

The Ultimate Virtual Events Checklist: 2023 Edition





As the pandemic wore on into 2021, we saw more innovations in the virtual events industry to ward off “Zoom Fatigue” and keep attendees interested and engaged. **2021 ended and as 2022 got underway**, in-person events began coming back. Where does that leave the virtual event scene heading into 2023? **Innovating once again!**

With new events options crowding in, we decided now was the perfect **time to update our Ultimate Checklist**, to give you fresh tools and guidance to keep your virtual events interesting and relevant as **we move forward into the “new normal.”**

Flex Your Virtual Mindset

With the steep rise in hybrid events and a slow but steady return to in-person conferences and summits, audiences have more competition than ever for their time and attention. However, virtual events are still very relevant. According to recent client research by Gartner, “30% of technology and service providers (TSPs) with at least \$100 million in revenue will extend their reach to additional audiences and roles by shifting to a virtual-first model for both first-party and third-party events, compared to less than 5% pre-pandemic.” The takeaway? Virtual events are a central part of the events industry landscape beyond lockdown scenarios.



Match Your Tech to Your Event

In the same Gartner study, they found that, “client inquiry related to event technology options is on track to increase 45% in 2022, spurred by buyers looking to reduce redundancies in their event tech stack and implement global standards for events within their business.” Making sure you are taking full advantage of what currently you have, streamlining your processes related to your event technology, and offering events built with the event tech your attendees are likely familiar with will help you enhance your program offerings and standardize across business segments. 2021 and 2022 saw continued investment in adding new features and functionality to familiar favorites, like Microsoft Teams and Teams Live Event, with many new enhancements designed specifically for events and presentations. Learn which new features you can leverage and that may help you eliminate duplicate

event technologies to keep your events current and cost-effective.

Assess what your current tech capabilities are and decide what you may need as you grow. Can your tech keep up with your goals and needs? Is it ready to scale? Can you flex your tech to provide events options, such as hybrid or multi-track sessions? What went wrong with past events? What went right? Some of the answers to these questions will take shape around the type of virtual events you’re planning, so it’s important to match the technology you’re using with the type of events you want to deliver and the number of participants you expect. Performing an audit of your current event tech to identify any areas in need of attention is always time well spent.



Ensure Adequate Staffing & Consider Outsourcing to Meet Needs

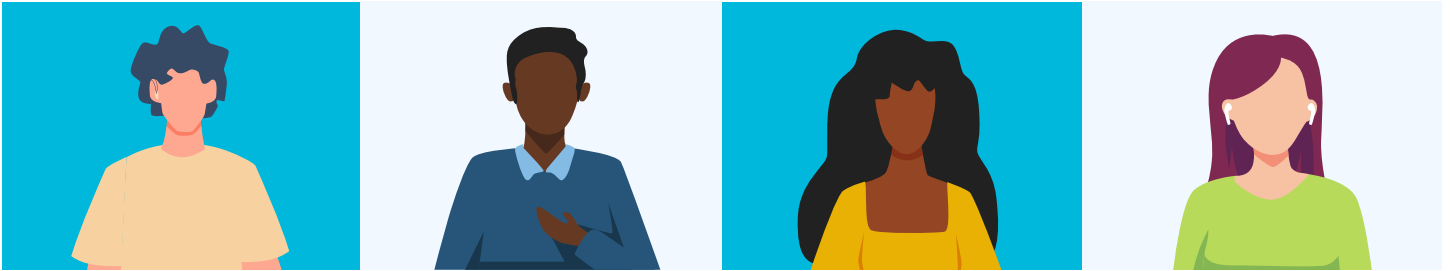
Continue to take a long view of your event staffing needs by breaking out your virtual events calendar and looking ahead. Providing adequate staffing for your virtual events can make or break the experience for your attendees.

We recommend planning for at least two to three people per event: a moderator and a technical producer/support person. Well-trained moderators keep the event flowing and on track, as well as helping presenters keep an eye on Q&A. Your technical person can offer troubleshooting assistance to presenters or attendees having difficulties, relieving the presenter or moderator of interrupting their duties to help.

A few words of advice: Train your team members, maintain clear event best practices documentation, perform technical walk-throughs, and create a disaster

recovery plan. If your staff members have the know-how they need, event delivery will go much smoother. Refresh their training occasionally and include any new features your tech stack has added. If you don't have enough hands on deck to access needed expertise internally, talk to an event management and services provider to explore [outsourcing](#) what you don't have available in house. Virtual event services providers can support you with training, technical know-how, professional event moderation, and [so much more](#).





Shape Content Around Your Target Audience Through Storytelling, Engagement, and Reach

Flat, boring content is a virtual event killer, especially now that the virtual events market is so competitive, and people have raised their expectations. Even the most exciting presenter in the world can't fill the gap if the content is blah. So, it goes without saying that investing time and effort in this area is paramount.

Shape a narrative around the bigger picture — communicating your company values and compelling attendees to act builds foundation for your event's content. Trends are moving toward [higher production value](#), including media-rich content such as videos, easy-to-read slides, and live streams.

Use engagement tools, such as polls and breakout sessions, to keep your audience invested and the pace from lagging - adding variety increases engagement, even when your presenters are high-energy and creative. On the topic of presenters, less is more: pare down your speaker invite list to the most relevant subject matter experts.



Accessibility & Inclusion

When building your event and creating content, prioritize [accessibility](#) elements such as closed captioning, additional languages, and screen reader-friendly assets. Inclusive presentation and content design helps you reach a wider, highly engaged audience and strengthens your reputation.

As you design your events, other areas to consider incorporating include:

- [A Code of Conduct](#) – state your company values, commitment to equity, and specifics as to what constitutes a violation of your code of conduct. Requiring an opt-in agreement at the time of registration is a possible strategy to ensure compliance.
- Adding preferred pronouns to the display names of presenters and other staff.
- Preparing disclosures/warnings of media elements in your content that may be difficult for individuals with sensory issues (e.g., flashing lights, etc.)
- Build in short breaks during transitions to [ease digital fatigue](#) – that’s good for everyone!

Make supporting materials such as slide decks and documents available for download prior to the event and extend the life of your content with on-demand viewing and downloadable transcripts available. Empowering your attendees to access and customize content in the way that best suits them is a fundamental element to virtual events and, done thoughtfully, provides a fully inclusive event experience.



Marketing & Communications

Create a marketing and communication plan, including a timeline for deployment. A clear marketing and promotion strategy is second only to content when it comes to successful virtual events.

Key elements to a successful virtual event marketing plan:



Consider co-branding or adding sponsors as a strategy for expanding potential audiences.



Create posts and share them on your social media channels. [Source tracking](#) is a fantastic way to assess which channels are giving you the most traction.



Assemble your invitation email lists and analyze them for validity and possible segmentation, and account for any data privacy laws you may need to work around, such as GDPR and CCPA.



Leverage your influencers — reach out to highly engaged customers to share your registration link to help generate word of mouth.



Build an eye-catching registration page with a colorful banner, title, and essential information, a brief overview of the event, as well as your presenter's headshot and bio.



Analyze your efforts in the weeks and days leading up to your event and adjust your marketing efforts accordingly.



Embed your registration form into your website's home page.



Schedule [automatic email](#) reminders to send to registrants.



Post-Event Assessment and Analysis

Feedback on your event in the form of post-event surveys, and [analytics](#) in the form of [reports](#), are important parts of your event plan. Reports give you a look at the quantitative side of the event, and [post-event surveys](#) provide you with opportunities to look at feedback from a qualitative perspective.

Take the information gleaned and shape your next event around the feedback you receive. This is a very important step in guaranteeing your on-going virtual event success. Keep improving!

The Checklist Part of This Checklist!

1. Match your tech to your event

- Learn what new features have been added and leverage them to keep your events current

2. Perform an audit of your current event tech and identify any areas in need of attention. Ensure adequate staffing or consider outsourcing

- Plan for staffing on a per-event basis, based on event type
- Prepare documentation for training, best practices, and disaster recovery
- Perform technical walk-throughs with your event staff ahead of time
- Refresh training, and include any new features added to your tech
- Outsource to a professional services provider if in-house resources aren't available



3. Shape content around your target audience through storytelling, engagement, and reach

- Attendees have raised their expectations. Targeting will help you reach the right people.
- Placing a greater focus on production value, including media-rich content and audience interaction/participation is worth the investment.

4. Build for accessibility from the start

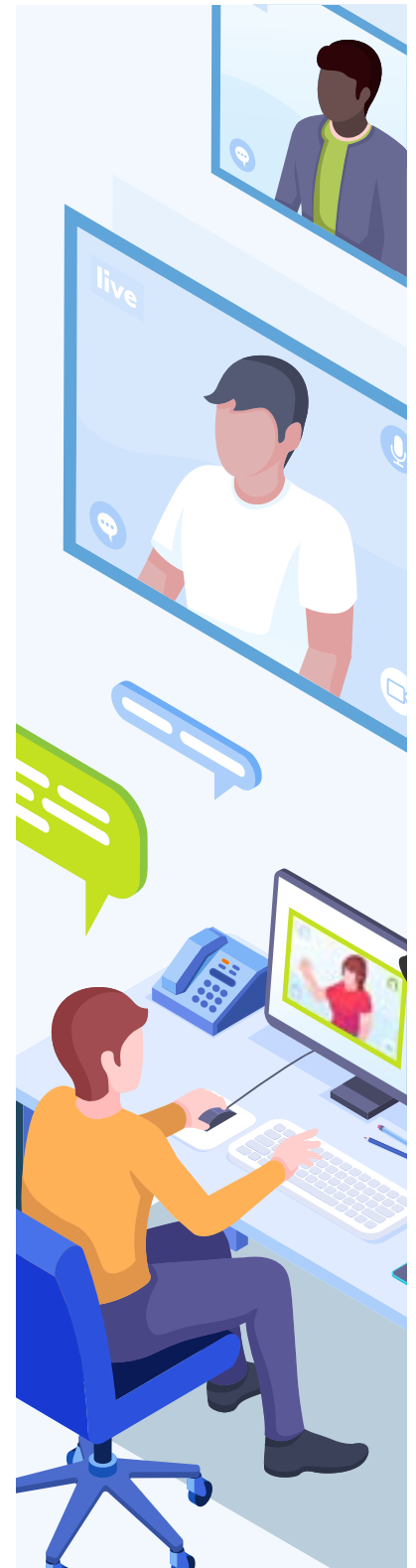
- Be ready with your tech to include closed captioning, multiple languages, and screen reader-friendly assets
- Make supporting materials available before the event.
- Add an accessibility/accommodation question to your event registration and follow up!
- Design for inclusion with a code of conduct, short breaks, and warnings for sensory-sensitive media.

5. Marketing and promotion plan

- Create a marketing and communication plan, including a timeline
- Build an eye-catching, informative, but brief registration page
- Embed the registration form on your website
- Email segmented, compliant invitations to your vetted email lists
- Share the registration page on your social media channels and include source tracking
- Engage the help of influencers
- Assess how efforts are going and adjust based on information from email segments and source tracking data

6. Post-event assessment and analysis

- Send post-event surveys to gather qualitative event analysis
- Gather event reports for quantitative event data
- Shape future events around the feedback received



Eyes to the Future

In-person and hybrid events are gathering momentum, but virtual events have a bigger space than ever before. Stay the virtual course and keep an eye on future trends that are beginning to generate buzz. The last three years have given us opportunities to show off how flexible, innovative, resilient, and brave we can all be. You've got this!

We've Got You

EventBuilder has been providing software and services for virtual events and webinars since the start. With 17 years of experience in this space, we have the expertise to provide you with guidance, training, technical support, and more.

[Get in touch](#) and let us show you what we can do!



THANK YOU!