EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Engagement, Reimagined
How brands will connect with their audiences in 2021 and beyond

As marketers seek to minimize risk and maximize effectiveness in the face of a pandemic, the precariousness of the global circumstances can be paralyzing.

This forecast is designed to propel your businesses forward, past the reactionary pivots of 2020, through uncertainty, and toward a purposeful reinvention of how you engage your most important audiences.

It is rooted in InVision Communications’ decades of experience delivering audience engagement solutions across channels, in our conversations with our clients – and in our own hard-earned insights from the past nine months.

We have analyzed the state of our own industry; we have tracked trends and predictions in adjacent ones; and we have sought out the perspectives of experts in everything from business travel to consumer psychology. From this research, we have synthesized this guide to audience engagement in a post-pandemic world.

Most importantly, we do not expect live meetings and events, user conferences, brand experiences, or business travel to be operating under normal conditions until 2022 or beyond. To guide you in preparing for this next normal, we first underscore four keys to success that have assumed increasing importance of late:

- Adopting a campaign approach that delivers sustained engagement over time.
- Building a content-first framework that puts marketers’ focus where it belongs.
- Integrating technologies that remove barriers and deliver meaningful value.
- Remembering the central importance of effective communications.

We then explore what this current landscape means for the future of face-to-face engagement. Specifically, how event owners will have to focus on risk management, attendee confidence, digital transformation, flexibility and adaptability. And how they will have to craft event strategies that overcome obstacles of audience acquisition, attendee privacy, policy enforcement and financial viability.

We examine how the societal state of pandemic-induced disengagement has challenged traditional approaches to audience engagement. And we explore strategic approaches to seven common audience engagement needs: brand awareness, digital community building, lead generation, consultative selling, investor relations, employee engagement, talent acquisition and employee onboarding.

Lastly, we leave you with a working timeline to inform how you engage audiences in 2021 and beyond. We believe this timeline will hew close to reality (even if it does not align with every event marketer’s hopes) — though we also reserve the right to change our minds in the face of rapidly evolving pandemic circumstances.

In this era of societal disengagement, we know that driving audience engagement is both increasingly difficult and increasingly important. At InVision Communications, we’re ready to help you chart your organization’s path through this pandemic and into a post-pandemic world.

Email your account director or info@iv.com to get started.