

Brownell Travel looks for Virtual Togetherness

Company Brownell Travel	Industry Travel	Location Georgia USA	Event Type Virtual
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Challenges

- > How could training and workshops be provided virtually.
- > Create meaningful and engaging networking opportunities.

Solutions

- > Grip and Brownell created a virtual event that enabled networking, training across 27 sessions, and a sense of fellowship through networking and chat.

Grip platform enables meaningful networking and training at virtual event

Brownell Travel has become one of North America's leading upscale travel firms by offering their clients a white-glove service. This success has led to them being a preferred partner with the world's best cruise lines, hotels and resorts, tour operators, and destination management companies.

Brownell Academy is the firm's annual meeting with attendees from their family of Independent Advisors, supplier partners, and staff. What began in 1990 as a one-day meeting to give remote Independent Consultants face-to-face time, has evolved into an energising

and rewarding family reunion. Attendees consider the conference a can't miss due to the valuable networking and enriching content.

Each Brownell Academy is carefully planned over nine months by a team of seven to develop content and opportunities for professional growth. However, due to Coronavirus restrictions in 2020, the challenge for Brownell was how they could provide their high-end event without meeting in person. Brownell looked for an alternative that would still provide workshops, training, togetherness, and networking. The focus was still to 'bring together the Brownell family'



"All of our attendees were blown away by the platform. It exceeded everyone's expectations."

Rene Alldredge
Vice President-Operations, Brownell Travel

Keeping focused on the virtual event experience

The in-person event had to become virtual and Brownell decided that the attendee list was to be smaller than previous years to make it more focused. With pre-covid events hosting over 300 attendees, this year's virtual event had around 268. Brownell landed on the Grip Market Engagement Platform after several referrals given the need to focus on networking and delivering engaging content through their training and workshops. Brownell's ultimate goal was to keep the 'family feel', and throughout the virtual event engagement was high with 95% of attendees activating their profile within the Grip platform. This compares to an average activation rate of 65% for virtual events.

Brownell's attendee's also appreciated the platform once they were on it, with 27 sessions run with a 99% 'Good' rating from those in attendance. One of Brownell's primary goals was to enable networking among its consultants. Rene Alldredge (Vice President-Operations, Brownell Travel) said, in the past, we always asked attendees for their meeting preferences, and the planning team scheduled their 1:1's with this information. Through Grip, attendees have the power to meet with whoever they want to.

The flexibility within Grip's AI-powered recommendations resulted in 2,687 meetings with an 83% acceptance rate. Engagement extended beyond meetings too, with 90% of attendees using the chat functionality within Grip to send an average of 20 messages each. In total, 4919 chat messages were exchanged at the event.

After some initial trepidation, Sheri M. Selkirk (Brownell Travel - COO) said: "Our biggest concern was that virtual would take the event experience away. But the attendees said they were blown away by the Grip platform."

The future is hybrid

The Grip platform enabled 4,468 connections during the Brownell Academy. With attendees commenting on Grip's user-friendly, seamless technology, Brownell surveyed their consultants and suppliers to gather feedback on the Academy format for the future.

The results showed that the majority would prefer a hybrid event. While they acknowledge cocktail sessions are likely to run as in-person sessions, the workshops, training and 1-2-1 networking will be done online.

It really exceeded everyone's expectations of what a virtual event could be like, said Sheri M. Selkirk. When people asked who we worked with on our virtual event, we didn't hesitate to say Grip, and we have already recommended the Grip platform to others, she added.

Case Study Overview

Results

- > 99% of the 27 sessions were rated 'Good'
- > 2,687 1-2-1 meetings recommended by the Grip platform, with an 83% acceptance rate
- > 95% of attendees activated their profile within Grip
- > Brownell will embrace Hybrid for their future events strategies.



“It was the best virtual meeting we’ve ever had.”



Sheri M. Selkirk
Chief Operating Officer, Brownell Travel



grip.events



hello@grip.events



Mindspace, 9 Appold St, London,
EC2A 2AP, United Kingdom

Grip