

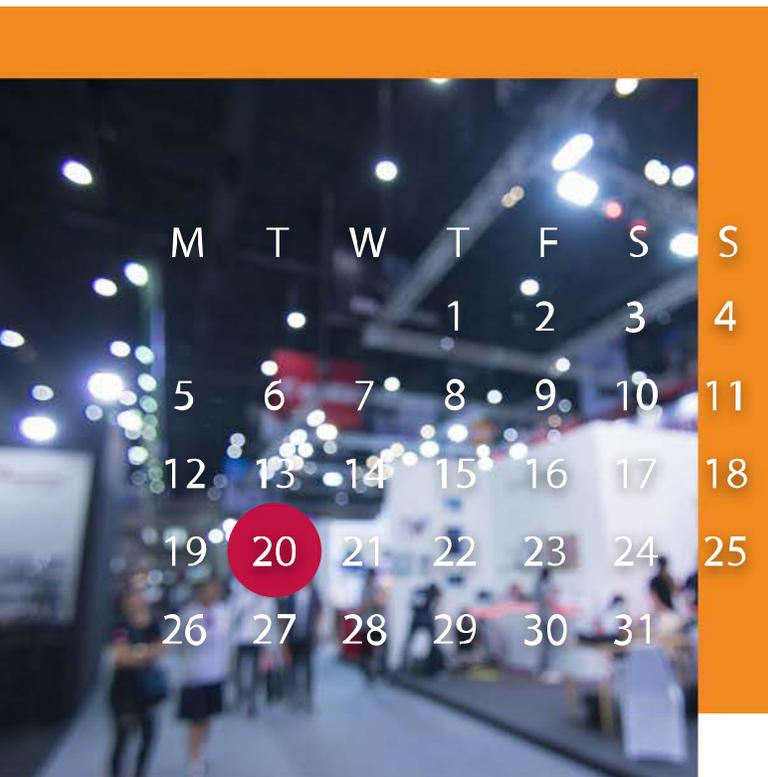
A&D Marketing for 2021:

The Year of Innovative Marketing

2020 has seen sweeping changes for business, and the aerospace and defense industry (“A&D”) has been one of the major industries affected this year. As a result, many A&D companies have had to reevaluate the traditional trade show cycle: where to go (if you can go), which products and services to promote, and ultimately how to connect to existing and prospective customers. As the 2021 advertising planning cycle is underway for many, I thought it might be worth considering what we have learned this year and approaches to effective, agile advertising.

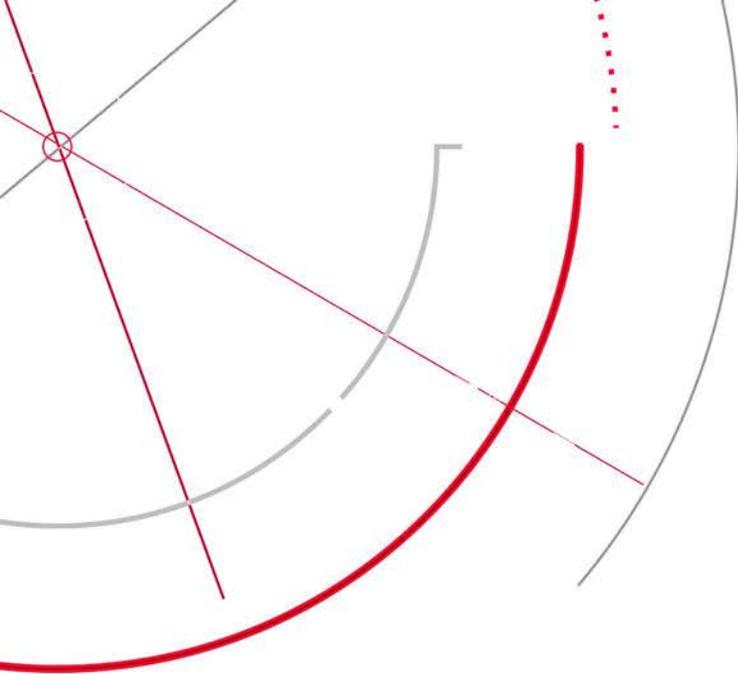
Making the Most of Virtual Formats

While the virtual meeting has been a much talked-about development this year, it might be helpful to remember that there was a time when “virtual meeting” meant conducting webinars for lead-generation. It is now time to upgrade our thinking about what virtual meetings and presentations can do, and how they can impact both brand awareness and generate new business:



Think outside the trade show calendar:

Put it another way, it's time to consider when it's best for you to present new products, and that may result in marketing prior to traditional show schedules...or afterwards. Not only can this take the pressure off from locked-in deadlines that have been industry mainstays, but allows companies to create their own narratives without jockeying for attention during the trade show news cycle or hoping for a “ICYI” blurb weeks later.



Create experiences rather than industry presentations or round tables:

Don't get me wrong, presentations and roundtables per se have their place when addressing a specific topic. But the goal should be to create energy and impact, leaving prospective customers with solutions that they can consider and remember that they came from you.

KEY CUSTOMERS



Keep engaged with key customers throughout the year:

Go beyond the email blasts, which now fill just about everyone's inbox. Engaging with key customers means that you provide them relevant content rather than solely datasheets or press releases. Consider social media as virtual channel that connect you to your customers.

Thought-Starters for 2021

Considerations aside, here are some suggestions for 2021 advertising:

When and where possible, integrate video into your messaging:

Video stands out in the static-standard world of B2B or B2G advertising. Keep it short, engaging, and relevant.

Ensure that your communications are branded and "gracious":

Make sure your logo is visible and remember to thank your prospective lead with a branded "thank you" email. This tactic is often part of consumer ecommerce marketing, but it goes a long way toward being memorable. An "automatic reply" email with the attached whitepaper or download link is not enough to win attention in the inbox.

Co-create with industry publications and websites for new advertising opportunities:

Do not settle for just what is available via a media partner's media kit. Think about executions that may be outside of what is offered. Be prepared to brainstorm with your rep about an idea that can excite your customers, your company as well as the media property. Being a part of a new ad solution can create its own industry buzz.

Promote your brand in social media with paid placements:

Allocating marketing dollars toward social media not only leverages your social media channels beyond your current followers, it also helps remain top of mind with both existing and new audiences. By doing so, social media can become both a branding and lead-generation tool.

Whatever you are planning for 2021, next year provides the chance to stand out from competitors and let your offerings resonate with customers in a new way. Good luck to the innovative!



Daniel Robinson

Daniel Robinson, SVP and Media Director at GKV, has nearly 20 years of experience in the Aerospace and Defense category working with clients such as Aerotek, Iridium and L3 Technologies, in both the US and international markets. Daniel has managed media strategy and implementation for a broad array of campaigns from brand awareness and trade show support to digital marketing and lead generation. To learn more about GKV's expertise in the A&D sector, or for a consultation, Daniel can be reached at daniel.robinson@gkv.com.