

# The MarkeTech Group

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## Minute

### COVID-19 and MedTech OEMs tradeshow strategy

EDITORIAL

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit a global level with country-wide lockdowns and travel restrictions.

The **impact** was immediate **for medical tradeshow events**. HIMMS Global Health Conference & Exhibition in Orlando and ECCMID in Paris were immediately cancelled. Organizers of other events had to decide whether to postpone or make their events virtual. Many events, like ECR or AACC, first postponed the physical meeting, but ultimately had to **cancel or go virtual**. The events scheduled for later in year, like RSNA, maintained their dates but rapidly turned into online-only events.

The new all-virtual event format forced medical technology vendors to react, rethink and quickly adapt their online presence and **customer engagement** at tradeshow events. This edition of The Minute aims to provide testimonials from the highest marketing executives at BD, Elekta, GE Healthcare, Philips, and Siemens Healthineers. We hope you will enjoy the summaries as well as the detailed scripts of the interviews conducted by our CEO, Dr. Christian Renaudin and Senior Partner in Europe, Dr. Romain Labas.

WHAT TMTG DID

The MarkeTech Group interviewed **five marketing decision makers** of major **medical technology vendors** to understand how they managed their tradeshow strategy in 2020, and what the future might look like for upcoming medical tradeshow events and conferences:

1. **BD:** **Fiona Garin Mc Donagh**, *Vice President, Strategic Marketing EMEA*
2. **Elekta:** **Ioannis Panagiotelis**, *Chief Marketing and Sales Officer & Executive VP*
3. **GE Healthcare:** **Mark Philips**, *Chief Marketing and Commercial Officer, Imaging* & **Kim Rutherford**, *Global Director of Mktg comm*
4. **Philips:** **Martijn Hartjes**, *Head of Global Portfolio Marketing, Precision Diagnosis* & **Guy Lomas**, *Global Head Experience Marketing*
5. **Siemens Healthineers:** **Alexander Zimmermann**, *Global Head of Marketing*

### High Level Takeaways

The COVID-19 pandemic **accelerated the shift** of how vendors approach events in relation to their customer engagement strategy. Digital marketing was already growing, but COVID-19 forced both exhibitors and attendees to adopt online events to overcome the inability to gather in-person. Hopefully in late 2021 **in-person event will resume**, but the digital component of customer engagement will continue impacting the look and feel of future events **as hybrid** events seem to be the new normal.



# INTERVIEWS OF THE SEMESTER

## MedTech OEMs' perspective on tradeshow in 2021



### **BD: Fiona Garin Mc Donagh | Vice President, Strategic Marketing EMEA**

**Tradeshow purpose:** Sales lead generation and brand recognition. When COVID-19 hit, BD quickly realized that it was **critical to reach customers digitally**, and managed to attend 12 virtual events, primarily to **"test the water"** and understand what customers expected from such virtual events. Virtual events are great to **reach a larger number of customers**. The metrics are evident as it is **easy to understand what content is really engaging** and to which customer level. BD needed to focus on their real pain points and surprise customers with more innovative and engaging concepts, so they choose to **attend BD hosted events**. BD believes **2021** will likely be a **blend of both physical and digital**. It will not be one or the other. The most important point will be addressing the cons of doing virtual aspects during the physical events. The tradeshow format will change, at least what is done at BD hosted events. [→ Access the full BD interview](#)

### **Elekta: Ioannis Panagiotelis | Chief Marketing and Sales Officer & Executive VP**

**Tradeshow purpose:** 30% sales leads, 20% branding and 30% account management. Net leads per major show is typically low (200 leads). Elekta attends 200 events per year. Technical exhibits are >50% of the budget. **Virtual shows do not deliver the same leads** (less than 10 in the last major show). The engagement strategy is now different and depends on more targeted messaging and private online events hosted by Elekta. **Virtual tradeshow are suited for scientific collaboration but not technical exhibits**. One positive is the **broader audience reach**: at ASTRO, a large percentage of non-American participants were attending the virtual show. The future will be a **hybrid of virtual and physical** and the ratio will depend on the fee structure. Elekta has developed **its own tradeshow independent virtual exhibit** and is re-adjusting customer engagement, thinking outside the box, and re-allocating budget and resources to create leads. [→ Access the full Elekta interview](#)

### **GE Healthcare: Mark Philips | Chief Marketing and Commercial Officer, Imaging; Kim Rutherford | Global Director of Mktg comm**

**Tradeshow purpose:** 50% sales leads (PQLs, SQPs) and 50% branding. Surveys help track visit statistics, quality of interaction / engagement, and the ROI for customer acquisition. **GE attends 250+ Tier 1/2 shows**. Technical exhibits used to be 60% of the budget, and are down to 30-40%. **The pivot to virtual started with HIMSS** with the construction of virtual content: webinars, fireside chats, online demos, etc. Objectives are the same in the virtual world and the results **show strong customer interaction and comparable leads**. Virtual brings **new metrics and data (SEO, traffic) and a much greater reach to customers**. It is early to compare ROI and lead generation of virtual vs. in-person. The **social interaction is missed**. The future is a **mix of virtual and physical**: keep the **reach** of digital (new attendees) and the **richness** of in-person interaction while extending the online presence beyond the normal duration of a show. Virtual or not, what customers expect to learn varies from show to show. [→ Access the full GE interview](#)

### **Philips: Martijn Hartjes | Head of Global Portfolio Marketing, Precision Diagnosis; Guy Lomas | Head of Global Experience Marketing**

**Tradeshow purpose:** Create branding, show technology leadership and generate sales leads. Qualified sales lead generation is one key metric used. **Philips attends 3,000 events annually** with 30 major shows per year. 70% of the budget is for technical exhibits. The **shift to digital experience started 3 years ago**. During COVID, Philips quickly reacted to promote more digital customer engagement while keeping the same overall objectives as it became clear that all events would pivot to 100% virtual. 2,000 events were postponed or cancelled while 988 became virtual. The amount of **customer interaction remained the same but spread over 2-3 months** per show instead of one week, and all had to be scheduled. The net benefit is a **greater reach and more quality exchanges**, although customers still prefer F2F for technical exhibits. **2021** will be a **mix of virtual and physical** where the need for socializing can be better satisfied, but immersive experiences will come soon. [→ Access the full Martijn Hartjes interview](#) | [→ Access the full Guy Lomas interview](#)

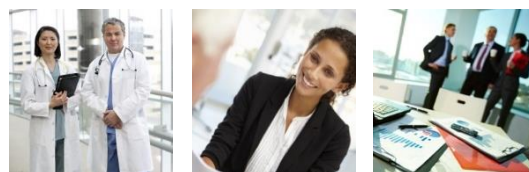
### **Siemens Healthineers: Alexander Zimmermann | Global Head of Marketing**

**Tradeshow purpose:** Share what is new and enhance client management. Siemens attends hundreds of shows each year. Siemens cancelled early to ensure safety of its customers and employees. To meet the customer demand for meetings, **a new tactical engagement was initiated through Siemens Shape21 platform** which leverages the absence of boundaries that digital affords while trying to mimic **one-on-one interaction with exclusive access to experts**. The **digital world outperforms the physical by 2 x**: greater reach to larger audiences, seamless experience once the customer goes through Siemens' digital front door. Post show NPS was 57, and 49% of potential buyers said that the information received at virtual RSNA was important and influential. The downside is the **lower quality of person-to-person exchange**. **52% of decision makers** indicated that virtual events are a **good complement to physical events** but cannot replace them, while **39% see digital events as an alternative to physical events**. [→ Access the full Siemens interview](#)

## ON THE HORIZON

### Towards a hybrid model

- Both virtual and physical events are here to stay.
- Customers are anxious to get back to in-person events for social reasons
- Virtual events are excellent in terms of marketing success tracking and engagement enhancement as an extension of existing digital marketing campaigns
- While virtual events are not ideal for customer one-on-one interaction and customer intimacy, it breaks the physical boundaries.
  - A greater reach to international communities and clinical experts.
  - Longer period of post-show customer interaction not limited to the actual event days



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