



The Ultimate Guide To Virtual Events



Table of Contents

Introduction

What Is a Virtual Event?

Why Should You Host a Virtual Event?

What Are the Different Types of Virtual Events?

Features To Look For in a Virtual Event

Planning Guide to Virtual Events

10 Questions To Ask Your Virtual Event Provider

How To Host a Virtual Event?

How To Make Virtual Events Fun & Engaging?

How To Promote Virtual Events?

How Much Do Virtual Events Cost?

Virtual Event FAQs

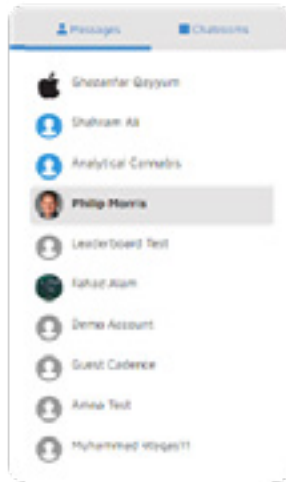
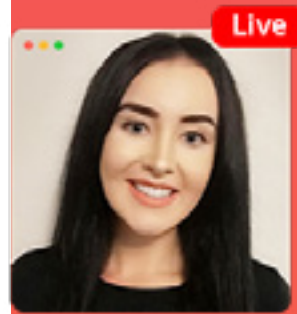
Conclusion



Introduction

Virtual events have been around for a while now. While many organizations swear by them, there are still a lot of people who question the vitality of the entire concept. It's understandable that people feel lost, don't really know what to expect and Zoom fatigue has gotten the best of them.

Those who have hosted virtual events realize how effectively they connect people through a user-friendly life-like experience. The benefits of virtual events have also proven to be undeniable and, frankly, it is irresponsible to ignore them. Even as the world shifts back to some semblance of 'normalcy', virtual events aren't going to be left in the COVID era. No matter where you stand on virtual events, this guide will help organizations by setting out clear concepts and practical instructions for how to plan them. It aims to teach you everything there is to learn about virtual events.



2

What Is a Virtual Event?

A virtual event is an online version of a physical event, with added value that differs from platform to platform. A [virtual event](#) provides a platform for audiences, exhibitors, presenters, influencers, and brands to communicate. They can share ideas, discuss different topics and new products, and share the same experience virtually.

These online events are a great way to connect audiences globally using chat tools, live webinars, and various engaging activities. It also offers digital visually rich content that users can save, download and access for a long time after the event is finished.

3

Why Should You Host a Virtual Event?

Virtual events have, over the years, proven to help a number of organizations across various industries achieve this goal. With the exceptional pros and the next-to-none cons, virtual events continue to benefit organizers. Before we dive into the mechanics of virtual events, let's quickly break down the reasons for you to take your event online.



You Have a Global Target Audience

If your event aims to attract participants from around the world (and why wouldn't it?), going virtual is your best bet. Virtual events are accessible from any browser, on any device and in any part of the world. Your virtual event is simply a click away from your prospects, which results in a wider and more diverse turnout.

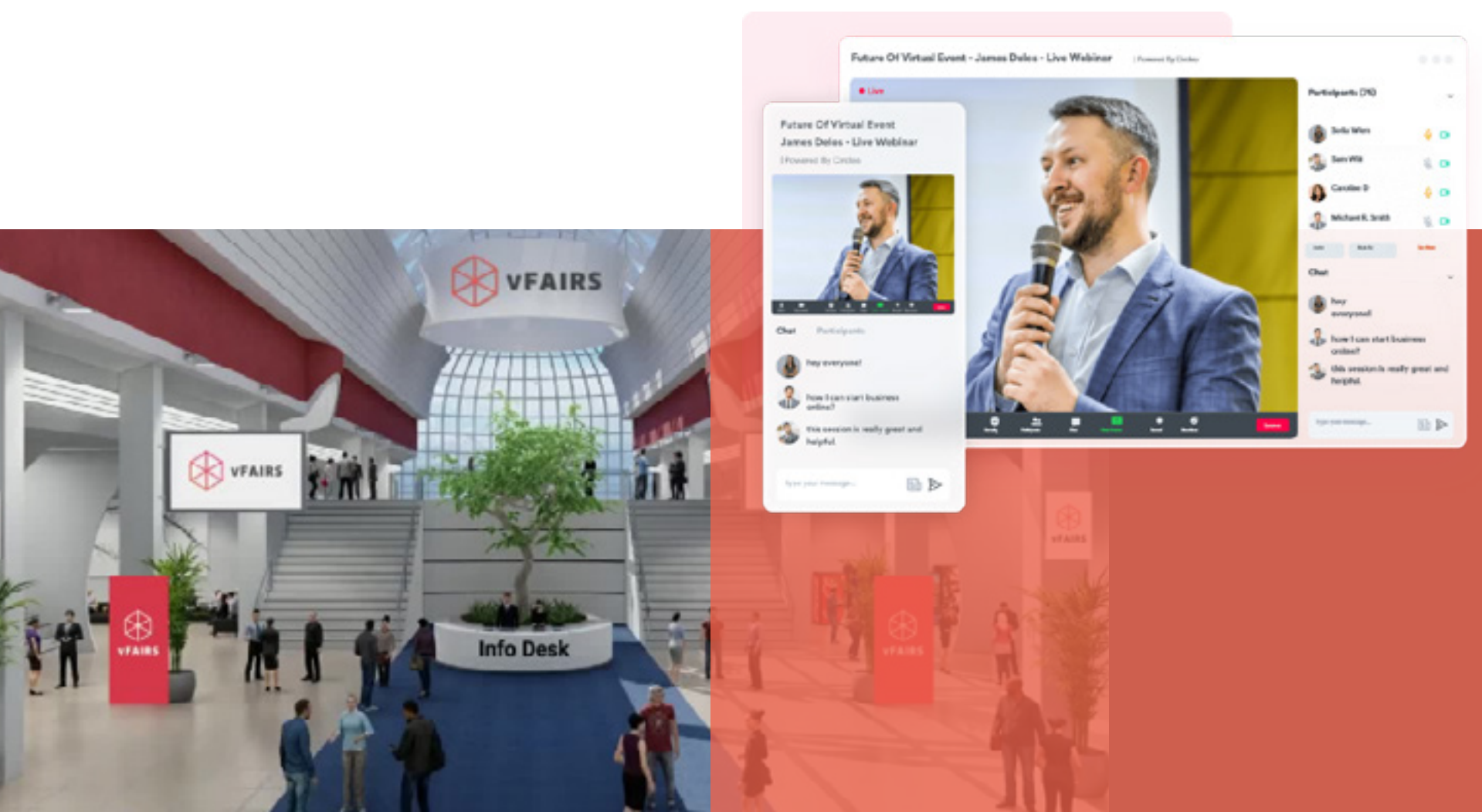
You Want To Invite Remote Speakers

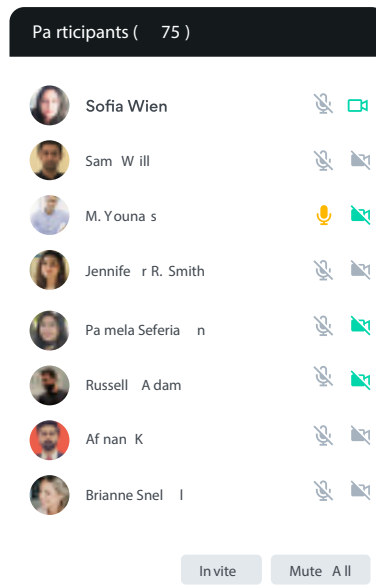
Just as you have a global audience at your disposal with a virtual event, you also have remote speakers and keynotes too. Since you don't have to wait for their availability, spend on their transport, fly them in, you can easily host those speakers you always wanted to invite.

For physical events, these speakers may not have the time to fly in. All they need is what they already have: their laptops and an internet connection. They could be in Australia, but you can host them at your event in Canada!

You Have a Smaller Budget

Virtual events not only provide you with a user-friendly experience but also solutions. Eliminating the additional cost of the venue, hospitality, travel, marketing collateral, etc., virtual events remove your physical as well as monetary burden and provide you with greater value at a lower cost.





You Want To Save Time

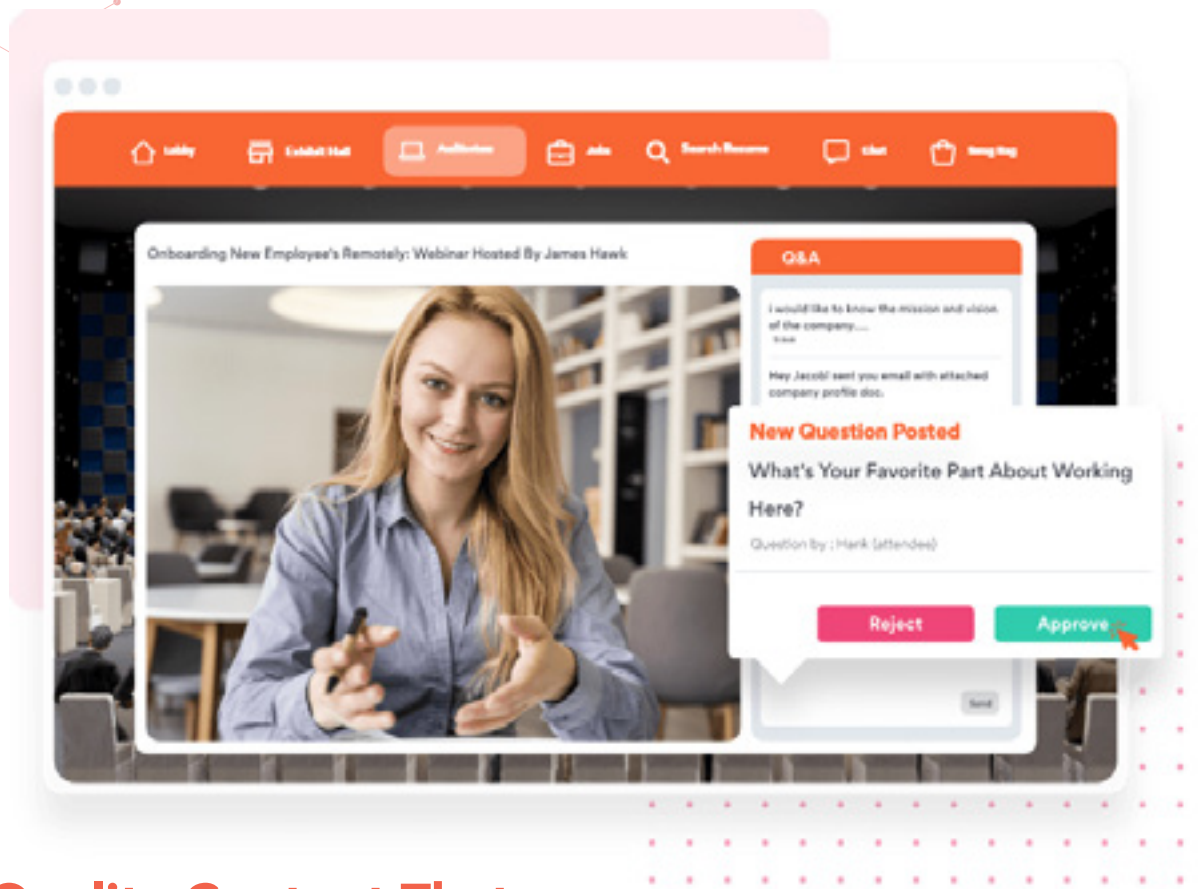
A virtual event has a setup time of about four to six weeks if you partner with a reputable virtual event platform. This includes the setup time, training your staff and exhibitors to use and manage the event. Oh, and let's not forget pre-event marketing to ensure maximized attendance.

An in-person event, on the other hand, can take months of planning, weeks to conduct vendor meetings, and the event itself consumes your event manager long before it takes place. The day of the event is chaotic to say the least. Event teardowns take an additional day or two at times.

You Want To Provide a Unique User Experience

At a virtual event, each visitor has the option to choose the content that they wish to absorb and save. This includes:

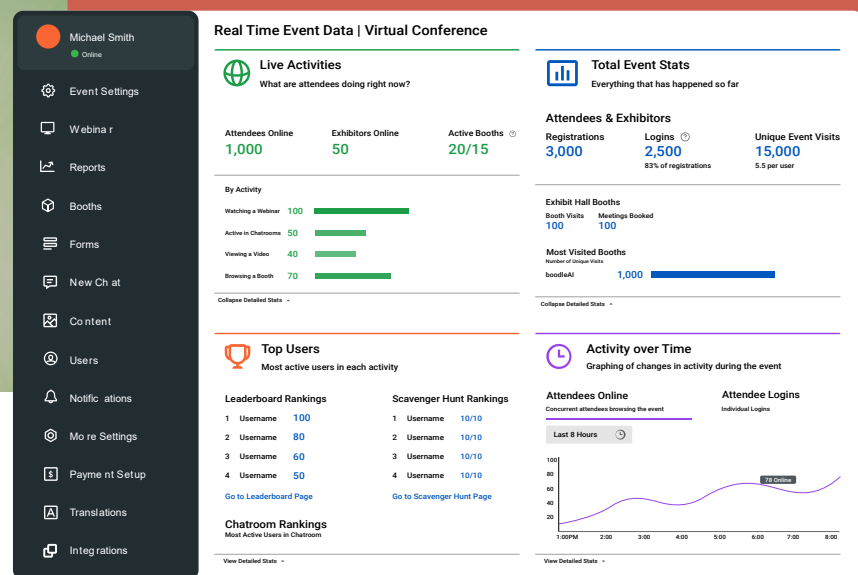
- webinars, videos, brochures, and e-books that often rate virtual events much higher in overall engagement,
- on-demand sessions which increase attendee interest and conversions,
- individual and group chats where attendees can chat with reps without having to queue in a long line, and live chat and booking tools in which attendees can schedule appointments in advance and interact with exhibitors, fellow attendees and others at the event and,
- exclusive content based on user type (i.e. if they choose to go for a platinum vs. gold ticket).



You Labored Over Quality Content That Shouldn't Go to Waste

Your team must've worked really hard at creating compelling content for visitors. A virtual event allows you to re-use it to improve your content marketing game long after the event is over. The possibilities of using your content are endless.

- ▶ Add your introductory videos to your company's careers site or products page.
- 👤 Record webinars and upload them onto YouTube or Vimeo and share them with your subscribers through email campaigns, or break them up into bite-sized snippets for social media.
- 🔗 Convert in-event surveys and polls into a blog post and share it with your social media followers.
- 💬 Use chat interactions to create or update an FAQ page.
- ✉️ Send some useful resources to people who missed the event, to keep them in the loop and remind them of the value you promise.
- 🔍 Use metrics to understand which content is the most popular with the audience and double down on those efforts moving forward.



You Want Quantifiable Metrics and Reports

Perhaps the most salient tie-breaker between physical and virtual fairs is the ability of the latter to furnish detailed reports. With a physical fair, although you do have people coming in, visiting booths, grabbing brochures and dropping their contact information, you don't possess the means to accurately measure the results of the fair. You might have a rough estimate of the people who stopped by for a conversation but that is it. So, in the end, it essentially comes down to how well the exhibitors thought the event had gone.

A digital space, on the other hand, tracks:

- every registrant and records every chat conversation exchanged,
- all on-demand videos watched, resources downloaded and shared along with all the uploads made,
- transactions performed, enabling you to track KPIs and ROIs, and
- individual attendee journeys.

You can get statistics that give solid proof of engagement and turnout, instead of relying on rough estimates and hearsay. Woah! That is information overload! But that is good, right?

You Want To Opt for an Eco-Friendly Approach

[Aviation contributes to about 2.5% of the world's global carbon emissions.](#) Traveling for an event thus contributes to this damage to the environment. Virtual events eliminate the need for all kinds of travel, therefore saving the planet from carbon emissions.

Not just that, physical events have a ton of waste caused by paper waste and other marketing material. This increases the carbon footprint contributing to climatic change. Due to the lack of printed/plastic usage at a virtual event, going online helps you organize a green, healthy event.



4 What Are the Different Types of **Virtual Event?**

Let's dive right into the most popular types of virtual events (however, the list of course, does not end here):



Virtual Conferences & Summits

Case Study:



[Virtual conferences](#) enable organizations to host keynotes, breakout sessions, webinars, and much more without flying in people from various parts of the world. They connect like-minded people who can exchange ideas, gain inspiration from one another and network.

Online Trade Shows

Case Study:



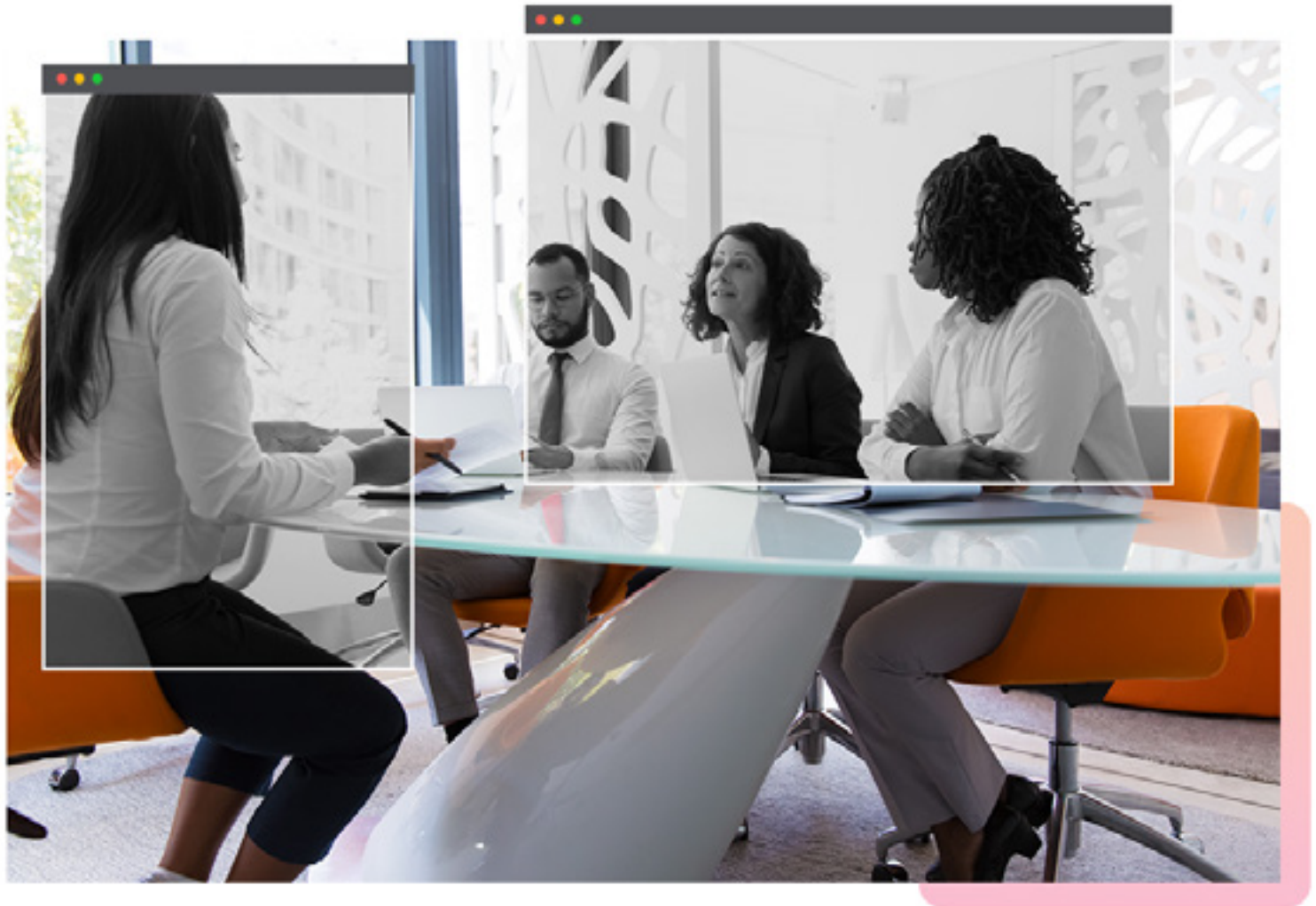
Trade shows conducted online allow businesses to capture qualified leads effectively. They are a good method of educating your target audience and converting them into customers, regardless of geographic boundaries. [Virtual trade shows](#) can be classified according to the industry, such as virtual fashion shows, [virtual motor shows](#), and [virtual food shows](#).

Virtual Exhibition

Case Study:



You can either host a [virtual exhibition](#) fair or be an exhibitor in an event hosted by another party. Either way, you can exhibit products and services to drive sales and increase brand awareness by marketing to the intended audience.



Case Study:



Virtual Career Fairs

A [virtual career](#) fair enables organizations to reach out to a global, diverse talent pool in a cost-effective manner. You can interact with potential candidates, advertise open positions, collect resumes and conduct real-time interviews. Employers can go through applicant data and filter candidates easily within the platform.

Case Study:



Virtual Job Fairs

A [virtual job fair](#) breaks traditional barriers and attracts participants from around the globe to meet, network, and give interviews to representatives of their dream organizations. It enables organizations to conduct real-time chats, collect resumes, and interview potential hires on the spot.



Virtual University Fairs

Universities often set up a number of fairs in order to help their students understand the available programs and opportunities at their university. These virtual university fairs can be accessed through any smart device, from any corner of the world.

There are a number of virtual university fairs that help students & alumni engage with universities as well as top employers across the globe, benefiting all the stakeholders in the process.

Case Study:

Bard

Virtual Open Day

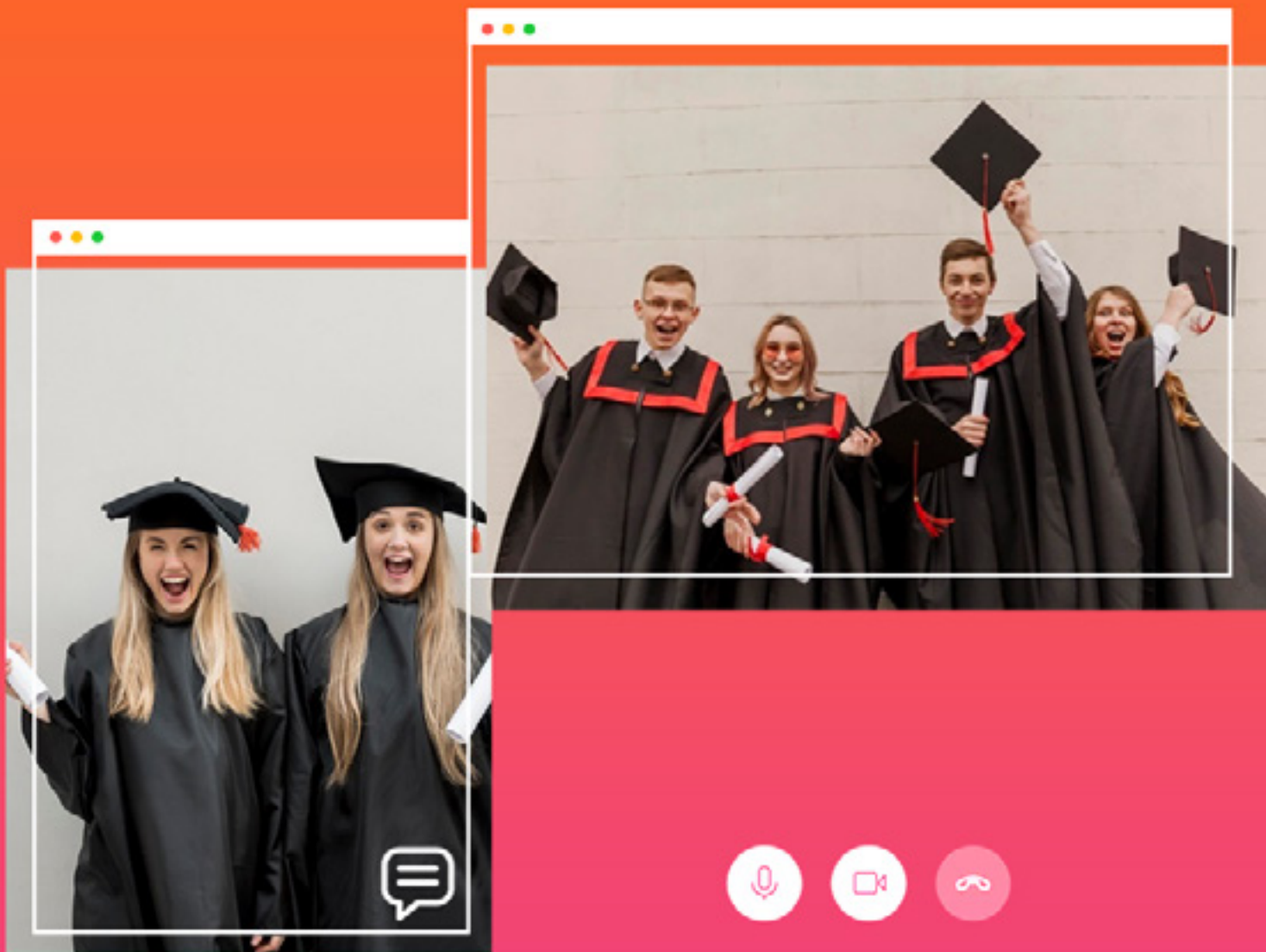
A [virtual open day](#) allows prospective students to absorb the rich culture at your university and interact with faculty. From virtual tours of the campus to extensive details on programs and departments, a virtual open day helps you attract & engage 3 to 5 times more students as compared to a physical event.

Case Study:

edlanta
ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ В ЧУЖБИНА

Virtual Education Fairs

A [virtual education fair](#) helps universities showcase their infrastructure, culture and programs to a diverse prospective student base from across the globe. In addition, a virtual education fair helps educate the student masses about higher study options through one comprehensive event.



Case Study:



Virtual Student/Alumni Networking Fair

[Virtual Student/Alumni Networking Fair](#) connects students with successful university alumni and boosts engagement with rich interactive tools. This creates an opportunity for the alumni to network with each other, cultivate connections that helps them with their careers and growing their businesses etc.

Virtual Graduation Ceremony

[Virtual graduation ceremonies](#) offer immense flexibility to students and their families from around the globe to attend the most significant day of their life. This allows universities and schools to create an immersive experience for their students where they can buy merchandise, connect with fellow batch mates, and have a fun time online engaging activities.



Virtual Benefits Fair



Case Study:

Hillrom™

In an interactive environment at a [virtual benefits fair](#), employees get to know about the benefits providers and compare the best options. Benefits fairs generally feature a wide variety of resources available on demand that employees can read through on their own time, submit questions and ultimately make more informed decisions about their benefits.

Virtual Onboarding Fairs

To ensure you direct your new hires from foundation to success, a powerful onboarding program needs to be set in place. A [virtual onboarding fair](#) can enable you to boost productivity for distributed hires and train them.



5

Features To Look For in a **Virtual Event**

The features you choose can transform the entire look and feel of your event, not to mention the unprecedented experience they promise your audience. Here are a few must-have features for you to hit the bull's eye with your upcoming virtual event.



Eye-Catching Environment & Easy Navigation

Ensure a remarkable user experience with an easily navigable, immersive space.

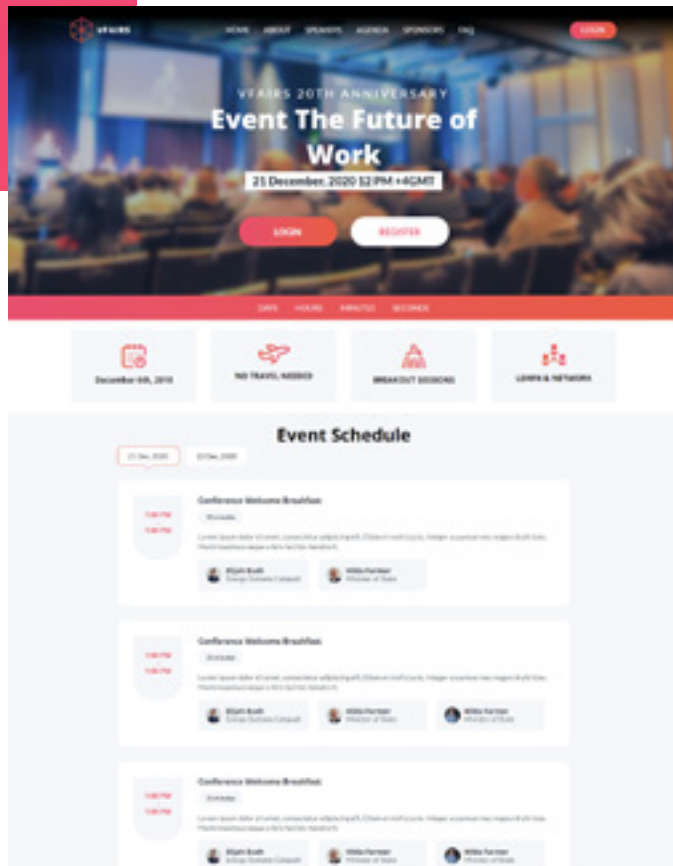
Convenience coupled with attractive designs are key to ensuring your events are successful.

Make sure your audience can browse through various areas of your event in a user-friendly manner. Whether it is navigating from one booth to another, or moving from the lobby to the auditorium, allow your audience to navigate seamlessly by testing the platform yourself first.

Some elements of the virtual environment include:

- Animated 3D designs
- Immersive virtual auditoriums, exhibit halls and lounges
- Personalized and branded exhibit booths
- Custom animated avatars
- Live help desk





Branded Landing Page

Send your audience to a single [landing page](#) where they can get all the information they need about your event. Your landing page should:

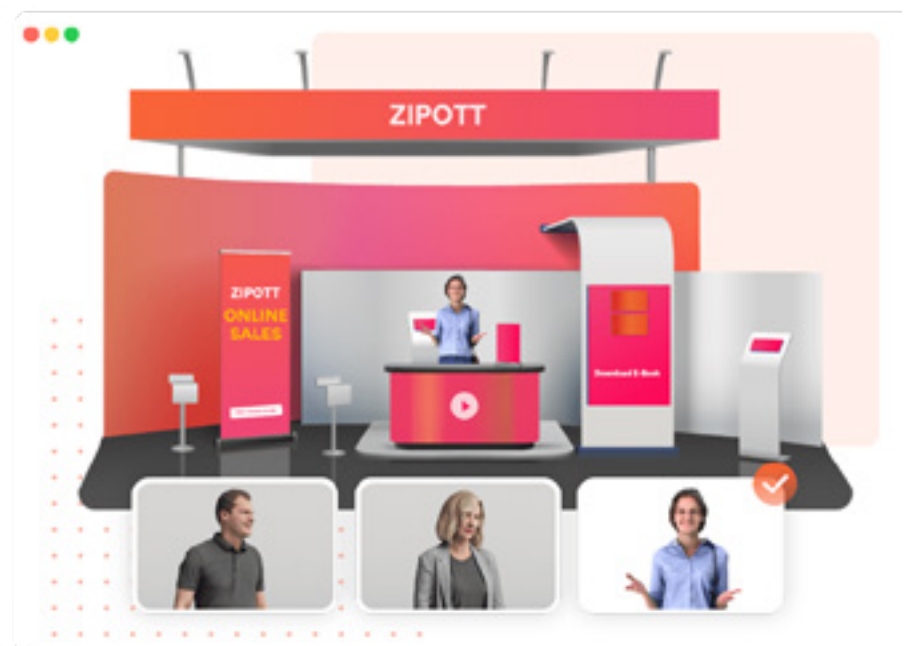
- be fully branded and customized as per your event,
- have all the relevant and useful information that will draw your audience in,
- host speaker lists, activities, agenda etc. in addition to dates and times, and
- show a prominent CTA button to 'Register' and/or 'Login'.

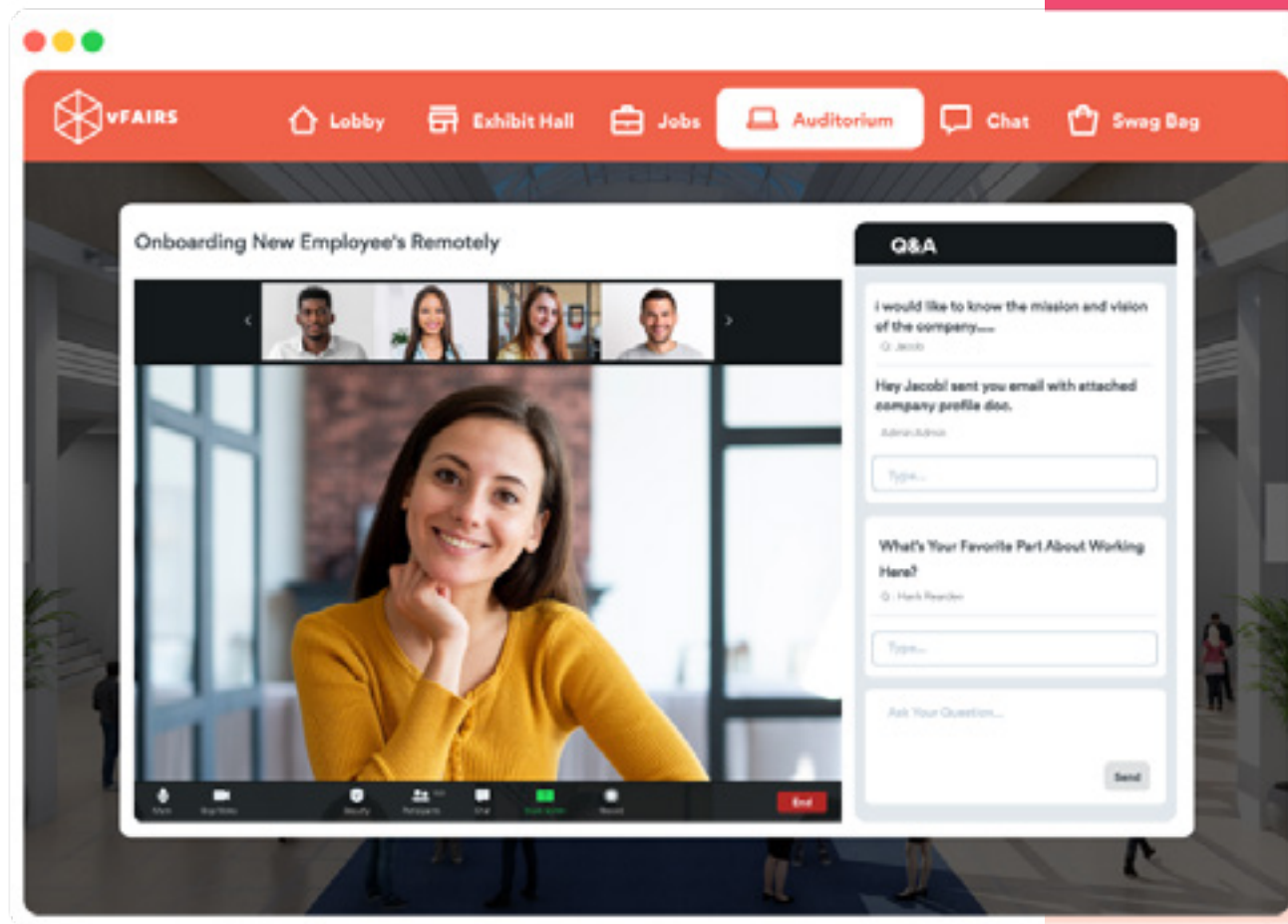
Customized Branded Booths

The exhibit booths in your [virtual exhibit hall](#) will allow your exhibitors to set up their space according to their company needs and objectives. It is not only a space for your exhibitors but also for the attendees to get more information and network with the exhibitors and their representatives.

It is important to offer your audience a digital experience that mimics the feel of a real-life event. Exhibitors has the option to:

- self-select avatars themselves to depict their company representatives,
- host documents and other valuable resources,
- allow participants to use the live chat tools for networking, and
- schedule meetings with the booth reps.





Dynamic Webinars

A single [webinar](#) could prove successful by getting you qualified leads while also educating the masses. Incorporating webinars into your event will increase your event's engagement and ensure your audience walks out with value. If your audience has the option to build their own customized webinar agenda, they will have an easier time keeping score of the sessions they were interested in rather than getting lost and missing out.

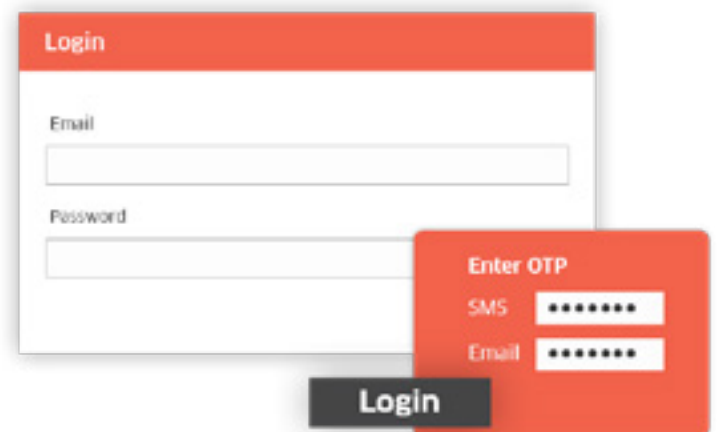
Virtual events allow you to:

- choose multi-presentation options: live webinars, semi-live or on-demand webinars,
- invite industry experts to share helpful insights with your audience,
- enable two-way communication with a live Q&A session,
- stream your presentations out through social media channels,
- incorporate polls, trivia and other interactive elements, and
- offer multiple language options through interpretation and translation apps.

Improved Security

By offering a space that is rich in interactions in the form of text, audio and video chat, it is highly important that these interactions stay secure. In the case of virtual career fairs, for instance, employers might be carrying out screening processes on the spot. In any case, you are ethically obliged to provide a secure platform to the people you are inviting.

Two-factor Authentication offers better identity verification by sending a one-time password to the attendee's email and SMS. Let your audience know about these security measures as well. You can even blacklist certain user identifications (for example, email addresses outside of your organization) or whitelist certain people you've uploaded into the event to keep the guest list closed.



Swag Bags

To opt for a "green" business strategy, it is essential to provide digital content and go for paperless marketing. Virtual events allow audiences to download resources, add them to a "swag bag" or a "briefcase" and email to themselves for easy access and consumption after the event.

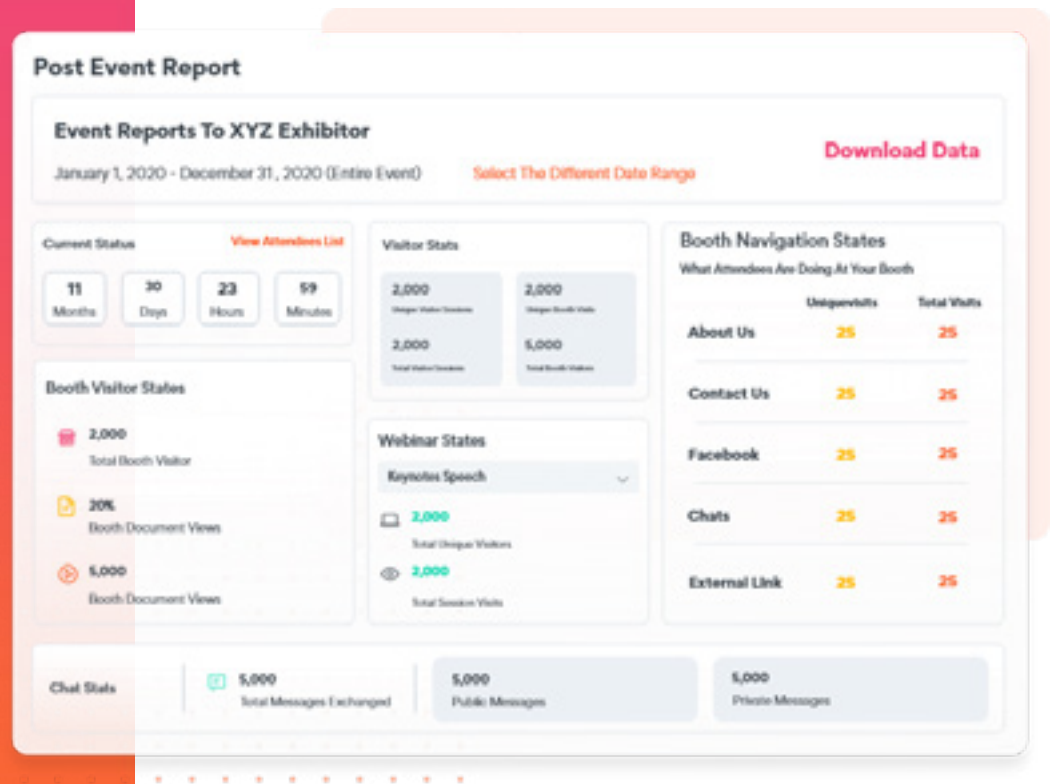


Information Desk

While the concept of virtual events is highly popular in today's world, it is also fairly new to a number of individuals. A help desk or an information desk, just like in any physical arrangement, is staffed by your technology provider to ensure that your audience gets their technical queries answered promptly at all times.



Measurable Results



[Reporting](#) is absolutely, without a doubt, one of the prime features of a virtual event. By hosting a virtual event, measuring all performance indicators are essential to evaluating the success of your event.

So, what can you measure? Let's just put it this way: everything under the virtual event roof is trackable. Hosts can track:

- attendee logins,
- attendance rates,
- user activity in real-time, and
- individual user journeys.

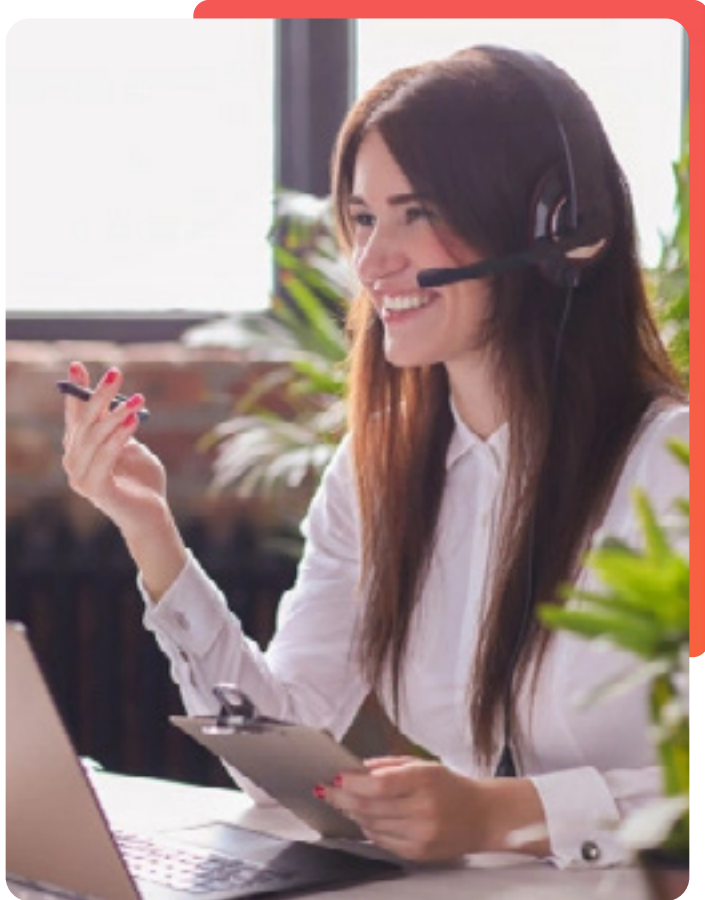
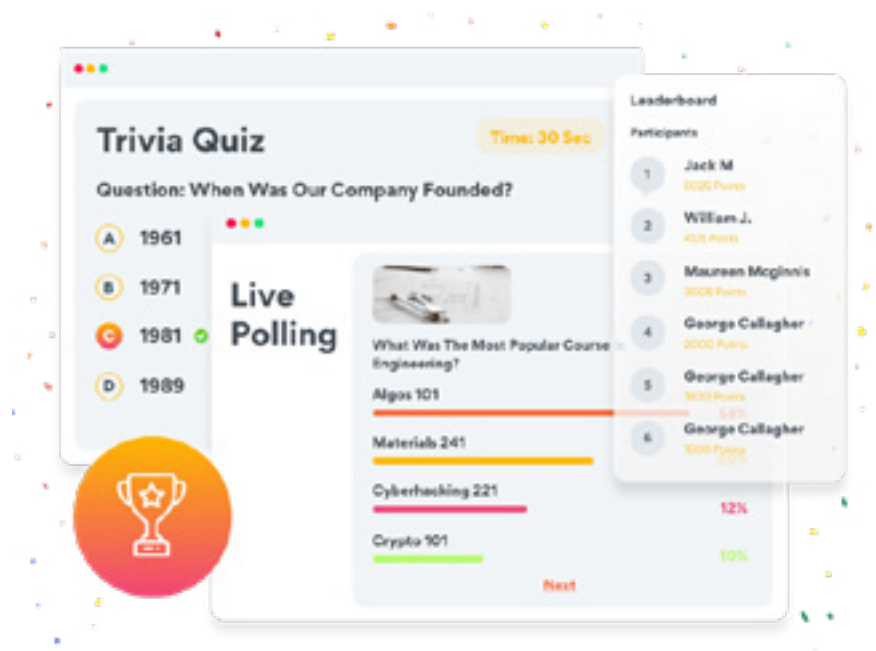
Use these insights to enhance user experience. Moreover, you can share these metrics with exhibitors:

- booth visits,
- link clicks,
- content downloads, and
- chat activity.

Your personal dashboard is updated in real-time so you can maximize your sponsorship ROI. With such detailed data at your fingertips, you can track KPIs, and even export all the data to share with your team or sponsors.

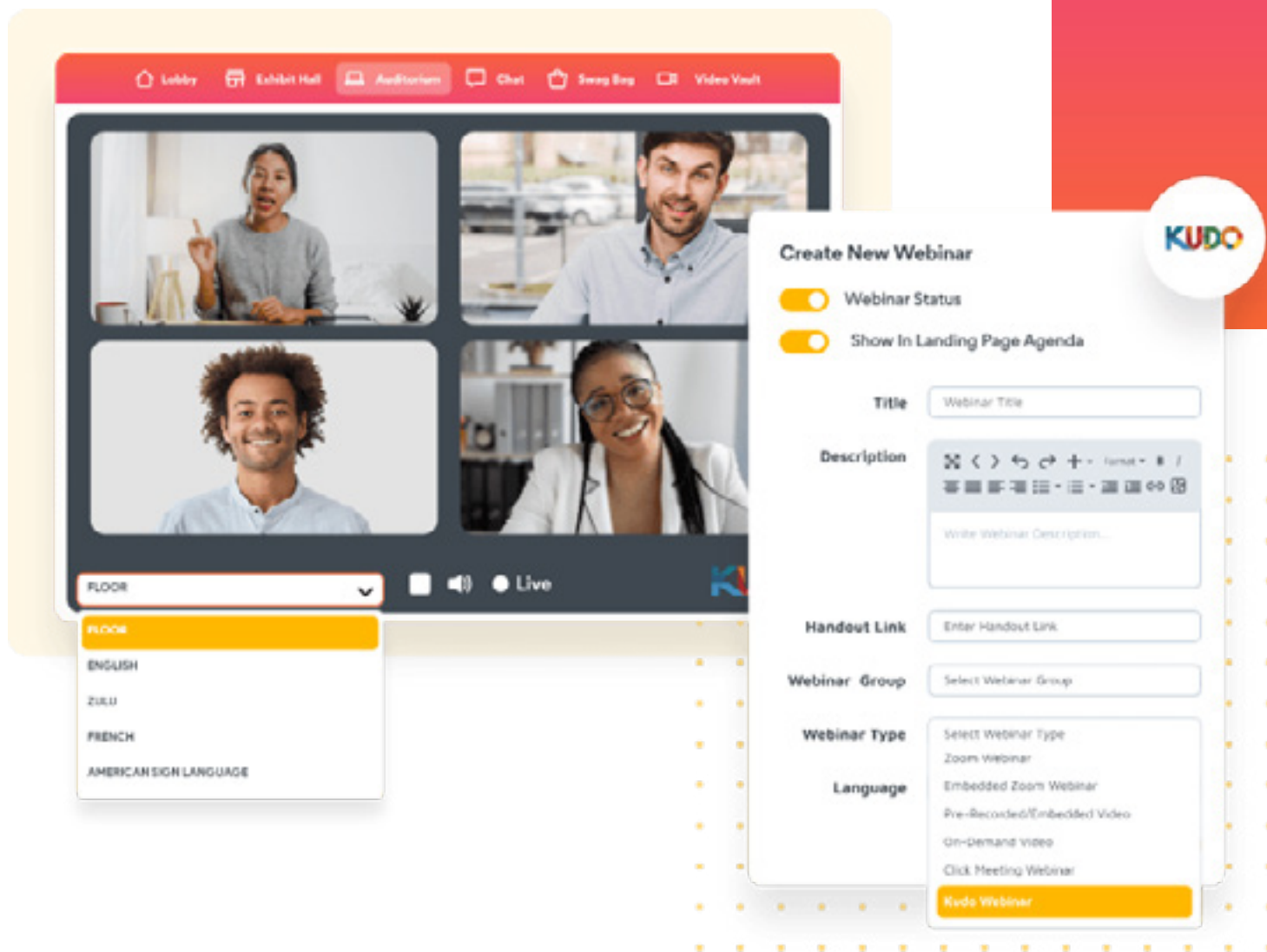
Gamification

Features such as leaderboards and scavenger hunts can be incorporated into your event to award points to guests based on activity and give away sponsored prizes. This [event gamification feature](#) also contributes to prolonging the time spent by your audience at your event by offering them incentives for covering the maximum virtual ground.



Ever-Reliable Customer Support

A critical feature of your virtual event platform is [customer support](#). Make sure the event provider offers 24/7 customer support which includes onboarding, pre-event, live event, and post-event support. A dedicated project manager will share ideas and find solutions for any challenges that you're facing as you set up the event. Additionally, customer support managers also work closely with clients so they have a smooth onboarding process and get the most out of the event.

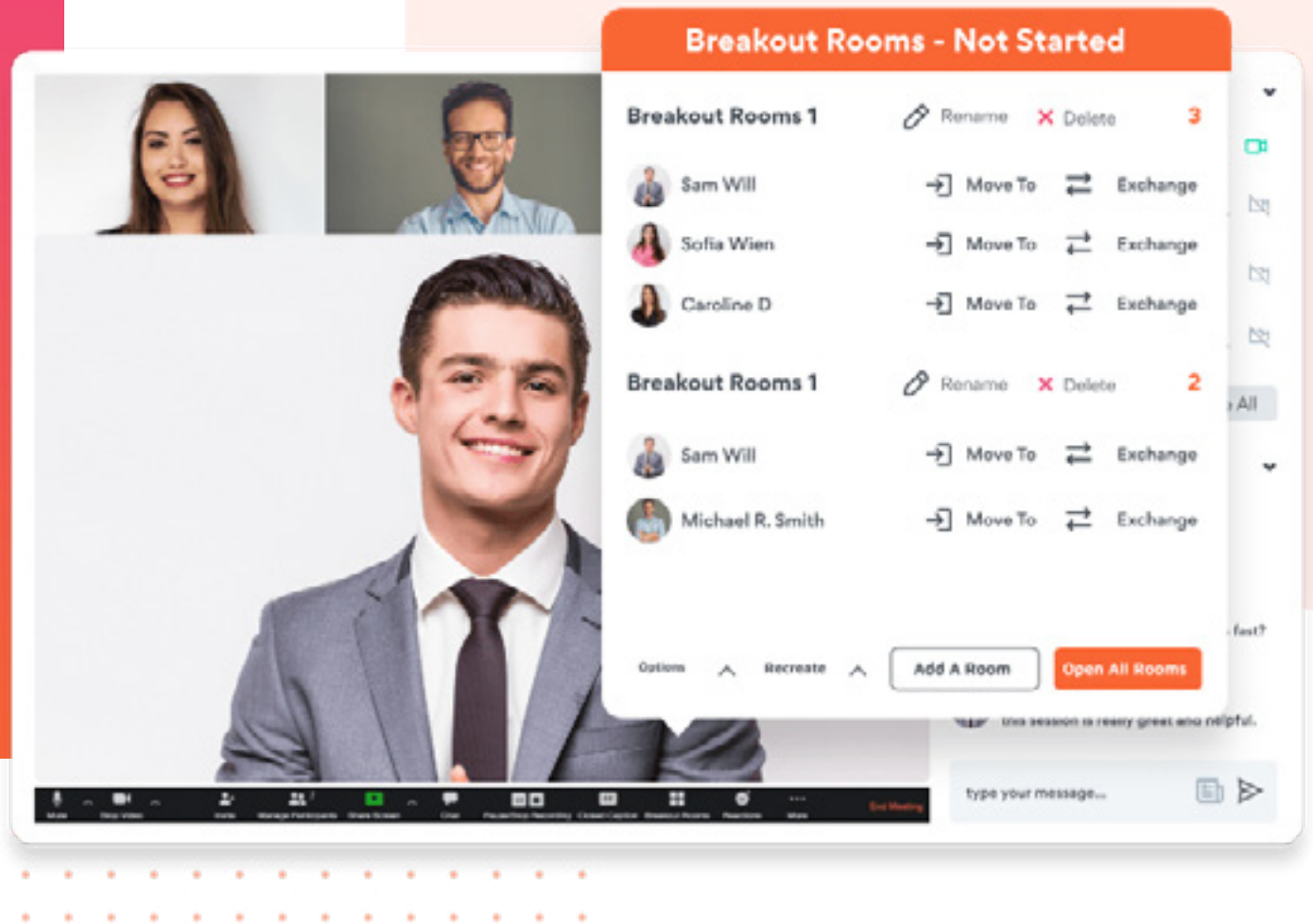


Accessibility Options

While virtual events have revolutionized the events industry based on how accessible they are, a number of platforms still disregard individuals with hearing, visual, or other cognitive impairments, claiming to provide customers with a global reach. Make sure your provider offers the relevant [accessibility options](#) to ensure that a wider audience is welcomed to your event. These include:

- Screen readers
- Color contrast
- Text size adjustment
- Video transcription

Plus a virtual event is easily accessible for people with physical disabilities. They can easily attend without any stressors.



Networking

One of the primary reasons audiences attend events are to network with industry professionals, exchange ideas and have meaningful conversations. As such, your virtual event platform needs to provide exceptional [networking features](#). vFairs has tools that foster easy connection through:

- embedded live individual and group chats,
- text, audio and video call options,
- live Q&As,
- meeting scheduler tool,
- attendee matchmaking,
- breakout rooms, and
- audience profile search and filter tools.

All these facilities serve to help your attendees, exhibitors and other event goers meet people and make connections.

Event Email Campaign

Showing 1-1 Of 1 Item.

Title
Email Title

Campaign Type
Campaign Type

From Name
John Doe

From Email
johndoe@Email.Com

Subject
Attend Virtual Event

Audience Segment
All Attendees

☒ Send Now ☐ Send Later

Email Template/Trigger

- Pre Event Reminder Email
- Not Logged In User Email Campaign**
- Post Event Sorry We Missed You Email Campaign
- Post Event Thank You Email
- Live Event Day Email Campaign
- Pre Event Reminder Email Template 2

Send **Save**

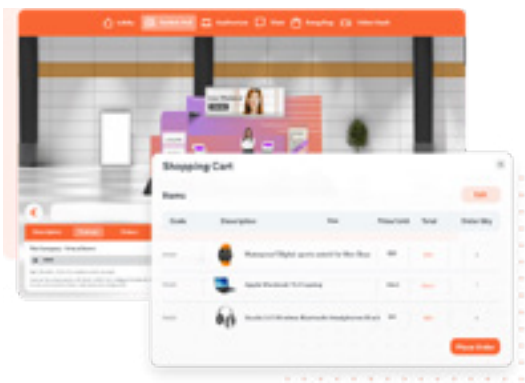
Virtual Event Marketing

What is an event without rigorous [marketing](#) backing it up? It is only if you get the word out will you have any attendees. Choose a platform that:

- facilitates pre-event marketing that allows you to build hype for your event,
- allows you to create a beautiful custom landing page and URL,
- integrates with social media walls to encourage expand your event reach and engagement,
- helps you in creating beautiful pre-, during and post-event emails, and
- allows you to add specific triggers to run automated email campaigns.

There are also some [custom features](#) that make virtual event planning easy. Let's have a look at them now.

Custom Features



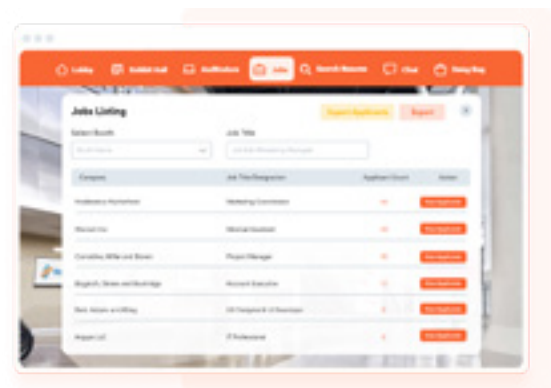
Shopping Cart

Eliminate purchasing delays and maximize conversions by embedding an online shop into your event to encourage real-time transactions.



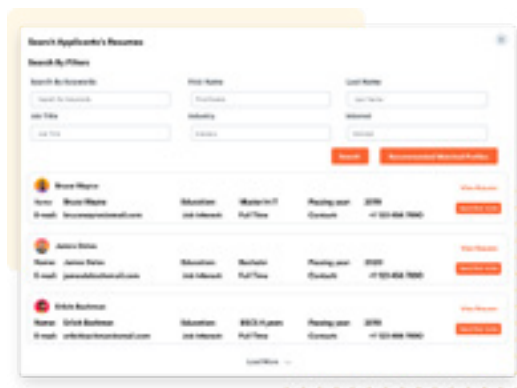
Poster Halls

Offer a dedicated space for researchers to showcase their findings, present data, graphics via posters and presentations while also taking questions from the audience in the poster hall.



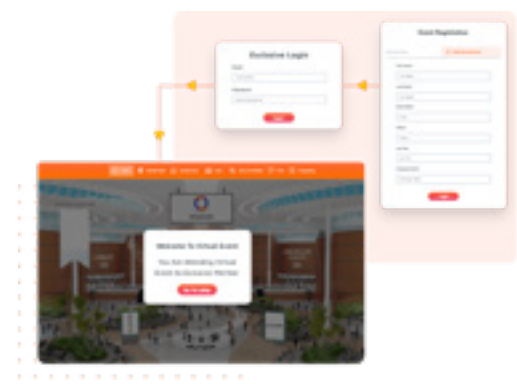
Job Board

Help job seekers find roles they are most suited to and apply right away with a job board and let employers see the number of applications received, review them and speed up the hiring process.



Auto-Match

Allow attendees and exhibitors to view a list of recommended people to network with based on the interests they specify at the time of registration with auto-match.



Exclusive Access

Grant exclusive access to higher-tier attendees with ticketing tiers. Offer a unique experience allowing them to enter exclusive areas in your custom virtual events.



6

Planning Guide to **Virtual Event**

Now that you're all set with your virtual event platform, how about we set up a detailed [virtual events guide](#) checklist to take off a remarkable virtual event?



Set a clear objective – decide on a quantified objective (product promotion, sales or lead generation) that can be used to drive metrics that you plan to achieve with your virtual event. Set a budget for all your activities.



Know your audience – identify your target audience and base features as well as content that they will most relate with.



Timing is everything – do your research well in advance and pick the days when all your partners, exhibitors and visitors are available (this means avoiding weekends or days with mega sports events).



Get partners on board – ensure that all your exhibitors and sponsors are notified, briefed and trained about your virtual event well in advance for them to create and provide their material.



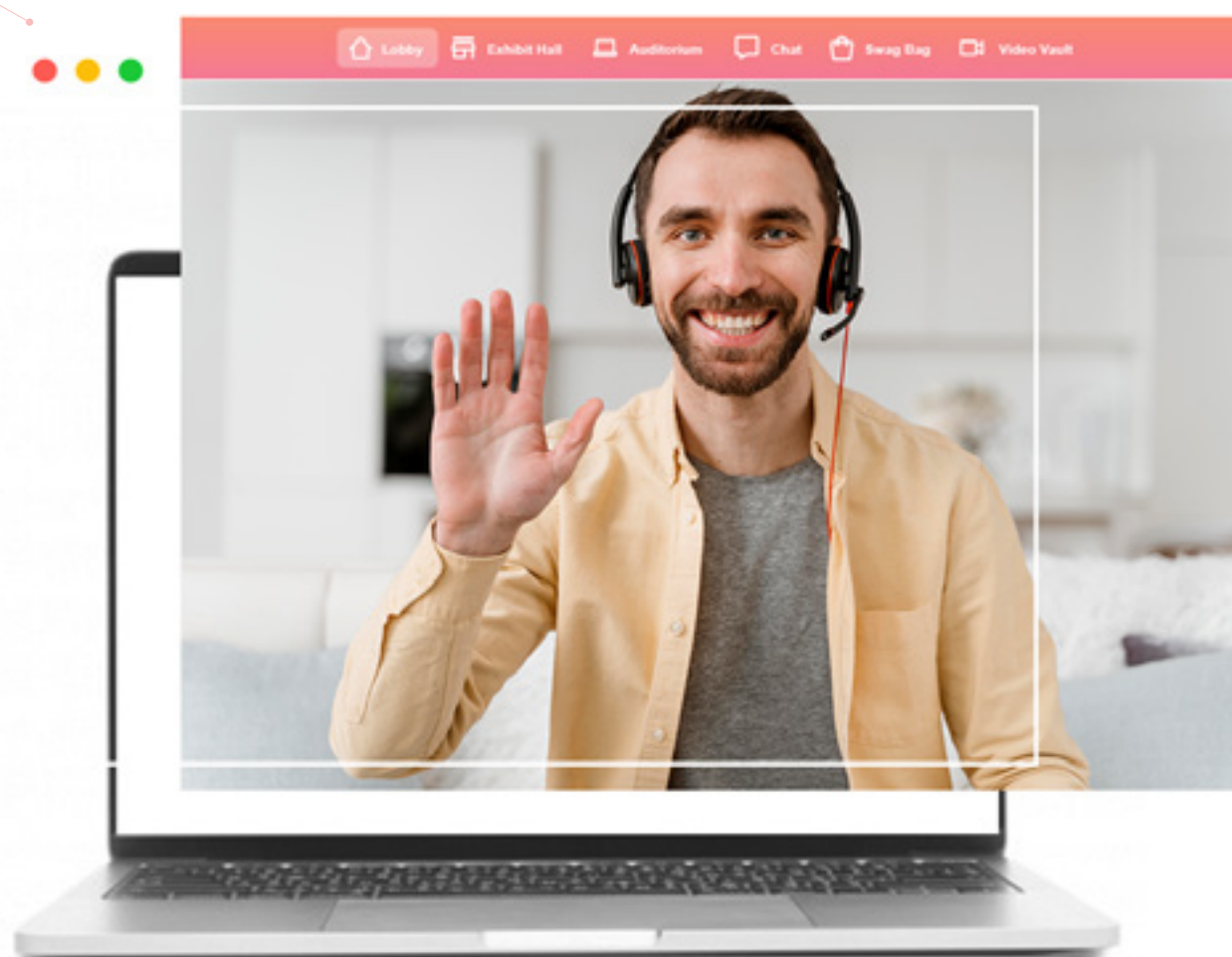
Promote, promote, promote – prior to your event, strategize your marketing channels such as social media, email lists and official website. Setup informative landing pages and think about how you could get people to spread the word.



Create compelling content – It is important to deliver what visitors want. Use surveys, polls, and questionnaires to devise presentations, articles, brochures and other collateral that delivers your event's purpose.

Use our free virtual event planner to stay on track for your next event

[Download Event Planner](#)



7

10 Questions To Ask Your **Virtual Event Provider**

Researching and finding the right virtual events provider is as important as planning the details of your virtual event. You're handing over a huge share of responsibility to your platform provider and need to be sure that they can provide you with the best service as well as the greatest value.

Before you get started, here's a set of questions you might want to ask.

1. Will I Get a Detailed Demo of My Virtual Event?

Request a thorough demo of the platform to get a sense of what your virtual event will look like. The demo will also help you test aspects like platform functionality, ease of use, navigation, visual quality and built-in features that are central to obtaining your event objectives. Not just this you get an understanding of how well the virtual events platform can help you solve problems and achieve the goals you've set for yourself.

2. Are There Any Past Executions That Can Be Shown?

With many new solution providers entering the industry, you want to choose one that has worked with a diverse range of top organizations, executed a wide range of virtual events, and can provide you with one-on-one customization that best matches your event requirements.

Case studies and past events can also show the level of creativity and professionalism a platform can help an organization achieve with virtual events. Check out their resources page to see their previous work.

3. How Long Is The Event's Set Up Time?

To ensure that your events calendar stays on schedule, do enquire about the average time it takes for the provider to set up the event, from start to finish. The ideal time for a high caliber provider should not cross 4-6 weeks to set up your event.

4. Where Will the Virtual Event Be Hosted and How Secure Will It Be?

Make it a point to ask your virtual events provider about the specific security features that they have in place. Your event should be protected from data fraud, viruses, and crashing servers when the event sees bulk registration. Features such as single sign on and two-factor authentication also ensure that the event is accessed only by the intended audience, eliminating risk of intruders.

5. Is the Platform Compatible Across Devices and Operating Systems?

While your visitors will be accessing your event using any and all smart devices, you need to make sure you provide them with a seamless experience on their smartphones, laptops as well as tablets. In addition, ensure that your vendor provides event hosting compatible with Android and iOS platforms. After all, you do not want to lose visitor acquisition or engagement due to poor technology compatibility.

You might also want to know if the platform offers a [mobile event app](#). A mobile event app is the perfect supplement to your event, offering greater accessibility and flexibility to your audience.

6. Who Owns All the Data?

The data stored on your virtual event platform will oftentimes be highly confidential. For example, in case of a [virtual career fair](#), you might be storing hundreds of candidate profiles, feedback forms and company data, and hence, making it crucial for your contract to be very clear in detailing the provider's right to store and process the data whilst relinquishing all data ownership to your organization.

7. What Kind of Support Do You Offer?

You want to be sure that the solutions provider is not choosing a one-size-fits-all solution for you, and is instead going to deliver customized instruction across all phases. From booth design, event layout, and marketing in addition to delivering flawless execution and independently managing the event planning and implementation.

Enquire if the support is 24/7 or, alternatively, what are the hours during which they offer support. You and your event provider might be in two different time zones altogether, so need to fix that beforehand.

8. What Engagement & Interactive Features Are Available?

There's a lot more to virtual event planning than defining timelines and budgets. Discuss how you will attract, excite and engage the visitors to leave the intended impact.

- Do you want textual, voice or video chat-based functionality?
- Do you want live webinars to address audience questions or share market insights?
- Does a multilingual platform help you achieve your objective?
- Are you interested in gamifying your event? Adding leaderboards/polls/trivia questions for engagement?
- Do you need social media integrations?
- Will you add photo booths and other fun activities?
- Does your event require matchmaking and user profile search features for networking?

Be specific with how you choose to communicate with your visitors so that your virtual event is remembered by all participants and ensure the platform you choose excels in those features.

9. What Type of Reports Will Be Generated?

Your vendor of choice should not only excel at delivering a fantastic virtual event but provide reports that measure the impact of your initiative on your audience. Your reports should also help determine your KPIs in advance, for example, unique visitors, visits per booth, or job applications received for every position advertised. Discuss this ahead of time.

10. What Sort of Accessibility Options Are Available for Differently-Abled Visitors?

One of the key winning points of a virtual event in comparison to its physical counterparts is that it is accessible and inclusive. It invites quality individuals based on their skills and relevance instead of restricting them based on their disabilities. Look for features such as:

- colour contrast for visually impaired individuals
- text size adjustment
- page narration
- webinars with subtitles
- clear and straightforward layout for easy navigation

If you wish to reach a global audience and offer value to people from the comfort of their homes, it is imperative to cater to those who are normally left behind but can offer a lot at the same time.



8

How To Host a **Virtual Event**

Another critical pillar of our guide to virtual events is understanding how to host them. If you're looking to produce a high-quality digital experience with one-on-one interaction and continuous engagement, then you're in the right place.

✓ 1

Decide the Type of Event You're Planning To Host

Whether it's a virtual conference, virtual career fair, virtual trades show, or any other event, you first ought to define objectives in order to plan an event on top of it. With specific objectives driving you forward you will have a clear direction, which not only keeps things streamlined but also helps you in meeting deadlines.

✓ 2

Set a Timeline

Ideally, it takes about four to six weeks for an event to be up and running. However, it is highly recommended to book your event way in advance so that you can build it up to perfection and have enough time to market it to your audience.

✓ 3

Reach Out to Exhibitors, Keynote Speakers & Sponsors

Booking key stakeholders is a time consuming task. Invite them via emails, calls and if needed, use explanatory videos to bring them on board. Tell them what the event is about, what you hope to achieve and what are the key objectives. This is where you tell them about the impact you wish you to create with this virtual event.

In case of exhibitors, you will need to sign them up to give them enough time to set up their booths and invite their audience via social media, emails and other platforms of their preference. Many hosts offer exhibitors and sponsors both tiered packages along with a-la-carte options so people can choose how they would like to participate. They offer various pricing points for different budgets.





4

Reach Out to Exhibitors, Keynote Speakers & Sponsors

When choosing a [virtual events provider](#), ensure that they support your necessary requirements to deliver your brand's goals and vision. Prepare a set of questions, no matter how many, and inquire until you're absolutely sold on their service.



5

Reach Out to Exhibitors, Keynote Speakers & Sponsors

You need to set a memorable first impression, just like at any physical event. Make sure your landing page:

- is visually compelling,
- consists of relevant information,
- is branded and has an informative event description, and
- has a clear agenda with session descriptions and timings.

As soon as your visitor enters your event, it is important to ensure that the virtual environment replicates the entire experience of an in-person event.



✓ 6

Create Quality Content

To begin with, a content strategy is required to inspire, inform, and raise awareness about your brand and its initiatives. Your content must deliver value to your audience. Thus, a tad bit of homework for your team that will pay off well through exceptional results. This means, creating and stocking up on collateral such as:

- booth images, logos & banners
- company description
- content tabs
- videos
- documents/PDFs
- presentations

Remember, all the resources and content you've worked on fall under your ownership and can be used on multiple avenues for the times to come.

✓ 7

Use Engagement Tools

The success of any event is strongly based on the extent of engagement and interactions taking place. Virtual events provide effective online tools to maximize engagement in real time, using the following features:

- 1:1 text, audio video chat
- group discussions
- live/recorded webinars followed by Q&A sessions
- surveys & polls
- photo booths
- social media walls
- attendee matchmaking



8

(Bonus) - Gamify Your Event

Incentivize certain steps you wish for your audience to complete by gamifying your event. Scavenger hunts and leaderboards not only increase the time your audience spends at your event but also helps set a lasting impression of your organization, eventually improving the quality of leads.



9

Generate Detailed Reports

What sets virtual events apart from its physical counterparts is the capability to generate reports, in real time as well at the end of the event. Make sure your reports gather enough information to help you measure your ROI and optimize your KPIs. Some important components that to look for include:

- registrants contact details (as per the registration form)
- total registrations
- total booth visits
- clicks per tab
- downloads per content piece
- chat volume
- total webinar attendees

Extensive reports with vFairs help you visualize attendee journeys that help you understand where they enjoyed the most and where they found most value.

Here's vFairs free virtual events planner. Download and use to plan events to the tee.

[Download Event Planner](#)

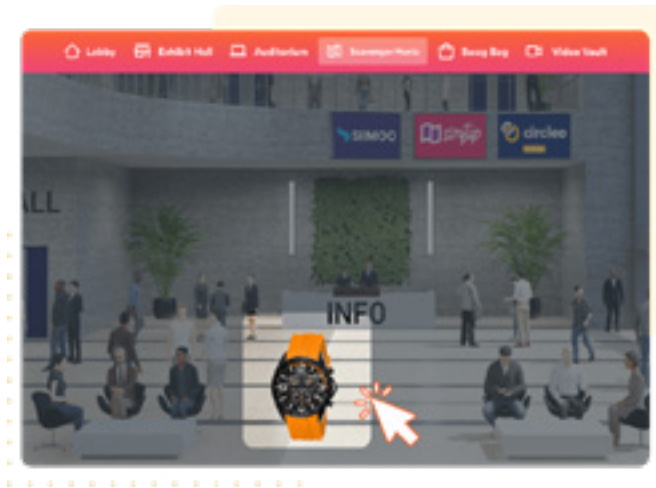


9

How To Make **Virtual Events** Fun and Engaging

Virtual events could easily fall flat. It is a tricky balance to strike where you keep them hooked and also deliver the value you intended to, while also achieving your own objectives. So how would you keep participants engaged? How would you keep things exciting?

The following ideas by vFairs are based on tried and tested event practices. To see tangible results regardless of your budget or event size, continue scrolling.

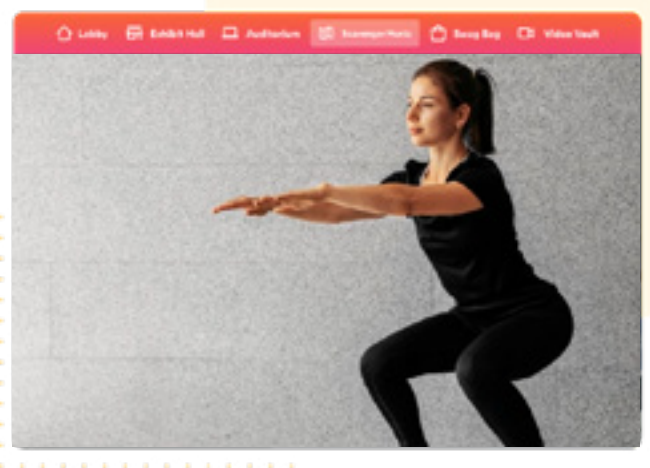


1. Live Games and Competitions

One of the best working ideas for virtual events is featuring sponsors and exhibitors with the help of different kinds of competitions or live games. It is a creative way if you wish to provide engaging demos to your audience while getting their full involvement.

2. Health and Wellbeing Activities

The majority of people have been struggling with physical as well as mental health owing to recent world events. Keeping this in mind, incorporating activities that are relevant to health and wellbeing is a good idea for virtual events.



3. Virtual Content

Bringing your event online doesn't at all mean that you need to forget about entertainment. There is a long list of ideas for virtual events that can translate very well to your event. One of the most popular and entertaining options is musician performances. This adds a fun element while keeping the audience engaged.



We all know that content is king but do you know who we call the queen? The Delivery.

4. Attract Star Talent

There are a ton of ideas to consider in virtual events, especially for very content-heavy events. This is because the delivery needs to be an 11 out of 10 in every possible manner. Bring star hosts, moderators, or even speakers that are capable of owning the virtual setting and must know how to encourage engagement throughout the virtual event.

5. Virtual Trivia Night

One of the quintessential game night options is trivia. Also, it's relatively easy when it comes to doing things online. You can come up with a theme to set the event stage. You can even divide participants into teams to help build excitement around it, ahead of time. In this way, they will know who they'll be playing with and who is the opponent.

6. Team Movie Night

You can have people vote on a selection of movies and get everyone together for a movie night. Watching the movie at the same time, even if they're not physically together is one of the other creative ideas for virtual events.

7. #Donations

One of the most authentic ideas for virtual events is to show that all donations matter, no matter what the size. In this virtual event, you can encourage participants to join you with the purpose of donating a particular amount to your cause instead. You can use an easy mobile app to encourage people to donate. Also, make sure to share all of the mentions of people doing so purely on your behalf. Moreso, even if you're a [non-profit organization](#), you can raise money for causes that your organization supports through virtual events.



8. Chat Moderators

Another well-tested idea is to assign a person to the live discussion of each of your sessions from the organizing team. This person will be responsible for making sure that the chat keeps going. They answer platform or tech-related questions in addition to removing any content that is irrelevant to the topic or inappropriate.

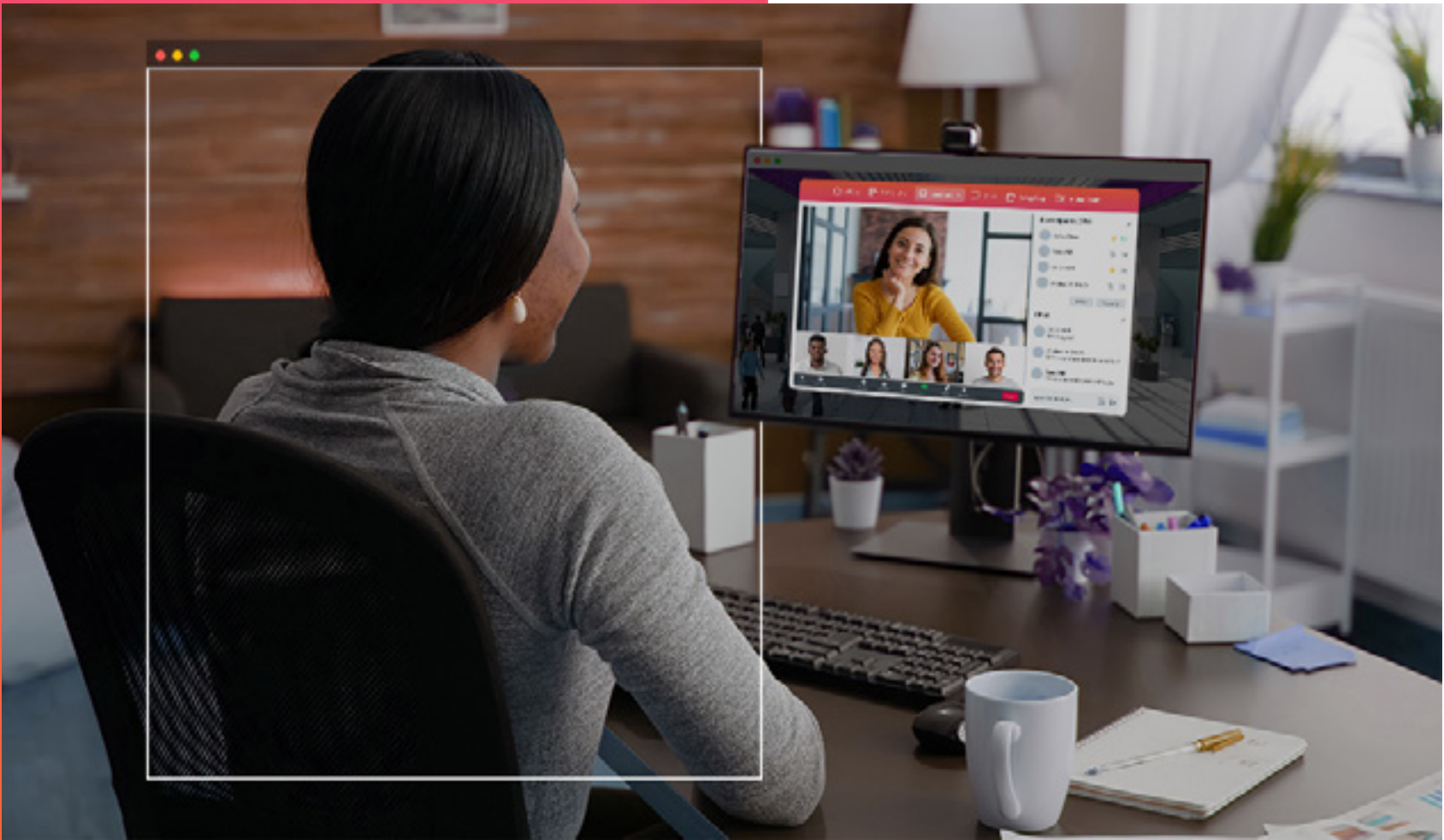
9. Online Tours

There's one [virtual conference](#) idea that is ideal to give your audience a sense of traveling far away from their home or office. Your sponsors or speakers might work in some interesting places, but it depends on the sector you are currently working in. For example, you can offer 360-degree virtual visits to farms, factories, galleries, museums and other unique spots.

10. Host a Giveaway

Last but not least, giveaways are a good way to increase attendees' engagement. They can be a fun addition to your virtual event. Although the giveaway is not one of those simple ideas for virtual events where the prize is simply handed to the attendee, there are some virtual goodies you can offer. Also, there's an option of mailing physical incentives to your attendees following the virtual event.

For example, you can have the participants share a post using the dedicated event hashtag on social media. The attendees can also complete certain actions during the virtual event.



10

How To Promote **Virtual Events:** The Ultimate Virtual Events Communication Plan

What's a guide to virtual events that doesn't talk about the backbone of the event? Guessed it? Yes it is marketing. How else will you get the word out?

Building awareness via a carefully curated marketing strategy is the key to achieving high attendees numbers, conversions, applicants, and leads for your business.



Identify Your Audience

Be clear about who you're targeting and why.

To start building an effective marketing plan, you need to first understand your audience. The better you can lock down the target persona you plan to serve, the better your marketing campaign will perform.

- their demographics (age, location, profession, etc)
- where they spend time online
- their motivations and goals
- how they prefer to consume content
- topics that will pique their interest

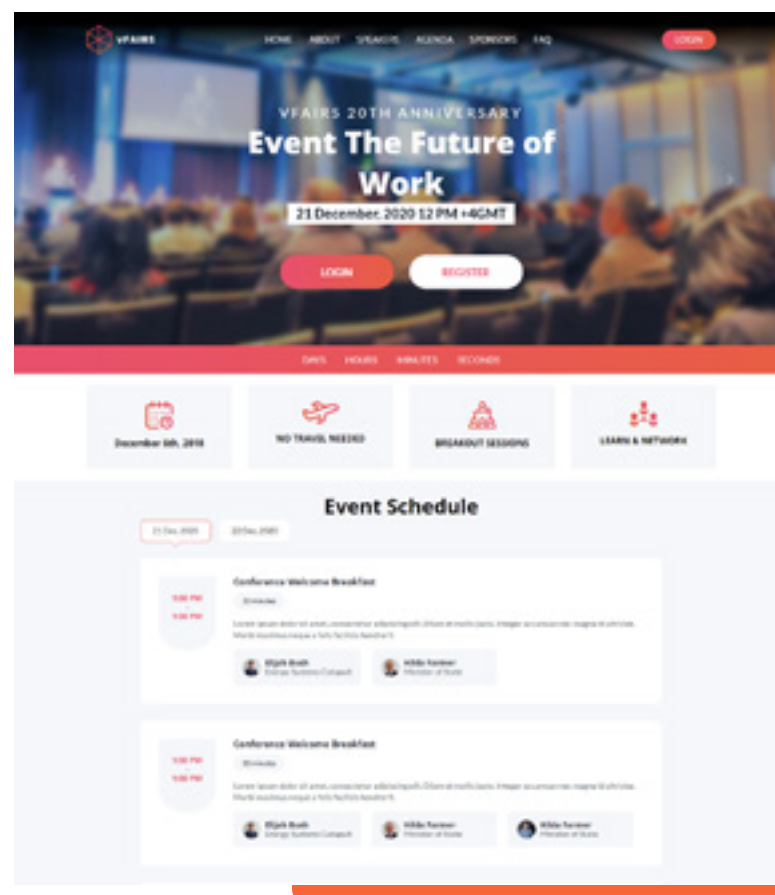
Once you know who you are targeting, you have to then figure out the desired outcome you require from them. Create a target goal that will help you measure what success looks like and then ensure your marketing messaging encourages your target audience towards your end goal.



Create a Landing Page

After you've identified your audience and the goals you wish to achieve, you need to work on the focal point of your marketing campaign – your landing page.

Communicate a compelling value proposition.



The landing page of the event serves two purposes:

- It helps you freely communicate why people should care about this virtual event (think of it as an elevator pitch)
- It helps you capture details of interested visitors so you can pull them in on the day of the event

Apart from “wearing” your brand, the virtual event’s landing page should ideally have the following components:

- A compelling headline
- Date & time of the event
- Event agenda (e.g. schedule of webinars, etc.)
- A brief overview of the virtual event so audiences know what to expect
- Who is exhibiting at the event and who the sponsors are
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs)
- Content & imagery that supports your message
- An engaging video to attract and convert traffic to registrations



We recommend promoting your event's landing page two or three weeks prior

Market at the Right Time

Okay, now you're all set and excited to announce your virtual event. You're ready to start driving traffic to the landing page and build registration numbers – but let's hold that thought for a minute.

Timing your marketing is essential. If you do it too early, you risk losing the audience's attention, especially with the number of distractions that surround your remote audience presently. If you do it late, you might not be able to generate enough reach with your campaign.

As a rule of thumb, we recommend promoting your event's landing page two or three weeks prior to the event date to secure a safe space on your potential participants' radars.



Leverage your existing web presence to get the word out.

Promote on Your Site

Using your website to market your upcoming virtual event is an effective way to engage visitors. Here are some ways you can leverage your site:

- Add a prominent section on the homepage of your website that links directly to your virtual event's landing page.
- Throw in banner ad placements, message panels, pop ups and other catchy graphics with a countdown clock to draw in your audience and instill a sense of urgency.
- Feature a short video on the homepage promoting your event can also go a long way to dial-up registrations.
- Create a temporary line item in your navigation menu linking directly to the event landing page.

Use Email Marketing

Email marketing is a core component of any event marketing strategy. Marketers believe it to be the most effective channel for event promotion. If you have a subscription base, lead list in a CRM, or any database of potential participants, then you already have low-hanging fruit to focus on.

Send a sequence of emails to your existing subscribers.



Having said that, you need to craft your email campaign carefully. A few things you need to nail are:

- your target recipients,
- the number of emails to send and delays between each,
- compelling subject lines (which can be A/B tested),
- catchy, informative body text,
- layout and design, and
- a compelling call-to-action.

Ideally, you should focus your campaign on recipients that you are interested in inviting to the event. Plan out two to three emails, times a few days apart, prior to the event to invite, inform and remind your audiences (make sure you don't overdo it). Your lists do have the option to opt out of the campaign though, so they can if they're not interested (let's hope that doesn't happen though).

Leverage Your Sponsors



Ask your sponsors to help spread the word. You can:

- encourage sponsors to promote the virtual event on their website, social media channels,
- send emails to their subscriber list or write a guest post on their blog provided they grant permission, and
- make sure that you work closely with them to get the messaging right.

Involve Your Speakers

Invite renown speakers at your virtual event as your events' ambassadors.

Ambassadors and spokespersons are sometimes the core attractions of your virtual event that audiences would love to hear, connect with, and learn from. Thus, it makes absolute sense for them to add to the dialogue being built around your virtual event.

Content Marketing

Write articles and guest blogs. "Content is king" – we've all heard this and have witnessed the influence of content serving as a promotional powerhouse. Known to be one of the core pillars of a strong inbound marketing strategy, attracting visitors to your virtual event's landing page can be done by making use of guest posts on reputable and authoritative blogs. Ask your partners with lookalike audiences for backlinks or reposts on social media. This delivers your content to an even wider audience.



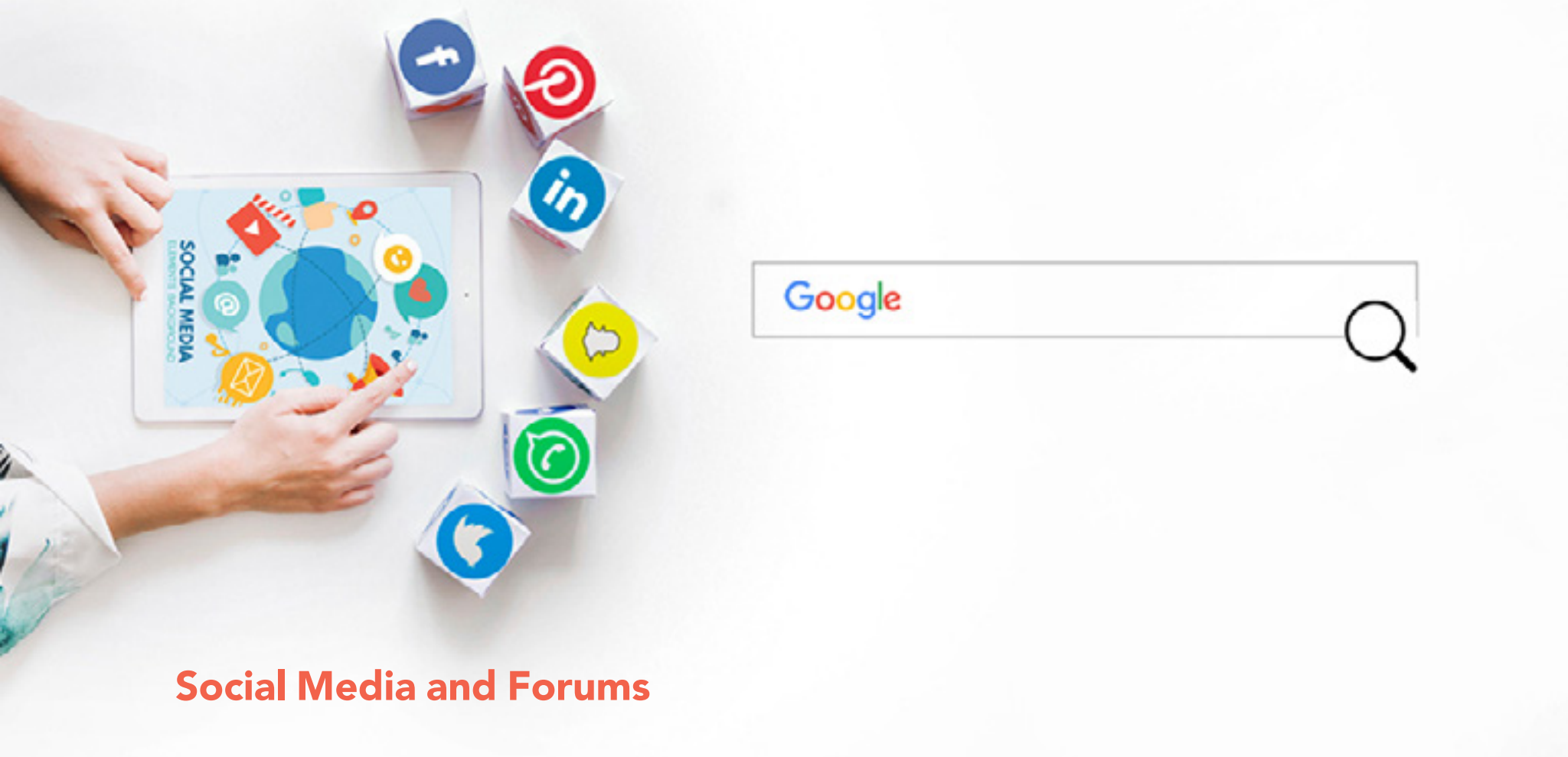
Issue a Press Release

Reach masses through a PR campaign.

For virtual events that are primarily B2B in nature, a timely press release can be an effective way to get the word out quickly. The messaging should:

- be effective,
- depict the value proposition of the event,
- cite who the intended audience is,
- mention the date & time of the event,
- highlight any sponsors/speakers worth mentioning, and
- link the write-up directly to your landing page so that you can drive referral traffic.

Beyond massive coverage, online press releases are also shared by readers and journalists on social media channels, allowing you to reap the benefits of that exposure as well.



Social Media and Forums

Social promotion is essential. Use organic or paid promotion and combine it with remarketing.

The obvious way to use LinkedIn and Facebook to your advantage is to keep posting updates about your upcoming virtual event to your follower base. Consider paid promotion in addition to using these two channels to re-market to your existing audience. This allows you to trigger a promotion of your event to users who have visited your website before or are on your email marketing list, making a second attempt at influencing them to convert.

Another winner is Facebook and LinkedIn groups. They allow you to reach and deliver your message to a targeted set of audiences.

It is not just social media that helps you create buzz around your event, but forums as well. They're a great way to attract an audience, linking your event in Quora, Reddit or even industry specific forums. This again helps you increase your reach.

Opt for Paid Search

Leverage Google Ads to quickly promote your event against valuable keywords.

If you're really in a rush to see fast improvements in your virtual event registration volume, then using paid ads to get more traffic is fundamental to attract your identified audiences online.

Creating targeted campaigns reaching out to the right audience, desired geographical locations, demographics and topics of interest will help build awareness and event visibility.

Own a Twitter Hashtag

Use a unique hashtag & build momentum on Twitter.

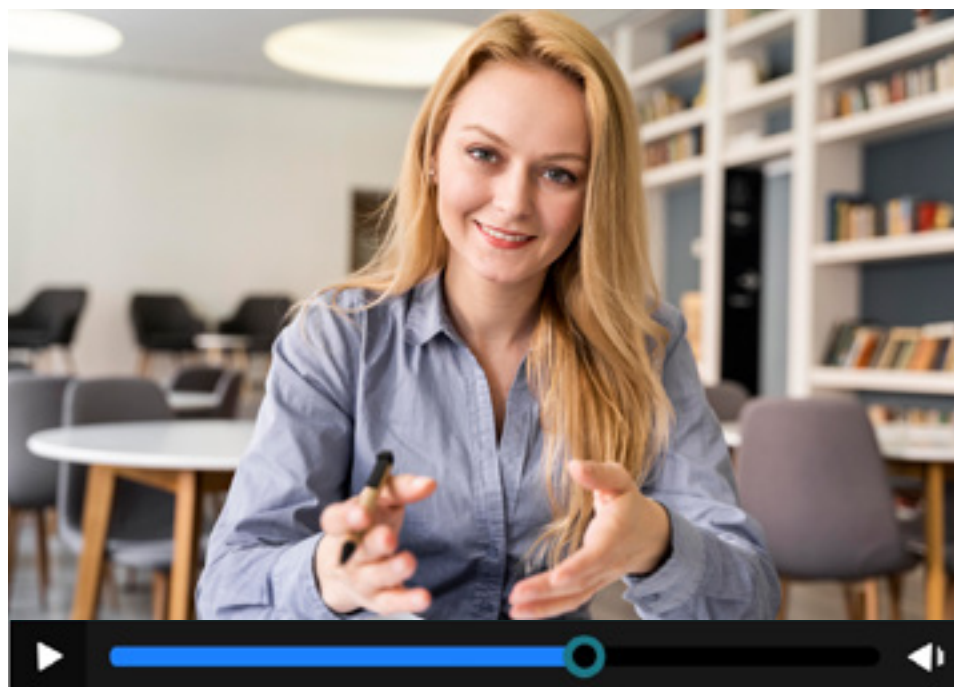
Businesses have been using Twitter to highlight their events, products, campaigns and much more for years. This is why virtual event hosts need to become a part of the hashtag revolution to get noticed.

Don't just fire bland tweets asking people to sign-up, though. Rather, share some nuggets of value and educate your audience, motivating them to attend the virtual event to learn more. By creating buzz around your hashtag and often linking back to your landing page, you're setting yourself up for a bump in conversions.

Create Video Previews

Invest in video. It takes time and effort but it's worth it. Here's why:

Viewers retain 95% of a message when they watch it in a video, compared to 10% when reading it in the text.



This content format is all the rage. Audiences are more likely to get hooked onto exciting and creative videos that allow them to consume information quickly.

Promoting your virtual event with a short video can help deliver a lot of information in a much more compelling and engaging manner. Positioning your brand as a technology leader, visionary, and in a league unlike others with teaser clips on your company's social media channels can give followers a taste of the experience in-store.



11

How Much Do **Virtual Events Cost?**

Cost Summary - Physical vs. Virtual

Pricing holds a lot of weight when deciding which option to go for. Let's put an end to the suspense and give you a quick breakdown of the components and hence the price of setting up a virtual event, in comparison to its physical counterparts.

Venue Rental

The cost of a certain physical venue is greatly dependent on the required capacity as well as its location. Both, therefore, contribute to a higher rent. On the other hand, virtual events eliminate capacity or location requirements, and takes your event directly to your audience's doorstep.

Parking Facilities

Most event organizers either provide large parking lots or free valet services to facilitate the audience visiting their event. Therefore, bearing the cost of this facility in order to provide convenience to everyone visiting the venue. You easily skip that with virtual events.

Setup & Equipment

Stage set up, equipment for keynote speeches, professional quality lighting rigs, projectors, technical assistance, and the list goes on. In order to ensure a smooth and seamless physical event that also sets a lasting impression, organizers usually have to empty their pockets to the last penny. However, when hosting virtual events, leave all these worries with the virtual events provider.

Food & Beverages

What defines you as a great host at a physical event is the variety of refreshments that you offer. Virtual events eliminate the need to incur costs on hospitality, therefore lowering your overall spend.

Staffing

How often has it been that your entire business had to be on high-alert during the occurrence of your event? Resources had to pitch in extra hours and all other tasks had to be put on hold till the event ended. Good news is, virtual events save you of all of this hassle.

Travel & Accommodation

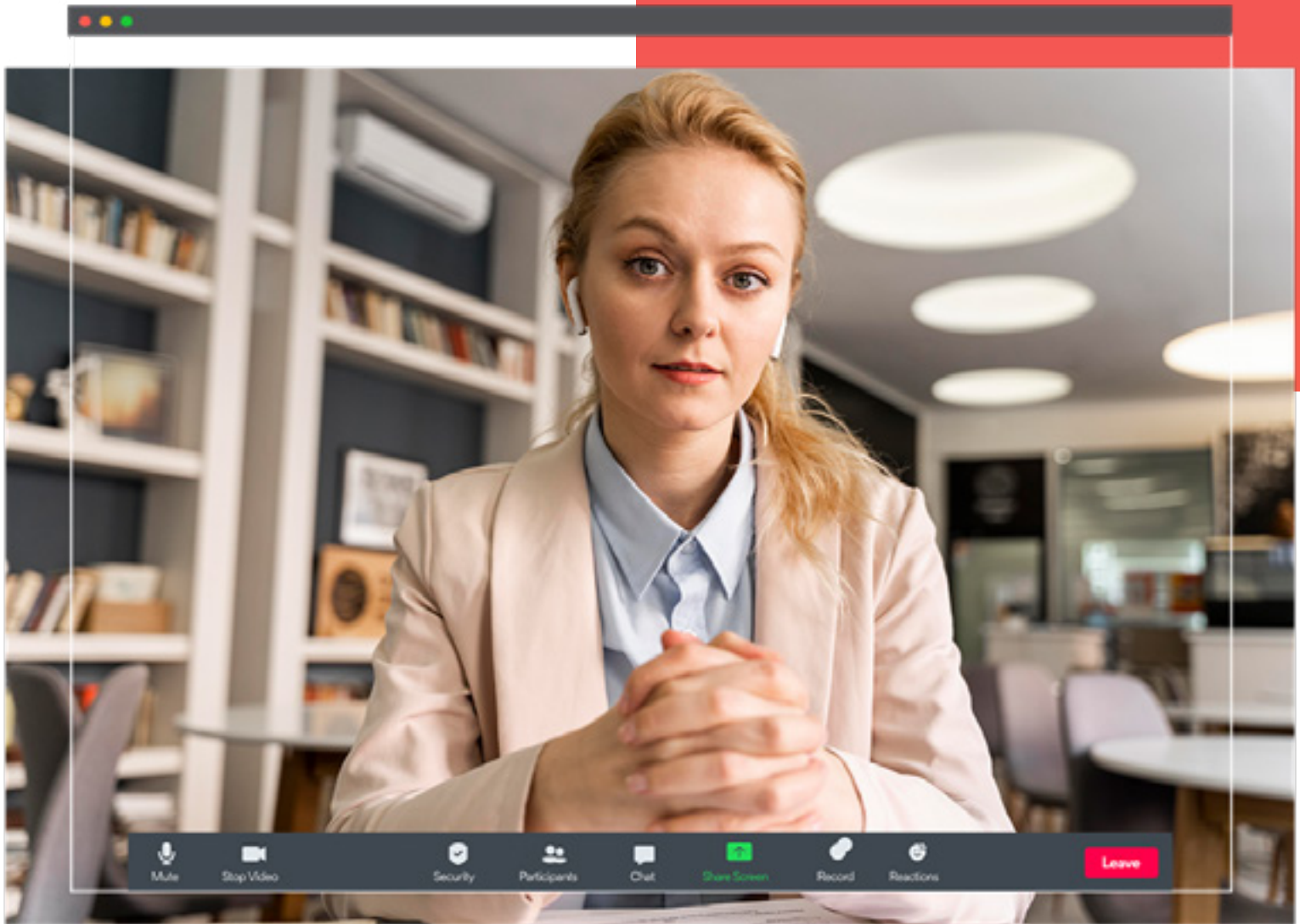
While inviting prestigious speakers to your event, you are bound to incur their travel expense and provide them with respectable accommodation. Fortunately, in case of virtual events, you can invite speakers from across the globe without spending a single penny to ensure their presence at your event.

Here is a rough cost estimate comparison for an event hosting about 100 people:

Venue	\$950 - \$1250/hour
Food and Beverage	\$125 - \$200/person
Speakers and presenters	\$4500 - \$8500
Additional staff	\$12 - \$40/hour
Travel and accommodation	\$700/day
A/V equipment and staff	\$1100 - \$1400 for equipment + \$350 - \$300/day for staffer
Printed branding collateral	\$90 - \$170/item
Rentals (tables/chairs/linen)	\$2100/day
Swag bags	\$2 - \$8/ item
Karaoke machines	\$250/day
Photo booths	\$125 - \$200/hour
Entertainment	\$650 - \$1700/hour
Decorations	\$200 - \$1000

Total cost: \$58k - \$100k

We just did the math for you and our heads are spinning. Considering the base costs, minimal overheads and just adding in the most basic add ons, the cost for an 8-hour event for 100 people is upwards of \$50,000! That is insane. Whereas a virtual event is starting from \$15,000 (with the scalability & the global reach that it brings with it).



12

Virtual Event FAQs

1. What is a virtual event?

A virtual event is an interactive event that takes place online bringing together a large group of people who share common niche interests or expertise – to network, learn and plan.

Virtual events, like physical events, consist of keynote sessions, breakout sessions and much more, with the purpose to interact and engage with audiences online.

2. What can I do in a virtual event?

- Share and gain information on industry insights
- Network with professionals and peers in real-time
- Discuss issues and ideas that focus on a topic of mutual concern
- Source talent globally
- Attract new businesses
- Exhibit and sell products/services
- Showcase thought leadership
- Launch products
- Attract new students for universities
- Celebrate graduations and other milestones
- Connect students with property agents
- Connect schools with a global student body
- Connect employees with benefits
- Train and integrate new hires into your company

3. Is a webcam required?

It is not a requirement in order to participate. However, some people at the event might request you for a video chat, in which case, you might want to have a functional webcam and mic.

4. Do I need to download or install any software to be able to attend this event?

No. You do not need to download or install any software to participate in a virtual event. You only need to have access to the Internet. However, vFairs does offer a mobile app that people can use to access the event and get more out of it (it is not mandatory though).

5. How do I log in on the day of the event?

Your login information is the email address and password you provided during registration. To login, simply use those details.

6. Where will the event be held?

This is an online event. You do not have to travel to any specific location in order to become a part of the event. You can participate from anywhere you have Internet access. The event is accessible from desktop, mobile and tablet devices.

7. Will I be able to take away information or brochures from the event?

Yes. Like any physical event, vFairs offers a swag bag for you! You can add documents provided by each exhibitor to your online swag bag and then email them to yourself or share items with friends and family by simply entering their email.

8. How can I ask questions at a virtual event?

There are a number of ways you can interact with each other. These being:

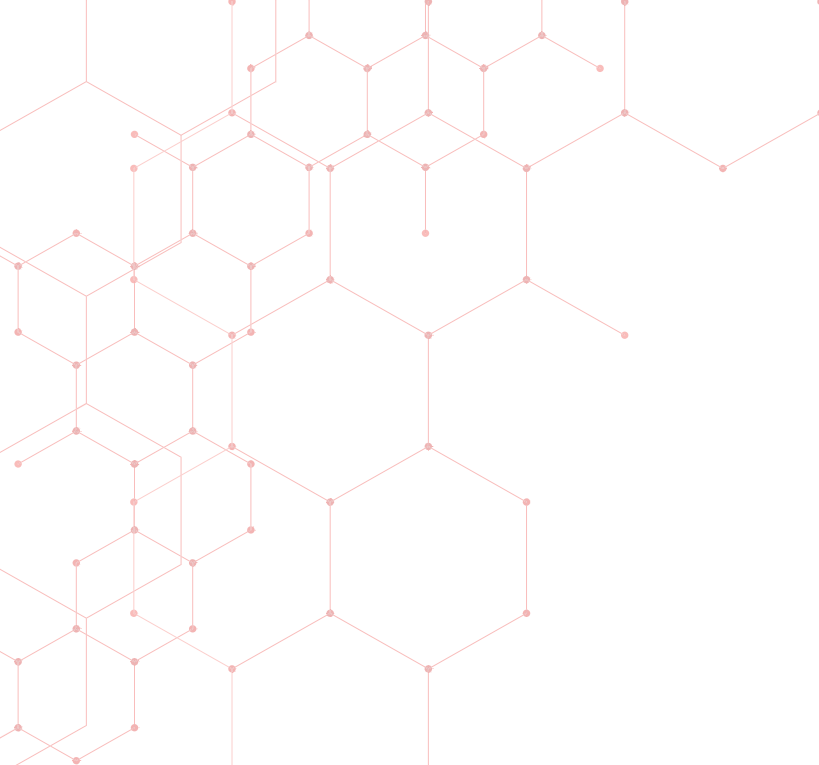
- 1:1 text, audio, video chat
- Group chat
- Live Q&A during or after webinars
- Moderated Q&A within booths
- Help desk for technical support

9. Can I invite my friends to attend the event?

If it is a public event, then absolutely yes. Your event is counting on you for spreading the word. You can simply share the link to the event page to allow them to register and enter the event at their convenience.

10. How do I log in on the day of the event?

As long as you know what the objective of your conference is, all you have to do is choose the right virtual events platform, and get started.



Conclusion

Hosting a virtual event, at first, might seem like an out-of-the-world technical experience. However, it is one that is convenient in all aspects, as well as more bountiful (and quantifiable) for businesses as well as universities, as compared to physical events. In fact, here's how our customers belonging to a number of industries have already benefited from their own virtual events.

Lastly, focusing on the need of the hour, as well as the overall shift in the global dynamics, virtual events have proven to be the 'knight in shining armor' due to the endless value and an exceptional experience they provide to organizers. Use this guide to virtual events to get you started with it. Reading and understanding this virtual events guide is the first step.

So start now!

Ready to Host Your
Hybrid Event?



(+1) 469-638-297

sales@vfairs.com

www.vfairs.com