

Welcome to the Event Brew, where event professionals from different backgrounds talk about the latest, most controversial, and interesting topics dominating the minds of the industry right now. This is a candid conversation, the likes of which can only otherwise be found late at night in host hotel lobby bars during industry conferences. So relax and drop in on what event pros really say when no one else is around. This show is brought to you by Endless Events, the event AB company that tells you how it really is. Now, let's brew something up.

Nick Borelli:

Hello everyone. This is another episode of Event Brew. We are in the midst of an official pandemic right now and still trying to stay positive, energized and be as helpful as we can to other people listening. My name is Nick Borelli, and I am the President and Strategist of Borelli Strategies. And with me today is ...

Thuy Diep:

Hi Brewers. This is Thuy with PRA Business Events, washing her hands non-stop. And we have a guest Brewer. We're really excited. Drum roll. It's ...

Amber Lee:

Hi. I'm Amber. Amber Lee out of Vancouver. Corporate planner.

Nick Borelli:

Dustin and Will couldn't be with us today because I assume chaos, which is what we're dealing with right now. And I think we're an industry equipped to deal with chaos. Maybe I'm becoming less worried with each hour, even though things are escalating beyond a point where I would have thought, I mean ...It's currently, I should say the date when we're recording this stuff, even though this, obviously it's done previously. Just so if something crazy happens between now and then, you won't be like, "Why didn't he talk about that?" I think at this point we might need to do a timestamp. So it's the 13th of March. And we're-

Thuy Diep:

Friday the 13th.

Nick Borelli:

Yeah I mean, that's great.

Thuy Diep:

Wait, I will say, and because we like Amber more, we're just replacing a Canadian with an even better Canadian.

Amber Lee:

Don't tell Dustin that, though.

Thuy Diep:

Oh, no, it's recorded. Dustin, you hear me?

Nick Borelli:

I'm going to stay as neutral as a Canadian on that one. Just say sorry to anyone who was offended.

Thuy Diep:

Sorry.

Nick Borelli:

Yeah, so we're all trying to stay positive and stay, keep conversations, I think, out there that might be happening somewhere else as is kind of our mandates. So let's talk about what we are consuming in order to get us to that point where we can have the energy to help everyone else. Who wants to start? What are you drinking?

Thuy Diep:

I'll start. It's the same, it's the usual. It's my Yogi Organic Green Tea with some honey in it. Nick, I need to know yours.

Nick Borelli:

Mine isn't as crazy as normal. I have the, I'm shopping local at McDonald's, with the McCafe coffee. Honestly, I was just running between different places today trying to get my kids to a daycare because all was canceled. And I was like, "I need more coffee." So I just went through there. But then I immediately felt guilt afterwards because I'm trying to keep a list of businesses that I think are being slammed the hardest, and I think probably smaller establishments for food and beverage are probably the worst. So I'm going to make up for this purchase and buy coffee somewhere else today.

Thuy Diep:

Wait, isn't it the same amount for any size? That's like the advertising you always see.

Nick Borelli:

Oh, the price?

Thuy Diep:

Like whether you get the small or the large? Yeah, it's like so American.

Nick Borelli:

I think so. I think most things in American cuisine are dedicated to getting as much into you as possible. So instead of half price, it's always buy one, get one free. For meals, which is weird, because I guess it's catering to people who eat two meals at a time. Crowd. But, yeah, I think the gas stations with their Big Gulps innovated that idea. No matter what it is, no matter what size, it's this much money. Because their price point is so low like, who cares.

Thuy Diep:

Amber is like, "What is going on over there, down there?"

Nick Borelli:

Yeah. We're definitely not healthy without something else going on out here, so it's a good time. How about you, Amber?

Thuy Diep:

Amber, what are you drinking?

Amber Lee:

I'm representing Canada today, so I brought the Clearly Canadian Sparkling Water.

Nick Borelli:

Nice.

Amber Lee:

And this is the Country Raspberry flavor. And for Dustin, who will be watching later, it is 90 calories, so Clearly Canadian. That's my little plug today.

Nick Borelli:

Yeah, I haven't had Clearly Canadian flavored water in a long time, but it's good.

Amber Lee:

I think it went away. It was popular in the '90s, and then it just went away. And then it just resurged like last year, or whenever. But now I'm just seeing it at 7-Elevens. And so, I was there, and I'm like, "Yes, that's okay."

Nick Borelli:

90s nostalgia fuels everything. Like even Zema came back a couple of times over the last few years. As we talk I'm actually wearing a hat that has a Josta logo on it, which I would assume means nothing to you two because you're not nearly as old as I am, and this was a popular Pepsi beverage in the '90s. Sometimes called the first energy drink. So but who cares other than the nostalgia fuels a lot of purchasing. And I don't know, I've been having nostalgia, whatever the reverse of nostalgia is this week, thinking about my life in 2008 during a recession, I've been trying to make these segues. That's what I've been thinking about the most.

Nick Borelli:

But this has just blown that out of the water for me and so many unprecedented things. Because in 2009, I went to almost a life-changing session at Cater Source with my favorite Cater Source speaker, who is the founder of Cater Source, Mike Roman and he had such an amazingly evocative title, which was, A recession is a terrible thing to waste. And I was like, "I don't know

what this is, but I want in." Because it sounds that kind of line that I do enjoy where you're like, "Is he rubbing salt in the wounds, or is he speaking truth?" It was definitely truth.

Nick Borelli:

The idea of it was, it is a crucible moment. Like you're going to get through this if you're strong and you put your head down. And all the complaining in the events industry about low barriers to entry, and all these other things. Well, here's the entry. The entry might be low but the sticking around is high. And I think getting through stuff like this is something that you can only do with lots of education and a strong network. And all those things that many of us who have been in associations, and have volunteered and preached for a long time, well, in a down economy with all these things, it is an absolutely reality. So, yeah, I'm having the reverse of nostalgia, but at least I have those memories from things that I experienced then.

Thuy Diep:

Well, going into that, today we're talking about, which is like I'm still trying to get my head around it, a world without live events. I feel like right we're potentially dealing with that. Actually, we're all dealing with it. But what?

Nick Borelli:

We talked about this title a couple of weeks ago, and honestly, the idea was like, "Oh, yeah, I could imagine a situation where someone has their one annual event every year, and it gets canceled, and what do they do with their time?" And now, over the last a couple of weeks, it's become like, no, literally, it is illegal to gather more than 100 people in my state. Like we're in that world right now. Hopefully for a super-finite amount of time.

Thuy Diep:

Well in Los Angeles, it's 50.

Nick Borelli:

50.

Thuy Diep:

But I'm all about it. If you want to talk about-

Nick Borelli:

We used to have brunches more than that.

Thuy Diep:

I love it, though. Or, not love it, but my mindset, when I first thought about when the mayor announced it, because in California it's 250. But in Los Angeles it's 50. And I am about the mindset now more intimate meetings and gatherings. Because for me, I just feel like we need that anyways. With technology, we get so many people, audience members, involved in it, and I

don't think that's where that true connection happens, and so, I'm taking everything, "Oh, this is a problem." And I'm saying, "Oh, this is a challenge."

Thuy Diep:

I don't know how it's going to go within our careers, because I feel like we don't really dictate the attendee, the guest count. But for me, I'm thinking for my own personal events I'll go to, I'm excited to connect with more people for a longer amount of time. Because there's less audience members there.

Nick Borelli:

Interesting.

Thuy Diep:

Amber what are your thoughts?

Amber Lee:

Yeah. I think it's exactly on that. We're moving away from the big mass, and creating more of that intimate gathering type of spaces and conversations. Especially in times like this, when it is sort of on a down, you really want to have those connections and feeling like you're part of your community. And so taking it as having it to make conversations, I think is exactly where the key's going to go. And then the working styles too. Now that all the businesses are closed, people are working together in more close-knit groups. So I think that will change the curve as how we look at large gatherings in future, and can we make them more intimate? As planners, what can you involve and think about with the process of guiding that journey and that experience of your guests, knowing that they're going to be more intimate experiences. I think that's where the new trend will be, for sure.

Nick Borelli:

Yeah. I can say that I work on large events exclusively. So for me, I take a pause and think about the work that I do and also the majority of the work I do is about audience growth. And audience growth in events with tens of thousands of people. Just from that perspective, I'm like, "Okay, this is with what I generally get up out of bed for." That said, what you said is true for good design anyway. Events with 10,000 people should have as many intentionally-designed experiences around small groups of people as is.

Nick Borelli:

So we do these things with Ed Merritts at Experian with meetings of four because we think that a group of four is the ideal conversation size, maximum, as best you can of equal contributions without too much dominance.

Thuy Diep:

Is that why we have four Brew Crew members?

Nick Borelli:

Maybe subconsciously, I don't know. Maybe just fits in a square. Couldn't tell you. Yeah, so I don't know. I think about that, but I also think about the community aspect of things where I want to get people across borders and with people with niches together in groups and that's very difficult in an environment where there's all kinds of restrictions and things on scale.

Nick Borelli:

I think I may have mentioned some episode previously my experience observing RuPaul's DragCon. There's these small, intimate meetings that take place in cities of drag queens that are their brothers, sisters, et cetera, and they're really important, but when they all got together it was this transformative thing that only happens when you have people from different areas validate experiences, and also help people grow because they bring in different perspectives outside of their region.

Nick Borelli:

Again, I skew towards liking to see that kind of big change because I have really adopted this mindset that events potential are in creating movements. While I believe you can create a lot of behavioral change in strong communities in smaller events, you don't really create a movement as easy with 12 people. And that's not to say that one's more valid than another. There different. It's just that's the area that I kind of skew towards.

Nick Borelli:

But I don't know, one of the things we wanted to talk about today was the idea of hypotheticals. And potentially I would really hope an extreme hypothetical, but one that at least gets our creative juices going, and has us envision personally what our lives would look like in an environment where the stipulations of scale of events are continue through the end of the year. Again, I haven't consumed any content as of yet that has foreseen this happening, so we're not trying to negative, or trying to put out something into the world that we want to happen, or believe will happen. It's neither of those things. It's just kind of an idea of an experiment of, okay with our skill sets.

Nick Borelli:

We envision different potentials. We don't just envision A, B. Some people don't even have letters for the plans because letters are too, there's only 26. Some people have a lot. This would be Plan L, or M, or N. The idea of what does our year look like for us individually if, let's say, gatherings of, who's got the lowest right now? 50?

Thuy Diep:

50.

Nick Borelli:

You win. So yeah. Thuy what's your world look like? What's your life look like in 2020 where the entirety of the year there's no more gatherings above 50 people? Just sci-fi.

Thuy Diep:

I mean, to be honest, I feel like half of the event professionals out there, I don't even know if they would have jobs. I feel like there would be so many lay-offs. I don't know if it's sustainable to only do events ... Like how many high-end events have 50 guests or less. Incentives. That's really where I see it. I'm in the world of corporation planning and conferences and sales meeting, annual trips, where they meet to discuss business. And so to limit that to just 50, I don't even know if I would have a job. So when I think about the rest of this year, it's trying to continually show my worth and my value to the company.

Thuy Diep:

In this downtime when I'm not doing so many proposals, there's not a lot of opportunities coming in, especially for Q1, Q2, You know what I mean? Everyone is at a still. Even our company, and a lot of companies I know, they've put on hiring freezes. So we're not growing in any way necessary and I hope that we just don't lose members, at least within PRA. But when I think of all the supplier partners, the ones that ... I mean, maybe they could. Yeah, because it hits socials and weddings too. So I feel like the rest of my year, if this continues to not get any better, it would be trying to fill my time with either creating documents or templates, or even my role isn't necessary going out and finding the business, but I would have to be extra smart with the opportunities I have to see how much I could provide revenue to the business. But t

Thuy Diep:

hat's my viewpoint. Trying to stay positive through all of this. If anything, it's just trying to keep everyone healthy too. I'm not either spectrum of the extreme. I mean, I did go out and get toilet paper yesterday, but I was making fun of the people getting toilet paper two days ago.

Nick Borelli:

I went and took photos today actually. Because I'm documenting all this stuff from a lot of different angles, so I wanted to actually have some photos of it.

Thuy Diep:

Oh my gosh. Yeah. But what about you, Amber? What's your take? What's your world looking like without live events, or limited events for the year?

Amber Lee:

Yeah. I think it's, I don't want to get into the negative side, so we'll keep it positive because obviously job loss is currently happening, and will probably continue to happen. So I see it as more of an opportunity for extra lead time. So a bunch of your annual conferences just got canceled, now you have an addition 12 months to start planning them. I'm trying to keep my mental state in that. Yeah, I worked on some really great shows. All of them just got canceled in the last a couple of weeks. So how can I make those plans even better for next year?

Amber Lee:

And I'm really looking at it as 2020 is a write-off. What's 2021 going to be like and how can I make those events better knowing the new environment that we're going to be in? How people might be more restrictive in their traveling coming back out from this time of being closed-off time. So how can we approach that? But, I'm still as busy as ever, just planning from a different perspective and just planning my timelines and having projects are allowing me to work that way in way, in that sort of mind frame.

Amber Lee:

So it is a silver lining if it is all that is. But if that's all the win that we can take, that's take that win. Extra time is always a positive to have, especially in the planning side of things. So, just using it as a positive. I would say, though, too, just the unknown time, and so, in the sense of large gatherings, how do we plan appropriately for that?

Amber Lee:

And then also just having the free time to, how do I improve myself? Taking an online course, or just improving your skills. So that when the function is back and running 100%, you're right there, ready to go with a new skill set, with more expertise on something. And so you're able to market yourself when the world is back to hiring. So that's the approach that I'm going with it. But again, it's one of those things, we kind of have to take it as it is what it is.

Nick Borelli:

Yeah. I mean, if we had the luxury of knowing when this would end, it would be a different animal, right?

Amber Lee:

Yeah.

Nick Borelli:

I mean, that's the one thing as people who professionally plan for things and plan for variations of things, we still generally know the end date. We can plan for the weather going this way, or attendance going down, or the venue having to change, or all those things. But we don't necessarily plan on what's it look like if we just don't have this after we've put this much work into it. It just goes away or changes date or that kind of thing. The fixed thing that we generally know is when it's going to happen. And with that variable out, it's definitely different to shift all of your gears to the next year.

Nick Borelli:

Although, again, working from knowledge that we have currently, that seems like a pretty reasonable thing to do currently. All said and done, the 2021 are going to be, I don't want to say back to business as usual because I don't think there is business as usual moving forward. And I think that there's a lot of lessons to be learned here, I suppose. There will be, if there's an annual event, it will probably take place in 2021.

Nick Borelli:

Yeah, I do strategy work for strategists, and so for me it's about how do I position, how do I, for people like you, what do you need right now potentially that the organization that I do most of my work with that they would be able to help you with. I think that there is generally speaking, it's kind of a double-edged sword. Generally speaking, there's a lot of need for perspective, and there's a lot of need for knowledge. Right now there's not necessarily a lot of extra budget. It's challenging to look at it like that, but I think there's a possibility to make some inroads with organizations in providing them the help they need.

Nick Borelli:

If there is help out there that is needed, and you're in a position to give that help, then the rest of it is just some kind of process to make that profitable over time. For me, as a marketer, I would probably spend my year looking at opportunities to work with people on virtual summits and virtual events. I believe face-to-face is superior to virtual. I also believe that things can't halt and progress needs to happen and information needs to be exchanged. I don't think that information exchange is the end-all-be-all of what a live experience offers, but it's an aspect and it can be covered in a virtual event. And as a marketer, I can market that to people, and the scale that I'm used to.

Nick Borelli:

But mostly, I think I'd probably pivot to working with event professionals individually, and as teams, to help them find new revenue streams outside of gatherings. That's the extreme end of it. What skill sets do you have that you possess that you would be able to flexibly utilize in different ways?

Nick Borelli:

So Thuy, if you had the same skill sets that you have right now and they had to apply to other industries, potentially that you can offer something to them, where do you think you would take a stab at it?

Thuy Diep:

I would say, probably advertising marketing. I think experiential activations, that's very close to my world now. So I feel like that would be the easiest jump to go.

Nick Borelli:

Digital advertising, print, media?

Thuy Diep:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Wait, and here's the really interesting thing. Because now there's so many articles saying take your meeting virtual now. And do you both, I'm going to ask you, do you feel like that's a temporary fix, or do you feel like that's going to be catalyst to then take our whole entire industry into virtual, into the future?

Amber Lee:

I feel like this is the pivotal moment of where the landscape changes. And I don't think it will go full virtual right away, but certainly this is now providing the opportunity for those events that were supposed to be in person, for a backup they're going virtual as a test. So 2020 is the testing ground. See what hits, see what doesn't. See how then it can be improved.

Nick Borelli:

Measured.

Amber Lee:

But before all this was even going down, the landscape was already changing with the cost of travel. Just the amount of people not wanting to be away from their home base. This is just now catapulting it to the next level at a much quicker rate. So I do worry about it, especially as to Nick's point, the purpose of events is not just only educational. There are other aspects to why people attend, and go, and gather in these large groups. So, yeah, I think it's going to be a very interesting time as to how people recover from it. But then also what kind of content is now developed and putting out there to allow for the gathering aspect to still occur while getting the education. But virtual versus real is completely different, and I know you guys will continue to talk about that subject. But I think it's like everybody will remember 2020 is the year when the switch was turned on virtual.

Nick Borelli:

Yeah. Nature abhors a vacuum. So something will fill it even if it's not as good. I got beat up on Twitter a week ago because a week ago, there was one event professional narrative, which was pure on cheerleading mode and less of the duty of care. We recorded an episode around duty of care specific because I was like, I understand everybody's coming up with their hashtags and logos and be strong, and business matters, and all of that stuff. And all of it does, and I'm fully on board with that as long as you can first do no harm. That's the bare minimum low bar. Don't do any harm first, and then after that do all those things.

Nick Borelli:

So I got beat up online by saying I could see a projection, this is just speculation, but I could see a world where the halting of events lets people, or forces people into trying digital for the first time and having at least some success, or removing the fear that they had around it because they knew how to do an event. Or they didn't know how to do a digital thing, but then they had to do a digital thing or they'd lose their jobs, so they did it. And then a year later they go, someone in the group says, "Hey, do you know how much environmental negativity comes from gathering people together? It's a big amount. What if we just did what we did last year? And then instead of doing it because we have to we can say from a PR perspective, we're doing it for sustainability reasons."

Nick Borelli:

Like there just has to be one other thing. Is it saving money, is it doing this, et cetera, doing that? And that will overcome that. So after that I immediately sub-tweeted myself, "That's why if you're putting on events, and you should've already been doing this, but if you're putting on events, you need to show all the intangible benefits of what you provide and not just we sold tickets, or we got mostly fours on our posted eval. Like you need to show all the buying signals. You need to show how this impacted CRMs. You need to show all your work, all the exhaust from attendees.

Nick Borelli:

Otherwise when they're comparing things together, you've got the one, which can spread disease, cause environmental impact, as all these negative things that are true and aren't going away. You got the other one that doesn't. If you don't put on accept live events also, are better for behavioral change, create community, foster trust faster, if you can't show your work for that, then we're going to lose.

Thuy Diep:

Wait. I change my answer.

Nick Borelli:

To what?

Thuy Diep:

I just thought about this. So in the year 2020, I would open up an illegal speakeasy where I have more than 50 people attend, but it would be a tease storefront, and you would have to have a secret passcode somehow, like how to get in. Like through the fridge or something. And the password would be an acronym like RFP, BEO. Like it would be an event thing.

Nick Borelli:

All the associations which would dissolve, right? So you can say like, any one of those acronyms would no longer be around.

Thuy Diep:

But it's got to be high-end. Like you would have to be tested somehow in order to get in. And you'd have to know a password, like it's going to be very exclusive. And that's how I'm going to make money, I'm going to be like-

Nick Borelli:

There are those industries that test people before they can get in.

Thuy Diep:

Yeah. I'm going to be like the illegal shop, you know, in all those movies. It's always the old Asian lady ...

Nick Borelli:
Yeah. Al Capone of-

Thuy Diep:
... that's like, "No, go somewhere else. This is a fish shop." And then they're like, "Oh, okay you got the code. Come on in. It's a party"

Nick Borelli:
That's great. So you're going to lean into negative stereotypes so you can put people off the scent?

Thuy Diep:
Yeah, but I'm going to make money. I want to make money. Then I'm going to connect people.

Nick Borelli:
I love it. The Al Capone of events. That's great. I don't know who the Elliot Ness will be. Probably some kind of digital platform that wants to knock you down. But still, that's cool. Hadn't considered that idea. Just operate breaking the law.

Thuy Diep:
Maybe a pop-up. I'll keep traveling. So the police never catch me.

Nick Borelli:
Like a rave.

Thuy Diep:
Yeah.

Nick Borelli:
All business-to-business exhibitions, and such will all be raves now, great. You drive to an abandoned parking lot and then somebody gives you a piece of paper and it says, "Go here." Perfect. And then you get there and you set your booth up.

Thuy Diep:
Dustin will do that for me. Dustin will be the one just handing out the code. Well will be DJing. Doing the content. Amber you're just going to come party.

Amber Lee:
I'm just going to have a good time. Just a lush, just going with the crowd, just having a good time. Yeah. Teamwork. Teamwork.

Nick Borelli:

Scram when the police get there, I guess. But yeah, barring raids, I think that's an interesting idea. So I was talking to a friend of mine yesterday. I've had a bunch of different calls with smaller firms, and some solar print orders that are like, not negatively, but sort of internally freaking out. And they're like, the smaller the organization, the more the cancellations are meaningful. So if you're a conference photographer and two of your gigs cancel, then that's your Q2. So you just don't make revenue for a quarter of the year. That's absurd. Things like that are happening all over the place. This is super real.

Nick Borelli:

But I was trying to come up with as many different ways to take the skill sets of people that exist now and apply them to other areas. And one of the things I across when it came to designers and planners, was two different lines I was thinking. One, you're all probably good at logistics. And there's a lot of industries that benefit from a strong logistical mind and probably don't have as many stressful variables that you've encountered to put you on lists of the highest stress jobs in the world. So I think that you have a lot to offer organizations that are founded and surrounded by logistical concerns. So there's that.

Nick Borelli:

And then there's goal-based creative design skills. So I'm thinking anybody who is in a position to sell things and has a physical space, you have the ability, potentially as a consultant, and go to them and say, let's say it's a lawfirm. You go in, and your pitch would be this: "I'm going to help you design your office in a way that is conducive to increasing your closing rate for sales. I'm going to look at the environment and I'm going to help you put things here that will queue stories that you will tell and utilize audio/visual lighting, scents, whatever it is. A combination of emotional triggers, as well as sensory triggers, that help you with your goals.

Nick Borelli:

So you have a picture over there, it's of the city, great. If someone were to say, "What's that city, why is it there?" What would you say? And if it's not something that makes you believe one of your core principles or one of your unique selling propositions, let's remove that and let's put something else in there and let's create a sales flow that is designed to make people feel things, as experienced designers should be able to do. Like that's the same muscles, just applied totally differently in a fixed location.

Nick Borelli:

And I think that the amount of potential clients that you would have could be endless. You could design a bar that would maybe instill a feeling of belonging, or a likelihood for retention, or have some upsell potential. You could start thinking along those lines to help other types of businesses through design. I mean, I'm trying to think outside the box.

Thuy Diep:

I feel like Amber and I would just take a really cheap flight somewhere. You want to go to Bora Bora?

Amber Lee:
Where do you want to go?

Thuy Diep:
You've see all those memes. I'm not sure Amber is a millennial, but like that's a brilliant idea. Everyone's just seriously going out and buying a cheap flights.

Nick Borelli:
I've seen some of those. Those are great.

Amber Lee:
I've seen the memes and I've looked up the flight deals.

Thuy Diep:
Have you?

Amber Lee:
Totally. Absolutely.

Thuy Diep:
Where'd you go, like where are you going?

Amber Lee:
Nowhere. I'm staying, I'm staying. I'm hunkering down. Because the fear of you can leave but then you can't come back. I'm with you on those cheap deals.

Thuy Diep:
Did you hear about Justin's wife?

Amber Lee:
Sophie. Yes, yes. And I have colleagues who now are under house arrest because they visited Parliament.

Thuy Diep:
Oh no.

Amber Lee:
Oh yeah. But back to Nick's point, I feel like, I really liked listening to, to hearing you speak about that, Nick. It was kind of flipping the switch of the changed perspective of going inwards and looking at what you've done, what you're currently doing, and then how can you switch that, or transition that back into something that's similar in line, but totally different audience, and a different foundational need. Yeah. I think that's an interesting exercise that we can all start to do

within our own selves, of what skills do we have and how could we potentially start servicing in a different way.

Nick Borelli:

Yeah, I think we have broader skills than we think we do because most of us, in a sophisticated society, we have specialties. Like I work on marketing, but generally marketing in the corner of trade shows and association events at conferences. From the strategy side, not execution. That's really niche. Like I don't create emails. I don't do the marketing, I do the strategy. And I don't do the strategy for weddings. I don't know, I guess they don't really have strategy.

Nick Borelli:

But whatever, I'm super niche, niche, niche because the market's good, and because there's lots of opportunities, and because specialization is possible in kind of a robust industry. If that industry goes away, what can I actually do? And I have to think about not what I do but how I think. And how I think and how I perceive the world. And the experiences I've had, and can I apply those in other areas?

Nick Borelli:

It might be difficult to do but I think it's better to find somebody who's not in the events industry and explain what you do and have them listen and say, "Oh, that's kind of like this," or something. Like you need a wildcard to kind of consume what you do because an insider will just be like, "Well, yeah, you can be, instead of a designer, you can be a planner, or you can be ... They just know that language. And I think you have to go outside of that.

Nick Borelli:

Like so if I was a DJ, maybe I should be a sales manager because I'm good at motivating people, and I'm good at high-energy, and just think of the persona details, and some of the psychographics of yourself, and then apply those to other types of jobs that are made up similarly. This is extreme. This is again, I'm not telling everybody that they're going to lose their jobs and events are going to close their doors. I think none of that's going to happen at all.

Nick Borelli:

But I think, just like that session I went to 10 years ago, a recession is a terrible thing to waste, I think that this is here. None of us have any ability to make it go away, so instead of moaning about it, I think we need to stretch ourselves past our comfort zones and see how adaptable we are.

Thuy Diep:

Love that.

Nick Borelli:

Scary, I don't know.

Thuy Diep:
No. This is all brilliant.

Nick Borelli:

We'll see. I mean, honestly, I think that, I just think event professionals all wear so many more hats than other professions anyway, that if we were to look at just one of those hats, there's enough skills in that bucket to probably be able to do different things. Or we could look at, potentially looking at one of those hats that we have, like, yeah, I'm a Jack of all trades. Right well pick one to be really good at this quarter. To focus, like Amber said, spending more time on education. Find maybe if you wanted to advance yourself in different ways, again, you because there's always things coming at you all the time, you never have the time or the focus to be able to be great at anything. You're really good at a lot of things. Present company excluded. You guys are great. But find something or some angle on this that you think has longevity and is maybe disruption-proof, and then really double down on being better than the rest.

Nick Borelli:

Because what's going to happen is unfortunately, once this is done, not everybody is going to be still on this ride. And things are going to change. And people are going to think about things differently, et cetera. If you're in this for the long-haul, what you need to do now is hunker down. That's the phrase I've been using a lot now. Hunker down and prepare for emerging out of this better than you were going into it. Better marketing. Better credits on your CV or resume, depending on what country you're in. That kind of thing. Build yourself up.

Nick Borelli:

And then also, I think it's really important because your network is in peril as much as you are. The network is your net worth stuff. If you can help your network in any way, now's the time to do it. Because as this progresses, and life outside of this, you're going to need them, and they're going to need you. So this is a real, I know we can't all gather all the time, but this is really good time for you to touch base with a lot of people.

Nick Borelli:

Even at the very bare minimum of being able to contact them, empathize with them. See if anyone's in dire straights. There's a lot of just flew egos and a lot of other things keeping from reaching out. I think you need to make yourself vulnerable first. But I think there's a lot of good to be done with investing in your network and investing in yourself.

Amber Lee:

Totally, and especially at this time. We are literally all in this together. Everyone in some shape, way, or form is affected. So it's not just one person's going through it. We're all going through it. So I think to that point, absolutely now, more than ever, we should be leaning on our community, leaning on people in our rounds to fight through it. kind of looking at like, it's like we're all kind of going into a cocoon. We're all cocooning. There's nothing really to go on right now. So let's utilize that time, and come out like butterflies.

Nick Borelli:

I love that. That's a great analogy.

Amber Lee:

Spread it around.

Thuy Diep:

Spread the wings, not the virus.

Amber Lee:

Spread those wings.

Thuy Diep:

Here is a what-if question. This reminds me of, I'm not sure about you guys, but in middle school, everyone in elementary school, there was four in the region, and then we all got split into groups in middle school. And so you would leave some of your people, gain new friends. So if the live event industry was no more, what other industry out there is sustainable that our event professionals would go to.

Nick Borelli:

We could flip like a flight.

Thuy Diep:

Yeah exactly. Where would we fly to? Let's say there was no, a world without live events?

Nick Borelli:

So I think that as we discuss in the episode and we talked about is there really an events industry, and we talked about how it's an industry that has absorbed a lot of things from other industries, and is a little bit of this and a little bit of that. I don't know of any one industry that would benefit the most from us. I think there's people who are, like for instance, the really logistically-minded people, and the really creative people both exist in the industry. The introverts and the extroverts. They're vital to the makeup of the events industry.

Nick Borelli:

I think some industries would benefit from some of those very linear-thinking people, and I think other people would benefit from the creatives. Like I could see, all right, there's no event industry, what's Rolando doing? Just as an example of somebody that we know. I think he's creating art, maybe art for institutions and organizations. I think he's creatively problem-solving ways to reach people that other people haven't. I think he's on the creative side. Or even, Gary Boardman. He's solving problems through creating things that didn't exist before, but probably physical things.

Nick Borelli:

Whereas I see a lot of people I know from the PCMA world, I think they're probably looking at overhauling internal educational programs of companies in order to teach people and apply the disciplines that they've had in conference-producing to curriculum for internal corporations. Those are both the same industry.

Nick Borelli:

One's creating art. Maybe the other is being able to disseminate information in a stickier manner. So, I don't know. Is there an industry that does both of those things tremendously? I'm not sure. We're unique weirdos. We're such a hodgepodge.

Amber Lee:

Really you're right. It is. We're all so different.

Thuy Diep:

All the crazies found each other. Yay.

Nick Borelli:

If Hollywood disappeared, I would say that our commercials would get really great because Steven Spielberg would be doing a Sprint commercial, or something. Like he'd be in advertising. He'd be doing storytelling for commercial purposes as opposed to artistic license. That's easy. It's a linear, like they'd all move to this. But we're such a melting pot of weirdos that it works but I don't know if you can just port all those skill sets over somewhere else and then have it work. They don't have circuses anymore, so I don't know. Are there circuses anymore? I shouldn't say that, I don't know.

Thuy Diep:

There's like Cirque. But I think there's less and less Ringling Bros.

Nick Borelli:

That's true. Less animal one. I don't know, what do you think?

Amber Lee:

There's circus themes at events.

Nick Borelli:

Who benefits the most from a migration of event professionals to somewhere else? It's a tough one, right?

Thuy Diep:

Yeah.

Amber Lee:

Yeah. It is. Or is that the time, with the migration, to create something new and then finally have a guiding thread that is staking the claim of what the event industry has been fighting for so long, which is that respect, and to have their own identity.

Nick Borelli:
Validity.

Amber Lee:
Yeah. So maybe that's an opportunity to come back stronger than ever. But it's interesting when we're all such just of all trades, but all very, very different. We can all sort of disperse and completely go into other orbs. It wouldn't just be the event industry.

Nick Borelli:
So true.

Amber Lee:
I feel like there'd be so many different industries that would be changing. The whole world could be changing. So it would be like how can you adapt alongside that and still find a space for yourself within that changing environment?

Nick Borelli:
That's true. That is a really good point. Because before that, all I could really envision was in the world we're in now, where would we go? But it wouldn't be our world now.

Amber Lee:
It's not the same world anymore.

Nick Borelli:
When you take away the potential for people to gather, again, the vacuum thing, it's something else emerges. Do we all-

Amber Lee:
Will still be there. Right?

Nick Borelli:
Totally. You're absolutely right.

Amber Lee:
Can we just change to something else? Just maybe what is that something else?

Nick Borelli:
Would we all work for Facebook? Would be fostering communities in Facebook groups in order to have them be actually communities where the community leaders and there was organization

through that. In again, a world without gathering. And again, we know that there's nothing better than that. So taking it away probably is not actually a real thing because there'd be more Thuy's out there selling-

Thuy Diep:
There can only be one Thuy.

Nick Borelli:
Well, there'd be regional speak easys, I guess, unless you're going to franchise this concept up.

Thuy Diep:
I want to trademark that. Actually I will probably.

Nick Borelli:
Mail a letter to yourself before we publish this.

Thuy Diep:
But I'll be the original. I feel like these venues, especially, they're getting hit. I would actually, I could see an apocalypse-style, venues getting converted into bubbles of communities with homes. Like in the Simpsons, like when they had the big bubble over Springfield.

Nick Borelli:
Yeah. They know everything.

Thuy Diep:
I feel like I could see something like that where you can, I don't know, it can be high-end exclusive where you have to apply to get into this community, and it's like virus free.

Nick Borelli:
Now we're in the real dystopia.

Thuy Diep:
Yeah right.

Nick Borelli:
Why not live on the moon, and then have, is it Illerium or something like that, where all the rich people get off of the earth.

Thuy Diep:
They're doing that with bunkers right now, I read.

Nick Borelli:
Yeah. Of course.

Thuy Diep:

That people are actually buying communities where there's underground bunkers.

Nick Borelli:

It's just the gated community taken to the logical post-apocalyptic conclusion. Just like under the Denver airport. Google it. I was supposed to be there Monday and I canceled. I always wanted to be where the leaders are underground serving them drinks or something. Well, that was scary and also interesting.

Thuy Diep:

What a topic.

Nick Borelli:

I want to thank Thuy for being with me and Amber for being our guest on this one. Again, I hope that the perception of this conversation, and hopefully the jovial tones that we had illustrated that we're not doom and gloom, we're not saying you're all losing your jobs this and that. But man, if there's any group that's good at seeing every potential, it's us, and I think that even the exercise of looking at the extreme, will help us think about things in the middle that are not as extreme that might be useful in the right now.

Nick Borelli:

So have these conversations with your team. It's an exercise. It can be fun because it gets you out of the mindset of just doing things like we've always done them because those days are done, and it gets you thinking just a little more flexible. I would say if you have the opportunity with a group that is legal to be able to have a conversation with them along these lines.

Nick Borelli:

And if you want to basically take this conversation to a safe platform, like the internet, you can do that on #eventbrew, or you can email us at eventbrew@helloendless.com. And we can continue this conversation about what ifs. And hopefully what never bes. That's not a thing. And there's lots more information. Hopefully we'll post some links about some institutions that are limiting right now, and maybe some hopefully content around different things you could be doing to get yourself in a better place at eventbrew.com. We've got show notes, links. Lots of other resources, transcripts and all that fun stuff.

Nick Borelli:

And then if you're listening to us on one of your favorite platforms for podcasting, we would love for you to rate and review us. We hear that that will be the new currency in the post-apocalypse is your podcasting rating. So hopefully we'll be able to eat. And again, I want to thank everybody for listening and I want to thank this team. I'm excited that we have positivity in this time of uncertainty. Thanks.

Thuy Diep:
Bye.

Amber Lee:
Bye.

Speaker 1:
Thanks again for listening to Event Brew. Be sure to rate and review us on your favorite podcasting app. Also, be sure to head to eventbrew.com and leave us a comment about this week's episode. See you next time on Event Brew.