

Make Your Hybrid Meeting a Success



Using 9 Easy Tips

Goal Setting ● Event Design ● Planning
Equipment Needs ● Marketing & Promotion ● Revenue Generation
ROI ● Event Day Strategy ● Post-event Follow-up

The Digital Experience Institute® (DEI), the definitive authority for digital and hybrid meeting strategy and production, is a global organization dedicated to advancing engagement around digital events, meetings and learning. DEI supports and contributes to research, education, thought leadership, promotion, and the digital events community.

Even if you are unsure where to start or what technology to use, these 9 tips will give you the answers you need to help you make your hybrid meeting a success...and your life easier!

Tip 1: Goal Setting

Determine your business objectives for creating a hybrid event. According to the a DEI Digital Benchmark Study, the most common objectives are to:

- Expand reach and audience
- Serve constituents by providing education to those who cannot attend the physical event
- Drive attendance to your next physical event
- Make better use of event education by making it available online
- Generate revenue
- Establish your organization as the leading education provider for your industry
- Increase international attention/interest in your education and organization
- Market your products

Tip 2: Event Design

Keeping your objective in mind, determine the best way to engage your target audience to reach your goals.

First, consider the following about your audience:

- What's their motivation for attending...CEs? Professional development?
- What's their attention span? Can they only spend 4 hours online or will they spend 10+ hours?
- Are they a visual audience? Will they need a TV-like experience with video or will audio/PPT be enough to meet your and their objectives?

Next, determine the following about your objectives:

- Should you include only the keynotes or are breakouts necessary to meet your goals?
- Is one of your objectives revenue generation? Have you considered all the options for how to do so?
- Do you need to create additional content at your meeting in order to meet your goals?

Finally, how will you create an experience focused on engagement?

- Prep your speakers to include the remote audience with polls, Q&A, or even just by welcoming and addressing them.

- Consider if you would like a chat alongside the presentations. This could be an open chat with a facilitator to keep people engaged with the content and to encourage idea sharing among the participants.
- Consider additional ways to keep people engaged like a remote audience-only session, a virtual emcee, interviews and more. Even the type of music you play for the attendees before a session can be vital to the experience.

Tip 3: Planning

Your registration, AV and streaming partners need true attention to detail in order to ensure everything works perfectly.

Registration

Make sure the company that you are working with can create a simple registration that tracks the data that is necessary to your event and analytics, in addition to tracking behavior throughout the event. This type of intelligence can give you a great overview of how the event went, regardless of what the evaluations say.

Examples of data to track include:

- Time in show
- Presentations watched
- Most popular presentations

Verify ease of registration before the day of the show since some platforms require the user to register via their system to ensure a smooth entry. Using your same face-to-face registration could create complications day of show, so work this through with your provider well in advance. Also, one of your team members should watch any emails or questions from people having issues accessing the content and immediately address them.

Teamwork

Your team is critical to your success. Your AV provider and streaming/platform partner should have several conversations in advance to ensure the right equipment is ordered, the right bandwidth is there, and the all electrical and set up is planned well in advance.

Make sure you talk through alternatives to save costs—rather than having a roaming camera to use in multiple rooms, a stationary camera in each room might actually be cheaper and easier. Always ask – is there a better way to do this? Is there an alternative to save costs? If you plan to capture content, plan ahead to ensure the equipment and support you need is ready to go.

Testing

Testing is critical to success. Test everything to ensure the platform works from registration to streaming content. You can test everything once before you leave for the show, but ensure that onsite before the event begins you have set aside time to have lighting camera and audio tested through the actual stream of the show.

Tip 4: Equipment Needs

This is not an exhaustive list and some enhancements may require more equipment. But if you are streaming one session from a face-to-face event, here is a list of equipment that is generally used. Please ask your AV and streaming provider for what will best work for your particular event.

Camera

If your audience is more of a visual audience and you plan to extend your event for multiple days or hours, a camera is key to creating an experience vs. audio with slides.

When choosing how many and what kind, take into consideration the following:

1. Is this a panel discussion or will there be some kind of entertainment that will require close-up shots and medium shots (knees/waist up)? If you will need two angles (or more) consider using multiple cameras.
2. What size are the streaming players screen and your display screens on site? If it is 4:3 or 16:9 or a combination of the two, you need a camera that will support all screen sizes.
3. Do you want HD and will the stream support HD?
4. Can the equipment needed onsite for image magnification be used for the hybrid event to save money?

Make sure your camera is stationary and is set high enough to avoid people walking past if they are leaving the room.

Est. cost: A camera and labor for one day in one room without a panel is approximately \$2,500; if you have a panel, you're looking to double that to get some great visuals.

Microphones

When possible use wireless lavalier microphones as they appear better on camera and there is less chance of shifting the mic which creates ambient noise for the viewer. Also, having an audio operator watching the speaker will help cut down on a mic accidentally being left on – which your hybrid audience will hear right away.

If you will have Q&A from the audience, you will need mic runners with wireless hand mics to capture each question. There is nothing more frustrating for a remote audience than knowing a question was asked, but only hearing the answer and not the question.

Est. cost: Depending on size of room and estimated size of audience of 250 people, est. \$1,200. *Includes one podium mic, one table top, and one handheld wireless mic with labor in most cities.*

Streaming Company's Encoder

The streaming company will usually bring their own equipment that will hook into the feeds from the camera and the AV company's presentation management software and then send out the signal in a player that is easy for the audience to view.

Est. cost: \$5,000 Show (\$1,500 per hour streamed).

Switcher

If you will have multiple camera angles that you will want to choose from, you will need a switcher and someone to choose the camera angle you want shown at the time. This can be your streaming company or your AV provider – it depends on their talent onsite. Plan ahead for this.

Est. cost: \$2,000 per day

Cables

Est. cost: usually no cost

Lighting & electrical

Est. cost: \$4,000 including: 3-trees and the labor for 4-lights to light a small stage.

PowerPoint

Est. cost: \$0 if you create it yourself; \$2,500 for 20hr Development if the AV company brings in someone to help with the graphics look and feel.

Internet

A dedicated line is essential for your stream to have the best quality. This means no one from the conference – staff or attendees – can use this internet line for anything else. Depending on the number of your hybrid attendees, your streaming partner should be able to tell you what the amount of bandwidth needed. Typically for a remote audience of 1,000 a T1 3 MB line is the right formula.

Wireless is not an option – it must be hard wired.

Est. cost: Ranges from free (some buildings) to \$5,000

Capturing Content

Capturing the content from all of your session rooms and selling it to an audience beyond the physical and hybrid attendees can help you to offset costs associated with your event. Your AV company or streaming partner will be able to offer complete details on this option.

Tip 5: Marketing and Promotion

The way you promote a hybrid event is very similar to how you market a face-to-face event.

Registration Launch Date

Determine what timing works best for your event. To figure out the best time to launch your registration take into consideration the following:

1. When will the majority of my program be complete? When will my speakers be confirmed? – People who are motivated to attend an event are generally motivated by content. There is no reason to launch an event (usually) without this information
2. How long in advance does my audience like to be communicated with?
3. How much time before the live date do I need to gather the best audience?

Promotions

Web site

- If you have an event web page set up for the face-to-face event, use that to promote the hybrid.
- Set up a page from your “registration button” that will have both options listed – face-to-face or hybrid – then your attendee chooses the path that works best for them.
- Include details about the hybrid event, including the sessions and any hybrid-only programming.
- Build the case for “if you can’t attend face-to-face, you should attend remotely”. □ Include as “house ads” if you have unsold space.

Email

- Promote the hybrid event registration at the same time you promote the face-to-face. Focus the majority of the email content on the face-to-face and include a short blurb about the hybrid.
- When you get closer to the date of the event, when the majority of your audience has decided if they can travel to it, switch your tactic and start promoting the hybrid.
- Think about all of the audiences you have been trying to attract to your brand/product/content and ensure you write customized messages to them.
- If you have one day registration for your longer face-to-face meeting – convert them to attending the hybrid too.
- Keep registration open through the event. Email invitations each day of the event to increase attendance with something like “Today: Join us for...” Usually the closer to a hybrid event, the larger the registration buildup.
- In order to capitalize on retention, during the week before and on the day of the event, send out a reminder to those who have registered. Give them instructions on how to access the environment and tech support tips, with contact information of someone who will be available to help them with any difficulties.

Social Media

- Choose the SM where your target audience is most active.
- Include hashtags to increase views of your promotions.

Print

- If your target audience likes direct mail pieces, make sure to include this in your marketing mix.
- In ads where you promote the face-to-face or in mailers, ensure that you include a small blurb about the hybrid event.

Peer-to-Peer Outreach

If your registration company can do this, create a “share with a friend” option at the end of your registration. Often attendees can choose to share that they have registered for the event on social media or via an email. Peer-to-peer recommendations are very successful.

Codes

When you are creating your registration revenue model, make sure to include complimentary and discount codes that you can track for registration and attendance.

Collaborative Outreach

Consider your target audience and reach out to groups that you feel would be beneficial to meeting your objective (i.e. affiliated organizations, partners, sponsors, etc.). Offer complimentary or discounted access. Most time the long term benefits of these arrangements can far outweigh the short term revenue loss.

Tip 6: Revenue Generation

If one of your objectives is to generate revenue to offset costs or create another revenue source, consider these opportunities.

Event Sponsor

Much like a face-to-face event sponsor, a Hybrid event sponsor is tied to the entire event. In exchange for monetary support, you can offer to include:

- A “thank you” in each promotion, including event registrations
- Their logo on the session screen
- A video that automatically plays when someone enters the environment
- A video that you include with your pre-slides for each session
- An interview with a representative about what they want to share out with the audience
- A promotional offer in the “thank you/Evaluation” email post-event

Content Sponsor

Some events have the opportunity to include additional content for the remote audience. In exchange for monetary support you can work with a sponsor to include topical education or other content that your audience would find valuable and that your sponsor feels would achieve their objectives. For example: A mobile provider might want to get in front of your audience as a subject matter expert about mobile so they can be top of mind when your audience chooses a vendor.

Captured Content

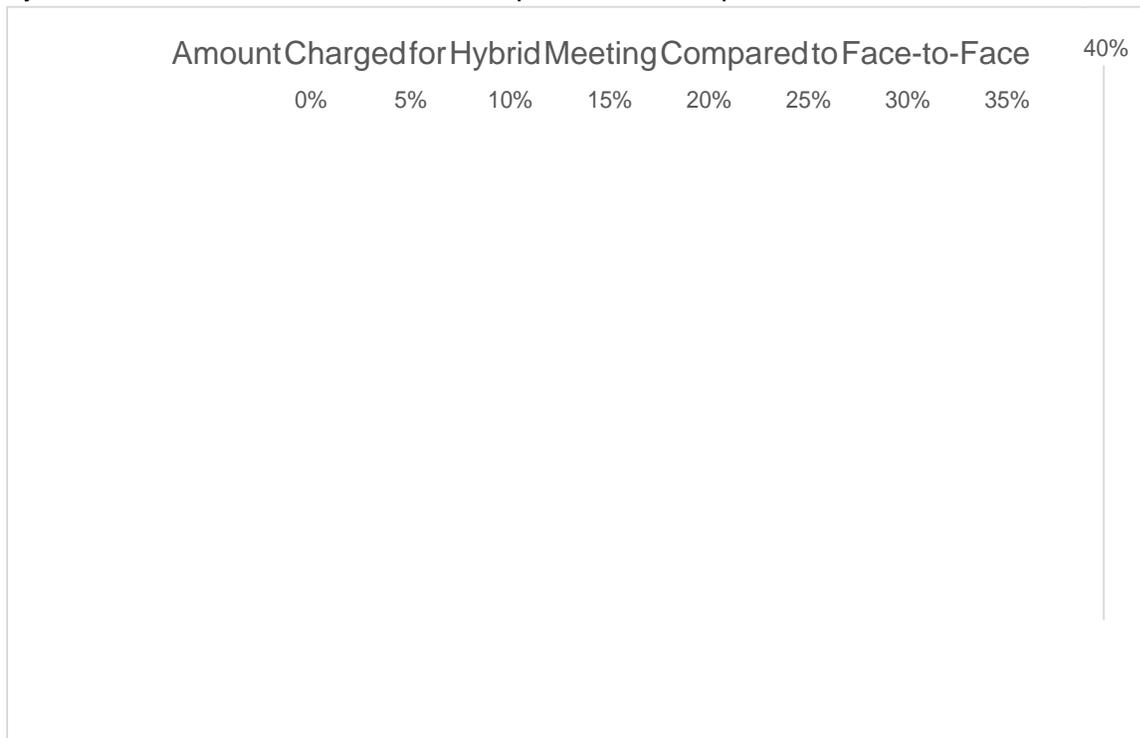
Many organizations work on creating content for a year that they then only have live during the event. Why not record the content and sell it after the event to attendees and others interested in your content within the industry? Many organizations have found that they have a low consumption rate when the content is free vs. when they charge for it. If this is an opportunity you’d like to include, make sure you plan this from the beginning as this may change some of your AV and equipment.

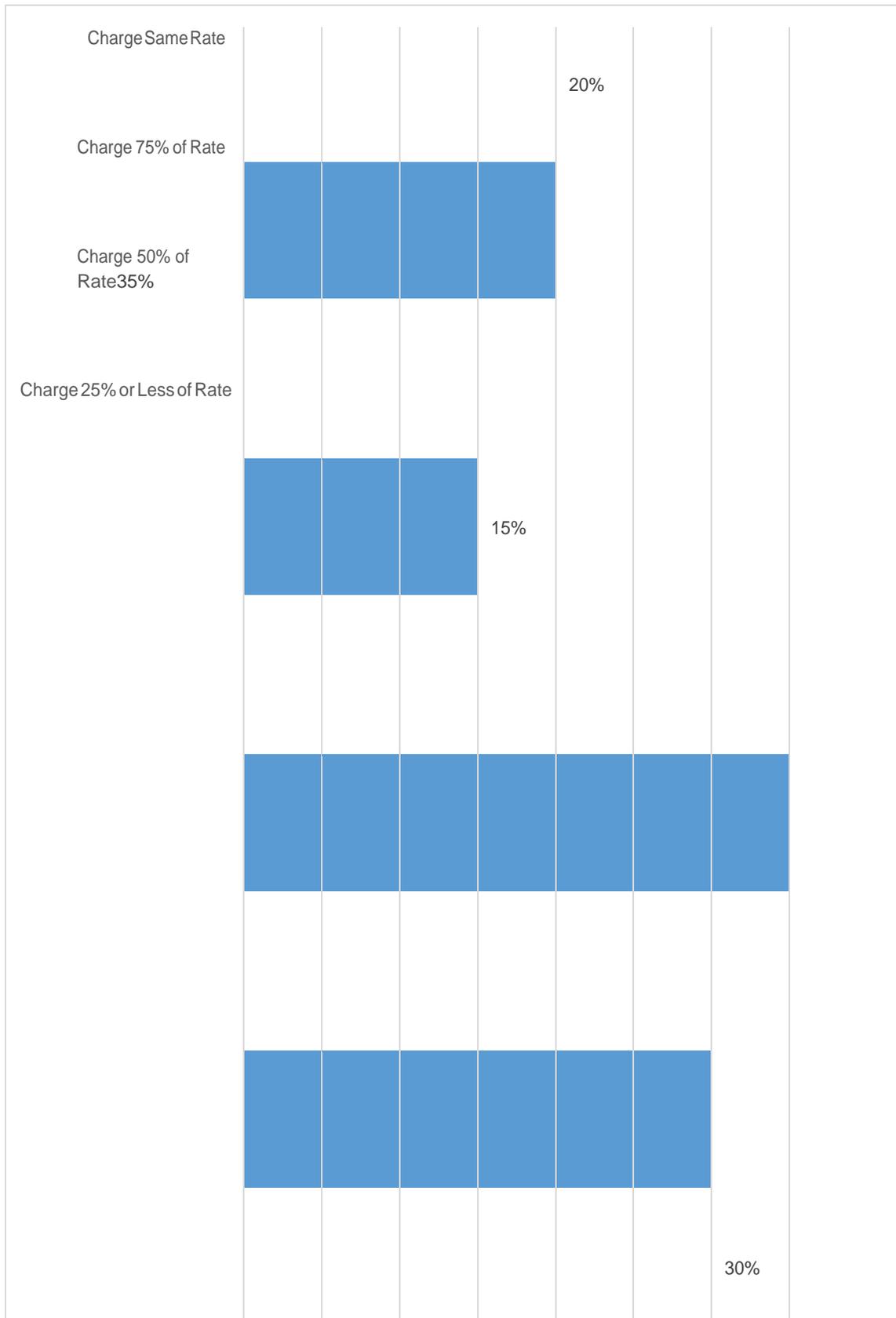
Rebroadcasts

Much like captured content, this is an excellent opportunity to reuse the content you already have. Plan in advance to create a simulive event—an event that has a beginning and end time, where the audience attends sessions that have been pre-recorded. You can create engagement points around it to create a new experience for different audiences or different time zones based on the topics you choose. You can monetize this through event sponsorship or registration fees.

Registration Fees

Based on your organization’s objectives, charging for access to the hybrid event might be the right path. The 2014 DEI Benchmark study revealed that organizations that did charge a registration fee for their hybrid event did so at various levels compared to their in-person rates:





Demonstrations

Your audience is called often by vendors who are interested in working with them. Offer a no hassle way for your attendees to learn more about different products. In exchange for monetary support, set up a one hour time slot where you show a 5-10 minute video demo followed by live Q&A from the remote participants via a live camera interview onsite. You can collect leads for the vendor via the event/session evaluation. One easy opportunity to include this during a hybrid would be during the face-to-face event's lunch since you won't want to stream that content unless you have a speaker.

Exhibitors

Face-to-face trade show participants might be interested in reaching your remote audience as well. In exchange for monetary support, invite a select number of exhibitors to include a product launch, or content from their booth, live to the remote audience.

Include as Part of the Face-to-face Experience

If you have a large event where it might be difficult to see everything or if you want to ensure that no matter where your attendees are onsite, they can tune into content, include the live stream as an add on expense to the face-to-face event. Attendees may prefer to catch a session from the lounge without the pressure of having to contribute.

You know your audience and industry best, so you know which mix will work for your event. Experiment a little, survey your attendees to find out what was successful and always ask for their preferred experience.

Tip 7: ROI/Reporting Back

ROI/Reporting

Hybrid events provide an opportunity for measuring delegate behavior that face-to-face meetings lack, because everything that happens in the platform is recorded.

Costs

To properly assess the ROI of your hybrid meeting, total all the costs involved in the production and execution of the event. Not all these costs will be applicable to every meeting format. □

Technology (broadcast platform, streaming and Internet connection)

- Video and graphics production
- Content development
- Décor/Signage/Branding
- External consultant (individual or agency)
- Speaker/facilitator/virtual emcee
- Staff time (including time spent on planning, execution and evaluation)
- Administrative
- Marketing/promotion

Metrics

These metrics can be easily obtained from your hybrid platform provider via downloadable reports.

- Number of registered participants
- Demographics of participants
- Number of live participants
- Number of participants who viewed the event on demand or via a rebroadcast
- Length of event
- Length of time participants spent at the virtual meeting
- Number of sessions offered
- Number of materials downloaded
- Number of complaints
- Number of tech failures
- Number of badges earned

Engagement

Tracking engagement is a critical KPI. For example, knowing if the participants are actively or passively listening. Hybrid platform providers should capture these metrics for you. Measure the level of interaction.

- Number of questions asked and the average per participant
- Number of conversations in chat rooms
- Number of participants who answered polls
- Number of participants who visit your sponsor's lounge
- Number of participants who earned badges and how many

Participant Satisfaction

The satisfaction of participants with the content and the experience of a hybrid meeting can be measured by your post-event evaluation. Be sure to survey the following:

- Relevance of the content presented
- Quality of speakers
- Quality of the event platform environment

Impact

There are a number of opportunities to measure the impact of your event, depending on your objectives and your platform's ability to capture data. It's always best to start with the basics and expand as your audience and event expands.

- Percent of target vs. actual participants
- Conversion ratio (number registered to number attended)
- Ratio of repeat participants to new participants
- Percent time in sessions vs. total content time
- Number of leads generated for your sponsor
- Cost per person to deliver the event
- ROI

Tip 8: Event Day Strategy

After all the prep calls and onsite testing of equipment, you have made it to the live day. Don't panic – there's always a solution.

Technical Support

Critical to a positive experience, your tech support is like the equivalent of the face-to-face event's hotel check-in, badge pickup, session room comfort and event experience all rolled into one massive undertaking. Preparation is the key to success.

AV/Streaming

Your AV and streaming company should have had multiple prep calls and followed a number of the items on Step 3 of "The Tips to Take Your Meeting Hybrid" resource.

Critical to success is early and often communication about equipment and testing. Once onsite, you should be alerted to any missing or non-functional equipment.

After the prep work is completed, talk to each camera operator and AV operator in each room. They should fully understand your expectations. For example, if your presenter will want to speak only to the hybrid audience and not have the audio broadcast in the room, the audio operator & presenter should have a cue. The camera operator should also watch for that cue to tighten and focus the shot on the presenter so that the presenter can address the remote audience.

Someone on the team should watch for changes in focus, lighting, audio and be prepared to immediately address them with the AV provider. The remote audience will notice everything.

Accessing the Environment

Often, your attendees will forget how to access the environment, even if you have just sent out a reminder email with all of the details. Follow these steps to ensure they have the best customer experience:

- **Website:** Make sure you have an obvious link to access the event through a user name and password. It needs to be easy to use and easy to find. Place this link everywhere your attendees might try and find it.
- **Dedicated support:** You must have someone (or a few people) watching an email address or social media that you have included for support in emails and on the website. Trying to login is their first interaction with your event and you want to show your best customer service. Many people if they receive no immediate response will give up or it will color the rest of the event for them.
- **Easy way to update password:** You would be surprised how many people cannot remember their password. Be prepared. Ask the Tech team to teach you how to reset this for people.
- **Access to their user name:** Today, people have a number of email addresses they use and they easily will become frustrated when trying to log in, if it doesn't work. Ask the Tech team to teach you how to find this for people.

Internet Browser and Other Tech Issues

Not all of your attendees will have the latest version of Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, or Chrome. Often the platform you use will be optimized to use the last 2-3 versions of each browser, but many companies don't allow users to update their own browsers without IT's support. To circumvent this, make sure you know what browser the platform works best on and put that in every communication. You also need to have a plan prepared for how to support people when they struggle—like including a tech support chat box right on the screen.

Speaker Prep

On the day of the event, ask the presenter to be in the room 30 minutes prior so they can get settled. They will need a mic and they will need to make sure the PPT or Keynote is up-to-date. If there is polling, they should check to make sure they remember how to use the polling.

They will need to be reminded of the following:

- This session has a remote audience
- Look at the camera as you would any other section of the room so that they feel connected to you
- You also should welcome the remote audience as you are welcoming the face-to-face audience
- If you wish to speak directly to the moderator or the remote audience without the face-to-face audience hearing you, coordinate with the AV/Camera crew

Moderator Prep

Congratulations - as the moderator of the event, you are now the person with all the answers and in charge of creating engagement, excitement and each attendee's personal concierge.

Tips for Success

Create a document with bit.ly links (so you can track clicks) of resources to share with participants like PPTs, articles, books, products from your organization that fit in with the conversation, handouts, and more. Be sure to have handy links for your organization's next event or anything else you hope to promote.

Have a show flow set up so that the moderator knows everything about each session they will be handling. If there is Q&A, they will need a mic onsite; if there are polls, those need to be run by the moderator, etc. A moderator who knows exactly what is coming next can prep the audience and keep them engaged. For example, they can tell the audience at the beginning of the session what will happen throughout, so that the audience is ready for Q&A, polling or group work.

Make sure your moderator arrives to each session 30 minutes before it starts. They can reconnect with the presenter and make sure nothing has changed. They can also check in with the camera and AV operator and get them ready for anything special so that it shows flawlessly on screen.

Typical Questions from the Audience

If you are acting as a moderator for the session, where you have an open chat alongside the session, you may notice you will receive a number of questions throughout the event. Be prepared to respond to these and others:

- Q: I can't hear anything? A: check your speaker volume/Make sure you aren't muted □
Q: Will I receive CEUs for this? A: Yes/No, here is how you will get them.
- Q: Are there handouts for this? A. Yes/no – access them here.
- Q: Can I have a copy of the .PPT? A. Yes/no – access them here.
- Q: Wait, I missed that last point – what did the speaker say? A. Always be prepared to answer this.
- Q: will this session be available after today to view? A. Yes. It is available here for \$X.
- And so many more...

Tip 9: Post-event Follow-up

- Follow up on any requests received during the event
- Send out thank you emails with CEU information included, resources, or any sponsor follow up
- Distribute an evaluation to measure your event's success
- Collect any positive tweets, emails, or information to share back with key stakeholders
- Send periodic follow-up emails to offer new opportunities to your attendees to further engage with your products, events and brand

Afterword

Now that you know how to successfully implement a hybrid event, visit [Digital Experience Institute](#) to stay up to-date on the latest industry trends, news and tips. You can register for upcoming webinars, such as “Demystifying the Internet for Digital and Hybrid Events” and the Virtual Edge Summit.

To expand your knowledge in this field, you can also apply for Digital Event Strategist (DES) certification, designed to help individuals and organizations develop a means to effectively plan, produce and measure the results of digital engagement practices. [Click here for more information about DES certification.](#)