

Start Planning Early – months earlier than you would begin planning an in-person event

Establish a program lead – this is the person who will oversee the entire event and must be capable of delegating key responsibilities to the team to execute. The program lead is the final decision maker, and everything runs through this person. They must be able to delegate, not abdicate....

Build Your Team - train your planners to be hybrid specialist or at the very least ensure each planner has a working knowledge of how hybrid events work. You may need to consider splitting your team so that one is running the in-person program and the other is running the virtual program – not separately, but side by side. You may need to hire additional planning support to ensure coverage in all critical areas of planning. Meet often!!

Establish Your Hybrid Format – determine with your client which hybrid version is best suited to maximize your program. Keep in mind that venue matters so make sure you are conducting your event in a venue that allows for the type of production required to support a hybrid event.

Engage your Marketing Resources Early - (internal and external). Have a strong sense of your event content and establish which segments are highly promotable – this will drive your marketing strategy! Promote main platform content including Keynote Speakers. Highlight Breakout Session Speakers, Entertainment, Activities, CSR opportunities, etc. Promote early with a Save the Date and make clear the event is a hybrid and registrants should choose the option that works best for them. Promote both experiences equally, but do not expect equal attendance.

Engage your Production Team Early – Having a strong production partner is key to the success of your event. Your production partner can advise on the various platforms available to support your total hybrid event, both on site for the in-person event and in conjunction with your virtual audience. Based on your hybrid format, you may or may not need a supporting Virtual Meeting Platform, but the two will undoubtedly need to interact so make sure you have a solid partner here.

Engage your Technology Resources Early – establish one or two members of your team to focus solely on technology and assign them to work directly with your internal and external technology experts. You will not only need technology experts within your production team, but also your internal technology resources who will provide direction on security concerns, troubleshoot any potential issues with VPN blockages, and will work to ensure bandwidth. They will also be your go to for managing user issues when the program goes live.

Keep in Mind Time Zones – and set your program start and end times accordingly

Be Aware of Virtual Accessibility Requirements – close captioning, font size, color schematics, etc.

Having all these strategies in place as you venture to market your hybrid event will go a long way toward ensuring your success. If there ever was a time to engage a village, this is the time!