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Virtual events: a new conversation has started

Webinars and online exhibitions have boomed in 2020 and brought more ways to interact with customers and partners

The beauty industry has always relied on the senses to promote its products: touching, seeing, smelling and trying a product has been an integral part of sales and marketing strategies. Until now. COVID-19 has caused a dramatic shift in how brands interact with their audiences, particularly affecting events and exhibitions.

Since May 2020, Quadpack has organised 4 webinars, ranging from topics like design, sustainable materials, future trends and the importance of cosmetics packaging for start-up brands. Unlike a physical event, the webinars aim to provide content as an added value to attendants. “Our goals are to spark collaboration with brands and to improve the quality of interactions we have with our clients, besides positioning ourselves as a reference in beauty trends,” says Sarah Eaves, Quadpack’s Marketing Manager. Although the financial investment is much more modest, online events require much more time and preparation in presentations, rehearsals and training. “We’ve really seen the benefit of reaching out to more people in different regions, something that we wouldn’t have usually been able to without this tool.”

Technology has been supporting brands in keeping the conversation open with clients and partners, opening interaction possibilities on online platforms. “When travelling was impossible or not recommended, and exhibitions started to be postponed or cancelled, we decided to use technologies we built for design and marketing purposes to create virtual events,” says Lars Hoffmann, Chief Operating Officer of Webpac, a cloud-based platform for packaging brands and suppliers. Webpac has launched its first-ever virtual exhibition, Webpackaging LIVE, bringing offline features to an online environment. Running from September to November 2020, the exhibition shows 3D versions of products, with links to catalogues, specifications and even the possibility to interact with a sales representative. “Differently from webinars or other content-based virtual events, our focus is on the product. We believe it’s a natural evolution of how to display packaging,” he says.

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Although the COVID-19 pandemic represents a challenge for exhibitions and event managers, it has also accelerated an inevitable trend. A few weeks before the lockdown, in January 2020, the Beauty Cluster Barcelona (BCB) invested in new equipment to stream their workshops and events. They were, without realising it, preparing themselves for the challenging times to come. "We had time to experiment it before and we liked the format," explains Ivan Borrego Valverde, BCB's General Manager. Since then, around 60 webinars, talks, forums and workshops were done virtually, fifty per cent more than in previous years. It allowed them to have more international speakers and attendants, although he believes the attention span and the networking are still compromised. "We're well adapted to the online environment and platforms have evolved rapidly, but many people miss the face-to-face contact." The future lies with hybrid events, he believes, and BCB is preparing to come back with physical conferences soon, with a limited forum, a wide streaming capacity and the possibility of a deeper B2B interaction.

Quadpack has plans to continue organising webinars, in parallel with traditional events. "It's a complementary tool that allows us to collaborate with our partners, share Quadpack's expertise, skills and knowledge. We would like the people who attend our webinars to be inspired by their content and want to work with Quadpack in the future," says Eaves.

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About Quadpack Industries SA

Quadpack Industries is an international manufacturer and a provider of enhanced packaging solutions for beauty brand owners and contract fillers. With offices and production facilities in Europe, North America, and the Asia Pacific region and a strategic network of manufacturing partners, Quadpack develops bespoke and customised packs for prestige, masstige and mass market customers. For more information, please visit www.quadpack.com.

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