



The Ultimate
**Virtual Cyber Security
Event Checklist**

Tips for Planning & Hosting a Cyber Security Webinar or
Online Training Workshop

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Let's Face It – Virtual Events Are Taking Over

As an event planner, you know all too well the ins and outs of planning and hosting an extraordinary business function.

But the times are changing...

With remote operations becoming more commonplace, it's becoming harder and harder to bring teams together in one shared space. Companies everywhere are shifting to digital events to surpass the barriers of distance, mismatched time zones and social distancing.

For some planners – and even some speakers – this is the first time presenting security education or workshops virtually.

While certain rules still apply, virtual event planning is a different ball game. The way you'll plan and orchestrate your experience needs to shift, and we're here to help you pivot with precision.

Here's how you can start choosing a digital cyber security presenter and hosting a successful virtual training or demonstration:



Why Virtual Cyber Security Events Are a Hard-Hitting Investment

Before we discuss how to execute a successful cyber security event, it's important to understand why virtual events are making waves.

Virtual events aren't something you should feel forced to host because you can't make an in-person event work; virtual webinars open a door to time savings, peak attendance rates and elevated engagement. Here's why:

Educated employees are security smart.

[New 2021 research shows](#) that 88% of all data breaches are caused by an employee mistake. Social engineers have a few tactics for tricking users: they'll send phishing emails with malware-injected links or attachments, get in through a missing patch on an employee's anti-virus software or find a document of passwords sitting right on an employee's desktop.



Because employees are often the reason bad actors breach a system, they are often seen as an organization's biggest threats. **But while people can be your greatest weakness, they can also be a company's greatest security strength.** By empowering users with the right awareness to recognize and avoid cyberattacks, organizations can avoid costly court fees, reputational costs and more. This is where hosting a virtual cyber security workshop can help. You can educate your team on newly evolving threats and give them the awareness they need to spot and report possible cyber attacks before they happen. Even a single one-hour digital workshop can do great wonders in lowering your security risk if the lessons are proactively reinforced!

Virtual events are necessary for modern remote operations.

With more and more companies shifting to partial or even full remote operations, it's becoming increasingly challenging – even impossible – to entertain the idea of in-person meetings. It's simply not always financially or logistically feasible to fly teams to one central location. Plus, with pandemic precautions making face-to-face events even more precarious for safety, virtual events are often more manageable. Let's not forget that today's modern digital threat landscape is changing more rapidly than ever before. **The once-a-year cyber security training summit you used to host just doesn't cut it.** Employees need to be educated about advancing vulnerabilities as they arise. It's easier to host a half-hour security webinar to brief your team on the latest threats than it is to plan and host a full-scale in-person event.

Live hacks “show not tell” your team what to look out for – boosting engagement.

It's one thing to hear stories about how hacks occur, it's another to watch one happen before your eyes. **During a virtual live hack, a cyber security speaker can share their computer screen so the audience can [watch a step-by-step process for compromising a device.](#)**

This insider know-how is enough to spark the interest of most individuals tuned in for the broadcast, promising you deep engagement. Whereas live hacks can be a part of an in-person hacking demonstration as well, virtual viewers are right in front of their screen, not missing a single detail.

Cybersecurity presentations that end with a Q&A invite curiosity.

You know how in-person training events are: busy. It can be hard for guests to stick around and ask questions if they have to race to another session. Equally, it can be difficult for speakers who have tight travel schedules to stay after the event. **Because one-off digital events don't involve travel or back-to-back training workshops, your team is more likely to hang around to have their questions answered and speakers are more likely to accommodate a few minutes on screen.**

With a virtual event, chatroom features and upvotes allow for the audience to ask their most pressing questions without needing to physically raise their hand and engage. For those who may be shy or uncomfortable asking questions directly, these features allow for a certain level of anonymity while still learning in real-time from a cyber security expert.

How to Plan & Host an Incredible Virtual Cyber Security Event

1. Pick the best speaker and host.

This is without a doubt the most important element of planning and hosting an incredible virtual event: booking incredible talent. Your speaker and host are the driving force behind your show. **The audience wants to feel entertained, and the people you hire need to translate their charisma and wisdom across the screen.**

Remember, as the event planner, you could do all the right things to guarantee a fabulous event – but no matter how much work you put in, a bad speaker means your event will likely be a flop.

Here are some tips for choosing wisely:

Don't go for a cheaper speaker just because your event is virtual.

“It's just a digital conference,” you may think, “no need to go crazy.” But whether you're having a digital conference and charging admission or having an internal training or team-building event virtually, your attendees will take the day just as seriously as they would in person (even though they might be in their slippers!).

A tacky presentation or bad speaker will flop just as noticeably as one on stage – and reflect just as poorly on you and your company as conference hosts.

Ensure your digital event gets the attention it deserves by investing the same budget you would for in-person talent. Good virtual speakers can cost up to \$50,000+. “You get what you pay for” logic still stands. If anything, you may end up paying a little more for a digitally-savvy, versatile speaker: one who knows the right techniques for connecting and engaging with your audience through a screen.

Before setting your heart on any speaker in particular, be sure to check their going rate and see if it matches your budget.

Don't assume an in-person speaker can seamlessly switch to a digital experience

This is one of the biggest mistakes an event planner can make: assuming all speakers are created equal. There are entirely different hurdles a digital cyber security speaker must jump over that differ from the challenges facing an in-person presenter: from successfully navigating your hosting platform to engaging in attendee chat features and integrating special effects.

When looking for the right speaker and moderator for your digital cyber security webinar or conference, be sure to consider their previous virtual experience (not just their stage work). You want to ensure they have the ability to create appealing visual content that translates well over listeners' computer screens.

To vet the best talent for your digital stage, personally connect with the speakers you have in the running. Ask to see their previous on-camera experience – not just live audience experience – and watch the videos all the way through. Do they paint a colorful narrative to help their audience understand, using realistic scenarios? You want your audience to be able to relate and empathize with the speaker's examples, so hiring a good storyteller is a must. Some speakers may even agree to perform a mock run-through, so you see the presentation for yourself.

Start vetting digital candidates through a speakers bureau.

There are great resources to help event planners find speakers, but in our experience, a speakers bureau like [The National Speakers Bureau](#) is the best place to start. You can explore speakers by popular topics, filtering speakers by cyber security, motivational, business, etc.

From there, you can find the profile of each speaker, which acts as a digital portfolio and lists their speaker fee and bio. Here you can also watch videos, read reviews, and begin to imagine how this speaker may fit into your event. Most importantly, you can see if they offer virtual experiences beyond the stage and have deep on-screen or remote experiences.

But don't limit yourself to just one domain. **Here's a list of excellent resources to get you started on your search:**

[Big Speak](#)
[Thinking Heads](#)
[Harry Walker](#)
[London Speaker Bureau](#)
[National Speaker Bureau](#)
[Leading Authorities](#)
[Keppler Speakers](#)
[Washington Speakers Bureau](#)
[APB Speakers](#)
[Aurum Speakers Bureau](#)

Make your conference a premium experience, if open to those outside your organization.

When marketing your digital cybersecurity event, be sure to position the virtual gathering as professionally as possible. If those outside of your organization are welcome, instead of promoting a “free webinar” that anyone could attend, add prestige to the attendance. **Make it a paid event to emphasize the same value as attending a physical conference or summit** – and be sure your speaker can deliver that valuable experience your audience is paying for.

Don't neglect the power of exclusivity.

Everyone wants to feel special – like they're valued and not a meaningless fish in the sea. Don't underestimate the value of narrowing your audience down to a select few. **Consider honoring your invitees by keeping attendance exclusive and sharing how they've excitedly made the cut!**

This may mean only inviting guests who would find the content super relevant and positioning the invite as if this talk was made just for them. This may lead to more engaged guests and advocates who later brag about their special experience – sparking others' interest in your brand or cause.

Prepare the right questions in your interview with the speaker.

Once you've narrowed it down to three candidates or so, it's time to arrange a meeting and see if they're the right fit. Ask for a brief video call, via Skype, FaceTime, Zoom or a similar visual chat platform to ask some impromptu questions such as:

- Can the speaker talk about x, specifically?
- Can they help us reach x goal? (Define what success looks like at the end)
- Can they fill our 30-minute, 60-minute, x-minute time slot?
- Can they live stream at x day at x time?
- What would they charge for your exact event?
- Do they offer pre-event or post-event marketing?
- Can they share any testimonials?
- Have they worked directly with other companies like yours?

Download our [Choosing the Right Cyber Security Keynote Speaker eBook](#) to add more questions to your interview line-up.



2. Choose the right time and date.

Every niche will have different recommendations for when it is ideal to schedule your webinar or virtual conference. For instance, in the cyber security industry, broadcasts on a Tuesday or Wednesday between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. typically show excellent attendance and engagement. It's right around lunch break, so workers can attend over their scheduled lunch should their employer not allow attendance on the clock.

Generally speaking, this was just an example. **There's no date and time that's best across all companies and industries.** To select when is best to host your virtual event, be sure to:

Consider your audience.

Who will be attending your event? Even if it's just your own employees that are in the seats, it helps to know which departments will be present and choose a presenter who can best speak to their specific pain points. For instance, if a speaker is scheduled to chat with your finance department, the presenter might address security measures very differently than if it was your marketing team – perhaps talking about best practices for scanning emailed invoices vs. social media account password protection. Or, if the speaker is addressing your IT team, they may be inclined to get a little more “technical” than if they were talking with your telephone representatives.

Beyond their level of security knowledge and what threats apply to them, you'll also have to consider your audiences' availability to attend. **Do you have remote workers in different time zones?** If you are allowing people outside of your organization to register for the online event too, what time works best for others?

Survey attendees on the best dates and times.

You may have a general idea of when your audience would like to attend your virtual event, but don't assume. Prior to scheduling the day and time, survey your attendees on when would be best for them. **You could do this by sending your team a poll on your internal messaging platform like Slack or by sending out a group email asking for what dates and times wouldn't work.** Sometimes it's easier to ask for conflicts and work around them than it is to ask for when they might be free. If upon going through the results, you feel overwhelmed by differing time zones, consider a mid-day run, where some guests can attend during their “morning,” while others attend in the late “afternoon.”

If it's internal training, talk with leadership and management.

While it's great to talk to the attendees first-hand to get an idea of their availability, it's important to **get buy-in from leadership before setting anything in stone**. There could be a big project happening the month of your presentation that makes it difficult for an entire department to attend. Or, a team may not be able to attend the same live stream all at once as it would leave phones unanswered or tasks hanging.

Should this be the case, a manager may have to prepare ahead of time for covering responsibilities while employees are preoccupied or they may ask you to only include certain employees this time around.

Plan to purchase a recording to share later.

As hard as you try, not everyone will be able to make the time and date you land on. **For those who cannot attend, don't let them miss out**. Look for a cyber security speaker who allows you to purchase a recording of the broadcast to share for further education. In addition to giving new watchers a chance to engage, it can also be sent to those who did attend to reinforce what they learned.



3. Heavily promote the event.

No one will attend an event they haven't heard about. It's up to you to inform employees or guests who will be attending about the big day.

Realistically, you want to give guests enough time to bookmark the event without promoting it too far out that they forget it's happening. **Consider announcing the event within the 45-60 day sweet**

spot, [according to Formstack](#). From there, don't be shy about reminding attendees once or twice before the week of the event, when you'll really want to ramp up promotion.

You can promote your event via:

Emails, paper announcements, etc.

If your cyber security presentation is intended for employees, send out a company email to announce the digital event. If your intended audience is outside of your organization and you have your contacts' email addresses, email can still work too. You can even tack up flyers around the office or in local businesses where you're hoping to attract attendees.

When sending out follow-up reminder emails, **consider adding a countdown** widget or counting down the days till the event in your email title, such as saying, "10 Days Away! Are You Ready?" in the subject line.



Social media and online.

When it comes to virtual cyber security events, you can certainly promote your event via traditional ads and through word-of-mouth, but your biggest asset will likely be digital promotion. Remember, the type of person attending a virtual event is probably a digitally-savvy individual.

Take to social media with creative promotional campaigns a few weeks before the big day. Tease information about your speaker's background, the chosen topic and even consider generating countdown graphics to post three days leading up to the event.

Some cyber security speakers will even offer to record a preview clip, announcing what they'll be discussing during the event, for you to share with attendees. Send out these videos to promote sign-ups, run targeted paid ads — whatever you can do to spark interest online.

Don't forget post-promotion and reinforcement

Post-promotion is easily missed, but it can keep people engaged long after the live stream has ended. Consider making the recording of the talk easily accessible on your digital channels. **Collaborate with your speaker on creating take-away resources** for your listeners, such as a downloadable summary of highlights, allowing access to the slide deck, or sharing additional resources attendees can check out to learn more.

4. Iron out the technical details.

If this is your first virtual event, consider the factors that make hosting a physically-staged event much different from hosting a digital one:

Meeting software.

For a webinar or virtual broadcast, you'll need meeting software to host the streaming URL. Be sure you're choosing a secure platform that's easily accessible to all of your attendees. Also, double-check that your speaker, host and event planning assistants are familiar with how it works prior to going live. This way, you'll be more confident to troubleshoot any technical issues.

There are a handful of excellent platforms for holding video conferences. A few of the top choices are GoToWebinar/GoToMeeting, Zoom, WebEx, ClickMeeting, On24, Everwebinar, and Livestorm. Check out how these options stack against one another on [Big Speak](#).

Internet connection.

Ensure your speaker and host have proper safeguards in place to keep their internet connection stable during the broadcast. If they're streaming from home, ask how they can guarantee readiness should their Wi-Fi fail. A good speaker or MC should have a backup hotspot to keep a steady connection under any circumstance.

Presentation deck.

Also, ask your speaker to prepare a backup plan should there be technical issues with visuals. Should their slide deck experience problems, can they keep the event going with just a webcam on their face? This may mean pulling up notes on their screen or having a print-out of their deck on hand to lead with confidence, despite a technical bottleneck.

5. Schedule a test run with your speaker.

Some speakers are great at self-promotion, but when it comes to the actual presentation... they fall a little short. Before showing off your great virtual speaker to your audience, see if they'll do a live run-through for you and important decision-makers before final approval.

This is the perfect opportunity for you to offer feedback as well as ask for necessary adjustments. **We recommend doing this run-through early enough to give the speaker reasonable time to revise before the actual broadcast date** — and to give yourself enough time to find a new presenter should you be unimpressed. Even after you choose the speaker, ask if they'd be willing to walk you through a full run-through at least a week before the live broadcast.

6. Set the tone while guests wait on the meeting link.

Once the big day arrives, it's your job to ensure the guests waiting on the meeting link are preoccupied by appropriately instructing the moderator and preparing a few instructions of your own.

Make sure people aren't signing onto a blank, silent screen.

You've built up the hype for your cyber security event by promoting it ahead of time. You want attendees to feel that same energy from the moment they connect to the live stream link. **Play upbeat or relevant music as the audience waits for the speaker and display your company's and the speaker's social handles to encourage attendees to follow your brands online.** This will give them a chance to engage with your brand while they wait for the presentation to start.

Ensure your moderator also promotes any special hashtags you've coined for the event. They can ask those listening to live Tweet throughout the presentation, tag your company or the speaker on social stories, etc.

[Here are some tips for live social interactions from Hootsuite.](#)

Don't immediately start; explain what's to be expected.

Wait a good five minutes after the clock strikes the magic hour to allow late-comers to trickle in. It's during these few minutes that your MC could go over what the audience can expect structure-wise for the presentation, how long it'll be, if there will be Q&A and if they should hold their questions until the end, etc.

7. Purchase a recording and post-event resources.

When choosing the best day and time for your event, we mentioned the importance of purchasing a recording of the presentation to share with those who could not attend. Not only can this recording come in handy for no-shows, but it can also serve to reinforce the lessons for those who did attend.

A versed cyber security speaker may also provide you with additional resources beyond the video. From specially selected blog posts to security training resources, be sure to ask how your virtual presenter can help keep lessons from the webinar top-of-mind, long after the live stream.



Have You Considered Kevin Mitnick?

In your search for cyber security speakers, did you stumble across Kevin Mitnick? Kevin was coined “the world’s greatest hacker” and has received immense praise for his enthusiasm and experience around all things cyber security.

Kevin is known for his incredible infiltration into 40 major corporations, which earned him a spot on the FBI’s Most Wanted list. He’s now a trusted security consultant for the Fortune 500 and governments worldwide.

Here are a few things that make Kevin the man for the job:

One-of-a-Kind Reputation

He was the world’s most wanted hacker without ever stealing a single cent, and a catalyst for the modern cyber security industry from his cell in solitary confinement. Even among the world’s most elite hackers, Kevin is revered.

Live Hacking Demonstrator

Why tell your audience about the latest and most dangerous cybersecurity threats when you can show them? Kevin hacks both companies and individuals live on stage to illustrate real threats and raise security awareness in ways you never knew were possible.

Media-Pull

Kevin commands a loyal following of fans, media outlets, and investors around the world. Even for those who’ve never heard of him, his reputation as a stellar live threat demonstrator set record attendance at event after event.

Modern Examples

Attract bigger, better sponsors in the security, financial, and technology industries. Kevin’s live hacking presentation highlights the very threats targeted by the industry’s best product and service offerings.

Learn more about his qualifications and book Kevin for a speaking engagement, today.

[Request Speaking Info](#)