IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EVENTS
Through the eyes of the St. Patrick’s Day Dash
The Build-Up
Listening to the information

Information changed quickly, with lots of uncertainty leading up to the event. Whereas on March 5, it was the organizer’s responsibility to make a decision – even with the indication of increasing risk – by March 11, there was no choice.

March 5 – “Currently Public Health is recommending postponing public events when possible.”

March 11 – “Under the Health Officer’s order in King County: Events with more than 250 attendees are prohibited.”

If we would’ve waited to March 11, we would have strung out multiple suppliers, and not benefitted increased registration.
• **Factors in Making a Decision**
  - Based on social responsibility – what’s the attitude of your audience?
    What are the optics of continuing to promote your event given the state of the community?
    What does it mean for your event brand, or for your sponsors?
    Consider the safety and health of your participants, your staff and your volunteers.
  - Based on recommendations by public health – Risk factors appear to be increasing, and officials issued recommendations to postpone.
  - Based on mandate – government puts prohibition on events.
• **Develop a Strategy**

Will you cancel? Or Postpone?
St. Patrick’s Day only happens once a year, so a postponement in 2020 would lack some of the Irish-ness.
Will you Refund? Transfer? or offer a Virtual Platform?
We found a partner, that helped create a solution that provided some value back to registrants, and transferred registrations.
How does your strategy impact your budget, and sunk costs?
What expenses did you incur? Can of your merchandise or awards be re-used in the next, or future, event?
Are you able to re-coup any permit fees?
Will you be able to retain working capital to move forward?
Fulfillment on Virtual plan – We decided against virtual based on the logistics and expenses of getting merchandise and awards to the participants.
• Communicate to your Audience

After the decision was made, sponsors received the first message, then we reached out to our registrants using these tools.

• Website – Create a statement and put it on your home page.
• Social Media – Announce your intentions in social media posts.
• Direct Email – communicate directly with your registrants through your registration platform.
• Email News – Use your newsletter program (Constant Contact, MailChimp, Emma, etc.) to continue to share your message.

Then, we reached out to suppliers to cancel orders, so they also didn’t incur any labor, shipping or equipment costs.

Don’t let the negative feedback dominate. This has been a tough enough decision. Enjoy the positive comments from your customers.
Current Resources

Mayor Durkan’s Arts Recovery Package
https://artbeat.seattle.gov/2020/03/17/artists-and-creative-workers-relief-funding/

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela

See you at your future event!