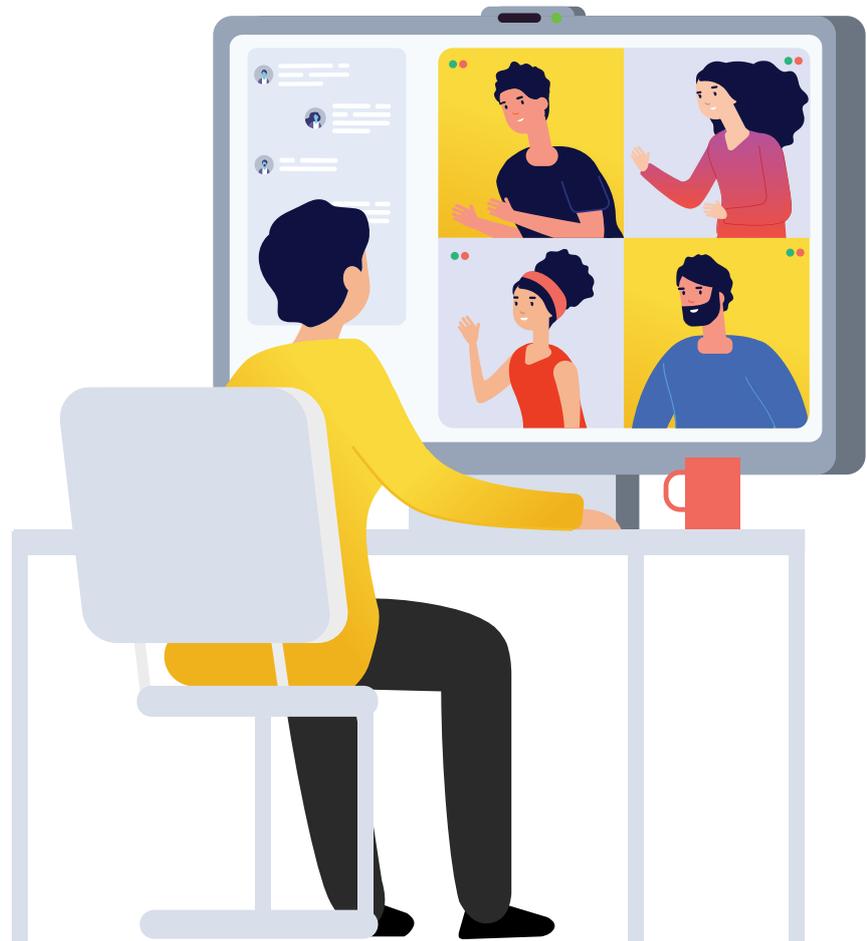# GEVME Live

Insights on Digital Conferences

A Publication from the
G GEVME **Insights Team**

30th May 2020

Foreword

On the 28th of May 2020, the GEVME team conducted a webinar on the topic of **How to Run a Digital Conference**. More info on the agenda and the speakers can be found at:
https://www.gevme.com/how-to-run-a-digital-conference

We had a total of 503 attendees who tuned in live from a total of 32 countries. The profile of our audience was mainly professionals from the events industry.

During the course of the webinar we asked the audience the following 4 questions:

1. Have you ever organised a digital conference before. How did it go?

2. What do you think is the main challenge in running a digital conference?

3. What do you think of the future of digital conference?

4. How much would you be willing to pay for a digital conference, if the price of the physical edition used to be $1,000 per ticket?

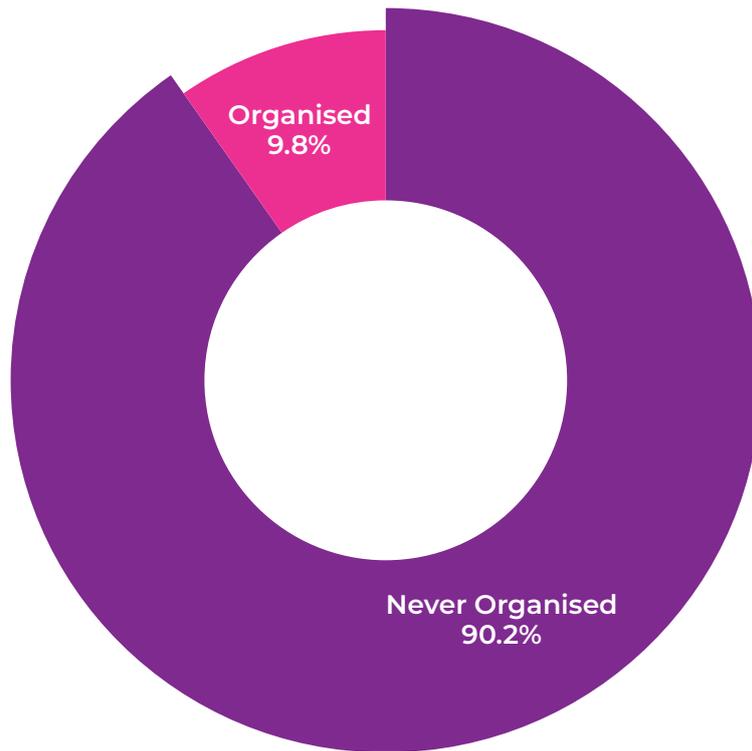This document shows the results from our survey and attempts to generate relevant insights from them.

We hope this can be useful to you as you embark on the journey explore, organise, and participate at Digital Events.

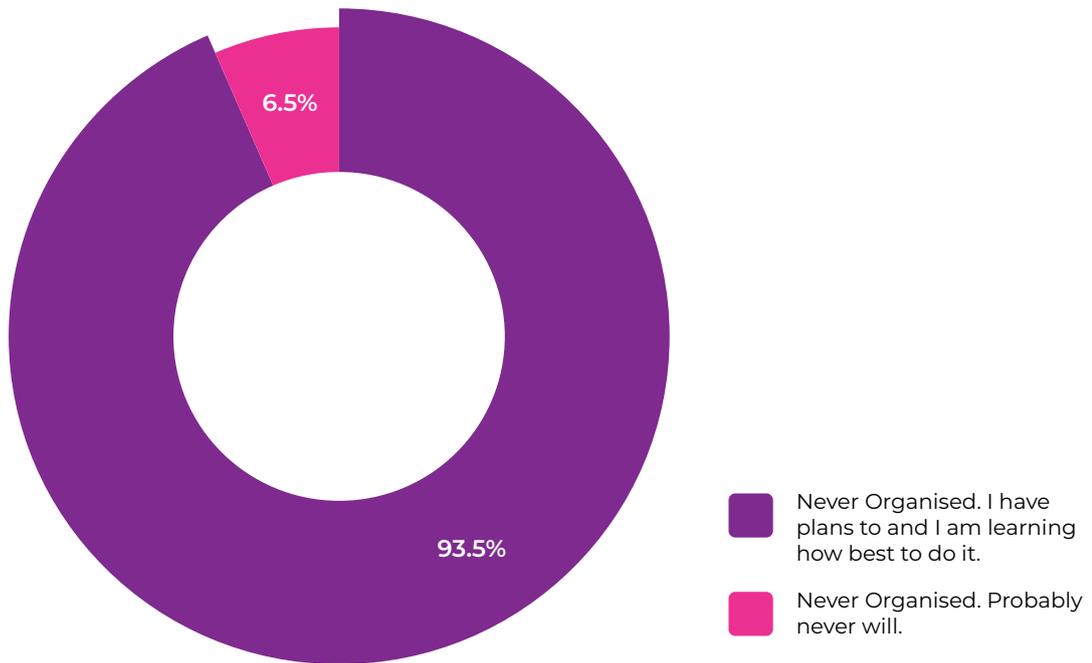**Veemal Gungadin**
CEO, GlobalSign.In Pte Ltd

1. Have you ever organised a digital conference before. How did it go?

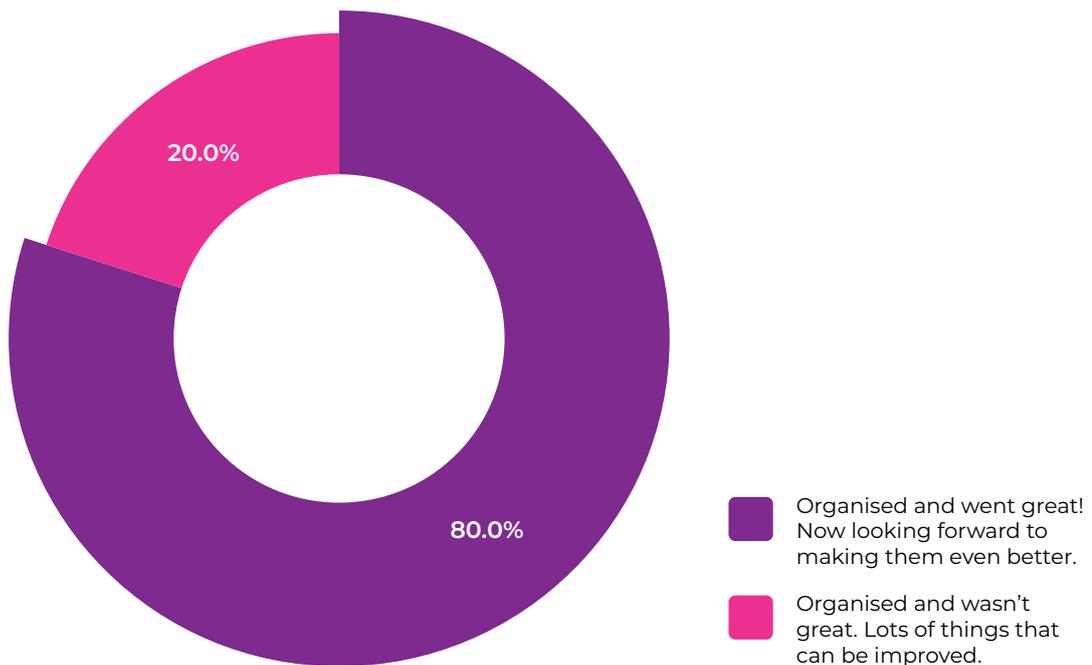Organised
9.8%

Never Organised
90.2%

We are clearly at the beginning of a new era. Digital conference is new for almost everybody - event owners, organisers and attendees. COVID-19 is effectively forcing the whole world to start embracing this (seemingly) new channel of attending an event. Understandably so, **over 90% of event professionals have never organised a digital conference** before.
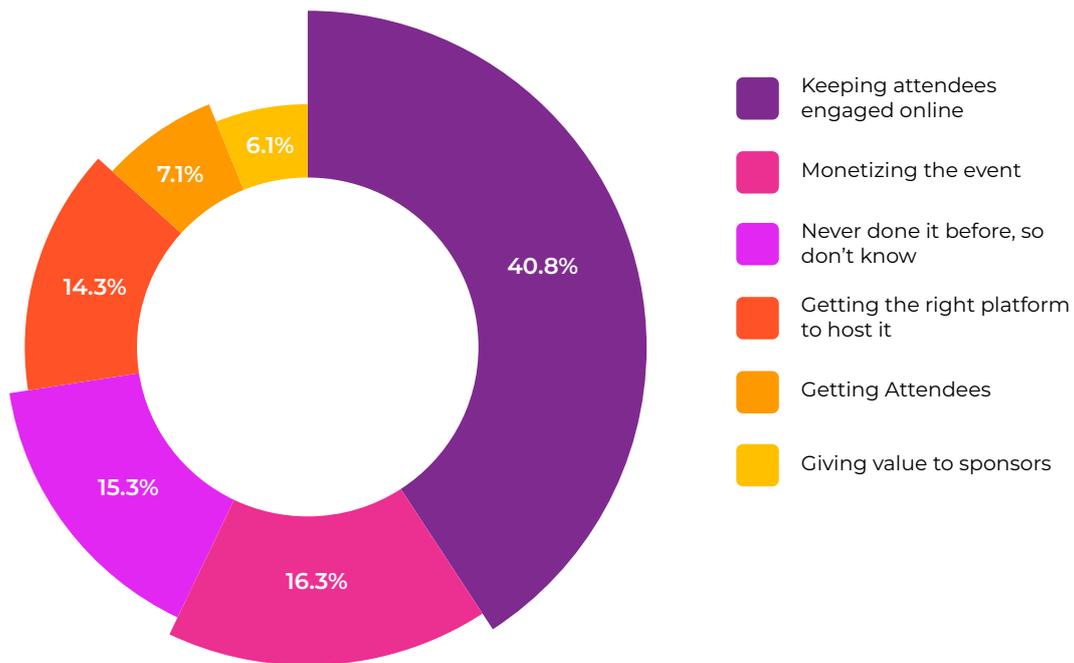
Out of those who have never organised a digital conference, over 93% are actively looking forward to organising one, and are currently still at the learning stage on how to go about with it:

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6.5%

93.5%

■ Never Organised. I have
plans to and I am learning
how best to do it.

■ Never Organised. Probably
never will.

Running a digital conference may seem daunting. Because it seems so new, there is obviously the fear of failing, and the fear that attendees will not enjoy the whole experience. However, **out of those who did organise a digital conference before, a solid 80% claim that their event went great**. These early signs are encouraging as to what the future may hold for conferences.

20.0%

80.0%

■ Organised and went great!
Now looking forward to
making them even better.

■ Organised and wasn't
great. Lots of things that
can be improved.

2. What do you think is the main challenge in running a digital conference?

Legend:
- **Keeping attendees engaged online** — 40.8%
- **Monetizing the event** — 16.3%
- **Never done it before, so don't know** — 15.3%
- **Getting the right platform to host it** — 14.3%
- **Getting Attendees** — 7.1%
- **Giving value to sponsors** — 6.1%

Keeping attendees engaged online is the top concern for organisers (40.8% of them). At physical events, we take it for granted that in between sessions, attendees can get to take a break over a freshly brewed coffee or tea. Lunches, dinners and cocktails are the perfect time for people to mingle and have a great time. But what happens during a digital event? How do people take breaks? How do you ensure that people are not getting bored, tired and simply dropping off? So, during a time where most event professionals are trying to grasp the whole concept of digital events, online engagement remains the top challenge to be solved.
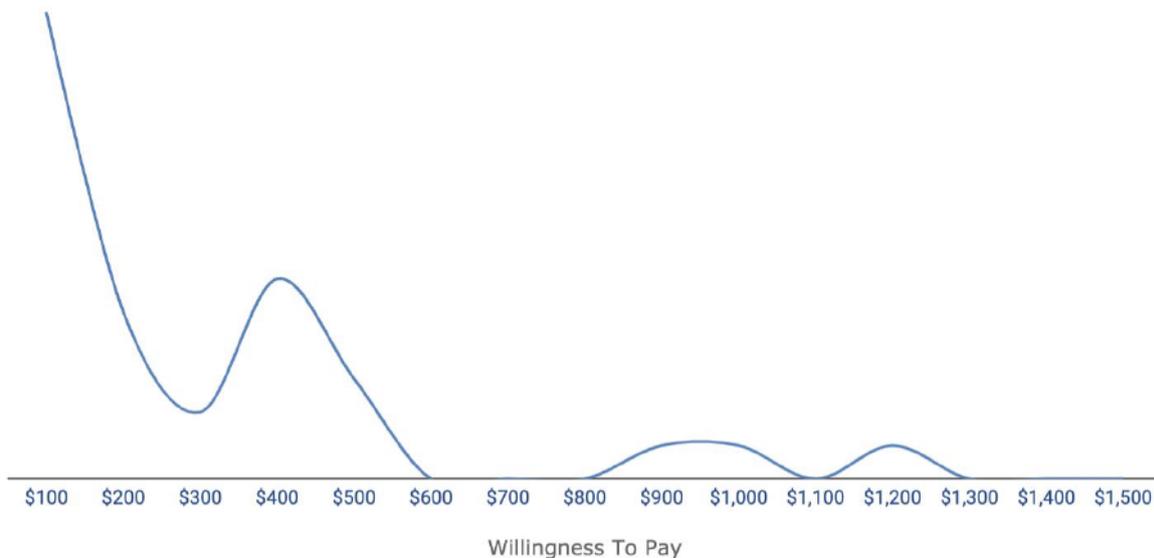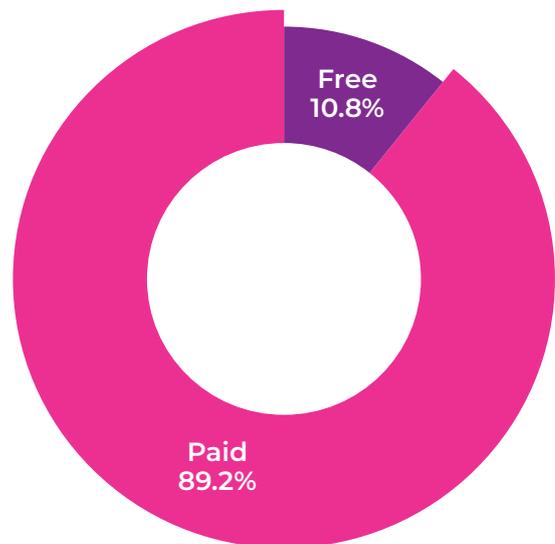
16% of organisers find it hard to monetise their digital event. With so many free webinars happening today, it is slowly creeping into people's minds that there is no need to pay to attend a live event with good speakers and content. And how best to give value to sponsors and exhibitors? 6% of our respondents have concerns on this.

14% of organisers feel that getting attendees to their event is a challenge. We should, however, bear in mind that over 90% of our respondents have not actually organised a digital conference before. So, attendance may be a concern in the minds of people, but that may not actually turn out to be the reality. Digital conferences, after all, break geographical boundaries, and hence provide so much more opportunity to have a larger reach.

3. How much would you be willing to pay for a digital conference, if the price of the physical edition used to be $1,000 per ticket?

The good news (from an event owner/organiser's perspective) is that people do believe in paying for online conferences. Only 10% of respondents feel that a previously $1,000 ticket of a physical conference should be free in the digital incarnation.

But expectations for what should be the price for a digital conference is significantly lower. Of people who do believe in paying, **82% expect the price of a digital conference to be 10-40% of the price of the physical equivalent**.

Free 10.8%

Paid 89.2%

$100 $200 $300 $400 $500 $600 $700 $800 $900 $1,000 $1,100 $1,200 $1,300 $1,400 $1,500
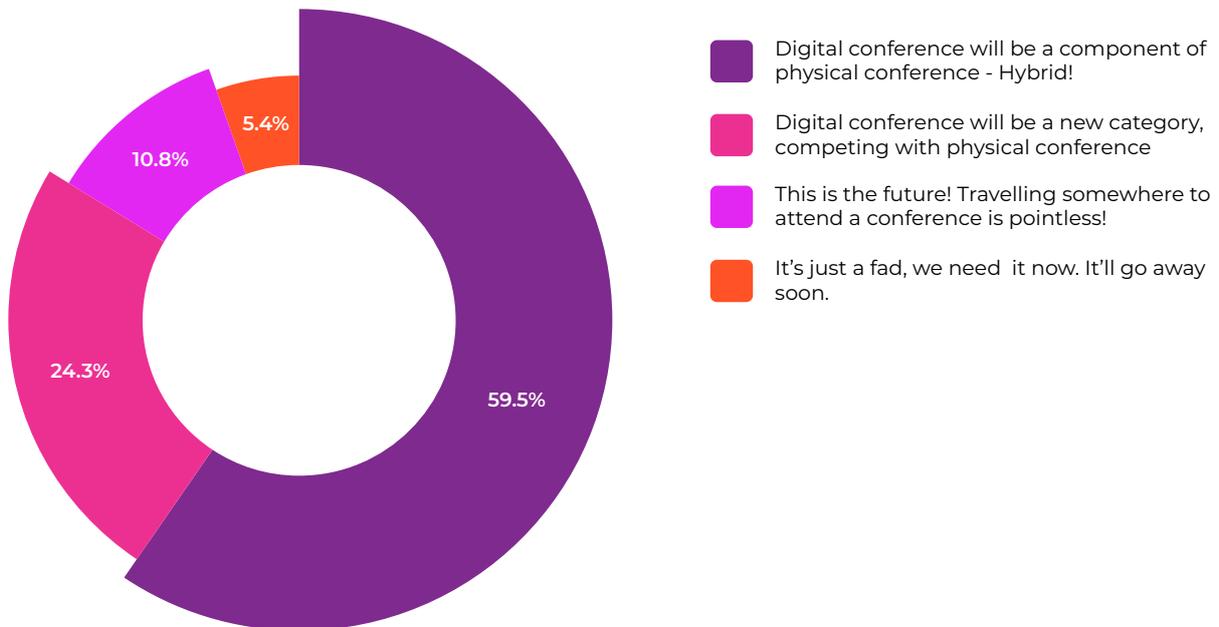
Willingness To Pay

To be fair, digital conferences cost much less to organise compared to a physical edition. But to really be able to crack monetisation of digital conferences, there definitely needs to be a better value proposition for both attendees and sponsors.

4. What do you think of the future of digital conference?

This is probably the pivot point in the whole industry. The whole **world** is being introduced to digital (or virtual, as some prefer to call it) events. And it is all happening at the same time. It is significant for us to see that **none** of our respondents picked this answer: *Good luck with that. Never believed in it. It doesn't work. Never will.*

Only 5% believe that digital conferences are just a fad.

Digital conference will be a component of physical conference - Hybrid!

Digital conference will be a new category, competing with physical conference

This is the future! Travelling somewhere to attend a conference is pointless!

It's just a fad, we need it now. It'll go away soon.

A brave 24% believe that digital conferences will be a new category of events, competing directly with physical conferences.

Almost 60% believe that the future of conferences is hybrid. The majority of our respondents believe that physical conferences in the future will have a digital component to it.

It is clear that COVID-19 will have a lasting impact on behaviours of people at work, bars, attractions, events, and even in casual settings. Would people still want to shake hands to greet each other? There is a new normal that we will all have to adapt to. Events will not be spared. It is clear that the future of events will be hybrid. The question is will that continue to be the case two years from now? There is a possibility that this may be very well the norm...

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