stakeholders
Cancelled Events

● Many will be very understanding
● For some, an event cancellation is going to be an unavoidable result of the outbreak
● Length of travel bans remain uncertain

Take a moment to invest the time and resources to create thoughtful messaging

● Explore event alternatives, like Virtual Events
● Many will be very understanding

Cancelled Events
Key Phrases to Use in Messaging

- "Out of an abundance of caution..."
- "As a preventive measure..."
- "We are closely monitoring the situation..."
- "For the safety of our staff, beneficiaries, volunteers, etc..."
- "In light of the growing concern over COVID-19..."
- "We will, of course, be following mandates from national, state and local legislature and operating in compliance with the CDC."
Virtual Events

Virtual Conferences

- vFair
- WorkCast
- INXPO
- MeetYoo
- Mimeo
Virtual Events

Online Fundraising

- Greater Giving
- Classy
- OneCause
- Bidding for Good
Now is a great time to review contracts with your vendors for all upcoming events.

- Contracts & Insurance
  - Business Interruption Insurance
  - Event Cancellation Insurance
  - Moving Forward

If you are about to sign a contract:

- The vendor will be willing to add or amend clauses to your contract.
  - What is the current cancellation/refund policy?
  - What will happen if you cancel?
  - What deadlines do you need to meet for a full or partial refund?
  - What are they willing to do if you wish to postpone or reschedule?
  - What are they willing to do if you wish to postpone or reschedule?

Business Insurance

Moving Forward
The Bright Side

1. Vendor Response
2. Understanding Crowds
3. New Technologies
Questions?