

**MDA Convention  
Committee  
Year End Report**

2020 was definitely a game changer, not only with the MDA Convention Committee, but with the entire planet. With all of the restrictions put in place from our federal and provincial governments, we had to start thinking in a whole new way: virtually.

Our annual convention that was originally planned for April 03-4, 2020 was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was supposed to be a big year for the MDA, as it was to be held in conjunction with CDA's annual convention here in Winnipeg. Everything was put on hold, as we had no idea when things were going to return to normal, and when we were allowed to resume business as usual. A global pandemic was something that we have never, in our lifetime, had to deal with before, so everything was a guessing game, as we waited for answers from Health Canada & the World Health Organization. We started to tentatively reschedule our convention for late July 2020, in case our restrictions eased up, but as time passed, week by week, we knew that this was not going to happen, as our COVID-19 numbers started to slowly rise. We had to start thinking about a virtual platform, and fast.

We realized that this was going to be a game changer for us. With the idea of having a virtual convention, we would now be able to reach out across the globe for new ideas, new presenters, and a new audience. The excitement was unreal! First we needed a date. We agreed on April 12-17, 2021.

Next, we had to find a company who was capable of meeting our needs for the idea of an virtual convention. We looked at a handful of options, and unanimously agreed on a local company, Association TV. Being our first time tackling a virtual convention, and with our local economy struggling to stay afloat, we wanted to support a Winnipeg company, who could be on hand 24/7 for any questions or support we may need. The platform they presented to us was, by far, the best over all of the companies we researched, locally and internationally.

The next step was the content. With an amazing hand picked team from our committee members, the search was on for presenters who were willing to do a live/online presentation. This meant that we could reach out across the globe and easily connect with world class, top notch presenters. The cost of travel and accommodations were no longer a factor, so this would allow for any higher honorariums that these new presenters may possibly require. They struck gold! It was wonderful to see how easily this came together, and what an amazing line up of virtual presentations we were privy to!

Sponsorship wasn't as easy, but we managed. With a couple of our gold level sponsors not joining us this year, we had to find other companies who were willing to take their place. Again, we had success.

Our virtual trade show was also in the works, but I was not able to attend the meetings when it was talked about. Entertainment was also discussed, as well as our Presidents Dinner, and virtual meeting rooms, but just touched upon here and there. I'm assuming they have been finalized at the last couple of meetings that I have been unable to attend.

As for registration, unlike our past conventions, this year the fees will be waived for all MDA members.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Campbell