

The recovery of trust and safety: the main challenges of events in the post-pandemic era

- *PortAventura Business & Events and the EMA have presented the main conclusions of a study on the new perception of risks in the sector, delving into the lessons learned and the critical factors that come into play when choosing a venue.*
- *With this initiative, both institutions reinforce their support and commitment to market research in order to contribute to the transformation of the sector, restore confidence, and face the new safety challenges arising from the pandemic.*



18 March 2022 – PortAventura Business & Events and the Event Managers Association Spain (EMA), the association that represents the sector of corporate event managers in Spain, have commissioned a study carried out by EMI, the Event Manager Institute, on the new perception of risks in the post-pandemic era to publicise the main lessons learned from the sector and the major concerns of brands when choosing a venue, as well as the future challenges they will have to face to meet new market requirements.

According to the professional opinion of the event managers, the great lessons learned during this last stage have to do with the process of decentralisation, reconstruction, and maturation of the sector, which will require new measures and formats to help restore trust and safety in the sector, and to revive business.

One of the key factors revealed by the report has been how the perception of safety has changed. Along these lines, the study raises awareness of several requirements that will facilitate the recovery of this variable in the future, such as, for example, compliance with the regulations by the venue and their public dissemination, as well as the implementation of new official protocols that are legally compliant without being too invasive in a way that may hinder effective execution of the event. In this new reality face-to-face will be the format of choice, perhaps on a somewhat smaller scale, in well-



known spaces, driven by the reputation and trust of the organising brand, which will help them revalidate their ability to overcome difficulties in the return of face-to-face events.

According to the **director of PortAventura Business & Events/Convention Centre, Laura Valdeolivas**, “it must be taken into account that face-to-face formats facilitate dynamic and mass participation activities that are mainly experiential, whilst the virtual formula is especially recommended for training or follow-up sessions. Although this change in the model, accelerated by the digital transformation of the sector and of the professionals themselves, has moved towards shorter and reduced formats, what our clients tell us is that they want to return to face-to-face sessions where they can apply formulas that leave an imprint on the participant”.

Looking to the future, Valdeolivas affirms that “safety will play a decisive role when it comes to regaining trust in our industry. To contribute to the transformation and updating of the sector, we need to once again hold events that highlight the success of the health measures and protocols that have made it possible and that make visible the enormous potential of technology to carry it forward”.

Critical factors when choosing a venue

Research has also revealed specific concerns that impact the decision-making process when choosing a venue. From a rational point of view, there is flexibility of the space (66.3%), requirements established by regulations (50%), technological capacity of the space (41.3%), ease of access and connection with the venue (24%), and COVID-free measures (15.2%). In contrast, although a positive, motivating, and constructive attitude prevails, the experts assure that emotional variables such as the struggle between apathy and motivation (78.3%), the spirit of overcoming (54.3%), emotional fatigue (8.7%), uncertainty (7.6%), and pessimism (6.6%) are also influential.

With regard to the organisation of a face-to-face event, the study has concluded that there are several critical factors directly linked to the prior planning of the event, the access routes, the specifications of the space and the services it offers. In this sense, the flexibility of the space, technological equipment, safety guidelines, signage and division of the zones, as well as enforcement of attendance requirements (certificate of vaccination and/or recovery or negative test result), and the cancellation and contracting conditions come to the fore.

Moreover, companies are going to up their demands for spacious, ventilated rooms with the possibility of accessing outdoor spaces, as well as the availability of adjoining areas to facilitate networking or teambuilding activities. Finally, they also ask for open-air restaurant services, use of individual rooms, bubble hotels, and other leisure and entertainment activities that comply with current regulations.

