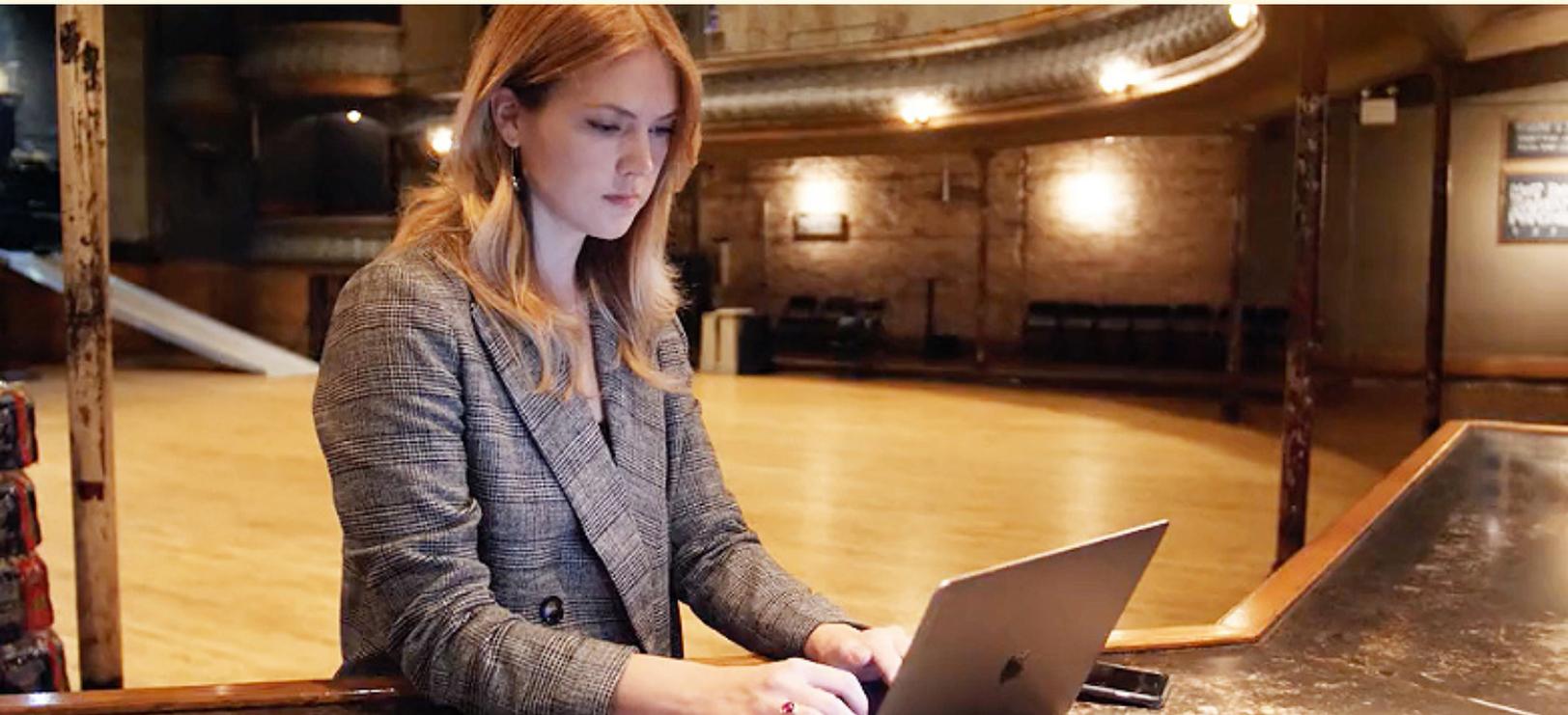




THYMEBASE

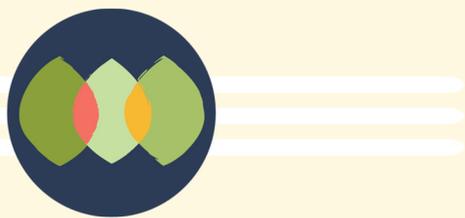
## How COVID-19 Impacts the Lives of Event Professionals



”

*The event industry has  
never seen anything  
like this before*

Jenna Phillips  
Director of Private Events  
16 on Center, Chicago



# Contents

## About This Report

Jenna Phillips on Uncertainty in the Event Space

Mallorie Davenport on Staying Focused on the Long Term

Jac Bowie on Being There for the Community

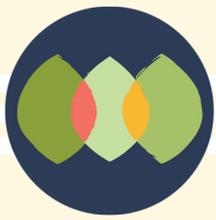
Desiree May on the Importance of Good Client Relationships

Ryan Gac on Staying Positive

Rosa Espinosa on Pivoting to Design

Sarah Wade on Utilizing Event Skills To Help Others

Jenn Dugan on Finding New Ways To Work with Clients



## About This Report

This report was compiled by us here at [ThymeBase](#), an event planning software startup based in San Francisco.

I work closely every day with event planners, vendors, and other industry professionals. As events began to be postponed and then canceled, I heard anxiety, concern, and amazingly, confidence from the event community.

The more event professionals I spoke to, the more I wanted to share their resilience and optimism. So I did a series of interviews discussing the impact that COVID-19 has had on their lives.

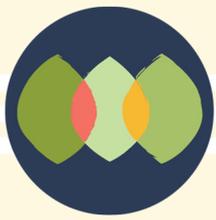
I've collected their responses below for journalists and anyone else to use in articles of their own. You're welcome to quote liberally from this report, but do give credit to both ThymeBase and the individual event professionals.

Dean Levitt, Co-founder of ThymeBase Event Planning Software

## About ThymeBase

[ThymeBase](#) was founded in late 2019 to create a useful and simple solution for event planners to manage and execute events from start to finish. The cloud-based software was designed after countless interviews with event professionals to capture their opinions and solve their daily needs. ThymeBase's shareable timelines make inevitable pivots possible by keeping every event stakeholder automatically updated in real-time.

Born and based in San Francisco, ThymeBase's team spans the world stretching from South Africa to Tel Aviv to Chicago.



## Jenna Phillips on Uncertainty in the Event Space



*This month has been an emotional rollercoaster*

Jenna Phillips is the director of Private Events at 16 on Center, a Chicago based collective of venues. Her and her team plan and coordinate hundreds of events across Chicago every year

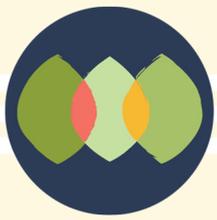


**Jenna Phillips**  
Director of Private Events  
16 on Center, Chicago

“The Event industry has never seen anything like this before, where all the wheels are forced to stop turning completely. It’s in the nature of a good planner to be prepared for anything, but this is a new momentous disruption. I’m afraid it is going to have ripple effects for a very long time.

Beyond the mess that COVID-19 has made of the Event and Hospitality industry, I’m devastated for my coworkers and friends who depend on our rooms, restaurants, and bars to support themselves and their families.

With the rug so suddenly ripped from under us, I’m really afraid of what life could look like for some people depending on how long this man-



dated closure lasts. It's likely that they could go 6-8 weeks without a paycheck.

Mid-month when our governor made his first press conference and announced the limitation of public and private gatherings, we in the Event world knew that this was just the beginning.

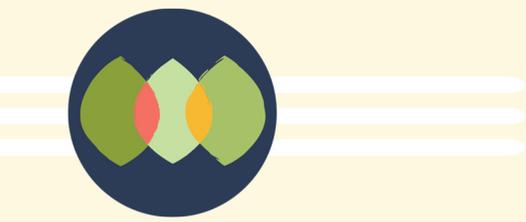
Sure enough, the limitations began to get tighter and tighter each day, until finally, here we are in a state of 'Shelter in Place.' After that, the already constant flow of client and vendor emails seemed to double, as everyone began to request answers, and brides and planners began to panic. We're now trying to reschedule events instead of canceling them. Still, we're not even sure when we'll be able to open our doors again.

I am one of a handful of Directors and Managers working through next week to keep things in motion as much as possible, and "wrap up" as many event-reschedules and cancellations as I can. Before the rest of my team was furloughed, we reached out to each individual client who had events booked with us through May, and we let them know their options for rescheduling and cancellation.

The ultimate hope is that all of these events that we're having to cancel or reschedule will still happen, and we'll make up for this lost time with an even busier second, third, and fourth quarter.

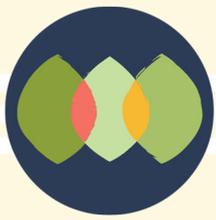
So, I will certainly take some of this time off to re-organize myself and try and make sure that when this mess is all over, I'm as ready as I can be to go at full speed.

This includes re-thinking our branding and marketing strategies - how are we going to make up for lost sales? It's also important to re-think cer-



certain protocols that we use at our venues and kitchens; what should we change about our practices in a post-Coronavirus world?

While I'm not working on event planning, I'll try and fill my time with some of the things that I tend to put on the back burner during the busy season, with all of my fingers crossed that the industry will recover from this and we'll have something to come back to."



## Mallorie Davenport on Staying Focused on the Long Term



*Everybody's just waiting to see*

Mallorie Davenport opened Enchanted Designs Weddings and Events in early 2019 after spending 10+ years in the wedding and event industry. She loves working closely with her clients to plan their dream event and makes sure their day runs flawlessly and stress-free!

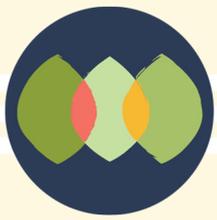
“Right now, I’m working with summer clients that are nervous because this thing just changes daily. We just don’t know what it’s going to turn out to be. So, we’re doing it, but it’s kind of a crazy time.

I think everybody’s just waiting to see what’s going on before they start booking vendors, even if they are in the fall or even next year right now because it’s been... It just feels like things have changed by the minute. And everybody’s really nervous. Everybody’s just very wary right now. Especially, with the planner side. You always need a photographer, you still need a venue. Everybody’s a standstill. At least that’s what it feels like.

Mostly I’m rescheduling, which is helpful. I know that I’m pretty lucky in



**Mallorie Davenport**  
Owner & Principal Event  
Coordinator  
[Enchanted Designs](#)  
[Weddings and Events](#)



that realm.

There've been a lot of people that have gotten a lot of cancellations. Luckily, I've just had a couple of postponements. So we'll work with them going into the fall or into next year. But it hasn't been too bad for me. I know people who have had more struggles.

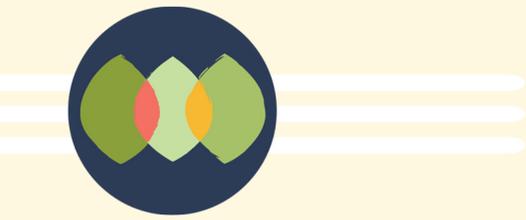
There's going to be a lot of stuff where things are getting rescheduled, and you're not going to have your original vendor. Or you already had your wedding in the fall, you're now starting to schedule some of your vendors. And just trying to be out on the forefront of this and just be ready for when the time comes, hoping it's sooner than later.

I have a couple of June brides that we're just not sure what's going on, where there are venues that are not even starting to reschedule those people yet. Because they want to focus on the spring people, which I totally get. But it's just... That's kind of crazy.

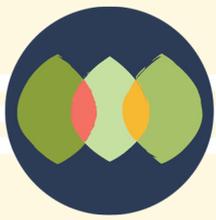
I'm using this [free] time to just get on some different marketing sites and just trying to get myself ready for when that time does pop, and that does come.

One, to work on the backend of my business, writing a lot of blog posts and [exploring] different things like Instagram, Facebook. I'm trying to get myself to a better place where I'm more consistent so that when I am busy again, I have the stuff ready to go.

I'm looking into some different marketing stuff. Unfortunately for some magazines or online services, they're losing some business, so they're running a lot of really good deals right now, which is great for me. Not great for them, but great for me, to where I'm thinking, okay, I can join



the magazine, they're running half-price deals, or they're letting us defer payments until June if we start now.



## Jac Bowie on Being There for the Community



*We're really struggling to navigate something that really keeps changing.*

Darling Don't Panic has established an unrivaled reputation as a modern-minded, dynamic, and creative-to-the-core wedding company that mixes style with substance.



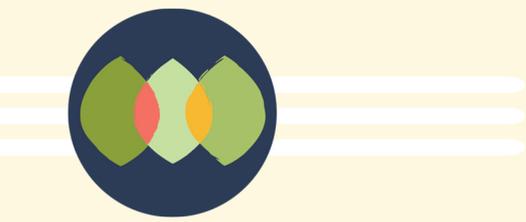
### Jac Bowie

Director and Owner  
Darling Don't Panic  
Wedding Planning &  
Travel Services

"It's been hard. We're really struggling to navigate something that really keeps changing.

We've been working closely with clients who have wedding dates that are affected and trying our best to guide them through postponing and the tasks associated with that.

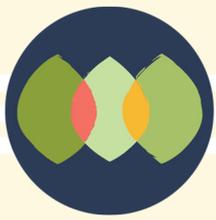
We know that there were a lot of people in our community and database that hadn't booked us but needed help. So I and some of the planning team are donating free advice in a Facebook group set up for couples planning a wedding that has been affected by Coronavirus. In essence, this is really keeping us motivated and making us feel useful!



I've got a travel agency as well. A lot is going on there too with trip cancellations and postponements. But on a lighter note, we're getting wedding enquiries for 2021 and beyond, so that's been a positive.

I've moved back home (from my co-working space for now). I'm taking this time to sort out my home office, work on our websites, virtually help as many clients as possible and – try to stay motivated!

I can tell you, I feel better now we stocked up on rosé, though!”



## Desiree May on The Importance of Good Client Relationships



*It's a lot of puzzle pieces we're trying to put together, but we'll make it work*

Leave It To May Events is an event planning and design company for clients ready to sparkle! We bring visions to life with style and flair, and no event is too big or too small. We realize the biggest impact lies within the little details, so we spend a lot of time creating experiences that will last a lifetime

Oh man, COVID-19 has definitely has an impact. All of my April events have been cancelled. I had six events scheduled for this month, hopefully we will be able to work our a reschedule for a later date. But sometimes a reschedule can be challenging especially with something like a baby shower.

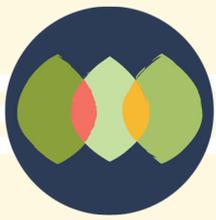
A lot of my clients are getting creative and have been pretty positive with the necessary changes. For the cancelled baby showers some are doing "Sip & See" parties after the babies are born and some of my clients will use their credit towards the child's first birthday party! But there will be a lot of shifting and regrouping.



**Desiree May**

Founder

[Leave it to May Events](#)



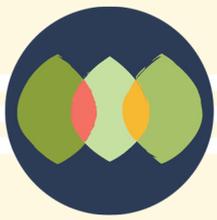
It's been a lot of stress. It's been a lot of phone calls and trying to figure it out and make it work.

But I think when all of this is over and done, we'll still be in a good place. I think that's why it's important to have really good details in your contract. With most event planners and rental companies, the deposits are nonrefundable. It's important to work out a Plan B option or provide a credit towards another event with your client.

I think it's essential to have a good contract laid out, so when things like this happen, you're not scrambling trying to figure out, oh my gosh, how am I going to get money back from a vendor? How am I going to do this? Instead, you have the understanding that if something happens, we will grant our clients with a credit they can use up to a year out. We'll make another beautiful event happen and go from there.

But yeah, it's definitely had an impact. I was supposed to have another baby shower, 130 people, this past Saturday, and that had to be canceled. Then like I said, six other events in April that are canceling and trying to figure out how to reschedule. Rescheduling is going to be a little tough because I have other events that are already on the calendar. It's just a lot of puzzle pieces we're trying to put together, but we'll make it work.

I've tried to stay level headed and not stress. I have a really good relationship with my clients. They trust me, which is so awesome. This could be a really stressful time for a business if they're just starting out, and they're figuring things out. But because I have those contracts in place, and I have a good rapport with my clients, luckily none of them are panicking at this time. They know that they're going to have a beautiful event even if the nature of their event changes and the date is different. The memories are still what is most important!



## Ryan Gac on Staying Positive



*You've got to be able to do stuff like that to stay happy*

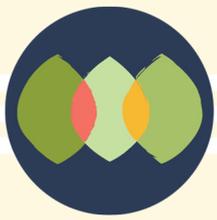
4EG is a Chicago and Cincinnati-based hospitality group of bars and restaurants with 16 locations across both markets. Ryan is the marketing director for all five Chicago locations and a DJ and musician in his spare time



**Ryan Gac**  
Marketing Director, DJ  
Four Entertainment  
Group, Chicago

So far everyone's coming together on social media. We're doing a six o'clock shot every night. Everyone's posting their shots, and it's kind of nice, but it sucks for those on unemployment. That being said, all of the DJ gigs I had lined up for the next couple of months are virtually gone. I had a friend whose wedding I was supposed to DJ in April, which is being postponed. I actually have quite a few weddings gigs this summer, in June, July, August, and October. I don't really know what the deal is going to be with them just yet.

So, yeah, it's been pretty rough. Same thing with all the other artists, musicians, DJs that I know. Everyone's sort of just like, "What the fuck do I do right now?"



I think I'm going to see how this goes for the next couple months before exploring any other opportunities. I'm just doing whatever I can to not sit around all day.

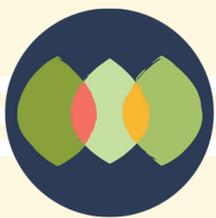
I've got my daughter with me and it's nice that I'm not as busy, glued to the computer all day because I can look after her and that's great. But, I'm here, I got time.

There are things that I'm doing for fun, like go downstairs into the studio and post silly videos of me playing with drum machines. That's all fun and I think stuff like that is just purely for my own personal joy.

But also, things like that bring a positive spirit to the public. I'm not like a public figure or anything, but more for the people that I follow and the people that follow me. I think if you're having fun and people see that you're having fun, it's not all bad and doom and gloom. You've got to be able to do stuff like that to stay happy. It's not just about making money. Obviously, that's very necessary during this time, but I'm trying to stay sane too.

I do think it'll pick back up eventually, but right now everything is so uncertain.

People, in general, are going to be so ready to be social and interact and get their life back in order. Think about how many people were planning to get married in May or April, for that matter. They don't want to put their shit on hold, either. I think the gigs will return.



## Rosa Espinosa on Pivoting to Design



*People are still asking me to design stuff*

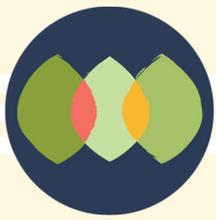
Rosa Espinosa designs experiences with high visual impact for shop windows, visual merchandising, and corporate events across North, Central, and South America.



**Rosa Espinosa**  
Creative Director  
[Rosa Creativa](#)

People are still asking me to design stuff. So that's what I'm mostly doing. That and I'm just taking it easy for the moment. I'm designing more.

Clients have asked me before, but I'd said no, because before I didn't do that. I know Adobe Illustrator, and I know how to do graphic design, but it wasn't my thing. I'd do it for an event, or I might do the invitation. But now I'm asked to do marketing design for Instagram posts, and things like that. So that's what I'm doing at the moment.



## Sarah Wade on Utilizing Event Skills To Help Others



*Trying to get some things started just to alleviate overcrowding in our hospitals*

Sarah Wade is a Top-performing Event Producer with over six years of diverse experience in producing small and large scale events for an array of different clients, including Netflix, Perrier Jouet, Dorit Kemsley from the Real House Wives of Beverly Hills, and Katy Perry.

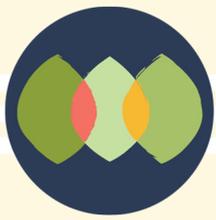


Sarah Wade  
Event Designer and  
Event Manager  
[The Event Studio](#)

Right now there are lots of fires to put out. Lots of phone calls and re-scheduling. WW

I would say for the most part though overall, the event industry itself has been great. I had a 650 person conference slated for Friday. Thursday morning, The California governor had said you can't gather in groups of 200 or more. So, that morning we canceled.

But, we didn't completely pull out. We're explained to the vendors that we're still paying you; just move the date with us. All of our vendors were super relieved.



A lot of great things came out of this as far as the industry goes - a willingness for people to work and finding flexibility, I guess. But yeah, it's been real interesting.

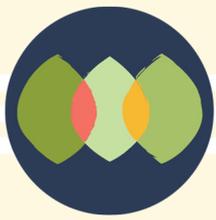
People have been very understanding, very willing to do whatever's needed to make sure that the event is postponed or if it wasn't able to be postponed, canceled, and kind of what that looked like.

I think everyone just wants to know that they're going to have a job in the next like six months. Everyone's just been really... Like I said, supportive, flexible clients understand that everybody's hands are tied. Basically, everybody wants dates for the last eight weeks of this year now. So, we're like scrambling, trying to find the space.

It's been really nice trying to figure out how the event industry can really support, I would say, everybody. There's definitely a lot of events professionals that want to utilize their skillsets and the fact that especially people in the festival industry, we basically built many temporary cities. And we can [help the health] care system. I've been putting design decks together that have gone out to governors and other politicians. We're trying to get some things started to alleviate the overcrowding in our hospitals.

I'm also in the midst of two product demos right now. And it's nice because I have the time sort of. So, I can give it a little bit more attention and really see how, especially one of the two programs, if it's even worth it. But that's just me. I'm always game to try new products, especially if I have time. So, that wouldn't bother me.

I've been testing some new software to implement for events and a few clients that were interested in Cvent. So, we've been kind of walking through those things. Taking a little bit more time because normally, we don't have that much time.



## Jenn Dugan on Finding New Ways To Work with Clients



*...my pivot is offering online  
makeup courses*

The Makeup Curio is a makeup and skincare studio offering facials, waxing, and makeup. Makeup services include options for brides and special occasions.

Even before all this, I already had a stockpile of Clorox wipes and rubbing alcohol and cleaning supplies and paper towels at my studio, because I do that regularly. I clean between every client. I wash my hands in front of every client. I've been putting gloves on for an entire facial since the beginning of the winter.

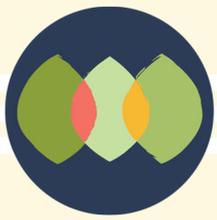
And because of that, my original thought was that "Oh, my regular clients will continue to come because they know that I offer safe, best practices. And I didn't really have any cancellations.

But seeing how it extreme it is now, and understanding that I do have a client that is a doctor and she is saying that everyone just needs to be



**Jenn Dugan**

Founder and Owner  
[The Makeup Curio](#)



staying home. If everybody puts life on hold for two, three weeks, maybe four, then we can flatten the curve, and the spread of coronavirus can diminish, and then we can get back to life sooner.

So I made the decision to cancel all in-person appointments, but my pivot is offering online makeup courses.

I mean, it's not like I'm going to get the same amount of income, but at least it is something. It can still keep me relevant because this is something I can offer after life goes back to normal – this is still something I can offer.

So I started calling a couple of people to cancel before I got on the call with you, I sent a mass email last night. I posted on social media this morning. The people I have spoken with completely understand. And they're already willing to prepay. A client I spoke to offered to pay right now.

So I was expecting not to get paid this month because I won't be doing the service until next month. But it's really nice to get the feedback though, too, in that “no, I still want my appointment, I still want this, and I understand that this can't happen right away.” I think people are finally recognizing the severity of it.

I've been creating blog posts, and so that was another thing to do to continue to be relevant. It's still important to produce content, be active on my business, and not get into a depressive state and not do anything.

I already teach makeup classes individually. I just needed a camera now and a platform to do it [on]. And I have that. I looked into it before I officially announced and posted the classes. People have been wanting

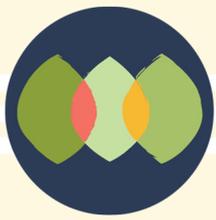


to take them anyway. I had someone message me today that “Oh, I just saw your post. I really want to take a smokey eye class with you, I’ve been wanting to. I think your price is really reasonable.”

Yes, you can get free videos on YouTube, but my client says, “you’re a professional.” And people want to support small businesses right now.

And it’s not just a video. I’m not having clients pay for a video, if that was the case, I would do it for free. What I’m asking clients to pay for is my time and my feedback. So that’s the difference. Coz, you know, online classes or webinars are two-way communication. Not just one way.

I got an email from an event that has been moved to June, that I was hired for, that had been postponed. And that was big for me. I had a big event in April that got canceled. I had a big event in May that got canceled. But knowing people are looking forward to June and hoping that COVID-19 is gone, and saying yes, we’re still going to host this, was huge for my mental state.



## Final Thoughts

Event professionals, like many others, have seen their world upended. We believe their stories matter. We hope you take inspiration from them.

You're welcome to get in touch with any follow-up questions:  
[support@thymebase.com](mailto:support@thymebase.com)