

HUSHconcerts

CASE STUDY: OVERCOMING A PANDEMIC

HUSHconcerts & SoulCycle in 2020

BACKGROUND: THE COVID PANDEMIC THREATENS TWO BUSINESSES

At the close of 2019, HUSHconcerts could fondly bask in its most successful year, after providing equipment and services to more than 1000 individuals and businesses. Their *Silent Conference* partnership, the exclusive equipment that enabled, and the company's unmatched expertise, brought huge successes on large scale events, including a world record 35 RF channels at *Oracle Open World*, and a US record 9960 headphones at *Kaaboo Del Mar*. This new equipment, new clients, and big wins had grown HUSHconcerts' business by 50% and cemented the company's status as the gold standard for silent disco, wireless headphone technology, and immersive event production.



Likewise, SoulCycle entered 2020 as an acknowledged leader in the group fitness space, with 87 locations in 15 markets across North America. With their emphasis on music and cathartic release, the company had likewise become the gold standard for Spin exercise and immersive fitness. Like the rest of the world, neither business could foresee the existential challenges that

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2020 would bring.

For HUSHconcerts, the onset of the Covid pandemic hit like a thunderbolt, with over 100 contracted events and installations canceling in the span of just a few weeks in late February and early March. For SoulCycle, the business disruption was somewhat more gradual, as restrictions hit each state and municipality differently, but for both businesses, by the Spring, it was looking like a slow, and sad 2020. That was of course, until the two joined forces to create *SoulOutside*.

BEGINNINGS: LONG ISLAND

SoulCycle has long stood apart from its competitors for its deep commitment to creativity in the pursuit of cathartic experiences for their riders. Thus, they demo'd HUSHconcerts' Pro / Silent Conference equipment in the Spring of 2019 for a series of outdoor activations. Then when Covid made indoor classes impossible, SoulCycle began to search for ways to move those studios to socially-distanced outdoor spaces. The rub was that since the vast majority of the studios were in either urban, suburban, or shared commercial (mall) locations, sound bleed would be an issue for the neighbors. Powerful, uplifting music and the energetic voice of the instructors are essential to the SoulCycle experience, so naturally, it was HUSHconcerts who got the call to help devise a solution.



After a few weeks of planning, the first installation took place on July 9 at SoulCycle's flagship

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studios at the Barn and Watermill in Long Island. Unlike later installations, which could be done in less than a day, these first ones took several days to execute. HUSHconcerts' engineers meticulously researched and customized frequencies to meet the local RF environments, and programmed the gear accordingly. They then integrated the HUSHconcerts tech with SoulCycle's existing microphone packages to cut down on the instructor's learning curve. Even so, it would take a 90-minute training at each studio to get the instructors comfortable enough with the new system to lose themselves in their work. Likewise, it would take a considerable amount of time, and effort to develop safety, sanitization, and charging protocols that would protect the riders, staff, and equipment.



In the end though, after those first days of installation and training, the rubber met the proverbial road on July 10, 2020 when the first of thousands of riders poured into these Long Island studios for their first taste of the future of fitness. Customer response was, from the start, overwhelmingly positive. Riders who had been stuck at home, and working out virtually, or not at all, suddenly had the cathartic, spiritual release that they had so missed. And not only did the headphones allow the bikes to be spaced out safely, but the audio experience of the HUSHphones' pristine audio and passive noise canceling, led to a far more immersive and cathartic experience for the riders. And while it took a few days to dial in aspects like maintenance (we were using too much sanitizer) and microphones (the instructors were sweating on their lavaliers), the end result was a flawless operation that kept the studio in business



EXPANSION

After the success of the Long Island studios, the stage was set to activate dozens more Soul Cycle locations across the country. From Florida to California, Texas to Illinois and all points in between, Silent Conference Pro headphones revived Soul Cycle studios for more than a year. At its peak, thousands of headphones were in use daily at more than thirty outdoor popup locations. This gave Soul Cycle's community, not only the workouts they crave, but the human connection on which they thrive. The program continued until vaccines made the popups less necessary. But to our surprise, once Soul Cycle's community had caught the outdoor bug, it was hard to go back in side. With the pandemic in the past, we helped Soul Cycle arrange a purchase of Silent Conference gear so that they could continue offering this wonderful service to their community.



CONCLUSION

Folks who produce events get told 'NO' a lot. We are told, 'not there' or 'not now' or 'not that act or that DJ'. But the pandemic was a rare instance where 'no' really meant 'ABSOLUTELY NOT'. There was no negotiating with the virus and life and death matters outweigh our desire to cohabitate, celebrate, and exercise. Working with Soul Cycle to devise a path through this difficult environment was one of the most rewarding challenges that the Silent Conference team at HUSHconcerts has ever taken on. Many times over the years, we have made events better, but in this case, we can say with some pride that we made lives better.