



Does 60% of your revenue come from events? Here's what to do in the age of COVID-19

Six Tips for Reimagining Your Gala
by Madcap Factory



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Social distancing has extinguished the Spring gala season and Fall cancellations are all but certain. Indeed the CDC's recommendation to cancel events of any size in areas with COVID-19 has left virtually every organization that relies on a fundraising event questioning their long-term existence. As nonprofits scramble to cut budgets and seek alternative revenue, keystone events are in dire need of creative reimagining.

As producers and strategists with more than 500 events tucked under our belts, there are a few things we always consider when planning a new event format at Madcap Factory. Based on our industry insights and understanding of experience, event, and product design, here are six tips for organizations to consider when producing a premier event in the age of isolation.

With creative strategy and thoughtful budget allocation, tomorrow's galas will offer cost savings, revenue replacement, and reach a broader community than any event most organizations have previously produced.

Six Tips



1) Never Surrender Allure

Just because the world has changed, doesn't mean you need to retreat on beauty, joy, and aspiration. Your event must provide enough intrigue to land a spot on someone's calendar. Good design is key.

2) Invest in Details

This year, your gala experience won't happen at a single, physical venue. It starts the moment you post your invitation. Use the communications at your disposal to design a thrilling journey from your first correspondence. Dazzle with video, use animations, and design interactive elements for mailed invitations.

3) Go to Them

If your patrons cannot come to you, go to them. Design an "unboxing experience" with physical items that will compliment your digital event. Provide theme prompts to invite at-home creative decor and costuming. Offer a 'shot-list' with sharing options to 'see-and-be-seen' on the 'red carpet'. Curate the experience with a custom playlist and signature cocktail.

"Smalls Smores"
A tiny s'mores experience
delivered in a beautiful wood box

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Six Tips Continued

4) Offer Opportunity

Your supporters need ways to support you. If they cannot get a table, let them fund a digital experience. Offer those who can a way to purchase ticket bundles for friends, colleagues, and loved ones and promote your cause. Find ways for benefactors to help shoulder the costs for the event and be seen for their contributions. Silent & live auctions enable people to give even if they came as a guest. There are excellent tools that provide a clean bidding experience. Don't underestimate the power of emotional giving, leave space for spontaneous gifts.

5) Tell Your Story

Don't forget that this is about supporting the work you do. Share your mission and celebrate your success. Take advantage of the format and produce richer content or use interactive tools to connect with attendees in a way you couldn't imagine from a stationary podium in a distraction-filled venue.

6) Design for Evergreen

Every moment is one that can be shared by, appreciated by, and inspiring to a far larger audience, forever. Thoughtful planning can amplify your message to audiences far beyond your current reach. A wow around every corner is an opportunity for a social post or a moment to recollect later in conversation with a friend. Make every moment shareable and link to 'learn more.'

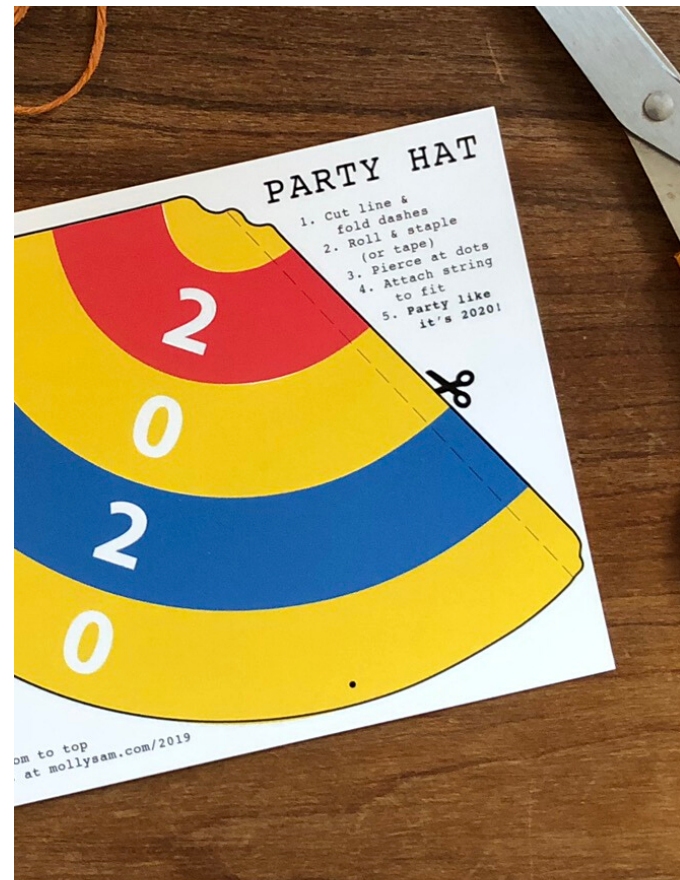


"Hello Stranger"
Design your own alter-ego

Reinvent, Don't Replace

The world has changed forcing entire industries and social formats to adapt or face extinction. These times call for resourceful ingenuity on all levels. As we navigate this unprecedented moment in history, we must strive to see it as an opportunity. By leveraging creative strategies we can build deeper, more meaningful relationships with our communities and support the cultural and social welfare organizations that are the bedrock of our ideal society.

While we cannot predict the events and outcomes of tomorrow, we believe that thoughtful attention to these six components of any experiential program will build a foundation on which any organization can ultimately flourish.



"Party Hat by Mail"

Madcap Factory

Madcap Factory is a virtual-friendly production house. We partner with forward thinking organizations and brands to design and produce bespoke strategies, experiences, events, and products that engage and delight.

Want Madcap Factory to advise on or produce your next gala, community engagement, or brand activation? Contact us to explore a collaboration.

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