Tips for Virtual and Hybrid Events
These are in no particular order.
They are broken down by category and are based on our recent experiences
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Type	Category	Notes
Event	Any event	Always establish a timeline with activities, date it needs to be complete, who is responsible and the progress.
Event	Any event	Much like a live event you can still have the same elements - printed invitations, awards, break out sessions, VIP experiences, etc.
Event	Any event	Virtual events are not easier to do, nor are they automatically less expensive. Budget management, especially if a fundraiser, is still a top priority.
Event	Communication	Establish easy to use hash tags early and communicate often to attendees so any posts they share use it.
Event	Communication	If you are using a platform where people need to set up their agenda/schedule or they must download an app, make sure to communicate as soon as possible and as often as possible.
Event	Communication	Make sure to communicate about the platform you will be using and allow people an opportunity to test it beforehand. Perhaps even create a video that shows all of the features of the platform. The worst thing would be to pay for something with lots of bells and whistles and no one uses it.
Event	Communication	Work backwards from your event date and consider dropping videos/engagement tools the week leading up to your event.
Event	Content	Attendee attention span has dropped from 20 seconds to 8 seconds so the content must be tight and engaging.
Event	Content	Be careful about contests - I watched a conference over a couple days where almost all of the comments in the chat section asked about "what's the code for this session"
Event	Content	Begin the webinar with an ice breaker to initiate engagement even if it's as simple as putting an answer in the chat (where they are from, Company, etc.)
Event	Content	Cocktail demonstrations - can send recipe card in advance so people can purchase the items and make as part of the event. Ingredients can also be sent as part of the Party Pack/Swag Bag.
Event	Content	Cut outs like MLB games - give a prize to someone that gets hit
Event	Content	Do not feel like you have to have a 4-5 hour event just because you have in the past. Crisp/sharp content is much more important than length.
Event	Content	Facebook is changing the rules about music and has been cutting songs out. They have something called Sound collection that allows you to use non exclusive music.
Event	Content	Have the presenters call out individuals by name - either from a comment they made in the chat or a question they sent in. Certainly gets people's attention.
Event	Content	If you are going to use an emcee/host for the event make sure they are comfortable with all of the elements and the need to switch between platforms. Also, make sure they are engaging and fun. Best thing to do is REHEARSE, REHEARSE, REHEARSE
Event	Content	If you are going to use the Zoom poll feature to measure pre/post impact or to have people vote on specific topics make sure to write the results down.
Event	Content	If you are using music as part of your program and plan to push it out publicly either live or after the event, make sure you understand music licensing/copyright rules. You Tube has been known to remove certain content if it's not proprietary.

Event	Content	If you are using pre-recorded videos and live presenters make sure the content is different. Nothing is worse than repeating the exact same message. It's good to support/highlight, just do not mimic completely.
Event	Content	If you use outside polling software suggest people use the platform on their phone while they watch the program on their computer/tablet.
Event	Content	Much like live events people like to come early. Have a plan in place for what to do with attendees prior to the event. If kept in a waiting room try to let them know when you will begin. If you have an event page consider having a countdown clock so they know when you will begin. If you are recording the event though do not have a PowerPoint that plays over and over because people may stop watching or will fast forward through and skip critical content.
Event	Content	Practice, Practice, Practice. You may want to schedule some time a day or two before with all of the hosts/presenters so you can go over their roles and practice how you split up and then eventually come back together for breakouts.
Event	Content	Timing - events no longer need to take place on a weekend evening. Consider the type of program you are doing and when it may make sense to host the event.
Event	Content	Try to keep the program to an hour or less. If using breakouts for fundraisers/VIP experiences you can go longer, just do not go much past 90 minutes total.
Event	Content	Use engagement tools like scavenger hunts, trivia apps, polls, etc. to keep the audience tuned in.
Event	Content	You can pre-record presenters to ensure timing. It's a nice feature if they are available during the presentation though to take questions in the chat. Try not to record time sensitive topics (advocacy) too far in advance though as things can change quickly.
Event	Engagement	As part of a Scavenger Hunt/Trivia app have people visit sponsors websites and answer a specific question.
Event	Engagement	Can use photo booth apps to engage attendees.
Event	Engagement	If you are using Zoom it may be fun to take a photo of your attendees, especially if a cocktail demo was done. Make sure to let people know in advance and give them a warning before you do it so they can turn on their cameras (or even off) and be looking at the screen.
Event	Engagement	Provide a meal gift card for the first 100 people who sign on to a session and stand on to the end.
Event	Party Packs/ Swag Bags	Can be picked up or delivered. Some groups are charging a delivery fee. Would base that on the cost of the pack - under $100 it seems reasonable to charge, over that you may want to build into the price.
Event	Party Packs/ Swag Bags	If partnering with a local bar/restaurant on a cocktail demonstration during the event, it may be ideal for people to pick the packs up there so the location can bring people in to see the site. Or have them come to your location if that's allowed. Great way for donors in particular to see your facility.
Event	Party Packs/ Swag Bags	Make sure to see the pack/bag before it goes out to attendees. Do not just rely on a venue to say they will make it look really cool/valuable.
Event	Party Packs/ Swag Bags	Utilize Party Packs/Swag Bags as a way to get people to pay to attend the event. Can include alcohol, however, you should have non-alcoholic options as well. Packs can include snacks, special treats, sponsor items.
Event	Sponsors	Allow them to add an item to the swag bags/party packs
Event	Sponsors	Allow them to do a live product demo.
Event	Sponsors	Allow them to record a testimonial about why they support the organization. Can be used on social media, on website or during the event.
Event	Sponsors	Depending on the platform you should provide links to sponsor websites, linked in pages, Instagram, twitter, etc.

Event	Sponsors	Depending on the platform you use you may be able to provide data analytics to the sponsors.
Event	Sponsors	Have them host a round table/breakout room
Event	Sponsors	Have them serve as a presenter or on a panel.
Event	Sponsors	Have them sponsor the "meal." Depending on the audience you may want to use Visa/MC gift cards vs Grub Hub/Uber Eats due to areas that may not have those services.
Event	Sponsors	Let them host a poll/engagement activity
Event	Sponsors	Provide them exposure before, during and after the event
Event	Sponsors	Put logo/name on app or in background
Event	Sponsors	Send out a sponsor specific email/social media post with a link to a video and/or their website.
Event	Sponsors	Virtual expo halls allow for attendees to visit sponsors/vendors and even set up appointments to speak with them, depending on the platform.
Event	Technology	Bandwidth - if doing hybrid events and using something like twitch you will need more bandwidth at the venue, which could increase costs
Event	Technology	Check settings for Zoom so only the Host/Co-Hosts can hear the "doorbell" when people join/leave a meeting. Very distracting to presenters when it goes off if everyone hears it.
Event	Technology	Check the lighting for the time of day you will be doing the event. If it's a night time event it's best to practice at night.
Event	Technology	Engage a technology company early on to help develop content and determine best platforms.
Event	Technology	Events can be done on Zoom and shared out via Facebook Live and/or You Tube to reach a broader audience.
Event	Technology	Give presenters the co-host ability so they can share their slides without having to say over and over to advance the next slide
Event	Technology	Huge windows behind you may provide beautiful scenery but can make it difficult for attendees to see the presenter.
Event	Technology	If producing a live event with presenters in different locations make sure their bandwidth can support the platform. Wi-fi can be spotty so they may want to consider plugging into their router with an ethernet cord. They are relatively inexpensive and can be ordered quickly online.
Event	Technology	If using Zoom make sure you use the proper format - Zoom Meetings and Zoom Webinars have different features.
Event	Technology	If you are going to record the program make sure you have the permission of the presenters, especially if it is content they have created.
Event	Technology	If you are using Zoom - make sure to have it set so microphones are turned off. This is especially crucial if you are recording. Unbeknownst to all of us someone had turned theirs back on and while the cocktail demo was going on during an event they coughed and were recorded on screen mid demo doing so.
Event	Technology	If you are using Zoom and plan to share a video make sure your setting is changed to allow for computer audio to be used. That change must be made every time. Again, REHEARSE, REHEARSE, REHEARSE.
Event	Technology	If you are using Zoom it's important to have co-hosts who can assist with letting people in from the waiting room, as well as watching the chat/questions and to turn off microphones/camera as needed.
Event	Technology	Make sure cameras are eye level - try to adjust the camera/computer if need be
Event	Technology	Make sure your audio works - if people cannot hear the presenter they will drift off.
Event	Technology	Plan to record and share after - either publicly or on a member only website with log in and password
Event	Technology	Push out to Facebook Live and You Tube to reach a broader audience.

Event	Technology	Several times presenters have had audio issues while using ear buds. Presenters should consider using computer audio or headset
Event	Technology	Zoom etiquette - cameras, microphones, how to log back in, etc. Consider having information in any advance communication, program book, etc.
Fundraiser	Communication	For Fundraising events recommend that the attendees watch the program on their computer/tablet and then bid/buy from their phone so they don't have to keep switching back and forth on the same device.
Fundraiser	Communication	Program/ad books can still be produced to support the event and allow sponsors to receive ads. It can be emailed out in advance, shared on the event webpage or even printed and included in Party Packs/Swag Bags.
Fundraiser	Content	If you are going to create an event landing page it is ok to bring in old video content to enhance the page. Mission moments are crucial to donor engagement.
Fundraiser	Fundraising	Walk through how to do text a donation if you are using a special texting platform. May also want to consider just directing people to your website to make an online donation to save fees.
Fundraiser	Revenue	Depending on your organization's rules consider asking people to host watch parties for their friends. Since they can no longer host a table of friends/colleagues they can certainly invite them into their home and even purchase Party Packs for them.
Fundraiser	Revenue	For Galas you really should have a free option for attendees. You can certainly ask for donations and even have a suggested price based on previous ticket prices, however, many more people are likely to watch the recording and learn about your organization if they don't have to pay. You can also broaden your reach and see additional fundraising when there is a free option.
Fundraiser	Revenue	Fundraising strategies do not change with virtual or hybrid events. Must determine why you are doing the event and what your goals are.
Fundraiser	Revenue	If using online auction platforms make sure to include donation options - whether specific items or just a donate now button in case they don't find anything they like but still want to donate.
Fundraiser	Revenue	If you are going to do an online paddle raise make sure you have folks planned to donate at those levels just as you would for an in person event. The last thing you want, especially if you have a live tote board, is to see little to no movement.
Fundraiser	Revenue	Like live events much of the fundraising happens before the event - whether it's through sponsors or major gifts. Do not rely on the night of the event to make your budget. It can happen but can be stressful
Fundraiser	Revenue	Mission moments are still critical - whether pre-recorded or done live.
Fundraiser	Revenue	Online auctions can expand your audience's reach. Must have a plan in place for delivery and/or pick up of items. Similar to in person auctions people love experiences.
Fundraiser	Revenue	Online raffles are possible - new platforms are being developed. Make sure to follow any state gaming laws.
Fundraiser	Revenue	Open the auction no more than 10 days before the event date - donors may check it out early but bidding gets busy in the final days/hours.
Fundraiser	Revenue	VIP experiences - host a pre-event zoom with attendees and a special guest. Can charge more for the experience.
Fundraiser	Revenue	While in person expenses like food/beverage and location will drop your cost for A/V and technology may increase significantly. With most fundraising events they have seen an increase in net revenue, even if sponsors have dropped a bit.