During the economic recession in the US, many companies were anxious to "go virtual" to save dollars on travel. However, the technology wasn't cheap and the impact of a live meeting far outweighed any virtual solutions, says Dawn Martin, vice president of meetings and shows at BI WORLDWIDE.

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The current trend, she believes, is to have live meetings and use new technologies, such as augmented reality, to make them as engaging as possible. "Much of the technology has become more affordable and the excitement it generates gives participants the feeling that the company is doing well," Martin explains.

As well as the showman aspect of technology, companies are choosing software and devices that enable them to execute their own events on a global scale by simplifying and managing the processes, ensuring consistency of branding and messaging, increasing visibility, monitoring event marketing spend and establishing reliable effectiveness measurement.

Offering delegates benefits such as social media integration, easy access to pertinent event information and the ability to connect with attendees and speakers, next-generation mobile apps also help event planners obtain real-time feedback, which in turn can impact a company's event strategy.

Technology research firm Gartner expects smartphones to surpass PCs as the most common method for accessing the internet this year and the events industry has had to fall in step with the way people gather, digest and distribute information.

Martin describes how BI WORLDWIDE uses technology to transform corporate events for their clients:

"As well as developing a very successful meeting app, we are using a lot of new technologies in our meetings and shows. Once used in outdoor, night-time venues on buildings, video projection mapping has been adapted to transform any ballroom set.

Holograms have become more main stream because production of the source material is fairly simple. It would work well for an electronic gaming company, for example, which could have a character rising out of a pod during a reception in holographic form and flying up into outer space through a retractable roof.

3D is a great effect, but the audience must wear special glasses so it's not right for most meetings. Augmented reality has found its way to the big stage though. Imagine a surgeon talking about features of the heart while on the screens a 3D heart helps illustrate his comments, or an automotive executive walking through the factory live on screen, when in reality he is simply walking on an empty stage."

BI WORLDWIDE's Meetings & Shows team can transform your next event with award-winning creative and production to engage your employees, sales teams and customers.

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