

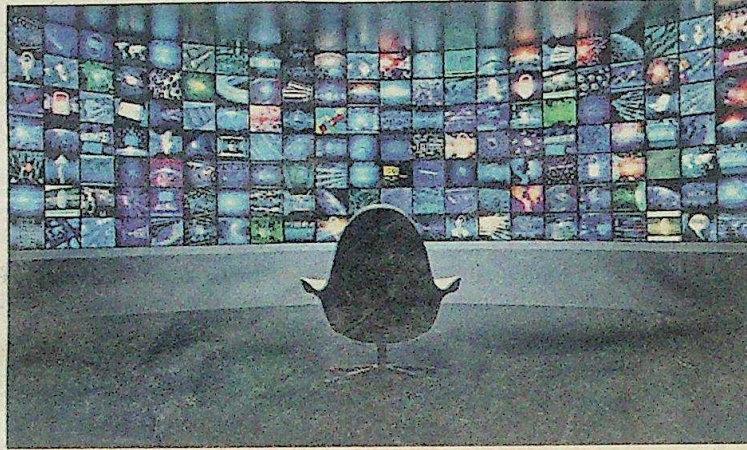
Opportunities in the Expanding Realm of Virtual Events

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On August 23, 2023 when India's Chandrayaan - 3 successfully landed on the Moon's surface, the event was virtually witnessed by a staggering 77 million people from across the globe. Even as Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was physically present in South Africa attending the BRICS summit, he virtually engaged with the team of ISRO in Bengaluru in observing the landing attempt.

This incredible feat not only highlighted India's prowess in space science but also underscored the potential of virtual platforms to transcend geographical boundaries and create shared experiences that unite people from all walks of life. The ability to bring together such a massive global audience virtually is a testament to how technology has transformed the way we experience and engage with significant events.

The COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 highlighted the power of virtual events, as leaders of the



G20 held an "extraordinary virtual summit" to address the pandemic's challenges. This showcased how virtual platforms enable high-stakes discussions and decision-making in adversity.

The concept of virtual events isn't new; it dates back to 1993 when Severe Tire Damage live-streamed a concert online, paving the way for virtual events. The growing demand for virtual events has transformed the role of event planners, who now need to adapt to the digital domain, curating engaging online experi-

ences and mastering various online platforms.

Roles within the Virtual Event Firm: Building Experiences Beyond Boundaries

In the dynamic landscape of a virtual event management firm, a variety of roles comes together, intricately interwoven to craft

seamless and captivating virtual experiences. At the forefront are the Virtual Event Coordinators, orchestrating the event's narrative from inception to execution, meticulously tending to every logistical nuance. These coordinators ensure that no detail is overlooked, leaving attendees with lasting impressions.

Behind the scenes, the Virtual Event Producers wield technical mastery, navigating the digital realm with finesse, and ensuring that live streams flow flawlessly, video production is impeccable, and interactive elements captivate audiences. While the Virtual Event Marketing Specialists work their magic, devising strategies to entice audiences through strategic promotions and compelling campaigns, the Virtual Event Platform Specialists

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expertly manage the intricate web of virtual platforms and integrations, ensuring that the digital stage is set for unparalleled engagement.

The Virtual Event Content Managers, akin to storytellers, curate a harmonious blend of content pieces, weaving them into narratives that educate, inspire, and entertain. As the participants begin their journey, the Virtual Event Registration Managers facilitate hassle-free entry of participants into the virtual world.

When technical uncertainties arise, the Virtual Event Technical Support teams stand vigilant, offering real-time assistance that guarantees an uninterrupted and enriching participant experience. Meanwhile, the Virtual Event Moderators foster a sense of community, sparking engaging interactions, and nurturing discussions that amplify the event's impact. In the realm of data, the Virtual Event Analytics Specialists dissect event metrics to reveal insights that guide future strategies and innovations. The Virtual Event Project Managers stand as conductors, ensuring all facets harmonise, and the event's resonates with perfection.

The Virtual Event Designers infuse visual allure, weaving aesthetics into every element, from branding to visuals, enhancing the event's visual identity. In the sphere of partnerships, the Virtual Event Sales Managers craft connections, forging collaborations that breathe life into the event and extend its reach.

Dedication to attendees continues with the Virtual Event Customer Support Specialists, extending a helping hand to ensure that every inquiry finds a swift and satisfactory response. Simultaneously, the Virtual Event Engagement Specialists craft strategies that foster deeper participant involvement, making each attendee an integral part of the experience.

On the digital frontiers, the Virtual Event Social Media Managers curate the event's online presence, building a bridge to

wider audiences, and ensuring that the event's essence resonates beyond its digital confines.

In a splendid convergence of skills, their collective efforts culminate in the perfect execution of memorable virtual events, transcending geographical boundaries and weaving together experiences that linger in the minds of attendees long after the virtual curtains close.

Navigating the Core Tenets while Embracing the Digital Shift

Enrolling in a basic event management course offers foundational knowledge about event planning, including its role in marketing, the responsibilities of event managers, and insights into event management firms. The course covers Indian-specific issues, entrepreneurship in the events industry, and principles of Public Relations (PR). It also includes topics like logistics, venue selection, legal aspects, and budget-friendly planning.

However, the events landscape is rapidly shifting to virtual platforms, requiring new skills. To stay relevant, event planners must adapt to this digital transformation, learning about virtual event platforms, digital engagement strategies, immersive experiences, and the integration of technology and human interaction. The basic event management course provides a foundation, but future success demands blending traditional wisdom with futuristic insights to navigate the evolving world of events.

Indicative Qualifications for Thriving in Virtual Event Management Roles

- ♦ **Virtual Event Coordinator/Manager:** Bachelor's degree in Event Management, Hospitality Management, Marketing, Communications, or a related field.
- ♦ **Virtual Event Producer:** Bachelor's degree in Film Production, Broadcasting, Multimedia, or a related field.
- ♦ **Virtual Event Marketing Specialist:** Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Digital Marketing, Public Relations, Com-

munications, or a related field.

- ♦ **Virtual Event Platform Specialist:** Bachelor's degree in Information Technology, Computer Science, or a related field.
- ♦ **Virtual Event Content Manager:** Bachelor's degree in Journalism, Communications, English, or a related field.
- ♦ **Virtual Event Moderator/Facilitator:** Bachelor's degree in Communication, Psychology, Sociology, or a related field.
- ♦ **Virtual Event Technical Support:** Diploma or Bachelor's degree in Information Technology, Computer Science, or a related field.
- ♦ **Virtual Event Analytics Specialist:** Bachelor's degree in Data Science, Business Analytics, Statistics, or a related field.
- ♦ **Virtual Event Project Manager:** Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Project Management, or a related field. PMP certification can be beneficial.
- ♦ **Virtual Event Designer:** Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design, Visual Arts, Multimedia Design, or a related field.
- ♦ **Virtual Event Sales Manager:** Bachelor's degree in Sales, Marketing, Business Administration, or a related field.
- ♦ **Virtual Event Customer Support Specialist:** Associate's or Bachelor's degree in Customer Service, Communication, or a related field.
- ♦ **Virtual Event Engagement Specialist:** Bachelor's degree in Psychology, Sociology, Marketing, or a related field.
- ♦ **Virtual Event Social Media Manager:** Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Communications, Digital Marketing, or a related field.

Qualifications for virtual event planning roles can vary based on company preferences, specific responsibilities, and expertise levels. Certifications in event management, technical skills, and industry knowledge can boost qualifications.

Successful virtual event plan-

ners need to blend creativity, technical proficiency, and strategic insight. They must adapt to the digital age, mastering virtual event platforms, multimedia software, UX design, content creation, gamification, and data analytics. Effective communication, adaptability, and innovation are crucial. Collaboration, resource management, budgeting, and environmental consciousness are also vital skills for orchestrating impactful virtual events. Event planners play a key role in transforming virtual events into immersive and impactful experiences.

Scouting for Opportunities

Landing a virtual coordinator or virtual event planner job in India, or anywhere else for that matter, requires a combination of skills, qualifications, networking, and a strategic job search approach. Here are the steps you can take to increase your chances of securing such a role:

Develop Relevant Skills:

Familiarise yourself with virtual event platforms and technologies. Develop strong organisational, communication, and project management skills. Learn about different types of virtual events, such as webinars, virtual conferences, online workshops, etc. Improve your attention to detail and problem-solving abilities.

Education and Training:

Consider taking relevant courses or obtaining certifications in event planning, project management, or related fields. Online platforms like Coursera, Udemy, and LinkedIn Learning offer such courses. If you have a background in hospitality, marketing, communications, or a related field, it can be advantageous.

Build a Portfolio: Create a portfolio showcasing your past event planning experience, even if they were not virtual events. Highlight your organisational and creative skills. Include examples of how you managed events, collaborated with teams, and solved any challenges that arose.

Networking: Connect with professionals in the event planning industry, both virtually and in person if possible. Join relevant online forums, LinkedIn groups, and social media platforms to engage with others in

the field. Attend virtual networking events, webinars, and workshops to build relationships and learn from others.

Job Search: Use online job boards like LinkedIn, Indeed, Naukri, and Glassdoor to search for virtual event planning jobs in India. Customise your resume and cover letter to highlight your relevant skills and experience. Tailor your application to match the specific job requirements mentioned in the job postings.

Cold Outreach: If you come across companies or organisations that you'd like to work for, consider sending them a well-crafted cold email expressing your interest and attaching your resume and portfolio.

Showcase Your Virtual Skills: If you have experience with virtual events, make sure to highlight that on your resume and during interviews. Discuss how you've adapted to the virtual environment, managed remote teams, and engaged attendees online.

Interview Preparation: Research the company thoroughly before interviews to understand their virtual event needs and objectives. Be prepared to discuss specific virtual events you've planned, challenges you've faced, and solutions you've implemented. Emphasise your ability to handle technical aspects and troubleshoot issues during virtual events.

Demonstrate Flexibility: Virtual event planning often requires adaptability due to changing technologies and audience preferences. Showcase your ability to learn and adjust quickly.

Follow Up: After interviews, send a thank-you email to the interviewers expressing your gratitude and reiterating your interest in the position.

Virtual events have emerged as a powerful and transformative force in the world of networking, entertainment, and professional development. Furthermore, the concept of the metaverse is reshaping the very nature of events. As the metaverse evolves, events are likely to become persistent, immersive experiences that bridge the gap between the physical and digital worlds. Event planners may find themselves creating and managing avatars, designing virtual venues, and integrating elements of virtual reality to enhance engagement. The metaverse challenges event planners to think beyond traditional boundaries, transcending the limitations of time and space. Just as the metaverse blurs the lines between reality and the digital realm, event planners of the future will find themselves at the forefront of shaping unforgettable experiences that transcend physical limitations. So, whether you're attending a virtual conference today or stepping into a virtual world tomorrow, remember that the future of events is not just an eventuality - it's an exciting journey into the unknown.

(The author is a Delhi based career coach. You can send us your feedback on this article at feedback.employmentnews@gmail.com)

Views expressed are personal.

Indian Institute of Management Raipur

Date: 30th August, 2023

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