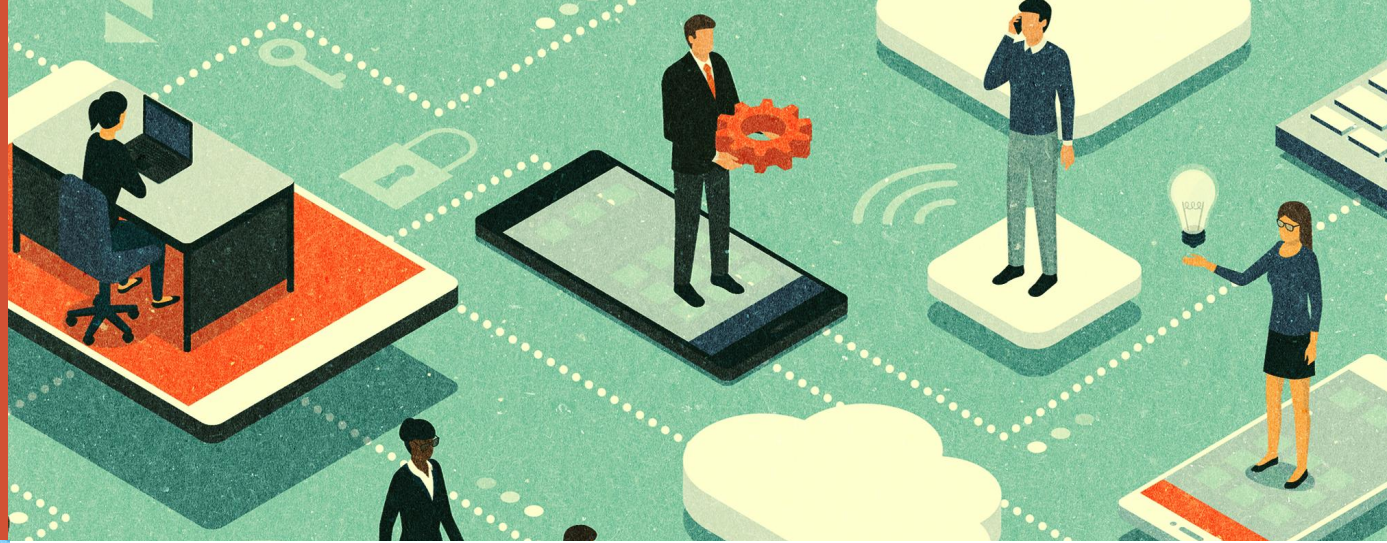


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# Mastering Design & Construction Week in a Virtual World

Ideas to Help Your Brand Succeed at IBS and KBIS 2021

## Intro

We've been expecting an announcement for a while, but now it's official: IBS and KBIS are going to a virtual format. Does your brand have a plan?

Many companies have been planning for this announcement for months. But even if that isn't the case for your brand, you still have time to plan an online event guaranteed to exceed expectations.



## Think Like an Attendee

We are eight months into a pandemic, and chances are, you know a lot about virtual events just from your own experiences. Remember that as you plan.

- What do we know about people's appetites for virtual events?
- People are spending an average of 6:09 hours consuming content per day, including phone, TV and other forms of digital media.<sup>1</sup>
- IBS and KBIS are happening virtually, but don't expect people to sit in front of their computers all day. More than likely, they'll be at work, engaging with brands between their regular tasks.
- A three-day trade show doesn't translate to three days of content or a three-day online event.
- Make your event digestible in terms of time commitment.
- Make the content engaging and short enough for your audience to stay interested.
- Make your content available on-demand. The more accessible your content is, the more people will view it.
- Consider the right mix of prerecorded and live content.
  - Prerecorded content gives people more flexibility in viewing.
  - Live content creates a buzzworthy experience.



## Does It Have a Virtual Equivalent?

As you plan, think about the portions of your trade show experience that can translate into an online event.

- Media events
- One-on-one meetings
- Product demos
- Educational sessions
- Roundtables
- Virtual gift bags
- Giveaways



## Play Up the Learning Element

A strong educational component is one of the greatest strengths of IBS and KBIS. These events usually offer roundtables, product demos and classes galore.

- Add CEUs to your online event offerings.
- Recruit an industry expert to moderate a panel on your behalf.
- Offer videos to introduce new products, with an emphasis on how-to information or new installation techniques.
- Create content centered on some of the most commonly asked questions about your products.
  - What would a customer ask you if they were standing in your booth?
  - Solicit questions from customers in advance via social media.



## Make Use of the Experts

Experts, influencers and thought leaders are always a big draw at IBS and KBIS and can tell your product story through their own lens.

- Hire an expert to represent your brand.
  - Consider opportunities for exclusivity
  - Editors — Builders — Designers — Celebrities — Trend Experts — Influencers
- Hire them as hosts and moderators for event elements.
  - Roundtables
  - New product introduction videos
  - Virtual showroom tour
  - Keynote address to customers
  - Demonstrations
- Use a top customer as a brand ambassador, building on their insights.



## Don't Forget the Gift Bag

Everybody loves free stuff.

- Create a virtual swag bag full of items that can be downloaded.
  - Zoom backgrounds
  - One-time product coupon codes
  - Virtual gift cards
  - Idea book
- Product samples and real gift bags are still relevant.
  - Confirm addresses and ship them or use your sales teams to distribute



## Partner with Other Brands

Everyone is in the same boat. Brands often collaborate during IBS or KBIS to display products, so why not do the same thing in the virtual space?

- Pool your resources with other brands, making your budgets go further.
- Partner together to build a demo house, bathroom or kitchen — whatever you feel is the best representation for your products.
- Position your virtual event as a combined solution that saves time for customers.
- Team up for product roundtables and trend presentations.





## Make the Media a Priority Audience

The media is in the same boat as attendees: They visit IBS and KBIS to learn about new products, too. Don't forget to consider them as an audience when planning your event.

- Think through the event — is it a virtual event that appeals to customers and the media? Do you need a separate event for the media?
- Remember that a virtual effort could result in more available media than an in-person event.
- Prioritize your media targets, and keep them in mind as you write your message points.
- Put your press kit online, but consider the benefits of tangible press items and product samples.
- Schedule one-on-one media appointments with product demos and experts for Q&A.
- Consider a video press conference if your announcement warrants it.



## Don't Forget the Camaraderie of the Show

Trade shows are shared experiences — the good parts and the bad parts.

- Consider things such as sizzle videos and sweepstakes or giveaways that drive the usual energy and fun of a trade show.
- Make your content into a podcast. Encourage attendees to walk the usual 20,000 daily steps of a trade show and listen along.
- Host a giveaway that is enticing, fun and relevant to the times we are living in now — a standing desk, an expensive office chair or a year's worth of DoorDash.



## Promote the Hell Out of It

No one will know that you're having a virtual event if you don't tell them about it — repeatedly!

- Use your social media channels to promote your event and engage attendees.
- Use public relations to get the word out about your event.
- Go old-school with a direct mail piece announcing your event plans.
- Build a digital advertising plan to promote the event and link directly to registration pages.



## Throw a Curveball — Don't Do an Event

If the thought of figuring out your virtual presence for IBS or KBIS makes you want to pull your hair out, don't panic. Pivot.

- What is it that you usually get out of your presence at the show?
  - In-person time with customers?
  - Sales to existing customers?
  - New sales leads?
  - Media coverage?
- Take your IBS/KBIS budget and allocate it to different tactics.
  - Spend it on a lead generation campaign.
  - Hire an influencer to produce all of your content.
  - Partner with a publication for a media plan to support your new product introductions.



## Tie Up the Loose Ends

Planning for IBS and KBIS begins ... yesterday.

- Don't know how to begin or need a partner to help you pull the pieces together?

## Contact Us

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