



Guidance and Best Practices for Virtual Events

Your virtual event can take place on [any platform](#). These tips help you plan for creating a smooth virtual event.

Planning ahead

- **Platform considerations.** When determining which platform to host your virtual event, use a platform that you and your speakers are familiar with. Most platforms offer similar features, so unless there is a very specific need, use the one that you know best.
- **Create a three-person team.** To run a successful virtual event, you need a team of at least three people to ensure everything runs smoothly and no one is overwhelmed by their role.
 - **Emcee.** This is the person speaking to the audience, introducing speakers, and often controlling the progression of slides, if applicable.
 - **Moderator.** This is the person performing important behind-the-scenes functions (chatting with attendees, sending links to resources, filtering audience questions) and also serves as backup emcee should the emcee's computer go down.
 - **Producer.** This is the person running the technical aspects of the event (monitoring the audio/video, muting/unmuting speakers, enabling/disabling polling, controlling screen sharing) and critical for an event to feel smooth and polished.
- **Prepare a script.** While you don't want an emcee to sound scripted or unnatural, you most certainly want a script to ensure the event's run of show is followed.
- **Know who's in control.** Different platforms have different host, presenter, and attendee capabilities. Know these different controls (how to mute/unmute, screenshare, enable video, ask a question, use the chat box) and determine who needs access to what and how to give it.
- **Schedule (and record) a dry run.** You want to host a dry run so your team and speakers are familiar with the platform technology and can troubleshoot any technological or physical issues. You

should record the dry run so you have the entire event backed up in case of unforeseen technical difficulties during the live event.

- **Lay ground rules.** People come to virtual events with many different expectations and online etiquette can be unclear when they might be joining the event from the comfort of their own home. Clearly communicate your expectations to speakers and attendees (e.g., keep your video disabled and yourself muted until it's your time to speak) to help ensure your event appears polished.

Day-of Reminders

- **Sign on early.** Have your team and speakers sign on at least 30 minutes early to individually test audio and video and work out any technical issues before the event begins.
- **Minimize background noise.** Encourage your team and speakers to join from a quiet place (if possible), use headphones, and keep themselves muted until it's their time to speak to cut down on noise distractions.
- **Be mindful when screen-sharing.** Know if your platform automatically shares your screen or must be enabled after the event starts.
- **Start on time.** In addition to signing on early, give your team and speakers five, two, and one-minute warnings before going live, mute everyone who's not the first speaker, and then go live!
- **Give a two-minute audience tutorial.** Your audience may or may not be new to the platform so take a couple of minutes to explain how to use the chat box, ask questions, answer polls, raise hands, mute/unmute themselves, etc. This is also a good opportunity to note whether the event will be recorded and shared following the event.