

The Ultimate Virtual Events Checklist





The world of virtual events and webinars are evolving as we move into an events landscape with more options than ever before. What was considered “wow” in 2021 is now “yes, and...?” when it comes to virtual events. With the proliferation of AI integration and tools, higher than ever attendee expectations, and an increased focus on immersive experiences making the scene, the must-haves in your virtual event toolkit are evolving once again.

We’re here to update you on the fresh tools and guidance you need for keeping your virtual events and webinars interesting, innovative, and relevant in 2024 and beyond with our Ultimate Virtual Events Checklist.



The Virtual Events Revolution

Even with the massive return of in-person events in the post-pandemic era, virtual events have stayed highly visible, taking their rightful place alongside their in-person counterparts in the events industry. According to a recent Gartner report, 54% of respondents to their CMO Spend Strategy Survey indicated they are increasing investment into event marketing, and current trends indicate the increased use of both virtual and in-person events for marketing purposes. Virtual events are as relevant today as they've ever been. As event professionals, keeping up on trends and audience expectations then adjusting your virtual programming accordingly, sets the stage for event program success as you move forward, making a virtual events blueprint more important than ever.



Innovation That Fits Your Goals

Recent studies covering the event technology landscape show that organizers are continuing the trend of seeking to consolidate their event tech stacks. Beyond the simplicity a streamlined events platform offers, audiences have come to expect an integrative, frictionless experience, whether attending online or in-person.

For example, 2023 saw generative AI take center stage in the world, and event technology was no exception. AI offered event organizers opportunities for improved personalization, deeper dives into attendee data, automation, and more. Many of these new tools seem like the answer to your event organization dilemmas.

With that in mind, the first step in your ultimate virtual events checklist? An audit of your event tech stack. Assess where you may have gaps or redundancies, where you can streamline, and what your goals are for the future of your event programming. Integrating new technology into your tech stack is tempting, however, it's important to approach the possibilities with an open mind and an eye toward future growth.

Something to consider as an event professional is “Shiny New Toy” syndrome - the tools are so exciting and promising, however, strategic deployment in your event programs should have a focused goal to move toward. Will it enhance your attendee's experience? Will it fill gaps in your current system? Is it easy to implement? Integration with what's already working is a smart step toward using the new AI tech with intention.

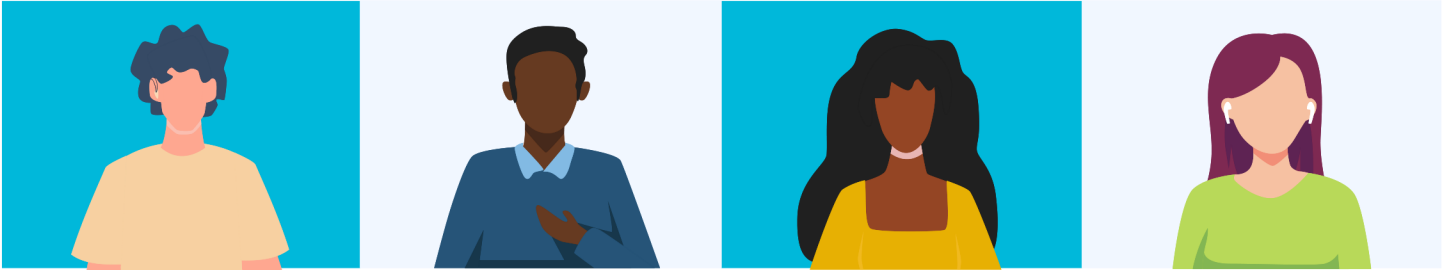


Ensure Adequate Staffing & Consider Outsourcing to Meet Needs

Nothing can truly replace the human touch, even in virtual events. Attendees want to know they will receive assistance from a person should the need arise. Plan for at least two to three people per event: a moderator and a technical producer/support person. Well-trained moderators keep the event flowing and on track, as well as helping presenters keep an eye on Q&A. Your technical person can offer assistance to presenters or attendees having difficulties, relieving the presenter or moderator of interrupting their duties to help, keeping the flow and focus on the presenter and the content.

A few words of advice: Train your team members, maintain clear event best practices documentation, perform technical walk-throughs, and create a disaster recovery plan, and refresh their training occasionally, including any new features you've added to your tech stack. If you don't have expertise in-house, an event management and services provider to explore an event management and services provider to explore [outsourcing](#). Virtual event service providers support you with training, technical know-how, professional event moderation, and [so much more](#).





Fight Virtual Event Fatigue With a Comprehensive Engagement Strategy

Virtual event burnout is real, and audiences have grown weary of less-than-positive virtual event experiences. As such, it goes without saying that investing time and effort in this area is paramount, as the need to address this phenomenon becomes clearer. Creating an engaging and valuable virtual experience is a necessity.

Since robust engagement strategies are a must for continued success in the virtual events space, we suggest starting with your tried-and-true interaction tools, such as pre-event surveys and live polling to tailor content and gauge interest and gather feedback. Build content supporting your attendee's stated preferences, keeping high production value in mind by adding media-rich elements such as video and live streams. Keep feedback surveys and follow-up at the forefront of your strategy as well.

Keep your audience invested and the pace moving with high-energy and creative presenters, interactive Q&A, and consider adding gamification elements such as quizzes and contests, rewards and recognition for active participation, as well as offering breakout sessions, networking opportunities, virtual chat rooms, and social media integration.

New, innovative engagement tools available for your engagement strategy include:

- Virtual tours or demonstrations.
- AR (augmented reality) or VR (virtual reality) to showcase products or venues.
- Interactive exhibits and displays, showcasing products services, or cultural elements.



Accessibility & Inclusion

When building your event and creating content, prioritize [accessibility](#) elements such as closed captioning, sign language interpretation, additional languages, and screen reader-friendly assets. Inclusive presentation and content design helps you reach a wider, highly engaged audience and strengthens your reputation.

As you design your event, consider including the following:

- [A Code of Conduct](#) – state your company values, commitment to equity, and specifics as to what constitutes a violation of your code of conduct. Requiring an opt-in agreement at the time of registration is a possible strategy to ensure compliance.
- Adding preferred pronouns to the display names of presenters and other staff.
- Preparing disclosures/warnings of media elements in your content that may be difficult for individuals with sensory issues (e.g., flashing lights, etc.)
- Performing an access check at the beginning of your event to ensure everyone can hear, see, and interact with your content.
- Building in short breaks during transitions to [ease digital fatigue!](#)
- Making documents and slides in an accessible format available in advance of your event, and downloadable transcripts available post-event.
- Including speakers and panelists from diverse backgrounds to represent a wide variety of perspectives and experiences.
- A dedicated tech support team on hand to assist with accessibility issues should they arise.
- Providing a method for post-event feedback and follow-up; a key element to making future improvements.

Inclusion = Empowerment

Approach your event design with empathy and compassion in mind, and strive to optimize everyone's experience. Empowering your attendees to access and customize content in the way that best suits them is a fundamental element to virtual events and, done thoughtfully, provides a fully inclusive event experience.



Marketing & Communications

Create a marketing and communication plan, including a timeline for deployment. A clear marketing and promotion strategy is second only to content when it comes to successful virtual events.

Key elements to a successful virtual event marketing plan:



Consider [collaborating with a partner](#) or adding sponsors as a strategy for reaching previously untapped audiences.



Leverage popups, banners, and CTAs on your website, and embed your event's registration form on a website landing page.



Assemble and analyze your invitation email lists, and account for any data privacy laws you may need to work around, such as GDPR and CCPA.



Create social media posts and share them on your channels. [Source tracking](#) is a fantastic way to assess which avenues are proving most effective.



Segment your audiences and customize messaging specifically to your various targeted populations.



Schedule [automatic email](#) reminders to send to registrants.



Experiment with registration incentives, such as limited-time offers, contests, gifts, swag, or digital gift cards



Analyze your efforts in the weeks and days leading up to your event and adjust your marketing efforts accordingly.



Post-Event Assessment and Analysis

Feedback on your event in the form of post-event surveys, and [analytics](#) in the form of [reports](#), are important parts of your event plan. Reports give you a look at the quantitative side of the event, and [post-event surveys](#) provide you with opportunities to look at feedback from a qualitative perspective.

Take the information gleaned and shape your next event around the feedback you receive, and identify attendees who expressed deeper interest for follow-up and lead nurturing.

A post-event wrap up strategy is a very important step in guaranteeing your on-going virtual event success. Keep improving!

The Checklist Part of This Checklist!

1. Innovation that fits your goals

- Audit your tech stack and look for opportunities to streamline.
- Keep it attendee-centered, aiming for an integrative, frictionless experience.
- Add new technology tools with intention and goals alignment.

2. Ensure adequate staffing or outsource to meet needs

- Plan for 2-3 staff members per event.
- Perform technical walk-throughs with staff ahead of time.
- Prepare documentation for training, best practices, and disaster recovery.
- Refresh training regularly, include any new features/technology.
- Outsource to a professional services provider if in-house resources aren't available.



3. Fight virtual event burnout with a robust engagement strategy

- Build on your tried-and-true engagement tools
- Create content around your audience's pre-event survey feedback and stated preferences
- Keep high production value in mind, adding media-rich elements such as video and live streams
- Add elements such as gamification, recognitions, networking breakout rooms
- Consider adding a newer, innovative engagement tool, such as VR

4. Inclusion and accessibility

- Prioritize accessibility elements such as closed captioning, sign language interpretation, and additional languages
- Present a code of conduct to ensure participant safety
- Add an accessibility/accommodation question to your event registration and follow up!
- Design for inclusion with short breaks to ease digital fatigue, warnings for sensory-sensitive media, speakers and panelists from diverse backgrounds, and accessibility support staff.

5. Marketing and promotion plan

- Create a marketing and communication plan, including a timeline.
- Design an eye-catching, simple registration page/form.
- Consider collaborating with a partner organization/co-sponsors to extend reach.
- Assemble and analyze email lists, accounting for data privacy laws.
- Segment audiences and customize messaging accordingly.
- Create promotional materials for your marketing channels, such as event teasers, and use source tracking to gauge effectiveness.
- Assess your efforts and adjust based on information from email segments and source tracking data.

6. Post-event assessment and analysis

- Send post-event surveys to gather qualitative event analysis.
- Gather event reports for quantitative event data, e.g., demographics, engagement, etc.
- Build lead nurturing campaigns based on attendee interest.
- Shape future events around the feedback received.





Eyes to the Future

While in-person and hybrid events are back in full force, virtual events have a bigger space than ever before. Building on your already solid foundation with an eye toward streamlining, adding exciting attendee engagement tools that fit your goals, and a growth mindset will get you where you want to go: up!

Ready to Grow? We've Got You

EventBuilder has been providing expert event management services and software for virtual events and webinars since the start. With decades of experience in the industry, we'll provide you with the guidance, training, and technical support to help you reach your event goals.

[Get in touch](#) and let us show you what we can do!



THANK YOU!