

## EVOLVE OR DISSOLVE:

## MOVING YOUR DIGITAL STRATEGY FROM 2D TO 3D



A year and a half into the pandemic and people aren't just suffering from Zoom fatigue and digital concert overload, they are seeking experiences that provide less unilateral engagement, and more valuable connections. It becomes imperative, then, to invest in the technological infrastructure for out-of-the-box digital experiences to bring value to your audience—and turn that added engagement into opportunities to monetize.

“We don't need this crazy technology to do this, we have everything we need right now. The metaverse becoming a reality is not just gadgets it's more about the adoption of these games by people, and developers learning what elements make for really awesome online social experiences,” Tim Sweeney, CEO Epic Games (VentureBeat).

Brands can capitalize on this global phenomenon by investing in the resources and technology to provide consumers, employees, and other stakeholders with an elevated digital experience—here's how to get started:

## 01 CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE DIGITAL STRATEGY.

Nowadays, it's not enough for brands to just have a digital presence. With chatbots enhancing a website experience, live broadcasts and interviews occurring on Instagram, and even dating apps like Hinge and Tinder integrating video chat into their platforms, the digital ecosystem is more elevated than years past. Think about your brand's core strengths and why your audience continues to engage (use behavioral science and data analytics to quantify these assumptions) and then utilize members of your team—from digital marketing managers and creative directors, to interns and software engineers—to brainstorm ways to bring your brand into the future.

## 03 THINK BIG. REALLY BIG.

While some companies are beginning to embrace a more thorough digital strategy, cutting-edge brands are zooming into the future.

60 years ago, when *The Jetsons* aired, it was preposterous to imagine a world with smart homes, video calls, holograms, or 3D printed food, yet it has quickly become reality in present day. Traditional multichannel experiences will soon evolve to multiversal experiences—and future-thinking brands are already at the forefront of this creation. “The future of social media may not be in traditional platforms, but in immersive gaming environments with their own economies, currencies, and culture. Fortnite, the popular battle royale shooter by Epic Games, is striving to become the first digital metaverse: a shared virtual space that goes beyond gaming to include an endless buffet of media experiences. CEO Tim Sweeney has been actively promoting the metaverse concept, and even if it's years away, one can begin to discern the contours of his vision, with Fortnite hosting in-game concerts, movie trailer premiers, and other appointment viewing events over the past year” (Fast Company). Consider recreating a physical space in a digital, avatar-based platform—where avatars can travel from branded platform to platform—or having AR experiences at every in-person event you attend. Don't be afraid to think outside the box—or watch sci-fi TV shows from the past to help predict this future.

## 02 INCORPORATE A HYBRID MODEL.

A traditional in-person event evolved to a digital conference on Zoom or Hangouts during the pandemic, yet findings suggest that a hybrid physical and digital model will become the 'new normal'. As Joanne Dennison, Boston University School of Hospitality Administration adjunct professor states, “a company might have had a national sales convention, and now do five regional meetings. They might have a hybrid component. That will probably be the rest of 2021. Then comes 2022, and it will open up for more national meetings, and I think almost everything will have a hybrid component. They may not have the 3,000- or 5,000-people event; maybe they'll do East Coast and West Coast events. I foresee people being reluctant to go to meetings that involve that many people, even next year” (BU Today). Ensure that your event programming includes opportunities for digital engagement before, during, or even after an event—which can range from offering exclusive programming online-only during a conference, or incorporating second screen experiences into an in-person or televised event.

## AUTHORS

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### JOSH RUSH

Co-Founder & CEO

Josh@surrealevents.com

### ADAM VOSS

Co-Founder & CMO

Adam@surrealevents.com

### KRISTYN POTTER

Marketing Manager

Kristyn@surrealevents.com

## ABOUT SURREAL

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SURREAL is a first-of-its-kind virtual event platform enabling audiences across industries to connect, collaborate and celebrate in entirely new ways. Web-based, hosted in the Cloud and pixel-streamed to participants, SURREAL provides a “digital twin” to physical events and experiences—bridging the possible and impossible in any virtual environment imaginable. Designed to be social-first, gamelike and avatar-based, SURREAL inspires organic meetings and real-world “collisions” in a variety of spaces and with intuitive tools that make it easy to converse and connect with colleagues.

Visit [www.surrealevents.com](http://www.surrealevents.com) for more information.

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