

A Marketer's Guide to Organizing Events that Don't Suck

Delivering Experiences that Leave Lasting Impressions

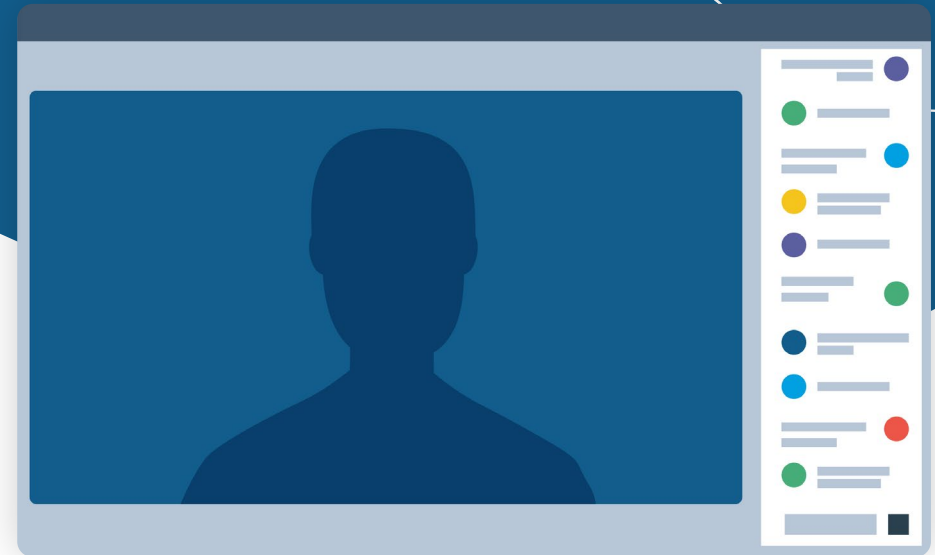


A New World of Events Has Emerged

Following one of the fastest modern paradigm shifts to virtual, 97%¹ of marketers are confident that hybrid events will become more prominent going forward.

One of the most compelling reasons for the continued popularity for virtual events - the ROI. Forget paying sky high prices for a booth on a show floor, cheap swag grabs, and overpriced onsite WiFi....Imagine creating a memorable event for a fraction of the cost, all accessible to your customers, even in the most remote locations. No unexpected flights, hotels or expensive dinners to factor into your budget.

There's no denying that virtual events are here to stay. In fact, more than 80% of marketers have seen a greater audience reach since their shift to virtual². However, virtual events can be boring. And in the wake of the pandemic, event organizers are challenged with cutting through the noise and Zoom fatigue their audience is facing.



Yet one thing is certain: **facilitating virtual events that put experience above all will be the sustainable path forward.**



Executive Summary

Like it or not, virtual events have solidified their place as a high performing marketing channel. Harvard Business Review Study reported that 86% of virtual event participants reported as high or higher levels of engagement compared to face-to-face meetings³.

Virtual events have lower overall costs, the ability to reach a wider and more diverse audience, and if hosted properly, can be a notable revenue driver. However, some of the

biggest challenges to hosting interactive virtual events are the technology and logistics - 60% of planners still aren't comfortable with the technology needed to host online events⁴.

At Postal, we believe virtual events don't have to be a hassle to plan. This playbook will uncover the possibilities of virtual events, challenges planners face when it comes to driving attendance and engagement, how to prove ROI, and how to leave lasting impressions.

Types of Virtual Events

MICRO OR ABM EVENTS

Small or micro events, under 50 attendees, are one of the most popular types of virtual events because they foster 1:1 connections, drive higher engagement and attendance rate, and can be tailored to the group. Common examples of these smaller group settings are round table discussions and virtual happy hours.

Small scale events, or ABM events don't need to be boring. The most memorable virtual events are personalized, relevant, and most importantly, fun. Chances are, if you're selling to an executive at an enterprise company, they have already been on a dozen calls before they show up to their event. The 45 minute opportunity you have to capture their interest is absolutely critical to the long-term success of your event. Our rule of thumb: If you wouldn't sacrifice after-work hours or time on the weekend to attend the same event, you may not get the attendance you're looking for. Some of the most engaging events have little-to-no educational content, but foster relationships and meaningful conversation.

Micro Event Idea: Invite some of your valued customers or employees to a Taco and Bourbon Happy Hour equipped with all the goodies to recreate a fun event at home. Want to book this out-of-the-box experience on Postal Events? [Learn More Here.](#)

TRADE SHOWS

Now that large scale gatherings are no longer permitted, large conferences have been forced to adapt to a digital version. And if you've attended more than one, you know they're not all well executed. Leaders in this virtual event adaptation, like Outreach, have learned how to re-create the energy normally felt in their annual conference, Unleash.

PRO TIP

Carve out smaller, targeted audiences within your attendee base and host curated experiences for VIP's or speakers like a wine tasting, cooking session with a chef, or a creative session with an artist. This can be a great way to engage in a more intimate virtual setting and a great opportunity to create unique sponsorship activations.

There are a few flavors of virtual trade shows that have emerged over the past year, but the best ones have learned how to integrate offline and online elements - in the Outreach example, a 90's virtual dance party was hosted in lieu of a live conference party inclusive of a 90's swag box landing on the registrants doorstep a few days before the party.

Trade Show Event Idea: Make sure there's an exclusive talent, celebrity, or benefit to joining your event. Even at a large scale, you can create unique experiences. Try bringing in a well-known comedy group, like Second City Improv, to facilitate an entertaining and valuable roast of your industry experts instead of a fireside chat. Want to book this out-of-the-box Second City show? [Learn More Here](#)

INTERNAL EVENTS

As workforces are forced to adapt to remote work, HR departments are struggling to uphold company culture and employee satisfaction via new channels. We are seeing increasing demand for internal event support. We recommend facilitating as much employee-to-employee interaction as possible. Make sure your teams are meeting new faces outside of their team or department.

Internal Event Idea: Create an experience that encourages laughter, team spirit, and collaboration, like a professional trivia experience hosted by Bar None Trivia. Want to book this end-to-end team building event? [Book Now on Postal Events](#)

Are webinars virtual events? We get this question a lot and we're here to take a stand against boring webinar content! Though virtual events can encompass educational webinars, virtual events in essence have more components to them across offline and online channels, and engaging elements beyond a well-designed slide deck.

Milestone Checklist for Delivering Memorable Events

In the next few sections, we'll go deep on the four main components to swiftly managing a memorable and profitable virtual event. Here's the basic checklist:

- Set **goals** and **objectives** for your event
- Design an **event experience** your attendees will enjoy
- **Think ahead** when it comes to tech
- **Build hype** no matter the event size to **drive engagement and attendance**



PRO TIP

Make sure your events and budget also align to these critical stages in the funnel so you can ensure you hit your bottom line marketing and sales goals.

Setting Goals

You've set goals before. But as marketers have adapted their event strategies in a changing world, so has their goal setting.

Our rule of thumb: map each event you're planning with an objective that matches to a stage in the customer journey. If your objective is to drive top of funnel engagement for your SMB audience, plan for a high volume, low cost per attendee event. On the flip side, if you're planning to engage late stage, enterprise deals, consider a high caliber, curated event.

Each event within each stage of the funnel should also have different KPIs and metrics of success. Top of funnel events should map to top of funnel goals, like number of new leads, MQLs, or new marketing-driven opportunities. Middle of the funnel events should likely take an ABM lense—considering KPIs like executive engagement from strategic accounts, or amount of total revenue opportunity in the “room.”



Top of Funnel (unlimited volume, low cost per attendee)

- Second City Improv Show
- Group Trivia Competition

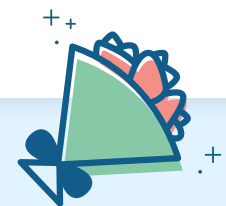


Middle of Funnel (under 50 high-value attendees)

- Wine tasting with Food Pairing
- Charcuterie Board Making
- Storytelling-Based Chocolate Tasting

Bottom of Funnel (50-150 valued customers)

- Craft Beer Tasting
- Cold Brew Tasting
- Zoom and Bloom Flower Making



Book these curated event packages directly with Postal Events **here!**

Creating an Experience That Doesn't Suck

Virtual events face stiff competition for people's time - Zoom fatigue is real! To meet your registration and live event attendance numbers, you need to consider the end-to-end experience of your event and how you can deliver a first-class experience. Here's a framework to think about how to develop a differentiated event design.

1. CREATE UNIQUE ATTENDEE EXPERIENCE BASED-OFF CUSTOMER SEGMENT AND TICKET TYPES.

Much like wedding planners think about that first-touch experience of receiving an invitation, you should be considering your invitation as important as the event itself.

Idea: Creative touches like handwritten invitations with a QR code linked to a registration page is a great way to ensure your event is on the attendee's radar and remembered by evoking the neuroscience of touch.

2. CURATE CONTENT, SPEAKERS, AND BUILD-IN UNIQUE MOMENTS.

Depending on how long your event format is, it will be important to pay attention to session length and fun breaks designed to keep people's attention in a virtual setting.

Idea: With some planning and the right partner like Postal, you can introduce interactive happy hours and other fun activities that include physical Event Kits - these are becoming popular as they tap into sensory experience: for instance, tasting kits or do-it-yourself activities. Send kits right to your attendee's doorstep with everything they will need to participate live and enjoy the session. By marrying elements of digital and live event design, you can overcome the challenge virtual events pose and elevate it to a whole new level.

3. GET THE WHOLE TEAM INVOLVED.

Typically, promoting and event communication comes from one specific team. However, by leveraging experiences, you enable sales to connect with prospects in a way that builds a relationship - the same goes for customer teams with clients!

PRO TIP

Sending attendees a package related to your event evokes a powerful principle of persuasion - reciprocity⁵. When people receive something that is unique and personalized, they are more likely to give back through a desired behavior, gift or service - in this case, attendance and engagement with your brand and event.



Building the Right Tech Stack

60%⁶ of virtual event planners aren't comfortable with their technology and 50% say they're unable to create live engagement. Having the right technology to track your performance metrics and KPIs is a vital component to success.

While there's plenty of options, you'll have to put in the time to figure out which one best suits your needs.

If you're planning on hosting a more complex event with breakout sessions and talent, chances are you'll eventually consider investing in a platform that can meet the needs of a complex event.

Data will be an important asset for your virtual event. Virtual event platforms such as Hubb come pre-built with marketing analytics tools that help you maintain a higher quality of control. Consider if you'll need any integrations as well - you may need to build landing pages or export data to your CRM.

Building Buzz Around the Event

An easy way to think about whether or not your event has traction is to do a sniff test on whether you've created FOMO, or "fear of missing out". If you can cultivate a contagious excitement around your event, the message will spread on its own and make your life of promoting the big day a lot easier.

Consider a multi-channel approach that you're likely familiar with, like email, video, social, etc but launch them in sequence as to make a big splash.

PRO TIP

Create a hashtag for your event and encourage attendees to post pictures of their event kits on social media. This is an easy way to build interest, excitement, and FOMO.



Maximizing Attendance

It's one thing to create hype and generate attendees, but it's another to get live attendees. In fact, the average no-show rate for virtual events is 35%⁷ and growing. Here are a few ways to ensure your registrants show up excited and engaged.

REMINDER EMAILS

Seems obvious, but ensuring you have adequate reminders (personal and automated) will help increase your attendance rate.

Idea: Send a \$5 eCard for coffee to attendees and leverage this in your subject lines to keep your event top of mind.

EVENT KITS

We mentioned the reciprocity principle earlier. Offering an event kit or gift package for each registration is not only an effective way to get people in the door, but to also get people to show up. If your kit has an interactive component that plays into the event, it can drastically enhance attendance rate. These kits can also be photographed for attendees to share on social media - great word of mouth marketing and a FOMO builder.

PRO TIP

Sending invitations from sales or customer reps that are already in contact with your attendee list will result in higher open and acceptance rates. Added bonus: an authentic touchpoint for sales and customer teams that will help accelerate your funnel velocity and customer renewals.

SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Promote via email and social media that you will be announcing something big at the event or have a huge surprise waiting for attendees. It could be something as big as an anticipated product launch, or simply a mind blowing singer//actor//comedian//celebrity speaker. The idea is to create that suspense for something that occurs at the event.

HOST A GIVEAWAY OR CONTEST

Hosting a giveaway or contest as a lead magnet to generate sign-ups can be one of the easiest ways to get more attendees to show up. Make sure you cover the details of the contest in your promotions. Make sure you're not offering something that would attract the wrong audience. For maximum ROI, giveaway the item at the end of the event so attendees are incentivized to stay throughout the duration.

Boosting Engagement During the Event

To prevent audience drop off, a high level of engagement must be maintained. No one likes sitting through lectures, especially when it's through a device screen. Go back through your event design and make sure you've crafted a run-of-show that has timing appropriately paced for virtual events with plenty of speaker changes and audience interaction over the duration of your event. Here's some examples.

INTERACTIVE CHATS

Get your audience engaged in the conversations by having an interactive chat throughout the event. This can be a great way for attendees to network with each other and riff off each other's experiences or ideas. Make sure your team is involved and that your event MC or moderators keep an eye on the chat and bring up valuable insights or questions that come up. This is the ultimate in virtual event engagement.

BREAKOUT ROOMS

A little meet and greet right off the bat can be a great way to help attendees familiarize themselves with each other and the hosts.

LIVE Q/A SESSIONS

Similarly, live Q/A sessions after a short presentation give the audience a chance to catch up on anything they may have missed. Have some pre-canned questions ready to go in case your attendees are shy to kick it off.

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES

Using an activity as the main allure to your event can drastically increase engagement. Assuming you delivered the materials to your attendees on time, activities can engage with multiple senses, leaving a better impression and higher brand recall. If you have an activity at your event, use it as the centerpiece of your virtual experience. Even better if it is attached to a physical component that attendees can interact with from home.

GIVEAWAYS

Announcing the winner to a giveaway is another easy way to keep engagement high. Turn on the chat room leading up towards the announcement to really see some sparks fly. Try to make the announcement towards the end, right after the last session for maximum attendance.

POLLS

Conducting polls during the event and then announcing the results is a great way to see what your audience thinks in real-time. Sharing this information back with them provides transparency on your end and makes for an engaging event.

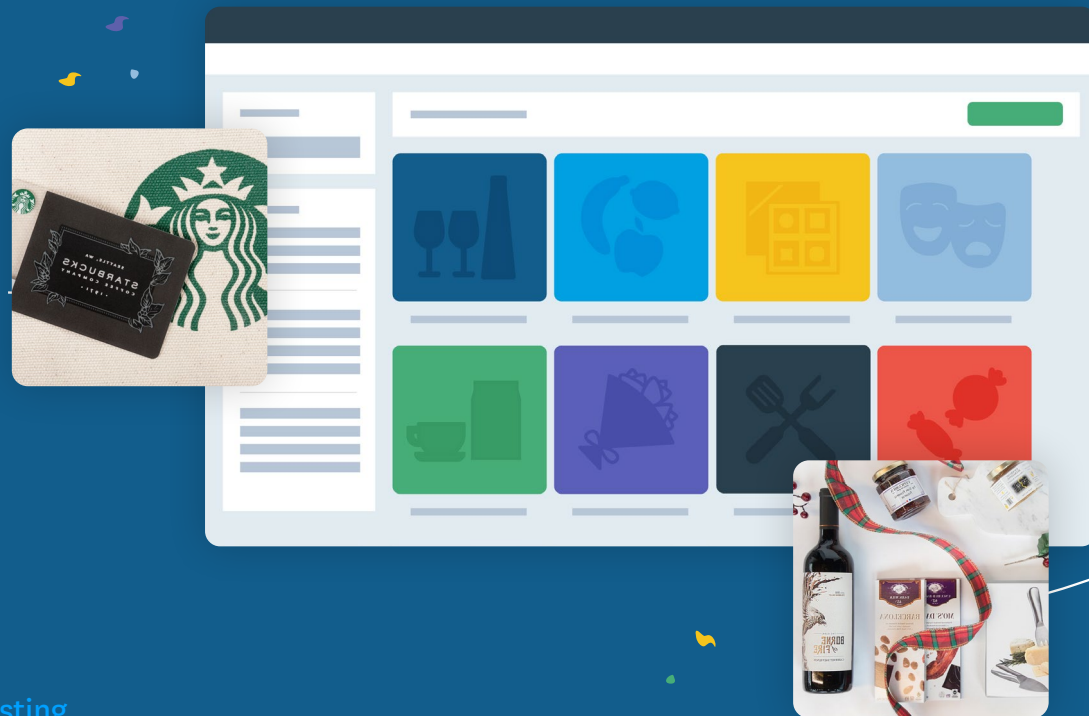


Post-Event Engagement

Following your event, make sure you keep the conversation and engagement of your attendees.

Consider saying “Thank You” with a handwritten note or e-gift. It goes a long way and will tremendously improve the performance of your post-event conversion rates.





Happy Eventing!

The best virtual events will be the ones that leave lasting impressions and build brand equity with its attendees.

Gone are the days of 60-minute slide presentations. If you want to deliver events that drive attendance and engagement, make sure you're optimizing for attendee experience above all else.

The shift to virtual has created a disconnect for many. But with platforms such as Postal Events, you can leverage this new change as an opportunity to bring together your valued customers across the globe and build meaningful connections through unique, curated experiences.

Learn more and explore the Postal Events marketplace today!

[Let's Go](#)