

Achieving Virtual Event Victory: Best Practices for Before, During and After Your Event



Virtual Events

A virtual event is a lead generation, marketing and thought leadership opportunity that doesn't require any travel. Also known as webinars or webcasts, virtual events are a unique way to bring together attendees from across multiple geographic regions for 60-75 minutes of learning and inspiration.

Like in-person conferences, virtual events are forums created for discussing topics that are top-of-mind among senior executives and an excellent way to position your organization as a subject-matter-expert on those key topics. Virtual events provide attendees with opportunities to learn from, and pose questions to, both their peers and your experts.

The following types of virtual events – editorial and custom – illustrate the value of collaborating with a trusted partner, especially with developing content, recruiting speakers, and targeting the right audience for your event.



Editorial Virtual Events

Attendees find editorial virtual events particularly compelling because they focus on new trends and best practices. From the point of view of a sponsor, editorial virtual events are ideal for generating leads for a new product launch, while also raising awareness of the sponsor's brand among senior-level executives.

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The development of an editorial virtual event begins with defining a topic that matches your organization's content marketing efforts. After crafting a title and description of the event, your virtual event partner will recruit speakers and provide a moderator for a panel discussion on your topic. Using your topic idea, the event partner executes and oversees all the promotional outreach for the event to attract the defined target audience you want to reach. Finally, they should also have a dedicated production team to manage the event, and leverage a strong, versatile event platform.

Custom Virtual Events

A custom virtual event is the opportunity for a sponsor to interact directly with C-suite audiences in a forum these executives trust. For a custom virtual event, the event partner and sponsor jointly develop a title and description of the event, as well as recruit speakers from your target audience for the event.

The format of a custom virtual event often includes a panel discussion, but can also incorporate a thought leadership presentation by your company (as the sponsor), your clients, or other experts on the topic, positioning your company as the subject matter expert. As is the case with editorial virtual events, the event partner provides a moderator and a dedicated production team, while taking the lead on promoting and executing the event.

When a sponsor proposes a custom topic and speakers for a virtual event, the event partner can provide editorial guidance to ensure that the description of the event resonates with your target audience of senior executives. A memorable but descriptive title, followed by a few short paragraphs that outline what attendees will learn, are usually sufficient to attract a senior-level audience. If the sponsor seeks more speakers for the event, the event partner can recruit experts who provide additional perspectives and types of experience from which attendees can learn.



Best Practices to Ensure Success

Given the limited time they have available throughout the workday, senior executives often have little patience for product pitches. Instead, senior executives, and those who work for them, prefer topic-focused content that is relevant to their roles, such as:

- Expert and objective perspectives on recent developments or new regulations that have or will have a significant impact on attendees and their organizations
- Case studies that reveal lessons and best practices executives can apply within their organizations

Attendees expect speakers to be knowledgeable and engaging communicators. Speakers maintain attendees' attention when they:

- Tell compelling stories
- Clarify complex topics
- Give thoughtful answers to questions, whether from the moderator or from attendees
- Possess expertise but also demonstrate the ability to convey their knowledge in a way that is both educational and entertaining

For a sponsor, a virtual event offers an opportunity to connect with an audience that explicitly demonstrates its interest and engagement. Besides hosting a recording of a virtual event, a sponsor can follow up by:

- Providing registrants with additional materials, such as research findings or white papers that align with the topic of the event
- Maintaining an ongoing conversation and offering other opportunities to interact



Attention to Detail

E-mail is typically the most effective method of promoting virtual events, with social media quickly emerging as a powerful complement to e-mail. A straightforward process for registering, including reminder e-mail messages and dedicated support, ensure that those who register are able to join the event.

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To make sure speakers feel comfortable and prepared before a virtual event, it is essential that the moderator and production team schedule a series of short calls with speakers prior to the event to confirm the flow and format of the event, as well as provide questions in advance to speakers participating in panel discussions.

The moderator must strive to maintain a high level of energy to capture the audience's attention and follow a streamlined script for introducing and concluding an event. Despite that scripting, spontaneity is an essential characteristic of a speaker or moderator, as it makes members of the audience feel they are listening to a real discussion rather than a scripted presentation.

A successful virtual event also requires a dedicated production team to ensure the event runs smoothly, as well as provide real-time support to attendees and speakers who need technical assistance.



Finding the Right Partner for Your Virtual Event

Many companies will often underestimate the effort involved with producing a virtual event. If you do work with an outside partner to help, be sure to consider a few factors:

- Work with a company that can provide not just a service for hosting the event, but also a full-service platform to develop your topic, market your event and engage with your audience
- Leverage a strong recruiting network to ensure that you're able to get the right target audience to attend the event.
- Focus on the results – work with your partner to outline clear goals for your event. The recent rise of “client success” teams help ensure that your event achieves the goals you set.
- Manage your leads – confirm that your event partner provides full registration data from your events to ensure that your team can execute your post-event follow up plan. Digital delivery of that lead data is also a key factor, allowing you to track your marketing and sales efforts.

Why Content Development Matters

As they say, “content is king.” That’s why you want to choose a topic for your virtual event that will not just resonate with your target audience, but leave them wanting more. Following the best practice guidelines described above, work with your event partner to develop a topic that not only highlights your company’s subject matter expertise, but also strikes

a nerve with the audience’s needs. An event partner with a strong network can help by identifying recent trends and themes that have proven to be successful topics. Following up post-event with additional information on the topic can help cement strong relationships with your audience.

leave them wanting more

What Makes an Event Stand Out

In the end, the true test of a successful event is not only how well you’re able access your hard-to-reach target audience, but also how well you’re able to carry on the ideas and the conversation beyond the event. The best virtual event programs start with a plan for what happens before, during and after the event. As we mention above, be sure that you and your event partner have a plan for following up with your targets before you hold your event.

What Argyle Can Do for You

For over 10 years Argyle has been hosting leadership and education events for our C-level executive membership. We’ve helped some of the world’s largest sales and marketing organizations connect with both new and existing clients. We’ve also been a great resource for recently funded startups looking to educate companies on their new programs and services.

Argyle seamlessly produces hundreds of virtual events each year, delivering real insights to attendees and brand awareness and quality leads to our event sponsors. If you would like to learn more about the successful virtual event campaigns that we’ve executed for our clients, we’ll be happy to share examples.

Let us know what we can do for you!

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