

One year on, the events and conference industry is starting to feel cautiously optimistic

By [Colleen Lategan](#)

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With lockdown levels having eased significantly since South Africa first went into strict lockdown in March last year, the teams behind meetings, events and conferences are beginning to clock interesting signs of life in this sector.



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Here, are a few new trends that have been emerging as South Africans get interested in once again hosting and attending events. We can look forward to:

More team building

With teams being split up for months at a time while working from home, it's not only been difficult for colleagues to keep in touch, but also to maintain and reinvigorate a company culture when everyone is never in the same room together.

Enquiries around team-building events are definitely on the up right now. Companies are enquiring about use of our venues for bigger (but within regulation) events, while others are simply trying to book a lunch with the whole team for a long-overdue catch-up session among colleagues.

Hybrid events

With Covid-19 safety protocols and safety top of mind for everyone, we've noticed that many companies are asking about our hybrid conferencing facilities that we have up and running.

In a nutshell, hybrid solutions combine the best of meeting in person and virtually, offering a reliable image, sound and video conferencing system, dual screens, wireless presentation clicker, high-speed internet connection, and more.

As the world continues to adapt to all kinds of "new normal", and in light of continuing travel limitations, meeting and event organisers now have the choice of virtual participation options and hybrid formats. These allow for small local gatherings, while also broadcasting to remote attendees and satellite locations.

More out-of-town enquiries

With travel between provinces now possible, we are seeing a definite uptick in the number of out-of-town enquiries for events and meetings. We've seen that businesses based in Johannesburg, for example, are keen to send their employees to Cape Town for some in-person, socially-distanced events and meetings. This is in response to the fact that many are finding they're losing the personal touch with their all-important client base in different cities.

As restrictions ease and vaccinations continue to be rolled out globally, it's likely that we will begin to see increasing numbers of people begin travelling internationally once again.

Unique activities

With so much of 2020 being spent behind closed doors at home with not much more than a computer screen and Zoom or Teams meetings for company, businesses are actively seeking unique ways in which to touch base with their clients and employees.

Even though many companies want a meeting or event, we've also seen a lot of questions about our Amani Spa and cycling that we also provide from our hotel, or the kayaking down the road. This goes to show that many are keen to add some spice to their event - something we could all use a little more of right now.

More outdoor events

Of course, the thing we're asked about most often is about our ability to host outdoor events. We are in the fortunate position of having a boardwalk that delegates can make use of, as well as an open-air restaurant. We have definitely seen enquiries around this increasing too.

Having the capacity for outdoor dining, meals or even coffee breaks are increasingly in demand as these allow for easier social distancing and better circulation of air when groups come together. If you can host your event partially outdoors, this has definitely become first prize in the meetings, events and conferences space.

Even though there is still a long way to go when it comes to recovery in this industry, having these different enquiries come through, and seeing more people reach out to us about events, certainly gives us a renewed sense of hope for the future.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Colleen Lategan is Assistant F&B Manager at Radisson Blu Hotel Waterfront.

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