

Best Practices for Planning Hybrid Events

Life Sciences Marketing Meeting- June 2021

Planning Agenda and Content

- Adopt an event producer's mindset when planning agendas and creating compelling content for both in-person and virtual audiences.
- Consider staggering event's agenda to serve audience segments from different time zones. This may improve attendance and engagement.
- Examine staffing needs to properly cover events that span different time zones.
- Introduce new content every 7-8 minutes to keep audiences engaged, per recent studies.
- Build breaks into the virtual agenda allowing audiences to stretch, get water, and use restroom.
- Select and rehearse with two emcees: one for the in-person audience and one for the virtual audience.
- Decide what content will be live streamed vs. pre-recorded.
 - Pre-recorded content may include:
 - Teaser videos to build excitement leading up to event
 - Messages from company executives
 - Customer testimonials
 - Product demos
 - How to decide what content should be live streamed vs. pre-recorded
 - Live content tends to be spontaneous, authentic and engaging.
 - Pre-recorded content can sometimes come off as scripted and dull.
 - Be mindful of the potential risk of failure associated with live streamed content.
 - Rely on AV experts to capture high quality video and audio tracks as the content will reflect your brand.
 - For pre-recorded content, consider not editing speakers' imperfections because those imperfections make the pre-recorded material sound more human.
 - Pre-recorded content may need to be reviewed and approved by legal, regulatory, and other corporate groups. Build in time for those reviews and approvals.
 - Seek opportunities to reuse all content to increase your marketing ROI.

Engaging the Virtual Audience

- Keep the virtual audience engaged through polls, chats, and breakout room discussions.
- Be sure to monitor and respond quickly to questions and feedback from the virtual audience.
- Be creative. Try new things for networking opportunities.
- Read articles, listen to podcasts, and talk to meeting planners to borrow ideas for networking, such as:
 - Drawings
 - Trivia games
 - Escape rooms
 - Live musical performances
 - Mixing cocktails from kits sent to event registrants in advance of event.

Planning for the In-person Audience

- Be proactive in planning exhibits.
- Hire on-site AV experts to support events.
- Have a backup plan for content if AV problems arise (e.g., a general video you can segue to).
- Plan exhibit with social distancing in mind.
- Have hand sanitizing stations and masks available for use.
- Avoid hospitality suites or serving food at the exhibit.
- Examine budgets vs. actual costs as costs for lumber and labor have increased significantly.
- Avoid late fees and/or service delays by submitting exhibit work orders early.
- Consider having smaller, exclusive in-person events that prioritizes quality engagement with targeted prospects over reaching a larger audience.

Goals Setting and Metrics

- Use metrics from virtual events to understand what content resonates with audiences to help plan future events.
- Metrics to track:
 - Number of attendees (virtual vs. in-person)
 - Engagement (comments, questions, likes)
 - Length of time virtual attendees consumed content
 - Number of leads generated
 - Number of conversions (e.g., revenue generated, product demos requested, requests for proposals)