

At least three months before the virtual event:

- Establish your virtual event goals and objectives – the “why?”
- Define target audience(s)
- Determine the virtual event format (e.g., TEAMS, TEAMS Live, Pre-recorded, AV Company)
- Develop a master event brief and a preliminary schedule of activities, and continue to update/revise as details are adjusted/confirmed
- Define your event support team – including both internal and external members – and which may be expanded from the typical in-person team
- Decide if the event is free to attend, or if there is a registration fee
- Create a preliminary budget
- Select the event date(s) and time(s)
- Create a marketing plan and timeline
- Create branded materials (i.e., logo, tagline, event description, benefits, etc.)
- Identify and begin to confirm speakers, presenters, hosts and/or other entertainers
- If applicable, develop sponsorship packages and begin soliciting partners

Two months before:

- Select technology vendors and start setting up the platforms, including registration/ticketing, video/livestream, audience engagement tools, etc.
- Define and assign support team roles for pre-production and run-of-event (speaker support, technical support, customer service, social media, A/V, etc.)
- Launch promotional plan, including virtual event website and/or landing page with registration/ticket sales. Don't forget to create and enable various email confirmations and reminders.
- If applicable, create dedicated social media profiles for your event
- Start event promotion, including emails, social media posts, press releases, mobilizing influencers, listing your event on online event calendars, and more as needed to support specific goals
- Coordinate and place orders with other support suppliers (virtual swag providers, at-home food delivery, etc.)
- Create a preliminary rehearsal and production schedule for pre-recorded elements
- Confirm presentation topics and descriptions, gather bios and photos from all speakers/presenters, and have contracts signed (if applicable)
- Request logos from sponsors
- If appropriate, provide speakers with branded presentation templates to use when creating their content

Two weeks before:

- Draft and send press releases about important event details, including keynote or celebrity speakers, new product information, honorees, etc.
- Test the platforms
- Start mailing out swag boxes
- Review presentations from speakers, and finalize any edits
- Finalize script for host

One week before:

- Develop back-up plans for various scenarios (speaker difficulties, technology outage, announcing a change in schedule, etc.)
- Begin briefing all support staff about the schedule and their roles during the event
- Conduct rehearsals for all speakers, including testing individual audio and lighting set-ups

- Do a dry run of the entire event on the live streaming platform, including transitions, video rolls, audience interaction segments, etc.
- Set-up any audience polls or Q&A used during the event
- Create a FAQ document for attendees, including instructions to access the event, troubleshooting tips and how to contact support
- Prepare and set-up real-time and post-event surveys for attendees, speakers, and sponsors

One day before:

- Send a reminder email to registrants, including login instructions and the event schedule/program
- Run another livestream test

The day of the virtual event!

- Rise and shine early to do another technical run through and verify everyone is ready to go
- Send a final reminder email to registrants
- Share and post real-time takeaways or news on social media channels

After the event:

- Conduct a debrief to gather feedback from internal team members – what worked well, and what to improve for the next virtual event
- Send thank you emails, including post-event surveys and links to any recordings if applicable, to attendees, speakers, and sponsors
- Send a separate email to those who registered to attend but didn't, with a link to any recordings
- Create a post-event report, with a summary of key results compared to objectives, feedback and lessons learned
- Prepare a video highlights reel to share via email to participants, or to post on social media or your event website
- Update the event website to announce the date for the next event, if known
- Update budget with all final invoices and costs
- Begin thinking about and planning the next virtual event!