

PubNub vFAIRS CASE STUDY

Meet vFairs

vFairs is a virtual events platform that aims to mimic real-world events as closely as possible, making them as enjoyable as in-person ones. Their platform allows companies and organizations of any size to create engaging, seamless remote experiences that connect people globally, whether for an audience of 50 or 30,000. They specialize in hosting trade shows, conferences, university open houses and job fairs, as well as online sales and auctions.

vFairs offers their customers a fully-featured platform that looks and functions just like an in-person conference or trade show. “We design custom 3D environments complete with interactive booths, exhibit halls, and auditoriums,” said Arfeen Godil, Director of IT at vFairs. “We allow companies to capture the networking and lively aspect of physical events in the virtual world.”



Scaled chat in 2020 by

40x

Dev time saved

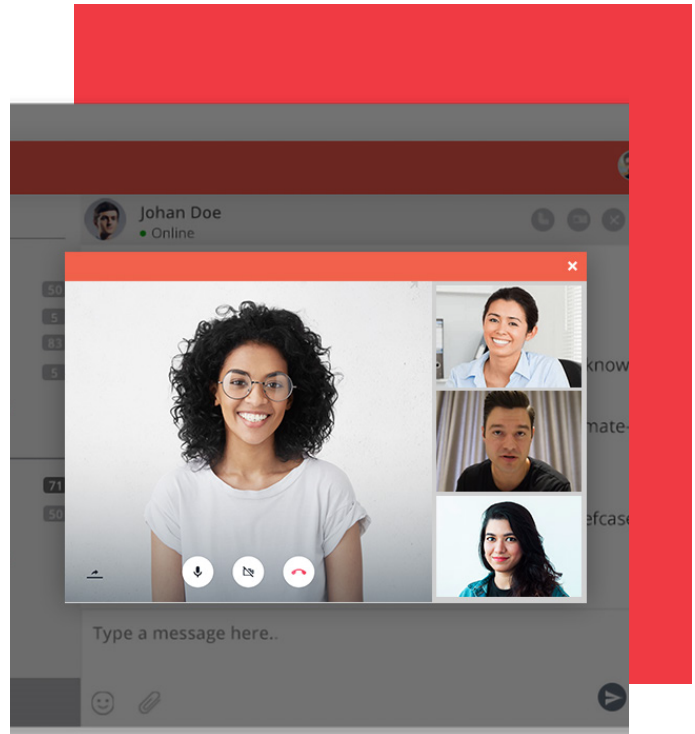
75%

In addition to this ability to effectively translate in-person events into online ones, vFairs has found success due to their ability to consistently provide a platform that is highly reliable and scalable. So when it came time to deciding how to power one of their platform's key features, chat, they turned to a solution that matched their high standards for scalability and reliability: PubNub.

Engaging attendees through real-time communication

What makes vFairs stand out from other virtual events platforms, is that they actually build 3D spaces that online attendees and conference-goers can engage with. When attendees log in to their event, they arrive in a virtual lobby where they can navigate to booths to learn more about sponsors and services. Attendees can also watch live webinars and presentations, and even speak to a help desk for information and questions.

In all of these various virtual environments, communication is key for engagement and participation. "For our virtual events to be successful it's very important that we capture the feel of being in-person," said Godil. "The real-time chat that PubNub allows us to power is essential to making attendees feel like they're interacting live with others."



Using PubNub, vFairs is able to provide attendees, speakers, and booth attendants with real-time private chat, group chat, and chat rooms, as well as presence indicators—which are helpful in allowing booth attendants to proactively reach out to attendees they particularly want to connect with. "When transitioning from a physical space to a virtual one, the thing that people miss the most is networking," said Godil. "And if the networking isn't top notch or user friendly, attendees are unhappy. So being able to see who's online and chat with them instantly is very important to our customers—that's why PubNub is crucial to our offering."



“**We are always confident our chat will work, no matter how many users we send PubNub’s way.”**

But relying on PubNub’s in-platform chat to help capture the energy, experience, and engagement of live conferences, trade shows, and other events was not always the case for vFairs—they previously handled their chat in-house.

Saving time and costs with a reliable chat provider

vFairs is not strictly a pre-built solution; they offer customers a core set of features that they can select from, but each event is custom designed and architected. “We don’t just hand over a login and password,” said Godil. “We work with customers step-by-step from day one until the end of their event.”

As Director of IT, a core component of Godil’s job is managing the process and team that customizes customers’ events. Need-

less to say, Godil spends a good portion of his time making sure that the customer’s events work and operate correctly, but one thing he doesn’t want to worry about is the underlying reliability and operability of the core chat component in the vFairs platform.

In fact, during the founding years of vFairs, Godil and his team installed, hosted, and managed their own database and server to power chat in their platform. “With our old, in-house chat solution, the problem was regardless of how high-capacity our database was or what servers we had, we always had a breaking point,” said Godil. After several cycles of their chat breaking and rebooting, Godil decided his team needed a change.

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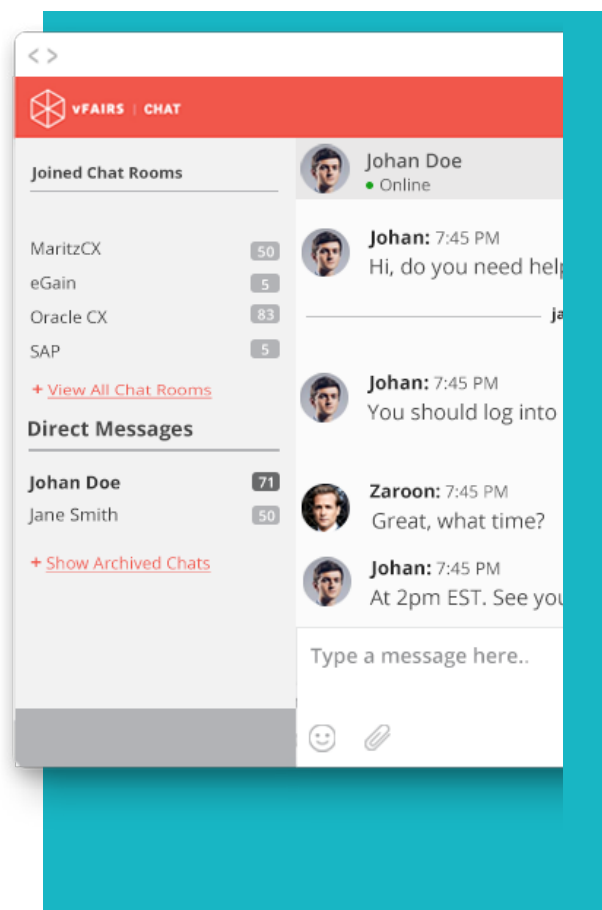
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“I didn’t want my team spending their time and bandwidth managing our own chat infrastructure,” said Godil. “We wanted to rely on a solution that had true expertise in this area, so we turned to PubNub.” In 2018, vFairs built out their own front-end

UI and switched to PubNub to maintain and power their in-platform chat and presence detection. Initially, Godil’s team had some initial hesitation around outsourcing their chat and wanted to try to build out the expertise themselves, in-house. “Once we actually got PubNub in the door, my team saw how easy it was to maintain and how reliable it was compared to our past solution,” said Godil.



“ Having PubNub means we have one less thing to worry about, we’ve never questioned if it will work and scale with us as we grow.”

“The reliability and, most importantly, seeing how easy it would be to scale our chat was what changed their minds. Now there’s no discussion of ever bringing chat back in-house”

Godil estimates that since switching to PubNub, his team has saved in terms of the hours of work and personnel needed to maintain their backend chat infrastructure. Previously, he had to dedicate 75% of one programmer’s time to making changes to their in-house chat to keep it up and running.

But now, Godil and his team are confident that their chat is reliable—they’ve had no issues with outages or downed chat service—and that it is always working in real time and can easily scale to meet the needs of vFairs and their customers.

Easily scaling chat 40x growth and demand

In addition to continuous reliability, another thing vFairs doesn’t need to worry about with PubNub is the scalability of their in-platform chat. With their previous in-house chat, successfully handling concurrent users was an issue as they began to host bigger events on their platform.

“Our events tend to have a lot of people joining in a very short period of time, like 5,000 users in 10 minutes,” said Godil. “The way the chat in our platform was built, it was always running from one database; and that one database would always get maxed out, regardless of how high our specs were.” Since switching to powering their chat with PubNub, vFairs has had no issues handling dips and spikes in their users, and chat concurrency limits and problems are a worry of the past.



Easily scaling chat 40x growth and demand

And the ability to easily and effortlessly handle thousands of users simultaneously sending thousands of messages is more important than ever, as vFairs has grown their business by 40x in 2020.

With this unprecedented growth, Godil and his team had to spend most of their time scaling up other parts and features of their platform to meet this demand, but not their chat. “With the growth we’ve seen in the past ten months, it would have been a huge problem and time issue to have to scale up our chat manually,” said Godil. “Having PubNub means we have one less thing to worry about, we’ve never questioned if it will work and scale with us as we grow.”

Knowing that they can count on PubNub to continuously and reliably work as their company and customer base grows instills a great deal of calm and confidence in vFairs, Godil, and his team. “We know we can keep our clients because our platform works successfully,” said Godil, “PubNub’s scalability and reliability is a big reason for that—we’re always confident our chat will work, no matter how many users we send PubNub’s way.”
