



Virtual Events FAQ

Here is our FAQ for virtual events. This provides general information of why these types of events are so important and how you can begin to plan and execute your first virtual event.

If you do not find the answer you are looking for, contact us at events@educations.com and we will help you.

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What are virtual events?

What exactly is a virtual event?

Basically a virtual event is an event held online. They are completely hosted and run within a digital environment allowing attendees to participate from anywhere in the world. And when we say event we mean any kind of gathering or occasion that you could possibly think of. From large scale trade shows and fairs, conferences and career days, to smaller webinars or online classes. Any gathering of people held online can be considered a virtual event.

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Have I experienced a virtual event before?

More than likely. If you have attended a conference from your computer or joined an online class from home, attended a webinar online, or watched an on-demand lecture then you have experienced a virtual event. All these are examples of virtual events.

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How do virtual events work?

Virtual events utilise the latest technological advancements, such as cloud computing, and dedicated software, either video conferencing tools or proprietary software platforms. By using these tools they enable you to host a variety of events that showcase your latest products or services, enable engagement and find new customers or recruits.

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What is a virtual events platform?

A software platform is a collection of software and resources contained within a single environment, designed to work together towards a single purpose. There are many varieties of software platforms and in general they are hosted by a cloud computing service provider, such as Amazon or Microsoft Azure, and made available as a Software as a Solution (SaaS) product. A virtual events platform is just a type of software platform dedicated to hosting events online. They incorporate a multitude of software applications, such as for the virtual environment, chat, email and audio & video tools, into a single customisable ecosystem that is purpose built for hosting events.

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What types of virtual events are there?

What are the different types of virtual events?

Like in-person events, virtual events can involve a variety of different possibilities. But in general there are four main categories of virtual events: webinars, virtual conferences, internal events and external events.

In addition, there are also hybrid events that combine both virtual and in-person attributes.

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What are webinars?

Webinars are usually one-off seminars or discussions, lasting between 35 to 80 minutes. By hosting these sessions virtually allow attendees from around the world to join and participate in, and they will generally have one or more speakers or presenters.

Webinars will typically use a dedicated video conferencing tool that allows for both the hosting and streaming of content plus interactivity between the hosts and participants. These features include Q&A, chats, audio & video conferencing, the ability to present live or pre-recorded content and they often offer the content on-demand after the event.

Organizations use webinars to build awareness, establish thought leadership and increase conversions. They offer more capabilities and tracking options than standard online meetings and can be used for internal and external training, product announcements or demonstrations.

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What are virtual conferences?

Virtual conferences are very similar to in-person conferences; they are built around live presentations and expansive agendas, which include keynote speakers, breakout rooms and multiple sessions. Virtual conferences often last between 1 to 3 days and are primarily used to connect business partners, clients and employees and rely heavily on networking and community engagement tools.

Virtual conferences will generally employ a dedicated virtual events platform that allow attendees to view presentations in real time, build their own agenda, as well as providing on-demand content and extensive interactivity tools.

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What are internal virtual events?

Internal virtual events are very common within organizations today and cover a wide range of event types including sales kick-offs, town hall meetings, company wide events, training & onboarding.

Many organizations are widespread across multiple locations and even globally, gathering all their employees to a single place can be very difficult and prohibitively expensive. Bringing the employees of an organization to a single virtual space to share the company message saves time, money and resources.

Organizations expect a high level of service and using a dedicated virtual events platform makes it easy to carry out these types of internal communications, and this method is fast becoming the norm.

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What are external virtual events?

These events are held for those outside of your organization, and are generally large scale user conferences or industry trade shows. As with the other types of virtual events, all traditional in-person external events can go virtual. This includes trade shows, fairs, recruitment & open days and industry exhibitions.

In recent years almost all in-person events have moved to a virtual environment, which has resulted in an increase in audience attendance and a reduction in costs. External virtual events reach millions worldwide and allow visitors to attend irrespective of their location.

With the increase in scale comes an increase in workload and expectations. These events require higher levels of production and commitment as well as more planning and coordination. And for the exhibitors there is a greater expectation for better lead generation and conversion rates. All this can only be achieved by using a dedicated virtual events platform that comes equipped with all the tools and features required for this scale of event.

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What are hybrid events?

Hybrid events are a combination of both in-person and virtual events, and can be both internal or external event types. The attendees of these events are both virtual and physical audiences.

Hybrid events are very beneficial as they have qualities of both virtual and physical events, and have gained a lot of popularity in the last few years.

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What are the benefits of hybrid events?

Hybrid events have many advantages over the other types of events. These events have a remarkable reach as they cater for both virtual and physical attendees, but they are able to incorporate a lot of the interactivity expected from virtual events into a live environment. Combining the satisfaction of meeting people in person with the engagement and tracking capabilities provided from the virtual events platform.

Internal events, such as sales kick-offs or corporate training can utilise the hybrid model to great effect. For example, keynote presentations can be hosted at a nearby facility where local employees or partners can physically attend but simultaneously streamed to those viewing online. This effectively gets rid of the need of being in a specific geographical location, which is very cost-effective. And with the vast range of interactive tools available everyone can feel that they are part of the event, whether they are in-person or online.

For external hybrid events there are even more advantages. Increases in ROI and attendance, and greater customer satisfaction. Sessions can be recorded and made available after the event ends for people who couldn't attend the live event. Live sessions or tours can be organized for the in-person attendees but also streamed at the same time for those online. And all attendees, whether they are in-person or online, can use the interactive engagement tools to really bring together the sense of community within the event.

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Why host a virtual event?

What are the benefits of virtual events?

There are many benefits of hosting your events virtually. Firstly, and it is important to say, almost all of the benefits of hosting in-person events are carried over to the virtual environment. Except for actually physically meeting someone in person, virtual events provide the same key objectives and results.

Key benefits of virtual events:

- Eco-friendly
- Cost-effective
- Flexibility
- Attendee engagement & networking
- Ease of data collection & reporting

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How are virtual events good for the environment?

Climate change is a serious challenge for everyone, and companies and organizations need to do all they can to address their impact on the environment. In order to reduce their carbon footprint, companies are increasingly encouraged to host virtual events. While physical events have a huge environmental cost, a virtual event will create less than 1% of the carbon emissions compared to a live physical event. With little to no travel, minimal food & water wastage and almost zero plastic or paper usage, if your company is seeking to go green, then moving to virtual events is the right option. Moreover, there is a demand by consumers to opt for environmentally aware businesses, and virtual events are a step in the right direction.

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How can virtual events save money?

Hosting a virtual event has comparatively less marketing and operation costs. Simply put, companies can profit more with less capital investment. Hosting a physical event incurs many costs, such as finding and booking a venue, technical & production costs, food & beverages, marketing collateral, graphics or construction costs, shipping & logistics etc...And not forgetting all those travel costs.

A lot of the expenses associated with a physical event are completely negated when moving to a virtual event; potentially cutting the overall cost by up to 70%.

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How do virtual events save time?

Hosting your events within a virtual platform will help you conserve a lot of time. Physical events require a lot of planning and a lot of time to physically set up and execute. Holding your events online eliminates the need for traveling, organizing accommodation or dealing with other logistical issues. Furthermore, content can be uploaded and changed on the fly and event templates can be repurposed again and again.

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How do virtual events offer flexibility?

Virtual events rely on technology, and this technology provides an incredible amount of flexibility. Firstly, you are not bound by a single physical venue or a predefined time frame for your event. With virtual events it is possible to have a fully branded environment that is accessible 365 days a year, at any time, and from any location worldwide. You can organize staff meetings, product launches, training sessions, webinars, and engage with your customers through live sessions or Q&As and post content and updates online within seconds. A single, well-developed, events platform can be used for any type of event, small or large, internal or external, providing you with the ultimate event flexibility.

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How do virtual events promote attendee engagement & networking?

Traditional physical events are built for engagement. From attendees networking at happy hours to one-on-one appointments and live sessions; these types of events encourage attendee involvement. You might think that virtual events don't provide an opportunity for networking – you'd be wrong.

Sessions can include live polling, Q&As or surveys. Engagement tools such as group chats, quizzes and gamification can all be employed within the virtual platform. Notifications and messaging capabilities mean attendees and exhibitors can meet each other virtually and set up meetings.

Another advantage of virtual events is their inclusivity. There can be many reasons why someone cannot attend your in-person event. From financial and budgetary constraints, to health reasons and disabilities. By hosting your event online everyone can participate, adding an element of inclusivity to your event strategy.

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How do virtual events make data collection easy?

Collecting and measuring engagements and capturing attendee participation is the only way to assess an event's success, whether it is an in-person event or online. This is where virtual events have a massive advantage as the collection of data is fundamental with a virtual events platform.

As every interaction occurs within the software platform, all engagements and connections can be captured in real time from all attendees and exhibitors. Live feedback for booth visits or session attendance can be accessed and acted upon immediately and potential leads can be gathered and dispersed to your sales force without delays. And after the event you have all this information to take away and follow up on or help plan for your next event.

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How do virtual events increase your reach?

The biggest hurdle with hosting physical events is traveling. People might not be able to attend your event as they are not in the right location. And for some they are not able to attend due to the time and costs involved with traveling. When you host events virtually, none of this matters. Attendees do not need to travel to your event, they do not even need to be in the same country to participate. Virtual events allow your organization to provide a chance for people living all around the world to attend your event and in turn, increase your reach to a larger audience.

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How are virtual events interactive?

Building on the necessity for organizations to connect virtually with their customers and employees, the development of conferencing tools and virtual events platforms, especially within the last few years, has been exponential. The majority of this development is focussed on the interactivity that they can provide. This is because interactivity and engagement are key to a successful event. Live polling, Q&As, surveys, live chat, group forums, gamifications, and more all add to the interactive element, and an increase in interactions leads to a better user experience and greater success.

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How can virtual events help in creating connections?

Virtual events can be fast-paced. Attendees have the ease of scrolling through a list of virtual booths or product listings instead of walking from one booth to the next at a convention center. Each virtual booth will have online representatives who interact with the attendees in real time, sometimes with a larger volume of people than they could do at a physical event. This enables your organization to make multiple connections, at a higher rate and from a much more diverse customer base. Furthermore, all the interactions are saved within the platform so no customers will fall through the cracks.

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How are virtual events easier to analyse?

The success or failure of an event is judged through the use of analytics, which traditionally are hard to organize and collect. Events held on a virtual platform, allow you to gather all the important information necessary and turn it into quantifiable data. You can keep an accurate track of the analytics of the entire event and more importantly these can be viewed and acted upon in real time.

Furthermore, feedback and surveys from attendees and exhibitors can be incorporated into the event strategy. Ensuring that you gather not just pure data but actually gauge the user experience at a human level, identifying areas within your event that worked, or didn't work.

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Will virtual events replace in-person events?

Can virtual events complement physical events?

Many companies today have implemented virtual events as part of their marketing strategy. In many cases the virtual event has replaced the traditional physical event. However, hybrid events add increased opportunities, and can be used to combine virtual and physical events.

One hybrid event strategy is to hold your physical and virtual events simultaneously. When you develop the project timeline, consider both the physical and virtual event milestones and how this can be combined. Incorporating the look-and-feel, branding and physical location imagery into the a virtual environment will make virtual attendees feel part of the physical event.

Another hybrid event strategy is to capture key content from the physical event and use it for a separate virtual-only event at a later time. This option is great for allowing physical event attendees to revisit sessions they enjoyed, or to view sessions and content they missed due to a packed agenda. It also provides a great way to leverage all that great content to reach a whole new audience who were unable to make it to the physical event.

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Will virtual events completely replace physical events?

While some companies use virtual events to complement or supplement their physical shows, others may opt to drop the physical event entirely. Sometimes companies discard their physical event after a virtual event's success; others prefer virtual events due to cost or resource limitations.

Many companies are discovering that with tighter travel budgets and a globally dispersed audience, physical events are either not practical or have been steadily losing ROI. There will always be a place for large scale in-person events or exhibitions but smaller shows with smaller budgets are having a harder time maintaining attendance figures. So while larger in-person events are not dead, there is a significant increase in the number of virtual events.

Going virtual can be a cost-effective and efficient way to get your message across to a global audience who never has to leave their office. Keep in mind, though, replacing a physical event entirely with a virtual one changes the dynamics of your audience participation, content development and marketing strategy.

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What are the key features of a virtual events platform?

What are the key elements of a virtual events platform?

With an immense variety of virtual events platforms available it is often difficult to know where to start. The key is to understand what it is that a virtual events platform actually does and what it should offer. Attendee engagement & interactivity, data collection, and content are the key components. Any virtual events platform should offer these key elements.

The key elements include:

- A fully customisable and branded virtual environments
- Easy and customisable event registration
- Live and pre-recorded content
- Presentation and webinar capabilities
- 2-way interactions via live chat messaging
- Audio & video calls / conferencing
- Q&A sessions
- Live polling and surveys
- Live analytics, dashboards and data tracking

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What customizability can I expect from a virtual events platform?

Virtual events platforms generally offer customization features, such as:

- Event environments, e.g. exhibition halls or webinar rooms
- Event branding, e.g. logos and banners within the environment
- Registration forms
- Virtual booths
- Branded event website
- Email templates

If attendees log onto your virtual event's registration page and see the virtual platform provider's logo, they may be confused and decide not to register for your event. Being able to integrate your company branding and messaging throughout the virtual events platform will help create a consistent experience for attendees.

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What networking & engagement features can I expect?

Virtual events platforms generally offer networking & engagement features, such as:

- Live chat messaging
- Audio & video calls / conferencing
- Q&A
- Live polling
- Feedback or exit surveys

Just like in-person events, being able to communicate with your attendees at all stages of the event lifecycle and keep them engaged during your virtual sessions is essential.

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What automation and user features can I expect?

Virtual events platforms generally offer the following automation and user features:

- Access to the backend for organizers and administrators
- Bulk upload or download of content
- Automated data collection and analytics
- Automated reporting
- Automated notifications and messaging
- User friendly environment and short learning curve
- Quick setup and self-service of event environment

Automation is a must-have feature. Automation makes event planning and execution easier, as well as helping save time and money. Especially if you need to create virtual events quickly, automation is vitally important.

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What can I expect from a virtual booth?

Virtual events platforms generally offer the following virtual booth features:

- One-to-one interaction between the attendee and representative
- Fully customizable and branded booths
- Host video content
- Share digital collateral such as PDFs or other documentation
- Book meetings with representatives
- Full insight into leads and opportunities generated via booth visits
- Full data capture of visitors including chat transcripts

Not all virtual events platforms offer the option to have virtual booths. Instead these platforms display exhibitors on individual webpages. Although virtual platforms cannot replicate the face-to-face experience, they do allow for one-to-one networking. Virtual booths are analogous to the stands you see at in-person events, such as trade shows and exhibitions.

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What sponsorship opportunities can I expect?

Virtual events platforms generally offer the following sponsorship opportunities:

- Banners within exhibit halls
- Main stage
- Networking spaces
- Social media channels
- Rotating ad banners promoting breakouts or sessions
- Gamification with sponsor messaging
- Digital show bags where attendees store event content of interest

A great way to attract sponsors is to offer a logo placement opportunity on the event welcome or home page. Here, high-level sponsors can place logos or video messages aimed towards the attendees. You can also offer customized banners or ads in the different areas within the virtual environment, or even provide sponsors with their own virtual booth where they can post live product demonstrations or video product showreels.

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What broadcast options can I expect?

Virtual events platforms generally offer the following broadcast features:

- Host live and pre-recorded content
- Support a variety of webinar and conferencing applications
- Support a variety of live streaming solutions
- Support embedded and linked to content
- Multi-speaker sessions
- Interactive and engagement tools

Having the ability to broadcast your keynote presentations live during a virtual event is critical. Live broadcasting not only creates a sense of urgency amongst viewers but also helps engage attendees via live polling or Q&A sessions. In addition to live broadcasting, some virtual event platforms feature multi-speaker sessions, which allow multiple people to present at the same time. This is particularly useful for panel discussions and roundtables.

Although many sessions within virtual events are live, to maximize attendee engagement and the attendee experience having the option to upload pre-recorded content is important. The idea of the simulive sessions are becoming more and more popular.

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What level of support can I expect?

Virtual events platforms generally offer the following support options:

- Live troubleshooting, especially during the event
- 24/7 support
- Multiple methods to obtain support, e.g. live chat, email, telephone
- Training & onboarding
- Knowledge base and online resources

No matter how prepared you are for your virtual event, like in-person events, the chances of running into problems is always possible, even likely. Since everything is done online the likelihood of technical errors are much higher than at an in-person event. That's why ensuring that your virtual events provider offers live troubleshooting, especially during the event, is a must.

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What analytics and reporting can I expect?

Virtual events platforms generally offer the following analytics and reporting options:

- Real time analytic and metrics dashboard
- Ability to add notes or comments to attendees
- Ability to shortlist or qualify attendees
- Capture a multi-dimensional view of attendees' presence and interactions
- Post event analytics and data support
- Downloadable reporting

Analytics and reporting are important to any type of event. The data captured helps determine the event's success and to make improvements for future events. But importantly the more information about the attendees and their interactions that can be given to an exhibitor the better they will be able to qualify potential leads, increasing ROIs and ultimately the success of the event. And the ability for exhibitors to see and act on this information in real time is of the utmost importance.

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What does a virtual event experience look like?

What elements can I expect at a virtual event?

Virtual events are built around attendee engagement and content. While there is a plethora of styles and types in general online events include the following elements:

- Event website
- Event registration
- Live and pre-recorded content
- Live chat
- Interactive video calls/conferencing
- Q&A
- Live polling
- Feedback surveys
- Dedicated exhibitor booths or webpages

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What is the virtual event journey?

While many of us have experienced a virtual event in some capacity it is often difficult to describe exactly what the exact experience will be. Is it like a webinar or a large online meeting? What additional steps are involved, what do I need to do to access the event, and then what happens?

Understanding the virtual event journey will help you conceptualize the environment and describe the experience your attendees will have. This journey will differ from event to event but you should have a clear idea of how and what an attendee will experience as they navigate through your event.

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How will the event look from the attendee perspective?

To begin, attendees will visit the event homepage and register. Virtual events platforms integrate event registration systems to capture attendee information automatically as part of the registration process. Once registered attendees will enter the event. The first point of call is usually the virtual lobby or reception area. Here attendees can orientate themselves with the event and the platform, and get all the essential information, including the session agendas and exhibitor lists. They can view itineraries, chat and ask questions with the receptionists and click to attend a session.

For smaller events, attendees can join a webinar or presentations and have access to the supporting content like presentation slides, videos or white papers. With larger events, attendees can either join a live session hosted by the event organizers or a webinar hosted by a specific exhibitor. Engagement tools like chat, Q&A, surveys and session evaluations create an immersive virtual event experience.

As well as the sessions many events will include exhibitor halls filled with virtual booths that they can visit and connect directly with the exhibitors. From here they can chat, view video content, download program information or brochures, and arrange one-to-one meetings.

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What is a virtual booth?

At a physical trade show, different companies come together in one place to promote their products and services. They each have a physical space where they set up their stands to showcase their products and provide a meeting space for customers. This physical space is called a booth.

The innovations in technology have enabled the ability to take the concept of the booth and put them within the virtual platform. So, virtual booths are spaces within the virtual event where different exhibitors can interact with attendees, talk about their services, and make new connections. And just like at a physical event the virtual booths can be tailored to the exhibitor with their own branding and content.

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How will the event look from the organizer's perspective?

Organizers get the attendees' view plus much more. Backend access enables event organizers to manage the event themselves, modify the environment, upload content, manage live sessions and view data in real time. With everything online, data is easy to capture and curate via automated analytics. You can measure event performance with up-to-the-minute data on unique visitors, views, questions, downloads, posts and chats.

Organizers can create custom reports for stakeholders in a couple of clicks. Drill down to glean insights on the most engaged attendees and companies and discover the top-performing sessions by attendee evaluations and content usage.

It will be up to the organizers to ensure that the event runs smoothly. They will be in constant contact with exhibitors, keynote speakers and attendees; answering questions, solving problems and facilitating a successful event. This is all accomplished via the virtual events platform backend.

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How do I choose the best virtual events platform?

What should I look for in a virtual events platform provider?

The key to your virtual event success is finding the right platform provider. The platform must be easy to use for attendees, quick to build for the organizer, offer a wide range of engagement and interactivity tools and deliver exceptional metrics for measuring ROI. On the backend, the platform must be stable, preferably hosted in the cloud to manage scalability, highly secure and built for accessibility on any browser or device. Finally, the provider should have solid experience with event management and customer support.

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What are the first steps in choosing a platform provider?

The first step is to determine the type of experience you want for your attendees. Will your event be for internal or external participants, will it be educational with little interactivity or do you envision a lot of engagement from the attendees, will it be a commercial fair where the key objective is to sell. What will be the audience size, will you need to ensure access for a larger number of attendees? This all needs to be considered as it will determine the features and functionality that the virtual events platform you finally decided on will need to provide.

Once you understand the basic requirements for your event and the experience that you want for your attendees the next step is to determine the event goals. What do you want to get out of the virtual events platform, what are your priorities? When considering your goals it is best to focus on key metrics. The general advantages of hosting a virtual event such as saving time and money, are not specific enough. By selecting a few key metrics and setting numerical targets based on these metrics you will be able to focus your goals, making it easier to judge the overall success of your event.

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What features should the virtual events platform have?

Once you have determined your event goals and the type of event you will be hosting you should now know what are the must-have features. Each platform will have slightly different offerings so it is important that you know what you need based on your goals. For example, do you want virtual booths and exhibitor halls, are you hosting multi agenda sessions, do you want live presentations with a lot of attendee participation?

Here are some key requirements to consider:

- Number of attendees and any limitations
- Live and pre-recorded webinars
- Live analytics, dashboards and data tracking
- Integration with CRMs
- Fully customizable event branding and environment
- Attendee matching technology
- On-demand content
- Reception area/help desk
- Custom registration
- Networking opportunities (video chats, 1:1 chats and meeting rooms)
- Mobile app and/or responsive design for different devices

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What other aspects should I consider?

While the specific features that different platforms provide are somewhat tangible, there are other areas to consider that may or may not be directly related to the platform itself. These additional aspects are very important. With many platforms providing the same functionality and capabilities, it is often the case that these additional aspects will determine which provider you will go with.

These additional aspects include:

- Overall cost and/or cost per attendee
- Technical support & customer service
- Onboarding & training
- User friendly
- Community
- Post event analytics and data support
- Experience and proven use cases
- Support with additional event marketing

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What long-term aspects should I consider?

While considering a virtual events platform you may already have a particular event, or series of events, in mind. But you should also be mindful of how the platform can be utilized in the future. You more than likely do not want to keep changing platforms, so it is not only important to think about how the platform fits into your immediate goals but equally important to consider your long-term goals and if the platform can adapt accordingly.

When thinking long-term consider the following:

- Is this platform future proof? What technologies does it incorporate and/or rely on?
- Does this platform offer an end-to-end solution?
- Can this platform be used for a variety of different purposes or event types?
- Does this platform integrate with in-person/hybrid events?
- What are the long-term investments and company goals for this provider?

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How can I host a virtual event?

What are the fundamental questions to consider before I get started?

Hopefully by now you have determined the type of event you want to host and chosen the best virtual events platform to suit your needs. You are now in the pre-event phase and this is critical to your success. Deciding on your objectives, developing a timeline and overall plan, collecting all the elements (content, speakers, presentations, etc...), assigning roles and identifying responsibilities, lay the groundwork for the virtual event planning process.

Consider these fundamental questions:

- What are the objectives of this event? Are you creating a virtual event to drive leads or generate brand awareness? Is your virtual event for a product launch, a recruitment fair or an internal training day?
- What is your budget? Create an outline for the budget and decide before proceeding with the planning. Make a checklist of resources and where to allocate them to make your virtual event successful.
- What metrics will you use to measure the results or define success? Registrants, attendees, leads generated, average time within the virtual environment, downloads, chat interactions, etc....
- Who is your target audience? Is there more than one?
- Will you have sponsors/partners as part of the event—if so, how many? What will your sponsorship packages look like, and how much will you charge for them?
- Will this event be internal or external and open to prospects, customers, and partners?
- Will you charge for the event or is the attendance free?
- What do you want people to take away from attending your event?

Once you have answered these questions you can begin to work on content. Speakers, webinar presentations, themes, material upload, guidelines and the exhibitors or partners involved will all contribute to the strategy.

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How do I start planning for my first virtual event?

As with any project having clear objectives and a well-defined timeline is essential, and planning a virtual event is no different. Below is a step-by-step guide of the most important processes to ensure a successful event:

1. Create a plan

This step includes defining the objectives, demographics, success metrics, theme or topics for the event, and the ultimate goal. It should be clear to all those involved why you are planning this event and who the target audience will be. The initial plan should include the budget for the event. Deciding on a budget at this stage will allow you to correctly plan for the overall event, and determine what features, activities or marketing strategies you can actually afford to deploy at your event.

2. Define a timeline

This step will define a timeline and overall planning strategy. It must be clear what needs to be done before, during, and after the event, and who is responsible for each specific task. This should include the format of the event, time & date of the event, interactive & engagement tools, how many sessions you will host, staffing schedules and deliverable deadlines. And remember content is king! Unique, informative and well-produced content will keep your audiences interested and hooked throughout your event. Ensure that you identify what content you will have at your event as soon as possible and set realistic timelines that factor in post-production timeframes.

3. Identify and allocate your resources

This is one of the most crucial parts of event planning and includes identifying the resources you have available, what resources you need and allocating responsibilities. You will need to analyze your team individually, and assign responsibilities accordingly. Communication is key. Making sure all those involved, both internal and external, are aware of their roles and expectations is essential. You should also consider your technological resources and requirements. To be successful you will need seamless integration between the human and technical resources.

Once you have these initial steps established you will then need to consider your marketing strategies, which should include email and social media marketing, website listings and even paid marketing. You will also need to set up a system for reminders for those who have shown interest in your event.

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How can I boost engagements at a virtual event?

Virtual event platforms come with an extensive list of engagement features that can be utilised to boost engagements at your virtual event.

Here are some of the most popular virtual event engagement features:

- Live chat
- Live polls
- Q&A sessions
- Live surveys
- Social walls
- Photo booths
- Quizzes
- Giveaways
- Offer digital certificates
- Virtual games
- Treasure hunts

The concept of gamification, the idea of implementing game-like elements such as scoring points or collecting items, is now commonplace with virtual events platforms. All virtual events platforms will include some level of gamification to help enhance engagement and the user experience. Depending on your event gamification can be a great way to engage attendees or a distracting annoyance, so should be considered carefully.

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What does on-demand mean for virtual events?

When planning your event you should also determine the length of your event's on-demand period. This is the time after the event when content will still be available to visitors from within the virtual environment.

The on-demand time will serve as a lead generation mechanism that can continuously produce leads and engage customers. It will also give attendees an opportunity to revisit interesting sessions and a way for those who were unable to attend the event access to the content.

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What makes a virtual event successful?

A virtual event is successful when you achieve your pre-determined success metrics and when your team is able to build meaningful relationships that directly benefit your business in some way. If you are hosting the event you also need to consider the user experience and customer satisfaction.

Areas to consider when determining success:

- Achieving your success metrics and goals
- Positive user feedback
- No technical issues
- Deliver value to your audience
- High levels of networking and engagement
- Great feedback from Internal colleagues
- Increase ROI. The quantity and quality leads compared to in-person events

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