

Leading the Way for Digital Solutions

The world has been taken by surprise by unexpected factors which have managed to alter mentalities, lifestyles and working norms. Regardless, our industry has quickly come up with the solution; hybrid and virtual events are multiplying by the minute for countries that were ready for the challenge. Capitalising on its already highly advanced tech scene, Norway was hardly caught off guard as new style event venues were made available almost immediately all over the country making it an attractive destination for interested associations.

Words Vicky Koffa

A traditionally industrial country focused on energy and fisheries, Norway is experiencing in the last decade an unprecedented boom in its technology sector, especially green technology. A diverse tech mix of hyper-growth scaleups, small creative start-ups and everything in between has taken over much of the national economy's interest. Innovation Norway has newly launched The Explorer, a free matchmaking service for connecting global challenges with green solutions to share with the world. As a consequence, the Nordic country was already up to speed when the new digital form of business events became necessary.

Digital technology was an existing part of everyday life for Norwegians both for conducting business and for public services prior to the pandemic. Excellent broadband connectivity, increasing numbers of ICT experts and augmented integration of digital technology for businesses during the crisis have brought Norway up to the third place of the Digital Economy and Society Index 2020 (DESI) - a European Commission monitoring tool.

SUCCESSFUL DIGITAL EVENTS

Looking at the facts, there was no reason why one of the world's most important exhibitions on fisheries technologies wouldn't decide to go digital. Normally running biennially in Trondheim, the Nor-Fishing Exhibition gathers exhibitors, experts and politicians and presents the latest technology in the industry. Instead of cancelling, this year's three-day show went online for the first time, taking place between 18 and 20 August, and was awarded with great success by participants and organisers both.

Kristian Digre, CEO of the Nor-Fishing Foundation, said: *"This year marks our 60th anniversary and it was important as ever to produce an event of high educational and market value. This virtual version offered us the opportunity to invite keynote speakers with excessive knowledge to share. Another benefit was that both exhibitors and visitors got to experience all the elements of the exhibition. During the physical exhibition, parts of the program run in parallel, and then one must choose what to participate in. Nor-Fishing Digital was like a chronological TV program. In addition, all elements are available on the website after the event."*



OSLOFJORD CONVENTION CENTER

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The event is organised by the Norwegian digital event organisers Tappin, offering the participating exhibitors space for presenting their product as well as one-on-one meeting time with potential clients. With attendees reaching as high as 30,000 and business blooming, Digre sees this model of event as the way to go also post-crisis. *“Trondheim is in the centre of our industry, with the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and research organisation SINTEF excelling in innovation. Combining this with a hybrid event where costs are reduced, attendees are increased, and exhibitors are numerous makes for the perfect solution for us for years to come.”*

ABUNDANCE OF DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

Options for virtual and hybrid meetings are not in shortage in Norway. New venues pop up at a regular pace with high tech material able to adjust to all types of events and attract even more delegates than before.

Taking a closer look, the Oslofjord Convention Center (pictured), located 1.5 hours outside Oslo, has risen to the challenge with its Oslofjord Hybrid Event studio. A 360-degree TV studio with a 120 m² LED screen offers the possibility to conduct interactive events online broadcasting simultaneously from several locations at Oslofjord. Participants join the event via an app where they can follow the broadcast live. The app allows viewers to participate by submitting questions, sharing photos and videos, and taking part in votes. There are also two-way communication solutions, linking those present in the studio with virtual attendees.

The easily adjustable studio was a perfect fit for Brunstad Christian Church's Easter Conference which attracted over 10,000 online users. The conference ran without a glitch exceeding previous on-site conferences in numbers of attendees while lowering the

cost for organisers. *“We at Oslofjord Convention Center stand together united during these challenging times. We really hope that safe live events will return soon, but until then, we do our best in delivering high-end hybrid events to our clients,”* says Johannes Lauchenauer, International Sales Director at Oslofjord Convention Center.

Norges Varemesse (Norway Convention Center), situated between the Oslo airport and the city centre, has also launched its new concept for doing business, the Nova Studios. In an effort to offer a high-end product leaving attendees fully satisfied, this solution can offer organisers to have 200 people in the crowd (the limit of the Norwegian Government restrictions), with all necessary safety measures, and an endless amount of people on stream.

The streaming of the Nova Studios project is more comparable to a TV-production. In addition to a six-camera production, AV, picture, sound and lights, there is professional staff on-site for hire. This makes sure the production will be of very high quality and attendees online will have a good experience.

“Being 200 people in the crowd also creates another dimension than if the event would just be on stream. Most of us have experienced how the absence of people can make the experience of an event feel that something is missing. Clearly this is something we see high demand of, and ever since we launched, we have had organisers reaching out with requests. We have already 11 production days confirmed and many more on request,” says Emil Johansson, Marketing Manager at Norges Varemesse.

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