



A pocket guide to planning impactful events

When you're tasked to plan an event, big or small, the essential elements of preparing for and executing an event remain the same.



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REMEMBER:

Failing to plan is planning to fail.

This e-book will be your pocket guide to pulling off an impactful event.



Determine the goal and objective of the event

Being clear on your purpose will make it more likely for you to achieve your goals and help you determine what type of event you are having.

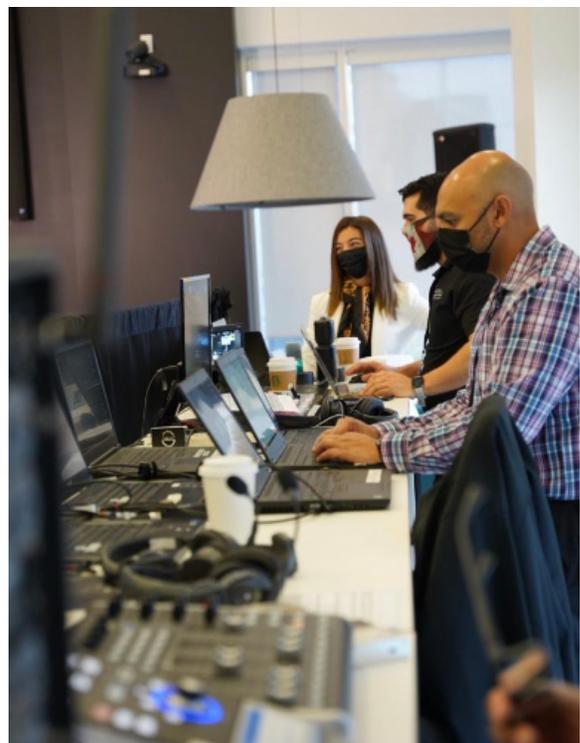
- Why is the event taking place?
- Are you trying to grow your client base by increasing brand awareness?
- Are you sharing information or new initiatives with staff?
- Who will be your audience and what will be their main takeaway?
- Is it for existing customers, stakeholders or staff?
- Are you trying to attract new people who are unfamiliar with the company?
- How will you measure your event's success?
- Will you track for an increase in sales of a product or service?
- How many people signed up for your monthly newsletter? How many leads did your sales people collect?

Type of event

Once the goal is defined, decide what type of event it will be. Some popular types of company events are:

- Networking
- Annual general meetings (AGM)
- Convention or trade show
- New product/service launch
- Seminars
- Celebrations (birthdays, holiday parties, etc.)
- Training
- Public announcements, town halls and quarterly reports

Once you choose the type of event, you can pick if you want it to be in-person, virtual or both, as in hybrid.



In-person, virtual or hybrid events

In-person events can be highly engaging and offer a unique experience to attendees. Networking with peers and being in a live audience with expert speakers are what drive physical events.

Being face-to-face helps attendees be fully present and they are more likely to contribute to the conversation. But the cost of renting event space, catering, and accommodations require a large budget.

Virtual events don't require travel, so they are more cost effective and you will have a much smaller carbon footprint.

However, it's hard to keep people engaged for more than two hours at a time. So if you're planning a full-day or multi-day event, it's important to consider this and incorporate other activities like virtual break-out tables so your guests can network.

Hybrid events give attendees the best of both worlds. In-person attendees get the benefits of being present and virtual guests have the convenience of attending from their home or office and still engage through breakout rooms or live questions. With hybrid events, your attendance numbers aren't limited to the physical venue space.

The main advantage of virtual or hybrid events is that you can have people attend from anywhere in the world and engage them with pre-recorded content.





Budget and Timing

Budget

Before you proceed, set your budget. Here are the main essentials to account for:

Guest size

How many attendees are you anticipating?
How much are you willing to spend per person?

Venue

Do you have enough physical capacity to accommodate your desired audience size and what is the booking cost?

Speakers

How much does it cost to bring in external keynote speakers?

Food and Beverage

What type of meals and drinks will you be serving? Does the venue provide or will you need a catering company?

A/V

Will you go in-house or with an external vendor? A/V companies are often 30-40% less expensive than in-house suppliers and

can add no-charge or value-add items with ease such as extra lighting or monitors. They are more technically specialized and experienced with diverse events. External A/V providers also have a greater investment in making your event a success

Decoration

Will you showcase your brand through decorations? What kind of signage will you have? Pop-Up Banners, Digital Signage and logos displayed by lights are all common solutions.

Entertainment

Will there be music or live entertainers?

Thank you gifts

What kind of swag will you be giving away?

Timing

Choose a date and time. Be sure to book your venue and suppliers ASAP. Try to have a few months for planning. Map out a tentative schedule of the agenda. The more time you have to send out invites and receive RSVPs or for booking speakers and vendors



Logistics and planning

30 days or more before event day

Venue

Venue research should be complete. A site-visit helps to help visualize your event layout like stage placement and audience setup. Factor in where food and drinks will be served and where entertainment will be held. Find out about on-site parking availability. Once you're satisfied, sign the contract and put down the deposit to secure the location. The balance is typically due 30 days before the event.

Find out what their cancellation policy is. If you have virtual guests you'll need to test the virtual platform that you will be using. Some platforms only allow up to 100, 500, 5000 people and some will allow you to stream to millions. As you increase the size of your audience you will run into bandwidth issues, so that will also need to be addressed.

Virtual / Hybrid

You will need the following for live streaming virtual events:

- Professional microphones
- A reliable internet connection
- High quality cameras
- Computers

Zoom can be a great tool, has limitations for design and custom layouts. If you plan on having a dynamic virtual experience, look into using a more powerful and customizable streaming platform. If you plan on having more guests, you will need a more powerful streaming platform. While in-person attendees get the benefits of the physical aspect, that doesn't mean your virtual audience needs to feel like outsiders. For example, with virtual break-out rooms your guests can network and be connected with anyone or team exercises can be implemented.



Content and Speakers

- Who will your main speakers be?
- What will the content be about?
- What topics will be covered?
- The information needs to be interesting, valuable and thought-provoking.
- Will you have videos and images to display?
- Will you be presenting PowerPoint slides?
- Will you be distributing the information in brochure/booklet format or making it available after the event digitally?



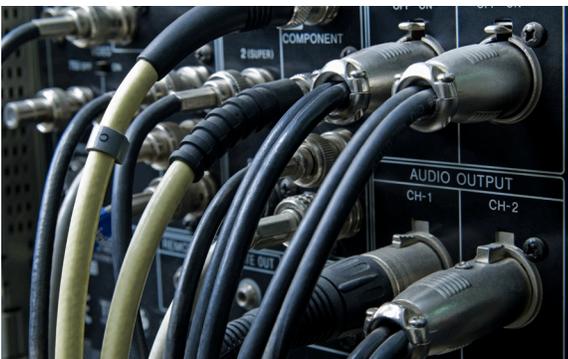
Invitations

When you finalize your invite list, decide how you will send out invitations. Will they be printed or digital? Will RSVPs be emailed back or will you have a registration page? Are guests allowed to extend the invite to others? When is the RSVP deadline? Who will send out the invites and do the RSVP follow ups? How will you track the registration?



Catering

Most events provide food and beverage for guests. Does the venue provide catering or will you need to outsource? Plan on having a bartender with a liquor license if you want to serve alcohol at your event and find out if the venue permits the alcoholic beverages. If you plan on selling food and drinks, consider how you will handle the monetary transactions.



Entertainment

What kind of entertainment will you be providing? Maybe you want a DJ or a live band. Consider the playlist you want. Find out if they will provide their own AV equipment or if you will be responsible for rentals. Other popular entertainer ideas are dancers, acrobats, magicians and caricature artists. Musical performances are also ideal for virtual events. Prizes are also a great way to entertain and engage your guests. You could sell tickets to a raffle or hold a silent auction.

21 days before the event

Venue

- How early can your guests access the venue and how long can they stay afterwards?
- Do you pay extra to set-up early or teardown late?
- Have you guaranteed your software can accommodate all your virtual/hybrid guests?
- Do you trust the in-house A/V or is it smarter to outsource?
- Visit the site before the event to plan layout.
- Is on-site or off-site parking available?

Entertainment

Confirm the dates and time with your vendors and performers.

Catering and decorations

Finalize catering menus. The bartender is contracted and the liquor license is in place. Your posters, flyers, signage and swag should be ordered at this point. Contact your printing company and set the deadline a couple days before the event date.

Event Content

Your scripts for your opening and closing ceremonies and presentations need to be in the final stages. Start rehearsing.



Execution

14 days before the event

Problems and cancellations are likely to happen at this point in time. Having backup solutions now will help you overcome any challenges. Here are some possible scenarios.

RSVP

Follow up and finalize RSVPs and review final guest count.

Venue

During busy seasons the venue might be hosting another event the day before yours. Be sure your rooms will be clear in time for your setup.

Cancellations

It's possible to still find replacement for entertainment and other vendors if there are cancellations. Make sure to have a list of backup vendors in case this does happen.

Food problems

Supply shortages for what you originally wanted might become a problem. But a week out gives you more than enough time to make adjustments to the menu.

Event content

Most issues happen here. So make sure your presentations and videos are completed. Ensure posters and brochures will be ready a couple of days before the event. Send guest event reminders. Will your guests get a copy of the itinerary sent to them before the event? How will you keep them updated? And for your virtual guests, if they are to receive any critical information before the event starts, send it now. event starts, send it now.



7 days before the event

Assemble thank you gifts and welcome brochures. Printed material, promotional items and signage should be received. Print out any name badges or agendas.

A great idea is to print names on one side and agendas on the back side and attach them to a lanyard for easy reference. Deliver decorations to the venue. Confirm the arrival times of your vendors.

Full rehearsals are recommended to check the technology and flow of the agenda. Doing rehearsals two days before the event will help everyone remember the order of timing and keep everyone on the same page.

For your virtual/hybrid presenters and multiple vendors, this would be a good time for them to practice sharing their slides, sharing videos, interacting with the audience and other features they may need. Once event day begins, there will be a lot of moving parts. Review everyone's duties and what to do in case one of your staff calls in sick that day.

Day of the event

This is going to be a busy day. But you have taken every measure to make sure the event goes smoothly. Of course there are a few variables that are out of your control, such as:

Traffic is very unpredictable.

Loading dock problems – Most venues only have one loading dock, so you might run into issues with sharing the dock with another event setup. The earlier you can get your vendors in the venue the better. Some venues allow vendors to setup the day/night before.

Sick/late team members - If a team member can't make the event, prepare your backup personnel because this can really slow things down.

Have your virtual/hybrid presenters check-in at least 30 minutes early to work out any technical issues with equipment, software or their content.

If you plan on keeping track of attendees have guest lists printed or digital for signing them in. Enlist a team of staff members to greet and direct guests and answer questions.

Welcome the guests and kick off the event by going over the agenda and introducing speakers. Make announcements clear when it is time for breaks and for the session to resume.

Take lots of photos and videos and share them on social media. Create a hashtag to encourage guests to share their experience as the day progresses.

For the closing ceremony, be sure to thank guests for their attendance and encourage them to keep in touch once the event is over.



Checklist

Planning

- Determine the goal and objective of the event
- Define the type of event and choose in-person, hybrid or virtual.
- Set event budget, date/time, venue, streaming platform.
- Decide what content and topics will be covered and who will be presenting.
- Draft agenda.
- Send invites.
- Research and select vendors: A/V supplier, livestreaming, catering, entertainment, decoration, promotional items, printers.

Logistics

- Venue hours of guest access, setup times, parking.
- Vendors, book entertainment, finalize catering menu, livestream management, A/V.
- Site visit for setup plan.
- Design decorations, signs and promotional material. Order and print.
- Content and presentations finalized. Rehearsals begin.
- Final RSVP and guest count.
- Cancellations?
- Finalize and confirm menu selection.
- Review presentations and videos.

Execution

- Setup presenters 30 minutes before event start.
- Sign in guests and direct them to seating area.
- Kick-off event.
- Direct guests when breaks begin and end.
- Take photos and videos and post to social media with hashtag.
- Closing ceremony by thanking guests.

Post Event

- Send thank you notes and collect feedback from guests.
- Internal debrief and review guest feedback.
- Measure the success of the event.
- Post winners on social media and send prizes.
- Thank and pay vendors.

LiVECAST has all the equipment and experience you need to run a smooth in-person, virtual or hybrid event. LiVECAST provides dynamic solutions to incorporate your entertainment and we also provide backup systems in case there are any glitches like poor internet connection.



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