

Events as a Service: The Future of B2B Event Strategy

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EaaS or Events as a Service is a phrase coined by Showcase to describe how we see the future of B2B events strategy. This ebook is going to challenge you to look at the way events are run, planned and executed based on the post-COVID period.

We aren't going to tell you that the landscape has changed forever, we know that already so repeating or rehashing yesterday's news isn't what EaaS is about.

The one thing that I ask, as our early readers from in the industry fed back, is to read it all. By all accounts, there are more questions answered and tips given about how to come into the multi-platform event process and capitalise on that than before. So please grab a coffee and give yourself 20 minutes to discover something new.

Introduction to Events as a Service

It's more
than a
simple 12
month
contract

INTRODUCING EAAS

Events as a service? What the hell is that you're thinking? "As a service" is typically used in terms of technology, right? Well, we agree, but in this case, it suits our way of thinking superbly and sets the context of the conversation.

Think about it, typically "software as a service" involves you committing to your software provider on an annual basis, right? You want to ensure that your commitment to that software will bring the most added benefit, or value and you would have done a lot of research to decide to buy it.

Well, why not the same for your established event production team?

HOWEVER...

It's not as simple as that. It's not a simple okay, these guys are simply trying to book a few annual contracts, and if that's what you do think, you should check out a more profound post on what Events as a Service is on our website [by clicking here.](#)

EaaS is about survival and transformation. As a reader from the events industry, you should be keenly aware of the relatively slow reactions of our industry to compete online, with great tech and better, more personal experiences for your audiences.

And by the way, treating your audience as such, as attendees, is part of the problem, and EaaS is a way to redress this imbalance and take your event program to the next level.

If you aren't inclined to read further at this point, we encourage you to put this down and revert to type or maintain the status quo, it's not a path with a long lifeline, but you are welcome to walk it anyway.

If you want to start thinking outside of the box, then read the suggested article in addition to this ebook. Here we cover how you implement EaaS, but the article challenges the why.

The team at Showcase sincerely hope this triggers some boardroom conversation or the senior leadership team is at your company to question the status quo. If you would like any of our team members to join that conversation, please let us know, and yes, that was a shameless plug!

BUSINESS STRATEGY

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EaaS

AS A STRATEGY

For those who chose not to peek into the blog post, we initially wrote on EaaS, the one that detailed our thoughts on how and why you should adopt this as a strategy, here is a brief recap.



01

Events as a Service keeps the organisation completely customer-centric in its approach with an annual stream of content and events at its core instead of an event-to-event model.

02

It focuses on building experiences for your audience and transforming audiences into communities by adopting the latest technologies. It looks beyond live or streaming or hybrid and into platforms and apps and 365-day engagement for your community, not necessarily the brand.

03

It requires organisations to vet suppliers differently. Rejecting the traditional RFP/tendering process and focusing on quantifying the value of relationships in addition to the value of your contract. Yes, we can even tell you how to do that!

Commit

The best way for events companies that work with external providers to adopt events as a service is to find your crucial production partner. COVID, unfortunately, saw many leading companies go bust, and a range of newer, less established companies come in behind to replace them.

The advantage of a partner like Showcase is that we survived the test of COVID and, already have years of global events expertise. It's by working with an organisation like ours that companies can then change focus from event to event in the traditional manner and refocus to become an evolving story. Seeing each event as a chapter in the growth of your company and the story it helps to tell to the incumbents in its target industries.

It's about how you bring live virtual and hybrid events in a continuous loop and carry the story and conversation on beyond the individual event and its post-event wrap up.

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These are the things you need to do to adopt

EaaS:

- Introduce the concept to the leadership team
- Build your roadmap around the strategy
- Find a suitable production partner that can help with all of your events in all of their formats
- Decide to build a fully engaged community that's switched on 365 days per year and commit to adopting appropriate technology to support that
- Adopt software that can help your organisation (Procurement/Finance) measure the value of the service/relationship of your contract, not just the financial value of the contract
- Implement Events as a Service in the organisation

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PROGRAM

But is that
really
enough to
keep your
audience
engaged?

Our experience shows that most companies do have an annual events program. Most of our bigger clients have their signature showcase event once a year. They could be in multiple locations internationally and spread across the four quarters of the year, but a single premium event in a single location is typical.

For what seems like forever now, we keep seeing the word “storyteller” appear. But are we really telling a story, or opening and closing a chapter at each event?

We see a lot of events happening where the signature event takes place in a region and then post the event, data is collated and a post-event report is issued.

- Does this go far enough?
- Is today’s expectation of content consumption and networking at events being fully fulfilled?
- Are you prepared to let competitive events move into a space of community and engagement and leave you behind?
- Why not follow up the main event with an online event to run through the findings, discuss the learnings and continue the conversation in a different way?
- Why does a report have to be the best way to remain engaged and distribute your findings?

If you start to stitch different event formats together, you can create a far more engaged audience, increase revenue opportunities and change your audience into a community.

Think about adding custom-built community platforms, Slack, Clubhouse or whatever options you look at, you can then harness another big reason people attend live events and allow your community to engage with each other all year round.

Facilitating business opportunities on top of your content is the nearest you can get to enabling/replicating the live event experience. But don’t leave it to your content director to manage this new platform. Find experienced social media community managers and have a dedicated role in this new approach.

There are probably sponsorship opportunities for particular rooms if you have those on your app, depending of course on engagement, but you can still distribute digital promotions etc into a community platform. If you doubt the sponsorship opportunities you should check out [Bizzabo’s virtual event benchmark](#) report from earlier this year which states that organisers are getting more sponsor dollars than before because of the unique value proposition that virtual events provide.

MAKE

The choice

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There are a lot of well-experienced production teams out there, so choosing the right partner isn't always easy.

Sure there are a number of standard tick box things to assess, such as:

- Previous work
 - Visually
 - Creatively
 - References
 - Case Studies
- Industry expertise
- ISO Accreditation
- Current clients
- Downloadable digital assets
- Services pages on your website

Which you can garner from a visit to a production companies website or social media channels. But then you have to have a conversation with a few companies and seriously consider what you ask them.

For us, we'd expect you to suggest hypothetical situations to see how the production team answer creatively and point to other events they have delivered as a basis. You'd want to know the size of the largest and smallest events, what technology we have, what we don't. How we differ from A, B, C companies as we all likely know what we do differently.

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In addition to asking questions, you should provide additional information like why you are seeking a new partner, what issues or challenges you may have faced in the past.

Be upfront about your budget, but remember that this is a move to EaaS, so hopefully, you are interested in looking at your strategy across the year and event platforms.

In order to gauge how well technology platforms work, here are a few questions you should ask your supplier to ensure they can actually deliver on EaaS.

Questions to consider:

- What is the look and feel you can provide? LED Screens? Printed Backdrops?
- What type of furnishings can you provide?
- How do you ensure that your systems provide a great online/offline experience?
- Do you provide data to your clients that can track and measure attendees and their experience?
- What does your technical set-up include and what comes as added extras?
- What complexity of delivery can you deliver? Multiregional? International? Local?
- How does the virtual element of your platform perform against the dedicated streaming platforms?
- What types of content can you create? Stings, animations, lower thirds?
- Can you provide sponsorship elements for our events?
- Can you advise best practice for event formats?
- What is your backup plan for internet redundancy or technical issues?
- What is your COVID policy and how can you advise us on the best use of government guidelines?
- How flexible are you around last-minute changes? Do you charge for late name changes or room changes for display systems?
- Would you be able to help our organisation, implement EaaS and how?
- Can you deliver from different locations?
- Do you help with content strategy?



Measure relationship value, assess contract value

Of all the topics we have discussed so far, this is the most contentious as it asks companies to look at changing their hiring process. That's not a wholesale change, but to look beyond the tender/RFP process.

If the basis of looking beyond the RFP is a direct correlation to a long-term partnership with your event's production company, it also asks you to acknowledge that you might pay a little more in some areas than others.

For example, a company like Showcase can provide in-person event support as well as streaming and hybrid with our own in-house technology. We are sure that other companies have the same ability too. However, companies like ours may not compete with dedicated streaming platforms or hybrid platforms on pricing.

This means that whilst we can try and match a price where possible, but you would lose the relationship with a committed partner to sidestep for a particular event type. This adds stress to your Ops and Events teams and means forming new relationships with brands that might not understand your own.

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In addition to this, you could lose creativity and flexibility and it makes EaaS, harder to deliver.

How you can manage this is by adopting a client relationship value proposition tool like www.suppeco.com. By adopting technology that enables your organisation to transparently see the value of the relationship of your suppliers, you can guarantee that you will always have the best service and prove it to the senior leadership team or your CEO.

Still, stuck on the pricing issue? Well, you can still benchmark suppliers on industry average pricing to ensure your costing is reasonably consistent. But now that you can also benchmark service providers and your team's relationships with them, events as a service starts to make a lot more sense.

Ultimately, technology has advanced enough to make events as a service a viable option for many event companies or those companies who run events as part of their marketing mix. It's not just events industry technology, but supply chain technology that has advanced enough to make sure companies can now focus on value as well as price.

**“Build a
community
not an
attendee
list”**

Finally, now that we have talked about how and why you should apply EAAS we want to dive deeper into the community-building aspect we touched upon in the annual events program section.

Firstly, let's look at what the core tenets of community building are:

- **Careful planning and preparation**
- **Inclusion and diversity**
- **Collaboration and shared purpose**
- **Openness and learning**
- **Transparency and trust**
- **Impact and action**
- **Sustained engagement and participatory culture**

If you can build all of these elements into your community-building strategy you're onto a winner.

However, this is not just about facilitating a digital space for your audience to do as they please. You have to be the driver of engagement and build trust, this means creating themes of content, going in and actually engaging with community members and driving communication.

Set agendas, champion topics and mobilise the community to become self-sustaining. Remember and accept that community self-determination is the responsibility and right of all people who comprise a community. You should not assume that you can bestow on a community the power to act in its own self-interest. That won't come overnight, which is why a lot of organisations, like yours, will dismiss this and say it's too time-consuming.

AGAIN...

That's the old way. The old way keeps you rooted in outdated tradition, principles and work ethics. Today's digitally native audiences are demanding more, travelling less and becoming ever more distracted by the information overload they get from their mobile phones, desktop and laptops.

You have no choice but to build and drive an audience, and that means investing time, money and personnel to do so. You have to cut through the noise, you have to take back control, and to get, you have to give.

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It also has Green Credentials

Finally, there is definitely a green element to adopting EaaS. By encouraging your audience to adopt multi-platform experiences; live, hybrid and virtual, you can reduce the impact of your brand's carbon footprint.

Less flying, driving and train journeys mean a reduction of significant proportions and less damage to the environment.

Have you considered becoming a [B-Corporation?](#) It's a certification your organisation can earn that drives you to specific goals that certify your organisation as green, liberal, inclusive and it's bona fide. It's recognised by many organisations globally and will govern your carbon reduction goals and ambitions with clear guidelines.

Let's face it, the biggest challenge for organisations in events is to balance the books, the experience and the environment at the same time. For many it's almost impossible to do this, but by going green and in particular for a Bcorp certification, it's also about your supply chain management.

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This ties in perfectly with our earlier update about managing value in your supply chain, which when tied with the demands in the supply chain for B Corp status really shows you value your environment.

The change for events has been seismic, but there is so much more to do. By adopting EaaS, applying for your B Corp status and thinking outside the box, you can ensure you cover people, profit and planet in one swift action.

Why not join the EaaS movement? Decide that wholesale change will drive the events industry forward and adopt annual programs of community building, telling the stories your brands want to tell and members want to hear in the formats that fit a world full of technology?

Be the change!

Events as a Service

Showcase is the company that first coined the term “Events as a Service” or “EAAS”. It was born from our years of experience consulting, designing, and producing events across the globe and working with some of the biggest events in region.

Now that you have digested the premise of Events as a Service, I’m sure that you are wondering how you can implement the practice into your own organisation and that’s where our team steps in.

We are currently working with businesses and brands like your own, running workshops and strategy sessions that help bring the elements together and develop your EAAS Framework.

To book your free initial consultation to discuss your options please contact us using one of the channels below.



[08458 336 515](tel:08458336515)



[Click to Book a Meeting](#)



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