DEI Office Hours: FAQ

How do I explore digital event platform options?
With so many platform options available, it can seem challenging even to choose a vendor. We recommend this three-step process to finding the right platform for your event.

Step 1. Start with the basic functionality that you need for your event. Will you be streaming content? Are you looking for streaming plus engagement features? What kind of reporting do you need? What internal teams or resources are available to support a digital event?

Step 2. With the considerations from step 1, consult the technology summary grid. While the grid isn't all-encompassing, it does provide examples to investigate. Take 30 minutes to an hour and do your own research on platforms, functionality and pricing models.

Step 3: Contact at least 2-3 vendors to set up brief calls to discuss your event goals, how their platform could fit your event and pricing options.

What are some suggestions for building a digital event agenda?
Your content will really frame how you build your agenda and the duration of your digital event. If you have enough material to support a multi-day event or a rebroadcast, these are viable options to keep your content fresh and continually reach your audience. For example, if you have 12 sessions that can be included in a digital event, try streaming 6 in one day, with intervals of 15 minutes between each session, allowing attendees to take brain, bathroom or other breaks. Then hold another digital event on a separate day with the same schedule. During the breaks, depending on the platform, you can include engagement or networking opportunities, and if applicable, push attendees to interact with digital sponsors or exhibitors during those breaks.

What are some ways to host an online workshop with breakout rooms?
With a platform like Zoom or Adobe Connect, you could start out with all participants in one room/meeting, then set up breakout rooms on the same platform. In the general meeting, provide instructions on how to use the rooms, discussion durations, etc. To go a step further for user experience, we recommend including a facilitator in each breakout room.

What are some benefits when it comes to exhibitor and sponsor digital interaction?
Exhibitors and sponsors can find many benefits of participating in a digital event. In the majority of full-service platforms, you can include sponsor pages, sponsor spaces and in some cases, an entire digital exhibit hall or floor. Sponsors could include logos, whitepapers for download, videos or even recruit staff members to engage in a live chat with attendees. Create reporting on attendance figures, chat logs and download traffic for sponsors.

How do we design networking opportunities for a digital event?
This is dependent on the platform you choose; however, the majority of platforms will have a live chat feature. You should include a chat moderator in each live engagement to keep the conversation going. You can hold a digital happy hour or something similar at the end of the event, including a music playlist and a chat feature. Other opportunities for engagement would be social media groups dedicated to the event with attendees tagging and posting from live sessions. Polling is also a great tool for engagement during live sessions. It provides real-time engagement with the session content and with the presenter(s). Sponsor spaces, if included, can have their own chat to hold conversations with attendees interested in their organization, services, products, etc.

How do you give meaningful value to attendees and exhibitors with a digital event?
Think about all the ways a digital event differs from an in-person event. Event updates in real time can be easier to push out to a digital audience. Post-event, sessions can be edited, placed on-demand and distributed to your audiences at a quicker pace. Attendees and exhibitors can come in and out of a digital event more freely than a face-to-face event. Knowing they have the option and the flexibility on time, participants can drop in, drop out, or return to sessions or exhibitor spaces. This can motivate them to digest as much of the digital event as they can.

What are some initial tips on staffing resources for a digital event?
Think about the content, duration and technical knowledge level of your audience. Below is a list of example tasks you'll want to consider when staffing.

- Engagement/chat moderators
- Speaker and staff trainers
- Session content collection (speaker bios, headshots, session descriptions, etc.)
- Sponsor content collection
- Live Day technical support (will vary depending on the platform you choose)

How do you increase engagement and networking during digital events?
There are many options to increase engagement and networking during digital events. The following are some examples to consider including in your digital event strategy.

- **Gamification and activity leaderboards.**
  Work with your events platform to formulate activities that participants can complete while logged into the digital event, such as earning points for contributing to a session chat, downloading resources and completing session evaluations. There doesn't always have to be an incentive tied to the points, being at the top of the leaderboard will be for then enough for audience members!

- **End of the Event or Day Digital Happy Hours or Wrap Ups.**
  Host end of event or day digital happy hour or wrap up sessions giving participants the opportunity to discuss what sessions impacted them, share ideas and questions and network with fellow remote participants to further connection.

- **Breakout rooms or discussions during sessions**
  Breakout rooms are a great way to continue the conversations during breaks in your event schedule or a way to include group work or discussions during a session. Breakout rooms typically consist of smaller groups of attendees and include a facilitator in order to drive the conversation and keep on task.

What are some recommendations for creating a similar session agenda from your physical event to a digital event?

Take a look at your session formatting as sessions that include group work or panels may not translate as well from a physical audience to a digital audience. In addition, if you have many pieces of content, consider hosting your digital event for more than one day, and feeding content to your audience over days, weeks, even months to keep the engagement and reach going. Lastly, think of your audience's attention span. How long are we asking them to sit at their computer or device and digest content?

What are some examples of benefits for sponsors or exhibitors to be included in a digital event?

Many platforms offer a multitude of functionality and features when it comes to including sponsors and exhibitors. Whether it consists of sponsor pages or a full digital tradeshow floor, there are many features that can benefit your sponsors, exhibitors and attendees alike.

Some feature examples that can be included are:

- videos, live or pre-recorded product demos
- whitepapers, website links, case studies (to view and download)
- live chat connections between attendees and sponsor representatives

Are there any examples of successful virtual events that we can reference?

Click on images to follow link.

Watch [part one of our DEI Office Hours](#) for more information!

More Helpful Resources

Click on images to follow link.