

CASE STUDY



QODE Brisbane 2020

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC)

24-25 March, 2020

Event Snapshot



**Global virtual
audience of
15,000**



Over 20 speakers



**Over 70 virtual
exhibitors**

QODE – Setting New Benchmarks

In March this year, the team behind Brisbane’s premier technology and innovation event delivered a world first for the global events industry in the face of the unprecedented threat of COVID-19.

Organisers of QODE Brisbane 2020 transformed their annual two-day conference and exhibition at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC) into an on-line event attracting a global audience of 15,000 - successfully delivering one of the world’s first virtual interactive conference and exhibition events.

QODE, whose primary audience is the entrepreneurial, investment and government sectors, showcases Brisbane and Queensland’s world leading innovation and entrepreneurship, with a focus on the future of technology.

Pivoting the event not only enabled the event to continue, whilst almost every other event was being cancelled, it provided an unparalleled opportunity to showcase Brisbane and Queensland innovation to a wider national and global audience.

The 2020 event, which set records in virtual conferencing, has already attracted international interest. It will be keenly observed by organisers and venues for upcoming meetings and events, consolidating the lessons learned and adapting and building on those learnings.



Overview

Against the ticking clock of an Australia-wide ban on gatherings of more than 100, QODE’s format pivoted from a physical event consisting of a 200+ company exhibition and two conferences on separate stages - all to be built in the Great Hall at the BCEC, to a fully virtual event consisting of a virtual exhibition, and livestreams of the two conferences produced on modified stages in the Great Hall.

Jackie Taranto, Chief QODE Officer and founder of the event, drew on all her entrepreneurial skills and experience, pivoting the event and setting new industry benchmarks as the country was shutting down.

“Coronavirus forced us to a deeper level of innovation, pushing us through, to an excellent outcome.”

QODE, BCEC and a video production unit all worked collaboratively to modify the staging, lighting, video and audio to that appropriate for a livestream presentation, whilst maintaining the quality and professional feel of the original QODE physical format. Around 35 speakers participated across the two conference streams.

The QODE virtual exhibition was a 3D interactive experience, viewable on a standard web browser, where delegates were able to browse the expo and travel inside an exhibition space to reveal a new world that was customised for each of the 50+ exhibitors.

Extremely positive feedback from exhibitors demonstrated that the virtual expo was able to effectively replicate the business environment of the physical expo, with exhibitors able to meet potential clients and transact business.

BCEC Team Member, AV Sales Manager, Daniel Tainsh said working on the event was both a challenge and a privilege. “Being able to deliver a successful event in the face of the unprecedented constraints of COVID-19, by totally converting a conventional meeting to one for a completely on-line global audience in a matter of just a few days, was a great achievement for everyone involved.”

Drawing on the capability of BCEC’s in-house Audio-Visual professionals and their vast experience in broadcast and technical production allowed them to provide the support and knowledge to help solve the many challenges in the days leading up to the event going live.

Highlights

Quizzed on one of the great highlights of the conference Chief QODE Officer, Taranto describes the moment when it all came together and the event went live streaming to an immediate audience of 1,000 viewers.

“It was a feeling of ‘we did it’, thanks to our passionate and committed teams putting in 18 to 20 hour days. QODE was exactly in a sweet spot - timing -wise. If it were scheduled earlier we would have just been able to present it as planned, but as it turned out we had the minimum possible time to pivot the event. It was hard work but it did give us the opportunity of being one of the first events if not the first globally to do so.”



Another she says was when a BCEC team member thanked her for going ahead with the event and ‘shining a light on the future of technology’.

Keys to success

Former Queensland Minister for State Development, Kate Jones praised QODE as: “Showcasing our best and brightest. What better way to achieve this than by sending such a message to the world as taking the entire program on-line to a world-wide audience.”

Jackie Taranto attributes success to the work of the collective and multiple teams involved.

Singling out BCEC she said: “I have worked with a lot of venues and it comes down to the people. The people at BCEC were excellent event partners working together, amplifying the message and bringing the event to life.”

“We were all in this together, pushing the boundaries of innovation and technology and moving so quickly, having that level of trust is very important to me.”

Offering her thoughts post Covid-19, Jackie is in no doubt innovation and technology will be key to future meetings and events, but says nothing beats face to face, human interaction.

“People need people to thrive, but interactivity will be a combination; one will support the other.”