



Customer Engagement and Events in the Backdrop of a Pandemic

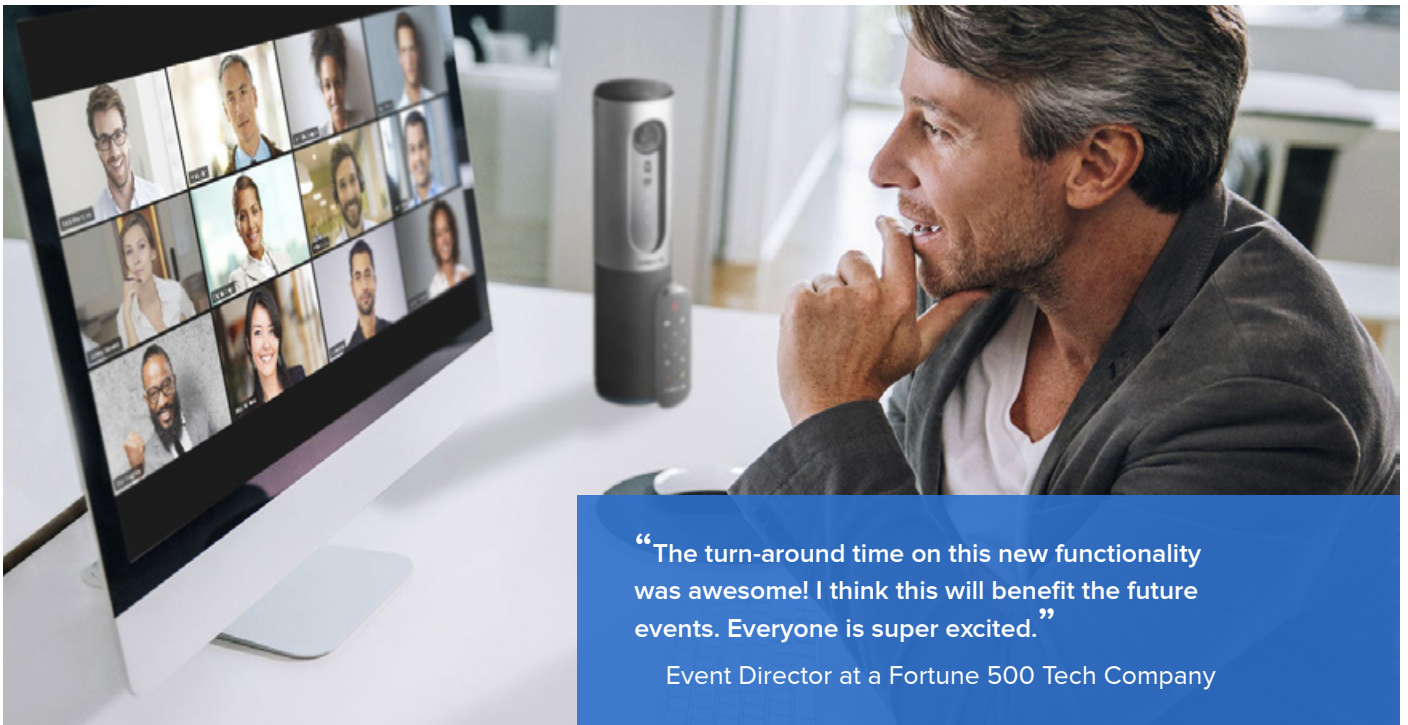
How to Schedule, Manage, and Analyze 'Virtual Meetings' when Live Events are not an Option



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“The turn-around time on this new functionality was awesome! I think this will benefit the future events. Everyone is super excited.”

Event Director at a Fortune 500 Tech Company

Executive Summary

The disruption caused by Coronavirus to life and businesses is unprecedented and can possibly last for months. We know that preparing for events and scheduling customer meetings requires months of planning, hard work, and precise execution. Customers had been scheduling a high volume of B2B meetings for upcoming live events using the JiffleNow Meeting Automation Platform. But when these events are canceled or postponed or exhibitors decide not to participate, the meetings also get affected and that greatly impacts the sales pipeline and growth. Businesses are very concerned about the lost opportunity to engage customers at events.

As enterprises continue to assess and look for ways to mitigate the challenges precipitated by COVID-19, JiffleNow announced the launch of the “Virtual Meetings” capability in its Meeting Automation Platform (MAP) for events. Instead of simply canceling events entirely, customers are now converting in-person meetings to virtual. There has already been high interest and momentum with customers implementing this new functionality to mitigate the business impact.

Key Highlights

- Coronavirus impact on the events industry may last for many months and will have a huge impact on business and revenue.
- A “do nothing and wait for better days” approach will not help sales opportunities.
- Due to canceled events, prospects and customers are motivated to engage online with vendors of products and services to support their needs.
- Meeting Automation Platforms seamlessly enable scheduling, management, and analytics of B2B in-person and virtual meetings.
- Converting pre-scheduled, in-person meetings to virtual meetings can be done with a simple click in MAP.
- “Virtual Meeting Events” are marketing programs that are easier to set up and more economical than Live Events and continue to support business needs with B2B meetings.

“We drove more ROI this year when we had to convert face-to-face meetings to virtual meetings due to HIMMS (event) cancellation, than last year.”

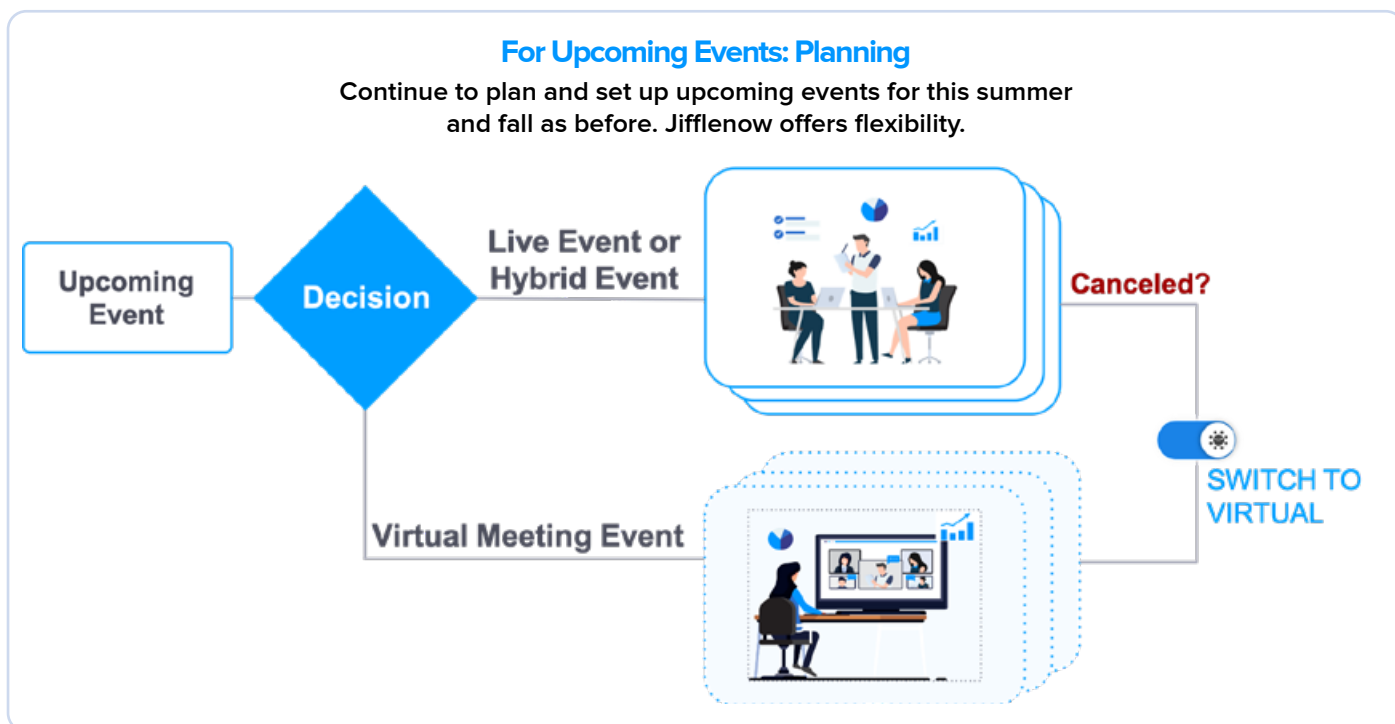
Event Marketing at a Fortune 500 company targeting healthcare market

Introduction

The Coronavirus pandemic is first and foremost a global human tragedy. In an effort to contain this alarming outbreak and for the safety of individuals, events and large gatherings around the world are being restricted or banned. This crisis has been sudden and has taken a huge toll on the global economy with disruptions to every industry.

Enterprises around the world invest heavily in B2B events such as conferences, trade shows, and road shows to engage with customers because of its high value in generating and growing business. But today, due to the unprecedented impact of Covid-19, events across the world have been canceled for safety concerns and resulted in delayed or lost business. Event cancellations have a detrimental effect on businesses as it directly impacts revenue.

According to data released as of early March 2020 by UFI - The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, 'the orders that exhibiting companies are currently not securing already add up to **\$26.3 billion** globally'. This is expected to increase exponentially in 2020.



Since B2B meetings at events are critical for every enterprise to advance the revenue pipeline, and every event and related in-person customer meetings is getting canceled, it creates a grim situation for marketing and sales organizations.

So the right answer is not “do nothing and wait for better days”, but instead to continue engaging with customers despite the circumstances by using a proven solution leveraged by many enterprises. The Meeting Automation Platform (MAP) is designed to support both ‘**In-Person Meetings**’ at live events as well as ‘**Virtual Meetings**’ when live events are not possible.

Virtual Meetings

Enterprises want to enable online B2B meetings between customers and internal executives and experts when live events are not possible to avoid the loss of advancing pipeline and closing deals. A B2B Virtual Meeting is defined as a forum where people representing different organizations, regardless of their location, use video or audio conferencing technology to meet online. Virtual Meetings allow meeting attendees to share information and data in real-time without being physically located together. Some of the reasons for the popularity of Virtual Meetings include convenience and lesser cost. While the impact of productive in-person meetings at events is immense, **virtual meetings** are the **next best alternative**.

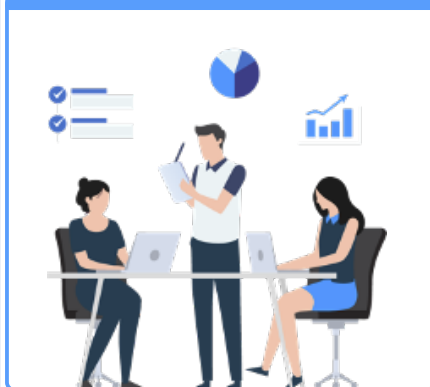
The most critical, effective and swift response to canceled events is to convert or reschedule all the in-person meetings to virtual meetings with customers and prospects to ensure business continues to happen.

When dealing with a high volume of meetings that need to be managed and tracked for effectiveness and follow up, a systematic process using automation software that is purpose-built is your best approach. This is called the **Meeting Automation Platform** or MAP. More on this is covered later in the paper. With such a platform, the conversion to virtual meetings is executed with a simple **'click'** in the platform and all the information associated with every meeting is also made available. The agenda and the list of participants remains the same but the meeting is virtual instead of in-person. To make the process easier, the platform is also **integrated** with **Zoom and Webex conferencing software** so meeting requesters can click and add meetings links from within the platform.

For Canceled Event: Convert to Virtual Meetings

The same agenda, the same participants with Virtual Meetings

IN-PERSON MEETINGS



Switch to Virtual



VIRTUAL MEETINGS



Virtual Meeting Event

It is unclear when the Covid-19 outbreak will end and live events will be back in place. A popular approach that many companies are implementing is to launch “**Virtual Meeting Event**” as a campaign to drive business. A Virtual Meeting Event, like its physical counterpart, takes place within a specific period of time. You can set up the event in the **Meeting Automation Platform** as a **Virtual Meetings** only event and involve executives, experts, and sales teams just like an in-person meeting at a live event.

A Virtual Meeting Event is held for the same reasons as Live Event - to deliver your company’s message, to advance sales pipeline and revenue, drive adoption, and build loyalty and lifetime value. Meeting and event planners have been making the choice between live, virtual, and hybrid events for years and each type of event comes with its own set of pros and cons. When deciding the type of event, consider what you hope to gain from the event and how well those goals can be reached virtually versus in-person.

How to Launch a Virtual Meeting Event

Organize online events by topic or industry or geography for specific period, to facilitate a number of virtual meetings between targeted customers and internal SMEs and Executives.



“We are definitely continuing with the virtual meetings. 17 meetings are scheduled for this week. We’ve also launched 3 Virtual Meeting Event programs over the next month.”

Director of Events at a Large IT Systems and Software Company

Multiple Virtual Meeting Events can be set up and managed as campaigns that can be focused on different industries, regions or topics to support the particular needs of your company. It allows your organization ability to engage a large number of customers with one-to-one virtual meetings. As with in-person meetings, all the opportunity, and other meeting information is available on the platform for meeting managers, attendees, and requesters, enabling you to easily manage, measure, and report on the results.

The main reasons to host a Virtual Meeting Event are:

- **Accessibility:** Virtual options allow you to accommodate attendees from almost any location who are unable to attend in person.
- **Budget:** Virtual Meeting Events cost a fraction of the cost of Live Events to sponsors and make even more sense when attendee budgets to travel are a concern. It also helps move the budget to the biggest events.
- **There’s no other option:** Whether due to disasters, travel bans, or extreme weather, you’re forced to make your in-person meetings virtual or cancel them altogether.

Challenges with Scheduling and Managing B2B Meetings

B2B Meetings drives business! A significant number of high-quality meetings with prospects, customers, SMEs, executives, etc., at events result in sales advancement, partnerships, and have a big influence on the company's growth. Most enterprises strive to have hundreds or even thousands of customer meetings from all events every year. The best ROI for an event or any marketing campaign is realized when it drives influenced-revenue.

However, the process of scheduling, managing, tracking in-person or virtual meetings with customers or prospects is a path filled with many challenges that can hinder the interactions producing less than favorable outcomes. It involves several steps that go beyond just a calendar invitation. Meeting requests from sales team needs a quick turnaround. Schedules, locations, and experts need to be coordinated so confirmations are made on time. Such workflows become particularly challenging when they involve business executives and subject matter experts whose availability is always in demand.

Common challenges in scheduling and managing B2B event meetings are:

- **Double-booked Meetings** - If event meeting calendars are not dynamically updated when meetings are booked or when an external or internal attendee is unavailable, it leads to double bookings resulting in missed appointments or delays.
- **Meeting Location Errors** - Determining meeting locations or seating capacity for different events can lead to booking incorrect locations.
- **Too Many Emails** - Meeting requesters, meeting planners, and executive admins have to manage too many back and forth emails for information needed to schedule and confirm every meeting. Analysis shows an average of 14 emails are required to confirm a meeting, leading to fatigue of schedulers and attendees.
- **Declined meetings** - Tracking multiple meeting invitations, acceptances, and declines using spreadsheets or calendar applications is time-consuming and highly error-prone.

- **Lack of Meeting Context** - When it comes to meetings, information is a gold mine. Clarity about the key objective of the meeting, opportunity type, opportunity stage, etc., is necessary for productive meetings. Such valuable information is lost in most manual processes.
- **Time-Zone Errors** - Attendees attend events from any part of the world and scheduling hundreds of meetings for attendees from different time zones leads to errors.
- **Analytics and Reporting** - B2B meetings, whether in-person meetings at events or virtual meetings are a treasure trove of information. Information such as the number of attendees, estimated revenue, meeting objectives, pipeline amount, and other valuable data that is collected before and during a meeting which when measured and analyzed can be used to make vital decisions later on. But this information is lost by using email-based meeting management.

It is clear that relying on mostly manually driven meeting management is error-prone and not scalable. This is where the Meeting Automation Platform comes in.



JiffleNow

Meeting Automation Platform (MAP)

An intuitive cloud-based software, a Meeting Automation Platform helps enterprises automate workflows associated with pre-meeting scheduling, in-meeting management, and post-meeting analysis to increase the number and quality of in-person B2B meetings. Businesses schedule hundreds of in-person or virtual meetings with prospects and customers and MAP overcomes all the challenges of a manual process. This platform is especially helpful for enterprises that need to manage a high volume of meetings every year. It also offers integrations with other event management software such as badge scan apps, event registration software, CRM, etc., for seamless meeting management.

JiffleNow is the market leader in Meeting Automation Platforms with more than **200 major enterprises** including **60+ Fortune 1000 companies** as customers.



Virtual Meetings Capabilities of JiffleNow

Companies can meet with customers and prospects in two ways - in-person meetings at live events and virtual meetings for remote attendees. JiffleNow's Virtual Meetings capability seamlessly integrates all the necessary information about the customer, the opportunity, purpose of the meeting, along with the meeting information such as date, time, location, etc., to get the right attendees to participate and achieve better outcomes, thus enabling enterprises to continue to effectively engage with their prospects and customers.

The conversion to virtual meetings is executed with a simple 'click' in the platform and all the information associated with every meeting is also made available. The agenda and the list of participants remains the same but the meeting is virtual instead of in-person. To make the process easier, the platform is also integrated with Zoom and Webex conferencing software so meeting requesters can click and add meetings links from within the platform.

“I'm excited about it. It's the easiest way for us to still emphasize the importance of using JiffleNow. Booking through alternate solutions is not going to allow us to get the data we need.”

A large mobile service provider



Some of the benefits include:

- ✓ **Convert and reschedule in-person meetings from canceled live events into virtual meetings**
In the case of virtual meetings, attendees are scattered across multiple time zones and meetings can be spread across multiple days offering more flexibility for rescheduling
- ✓ **Retains the meeting context**
When meetings are scheduled using video conferencing platforms and calendar applications, those tools do not provide valuable information such as meeting objectives, agenda, opportunity type & size, industry, topics of interest, etc., that is necessary to analyze the impact of the meeting. When meetings are booked using JiffleNow's Virtual Meetings capability, this information is retained.
- ✓ **Reschedule with experts and executives available remotely in the right time zones and locations**
With virtual meetings, there is an allowance for more freedom as there are executives and SMEs who do not have to be present at a particular location and therefore present more of an opportunity to schedule meetings with them seamlessly.
- ✓ **Automatically send meeting invitations by attendee type**
When a meeting request is confirmed external and internal attendees get different invitations which include appropriate information they need to participate.
- ✓ **Add your choice of Web Conferencing Link**
The Virtual Meetings feature enables meeting planners and requesters to copy and paste a link from any of their preferred web conferencing software and invite attendees based in different locations. The **integration with Zoom and Webex** allows for adding a web conferencing link from within JiffleNow with just a click.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused large-scale disruption to the people and the global economy in ways hitherto unseen and the event industry is no different. While canceling events may have been seen as an unprecedented disaster, the effects can be minimized significantly through 'Virtual Meetings' and 'Virtual Meeting Events'.

Business to business in-person and virtual meetings with customers, partners, and prospects result in sales growth, partnerships and advances the sales pipeline.

The core strength of the **Jifflenow Meeting Automation Platform** is the simplification of the process of scheduling hundreds of meetings and the seamless integration of all the essential information about the customer, the opportunity, date, and time to get the right attendees to participate and achieve better outcomes. This critical information is also available for **Virtual Meetings**. The Cloud-based platform helps enterprises shorten the sales cycle, achieve their business objectives through more number of high-quality meetings and makes events and marketing programs more valuable to enterprises.



Don't Cancel Your Meetings. Convert & Schedule Virtual Meetings. [Schedule your personal demo](#) today.



World's #1 Meeting Automation Platform

Jifflenow is the World leader in the Meeting Automation Platform (MAP) category. The Jifflenow MAP software is used by 60 of the Fortune 1000 companies to book millions of in-person and virtual engagements at tradeshows, roadshows, and briefing centers. MAP automates the scheduling, management, and analysis of B2B meetings to accelerate business growth.

Learn more at www.jifflenow.com