

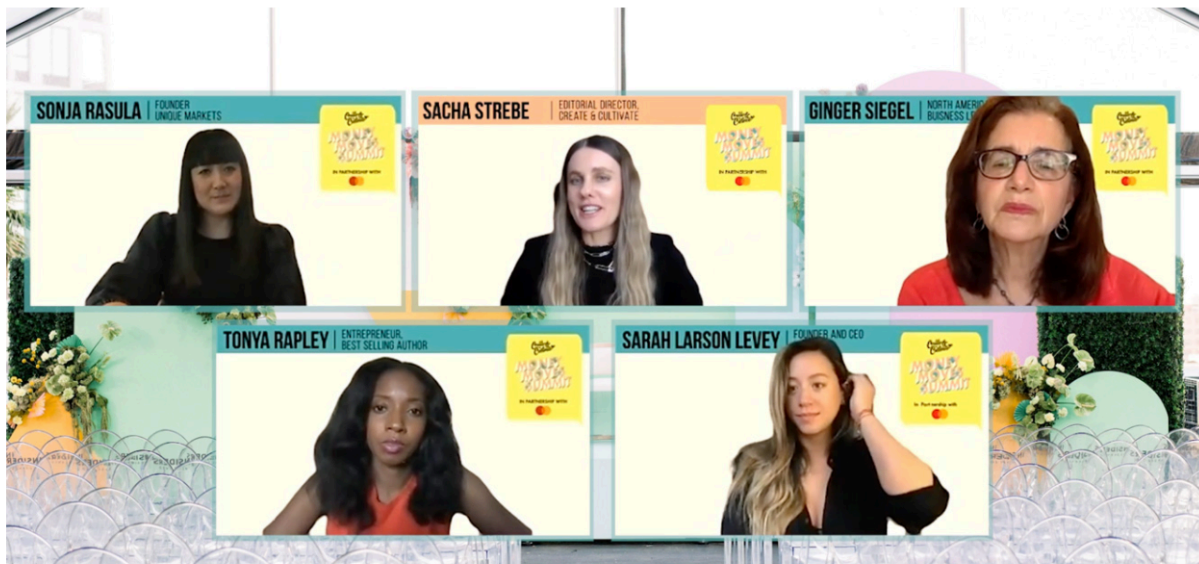
ADWEEK

EXPERIENTIAL

8 Event Tactics Create & Cultivate Used to Produce Its First Digital Summit

Platform teams with Mastercard for first Money Moves summit

By Ian Zelaya | 2 hours ago



Key insights:

- **Theming the session to money tapped into current anxieties.**
- **A mix of live and prerecorded sessions gave attendees flexibility.**
- **Sponsors could do more than just put their logo on programs.**

Like many brands, Create & Cultivate had planned its event schedule for the first half of 2020 before Covid-19 began to spread throughout the U.S. The **online career advice platform and business event series** for women entrepreneurs, which produces about 40 summits annually, was even able to host its first large-scale event of the year in late February in Los Angeles.

But once the pandemic wiped out the company's events slate for Q2 and beyond—including a summit in Austin in March and a New York beauty summit in May—the brand was forced to figure out how to transform into a fully digital events business to engage fans with timely, informative content and keep a core revenue stream open.

“In early March, we knew we had to start doing events online. We couldn't just double down on being a media business,” said Jaclyn Johnson, CEO and founder of Create & Cultivate. “We're all digital all the time right now.”

Create & Cultivate also had to decide if and how it could keep Mastercard as a partner—the two brands had entered a **yearlong partnership** for 2020. The brand worked with Mastercard to develop Money Moves, a ticketed digital summit of financial conversations, which took place on May 2 from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. PST on Create & Cultivate's website.

Based on attendance, the company is viewing Money Moves as a success. The brand reported the event drew nearly 7,000 ticket holders (more than 500 tickets were sold the day of the summit), and 11,000 people visited the site in general on Saturday.

In an interview with Adweek, Johnson discussed how her team worked with Mastercard to develop the event programming and layout, the strategy for integrating sponsors, tactics to keep attendees tuned in all day at home and where the temporary digital events business will go from here.

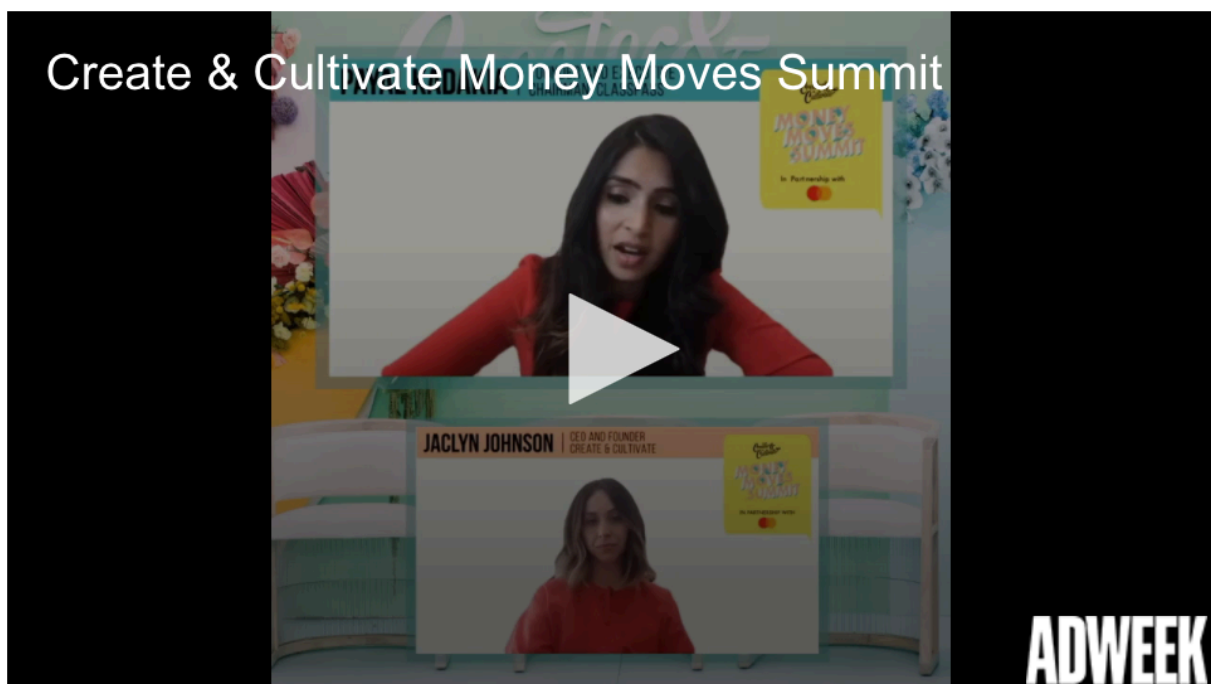
Keeping the content and speakers relevant

The summit's theme focused on what entrepreneurs can do to keep their small businesses afloat during a pandemic, brought to life with a mix of live and prerecorded keynotes and panels, workshops, mentorship discussions and a pitch competition—sessions one would expect at an IRL Create & Cultivate event.

Speakers for keynote conversations included ClassPass founder Payal Kadakia, Beis founder **Shay Mitchell**, Queer Eye star and interior designer Bobby Berk and comedian Chelsea Handler. “Roundtable” discussions with reps from multiple brands—including Shake Shack and Rebecca Minkoff—focused on the state of being a business owner right now, how brands are pivoting their marketing strategies and dollars, and how to prepare financially for the future.

Johnson and her team based the programming on what they thought their community would be most concerned about in the current moment, and speakers who could provide diverse insight on how they’re handling their work-from-home situations.

“Everyone is worried about money right now. We wanted to come together for a day of financial conversations around questions our community had and, frankly, our employees had,” Johnson said. “We had people talk about shutting down their stores or furloughing employees, but we didn’t want it to be all doom and gloom. These conversations are tough, but we also want to talk about what’s next.”



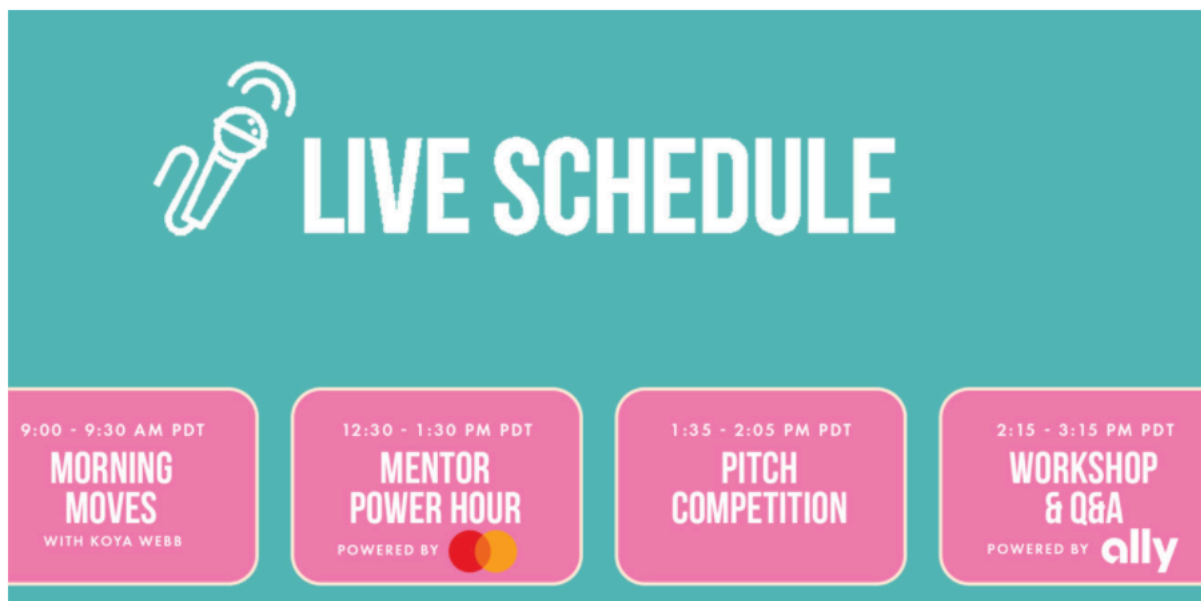
The Southern Influence

An event highlight was a live pitch competition, in which small businesses in the food, service or experiential industries could apply to compete for a \$10,000 grant funded by event ticket proceeds. At the end of the summit, three finalists pitched their businesses to five judges who had participated in the earlier sessions. The panel awarded the grant to Carolina Contreras of Miss Rizzo's Inc., a New York salon that caters to curly hair.

Emphasizing live and elevating prerecorded sessions

A major consideration for **virtual event producers** is whether to deliver live or prerecorded keynotes and panels, and the Money Moves summit offered both. All of the panels were broadcast or recorded using Zoom, and the pre-recorded panels were uploaded via Vimeo for attendees to view whenever they chose to.

For those mainly interested in the live sessions, the top of the event landing page listed when each event would occur.



The top of the event landing page included a schedule of livestreams.

Create & Cultivate


“For the conversations we knew would be a bit meatier—like how the C-suite is tackling Covid-19—we wanted those to be prerecorded to get super into the weeds of talking about what we’re dealing with right now,” Johnson said. “On the live front, we had live mentor sessions that were interactive and invited people to ask questions. And tuning into [celebrities like] Chelsea Handler live is also exciting.”

Some of the prerecorded sessions also included downloadable assets for attendees to keep after the event. For example, a workshop conducted by Clea Shearer and Joanna Teplin, founders of organization platform The Home Edit, offered a colorful guide of tips for optimizing your at-home workspace.

Incentives based on passes and participation

Create & Cultivate charged \$29 for general admission tickets, but also leveraged the summit as a way to promote its paid memberships. Launched in 2019, the membership gives people access to panels and footage of past events on the site, online mentorship sessions and VIP access to events.

For those who signed up or had an existing membership, the Money Moves summit was included—and all of the sessions are available to view on the site indefinitely. For those who bought a general admission ticket, the content was also available to view for the next 72 hours.



**POST A SELFIE AND
AUTOMATICALLY BE
ENTERED TO WIN A
MONEY MOVES PRIZE PACK**

TAKE A SELFIE ON YOUR MONEY MOVES JOURNEY, POST TO YOUR INSTAGRAM STORIES, AND TAG @CREATECULTIVATE, @MASTERCARD, AND #CCMONEYMOVESUMMIT FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A CURATED MONEY MOVES PRIZE PACK.

I MAKE MONEY MOVES

@CREATECULTIVATE @MASTERCARD

Viewers were encouraged to post photos of themselves participating in the conference.

Create & Cultivate

And while it's probably difficult for anyone to sit through a digital summit for the entire day, the brand encouraged viewers to document their participation. Any attendee who posted a selfie of them viewing Money Moves sessions was entered to win a curated prize pack.

Purposefully integrating sponsors

Along with Mastercard, Money Moves had multiple sponsors. Johnson said the brand worked on providing them a “fully integrated brand experience” on the site, from virtual branding to social pushes to having executives from certain companies speak and participate in the event as part of sponsored sessions.

Ginger Siegel, North America small business lead at Mastercard International, participated in a roundtable discussion, the pitch competition and a Mastercard-sponsored mentor power hour; Lauren Anastasio, a certified financial planner at **SoFi**, hosted a financial workshop that also directed viewers to the company's site; and Dell Technologies sponsored a fireside chat about moving businesses forward post-pandemic while promoting the Dell Women's Entrepreneur Network (DWEN).

Johnson said Create & Cultivate also worked with sponsors to reach their own membership networks—including DWEN and Mastercard's entrepreneur platform Hello Alice—by offering free passes to the event.

Providing multiple ways for attendees to feel connected at home

When participating in a virtual event from your couch, there's undoubtedly a loss of connection since you can't physically interact with attendees. And if you run into an issue or have a question, you can't go up to a staffer or ask someone at the registration desk.

“The biggest challenge we've found is that it's hard to have experiences that feel connected through a technology platform. You might run into issues where people are frozen and the connection isn't strong; it's the equivalent of a mic not working at a conference,” Johnson said. “What we prepared for is how to respond to those issues in real time on the site.”

For starters, the Create & Cultivate team created an event chatbot that attendees could interact with for issues such as a login not working or functionality problems. The team also launched a dedicated Slack channel for each session, so viewers could discuss the content in real time. Each channel was monitored by a company employee, who would also facilitate the conversations. Another channel was dedicated to addressing technical issues.

“We have a lot of event producers on staff, and they’ve had to shift their skillsets to put together a run of shows and budgets for digital events,” Johnson said. “The customer service element is one thing people might not think about, which we’ve been really focused on.”

Offering easy and interactive breakout sessions

A normal Create & Cultivate conference would offer attendees multiple breakout sessions, and the brand focused on translating that to a digital space with activities attendees could easily do at home.



Live breakouts included a morning wellness session by holistic health coach and author Koya Webb.

Create & Cultivate

Live activities included a morning meditation session with holistic health guru Koya Webb and an evening music session featuring a performance by singer Lennon Stella. Prerecorded activities included a morning workout with yoga expert Melissa Wood Tepperberg and cocktail workshops from food and drink influencers Adrianna Adarme and Cassie Winslow.

Keeping a consistent, colorful aesthetic

Create & Cultivate conferences normally offer a bright and colorful aesthetic, and Johnson said her team kept this in mind when attempting to create a cohesive layout for Money Moves. The massive event landing page presented a schedule with bold colors and graphics meant to grab viewers' attention.

Most of the live and prerecorded sessions also had consistent Zoom backgrounds for the speakers with their names and titles. The prerecorded sessions also included additional imagery of physical setups from past conferences.

Promoting the next event, which will have a different vibe

If attendees scrolled down to the end of the Money Moves event page, they would see a graphic inviting them to purchase tickets to Summer Camp, Create & Cultivate's next digital event on June 6.

Johnson said Summer Camp will offer lighter fare aimed at the creative community, and her team has already been planning out virtual workshops such as a live session in which a small business owner will teach attendees DIY projects like making a marble tabletop or floral arrangements with items that can be preordered from that company in advance. Other sessions will include wine tasting and how to create an entertaining TikTok.

Johnson noted the overarching goal for Summer Camp and future digital events will be to highlight and help out small businesses, by giving them an event platform and offering grants similar to the Money Moves pitch contest.
