

Palais des congrès de Montréal banking on hybrid solutions to fast-track reopening of operations

Montréal, June 10, 2020 – The Palais des congrès de Montréal, jointly with partners Encore and GES, and together with startups from its CITÉ Events Lab, is preparing to reopen by hosting hybrid events. In response to the safety concerns and social distancing requirements shaking up the convention industry, the Palais is retooling how it holds events by enhancing them with affordable digital components that will help offset the restrictions expected to affect speakers, exhibitors and visitors.

Integrated hybrid solutions

Hybrid events are both live and virtual. They are physical events that also incorporate virtual online components. Everything runs simultaneously in real time. The same content is shared, and interactive elements are included. They give audiences the option of participating live in-person, or online via the internet.

Ideal for events where lower turnouts are expected, these solutions replicate virtual event rooms where presenters and speakers can count on receiving support from crews of technicians and producers providing instant guidance and direction remotely at all times. Hybrid events also make it possible for participants attending in person to interact with their counterparts in remote locations in real time.

In addition, the Palais is set up to operate a studio area if needed, for recording audiovisual content for podcasts, interviews, etc. All told, it is a complete package designed to produce quality content and ensure it is delivered professionally to participants attending remotely.

Solutions for consumer and trade shows

The Palais expects to host physical consumer and trade shows the moment it is authorized to. New options are revamping how exhibitions will be organized, primarily through the integration of a virtual show platform enabling exhibitors to showcase their products and services remotely. Real-time interaction and monetization opportunities will also be possible thanks to Livescale, a CITÉ startup.

Consulting services

Because the Palais is able to tap into the expertise of its partners and a well-established business network, it can play a significant advisory role. It can shepherd clients through a range of event formats, including exclusive, full-service technological solutions developed by its partners Encore (formerly Freeman Audio Visual Canada), and GES. The Palais is also open to working with ideas proposed by event planning firms having developed their own hybrid event solutions, provided these meet new health and social distancing requirements.

[Visit the Palais website for more information on the integrated hybrid solutions.](#)

Toward a new normal

Clients looking to add virtual components to their events can now choose from an array of affordable packages. Digital trends already gaining traction in recent years have now leaped to the forefront because of the current crisis, to become the new norm for the convention industry. Although initially intended to render events COVID-ready, these hybrid solutions will make it possible moving forward to broaden the reach of events, period. Thanks to its innovative partners, the Palais is in an excellent position to perform well and thus remain on track to build the convention centre of the future.

New health protocols on the horizon

In addition to adapting the offering, the Palais and its teams are working tirelessly on developing the health protocols and standards of tomorrow. Together with other members of the convention and tourism community, both locally and internationally, and in tandem with the government, the Palais is rigorously developing new practices focused on ensuring the health and safety of employees and visitors.

Meeting in person will make a comeback

Although adding these new virtual options might appear to suggest physical meetings will no longer be required, the Palais remains optimistic. In the short term, a drop in attendance is to be expected for some events already scheduled. Nevertheless, history has demonstrated that the need to assemble in person has triumphed over numerous crises. These digital solutions are meant to complement the services the Palais offers. The Palais will continue to host major events, which are sources of economic benefits and intellectual wealth for Montréal and Québec.

Quote

“Despite the undeniable impact COVID-19 has had on the Palais’ operations, the current situation is serving as a springboard for going forward with new digital opportunities that will enable us to further make our mark globally. The convention industry is simply evolving, and the Palais and its new hybrid event solutions are at the forefront of this transformation.”

– **Robert Mercure**, CEO of the Palais des congrès de Montréal

About the Palais des congrès de Montréal

The Palais des congrès de Montréal convention centre stands in the heart of the top host city in the Americas for international events. It is the recipient of the highest quality standards certification in the industry, awarded by the International Association of Convention Centres (AIPC), and also a finalist for the prestigious Apex award honouring the “world’s best customer satisfaction ratings.” In 2018-2019, the Palais generated \$215 million in economic benefits along with an invaluable amount of intellectual wealth via the 353 events it hosted. A trailblazer, it operates its own events lab, CITÉ, which houses Montréal startups that are helping redefine how conferences are held. The Palais is a carbon neutral building, and also BOMA BEST certified. Its suite of sustainability initiatives, which it runs under the name Palais Boréal, includes an innovative program that shepherds event organizers and participants through the process of offsetting their GHG emissions locally. Actively immersed in the community, the Palais opens its spaces to visitors and stages art-driven experiences for the public, like the *Palais Seasons*, showcasing Québec creatives. A leader and visionary, the Palais is at the forefront of the Convention Industry 4.0 transformation. Visit congresmtl.com.

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