

Lessons Learned from the 2021 Host City of the Eurovision Song Contest: Rotterdam

#strategy #resilience #creativity #innovation
 #awareness #inclusive #sustainable #accessible
 #involved #collaboration #diversity #legacy
 #festivalisation #OpenUptotheFutureofEvents



Image: AHOY

#1

How scenario thinking and collaboration made the execution of Eurovision 2021 feasible and safe

What do you do when the world of international events comes to a stop? In Rotterdam you search for possibilities to make it happen anyway! Define every possible scenario, and take a step by step approach in realising them.

Thanks to a close collaboration with Fieldlab and all other parties involved, the Eurovision Song Contest took place with a live audience safely & responsibly.

What you should do if you want to make it happen:

- Take one step at a time, and be guided by your goal, your ambition and the drive to go for the maximum result.
- Stick to the plan but keep your organisation flexible. Make sure you have enough capacity and collaborate with the best people you can find.

- Use a scenario driven approach which is scalable, allowing you to course correct as the situation evolves.
- In the future, destination authorities will play a bigger role for international events, turn to them for expertise and support.

*“The greatest impact Fieldlab had on the MICE market was in **triggering a mind-shift**. They successfully took decision makers from ‘every event is dangerous’ to ‘there is a major difference in event types and between events and other social gatherings’. They proved that professional organisers are able to create a safe environment. Fieldlab created **partners in the journey toward a successful event** by informing and connecting relevant stakeholders, such as local and national health authorities about the findings”.*

#2

Less consuming, more creative

Yuri van Geest has a clear vision about the future of events: “from passive delegates to interactive delegates. Interactivity will be key in the future, and will only increase”.

- The future of events will be purpose driven.
- Events will be less about broadcasting and more about speakers providing inspiration.
- Co-creation and collective intelligence will be key, deep listening and dialogues will be integrated.
- The new scarcity will be connectedness. We will strive to be connected to each other.

#3

Legacy – lessons learned to achieve more for your future events

The future of events is bright! This is what the experts are telling us. Why? Because new possibilities in the form of hybrid events and co-creation will raise the bar when it comes to the ambitions of all event stakeholders, and a focus on the quality of interaction is key. Sharing knowledge openly is what helped the international event industry to survive. And to emerge a better, stronger industry we need to keep it up, together, and embrace experimentation. The key to successfully do this is to start small, providing a safe space for experimentation, with a clear vision of where you want to go.

How you can “Make it Happen” too:

- Be brave and walk a longer path toward your point on the horizon in order to realize the impact of your investment.
- Set clear requirements for achieving sustainability goals, and involve residents, entrepreneurs and partners from the start.
- Invest in local entrepreneurs, they are the building blocks of your event landscape, and will bring authenticity to your efforts.

Viable hybrid events will share three commonalities:

1. They have **deliberately designed a user experience** for virtual access (content-sharing, global connections) vs live access (authentic experience, human connection, no distractions, serendipity); inclusive vs. exclusive.
2. Events will be **spread out over time with more touch points** between attendees: physical events will last longer and virtual events will be shorter and recurring.

3. The **hub & spoke-model** will be applied: large, global events, with local physical chapters. Perhaps supported by the metaverse, where you co-create with people from all over the world, in a meeting room with some of your local peers.

*“Legacy is more than economic impact, it is also about bolstering networks, providing volunteer opportunities, and ensuring that there was social impact across all elements of Rotterdam society. This resulted in a **strong sense of pride among residents that will fuel future development**”.*

#4

What is Rotterdam’s strategy towards hosting events?

Rotterdam’s focus is on events that contribute to a sustainable economic development of the city. Events that match the city’s DNA, and our ambitions for the future. When a city and an event are aligned, amazing synergy can happen.

What you should do if you want to make it happen:

- Choose your partners wisely; work with professionals aligned with your mission.

- Invest in your partners and keep communication lines short: knowing each other’s goals makes collaboration more effective.
- Have a clear user journey: what part is online, what is live? Focus on inclusivity at both levels.

*“Online events offer the opportunity to open a host city and the event to **new geographies and target audiences**. Events that are able to capture the common knowledge from these communities will thrive”.*

“The future of events will be purpose driven”

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