

HOW VMX VIRTUAL IS TRANSFORMING NAVC'S VETERINARY MEETING & EXPO INTO A YEAR-ROUND EVENT

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In a first for the veterinary world, the North American Veterinary Community has launched VMX Virtual, an immersive and interactive 3D platform to transform the world's largest veterinary conference and trade show into a year-round, on-demand marketplace for exhibitors and attendees.

Intended to be a complement to and extension of its annual trade show and conference, Veterinary Meeting & Expo, the virtual VMX was launched in December 2019, one month prior to the live event. Held Jan. 18-22 at Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, the 2020 edition of VMX attracted approximately 700 exhibiting companies and 18,000 attendees from 80 countries.

According to NAVC officials, VMX Virtual is the first digital trade show and conference to blend advanced simulation and gamification technology.

"VMX Virtual is truly the next generation of trade shows, affording participating companies an avenue to better engage with their customers all year long and allowing conference attendees the opportunity to maximize their trade show experience," said Eugene O'Neill, interim CEO of NAVC, which provides continuing education and training to more than 500,000 veterinary professionals each year.

He continued, "People and companies spend thousands to millions of dollars each year going to trade shows or sponsoring exhibits. VMX Virtual lets them get more out of their investment all year long."

With VMX Virtual, visitors can digitally move through the VMX Expo Hall, experience exhibiting companies' virtual booths in their entirety, talk

live with company representatives, view and download content, watch webinars and videos, and take advantage of free giveaways.

Users simply search the virtual booth platform by products, services and content, while a virtual concierge is available to help guide them through the expo. Visitors can also add content to their virtual backpack, where it can be saved, organized and categorized to share with other members of their veterinary practices and referred back to at any time.

Meanwhile, exhibit sponsors have the chance to spend quality time with prospective customers and use the platform's robust analytics to follow up with them.

At the show, both exhibitors and attendees responded favorably to the virtual platform, commenting that it was not only impressive and easy-to-use, but that it also showcased exhibitor booths in an intuitive and innovative manner, according to NAVC officials.

"We had a strong response with the number of attendees that registered as users of VMX Virtual at [the show]," said Manolita Moore, VMX vice president of sales and operations. "Nearly half were veterinarians, and many commented that this would extend VMX all-year-round because they wouldn't have a chance to see in just a few days."

She continued, "Attendees commented they were glad that the booth content will be refreshed by exhibitors and that there would be ongoing promotions, raffles, publications and new content. [They also] mentioned that the forums were a great addition to VMX Virtual for sharing best practices and providing a sense of community."



VMX's virtual platform is developed by tech company Simulocity, which provides virtual platforms for training, education, healthcare and the trade show industry.



Meanwhile, exhibitors said they were pleased that VMX Virtual would allow them to receive leads and update content all year long, while giving prospective customers the ability to ask questions and purchase products online.

"Virtual is intended to extend the life of a live event and allow those who were not able to attend to participate and experience what it's like to be at VMX or a major trade show," said Manolita Moore, VMX vice president of sales and operations. "Or, those who attended but did not have enough time to browse all of the exhibitors can now browse and engage with the rest of the exhibitors at their leisure, complimentary to VMX attendees."