HOW TO ACHIEVE REAL-WORLD SUCCESS WITH VIRTUAL EVENTS

10 MISTAKES THAT WILL DERAIL YOUR VIRTUAL EVENT

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SO YOU'RE PLANNING AN EVENT, EH?

VIRTUAL EVENTS ARE TOUGH...

...especially if you've never done one before. With so many moving parts, we created this guide to help you plan your virtual event the right way.

1 | POOR USER EXPERIENCE

Too many steps. Unwieldy navigation. Ineffective tech support.

These are just a few examples of the many factors that can negatively impact your attendees' user experience.

Your virtual event platform and show flow need to be designed with your attendees in mind.

You want attendees to be able to get around the event site and find what they are looking for with minimal effort.

This will result in a better event experience that feels more professional and intentional.

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2 | PRESENTATIONS THAT DON'T ENGAGE

We all know what it's like to sit through a lackluster sales presentation or keynote speech. It's the easiest way to cure insomnia!

All kidding aside, keeping an audience's attention is tough enough in person, which means virtual presentations must be that much more engaging.

To prevent your attendees from falling victim to nearby distractions, book engaging speakers to present naturally interesting and relevant topics.

As always, visual aides can be a big help. Your speakers should mix in slides with their camera view, as well as interactive cues like polls and Q&A's to maintain audience interest.

3 | LACK OF REHEARSALS

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The old adage "if you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail" carries particular weight in virtual event planning.

Failing to schedule adequate rehearsal time and show flow reviews will add unneeded stress for all those involved in your virtual event.

Practice, practice, practice. For our productions, we have a minimum of two rehearsals before the day of the event. In addition, we have dedicated teams to assist in onboarding event organizers, getting them up to speed on the technology and software involved.

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4 | FEAR OF MONETIZING

We are living in the new frontier of virtual events, which means there is still plenty of uncertainty about the value of this new medium. Your virtual event is competing with free video chat software, which means you'll have to convincingly answer the following question: "Is your event worth the price of admission?"

The short answer is YES!

If you are delivering value to your audience just as an in-person event would, your organization should be charging admission to access this value.

Virtual events present unique opportunities for monetization, including admission, sponsorships, vendor booths and replays.

5 | USING THE WRONG SOFTWARE

"Why don't we just use Zoom or another free platform?"

VALID QUESTION.

Basic video chat platforms are great for micro-meetings of 10 or fewer people. However, once an event requires over 60 minutes of session time, pay gates, breakout sessions, virtual networking, user analytics and other more robust features, it's time to seek a platform specifically designed with large-scale meetings in mind.

Not to mention the fact that Zoom and other free platforms are often plagued with audio issues. Knowing this, why would your attendees feel inclined to pay for a Zoom call, especially if they can already access that software for free?

Hosting your event on a more feature-friendly platform will increase value perception from attendees and justify the price of admission.

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6 | SKIPPING NETWORKING

Many live-event attendees say they go to the conferences primarily for networking. It is important then, to carry this benefit over into your virtual experience if you want to deliver the same degree of value.

If you're struggling to fit all of your presentations into an already-tight event schedule, it can be tempting to skip networking activities.

We bake a networking area into all of our virtual events. Users can browse virtual business cards and connect with other attendees in their industry and/or geographical area, encouraging follow-up opportunities after your event.

7 | DOING IT ALL YOURSELF

DIY is great for home improvement projects — not your first virtual event.

Considering the sheer amount of work it takes to design, market and deliver a virtual event, it is in your best interest to partner with experts who know what they're doing.

Focus on the tasks that will make your event a success and that you know you can accomplish. These might include event recruitment, presentation preparation, promotion and other details that give attendees that "wow" factor.

Delegate the things that are outside of your wheelhouse so you don't get overwhelmed while planning your event.

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8 | FAILING TO USE ANALYTICS

The beauty of a virtual event is the ability to analyze everything the attendees do.

Trackable activity could include presentation attendance, length of time at a vendor page, Q&A submissions, interactive polls and many more.

This information is a gold mine for vendors and sponsors who want to follow up with ideal leads. As an organizer, this data is helpful for understanding which presenters or vendors were a hit and which ones should not be included in next year's event.

9 | IGNORING ATTENDEES POST-EVENT

Analyzing all of your event data is great, but it won't make a difference if you ignore your attendees after your event.

Your attendee email list is a terrific place to start. Here, you can survey your attendees' experiences, promote your next event or send follow-up materials.

This is where the relationship is built between organizers and attendees, which can greatly increase your chances of retaining the same participants for your next event.

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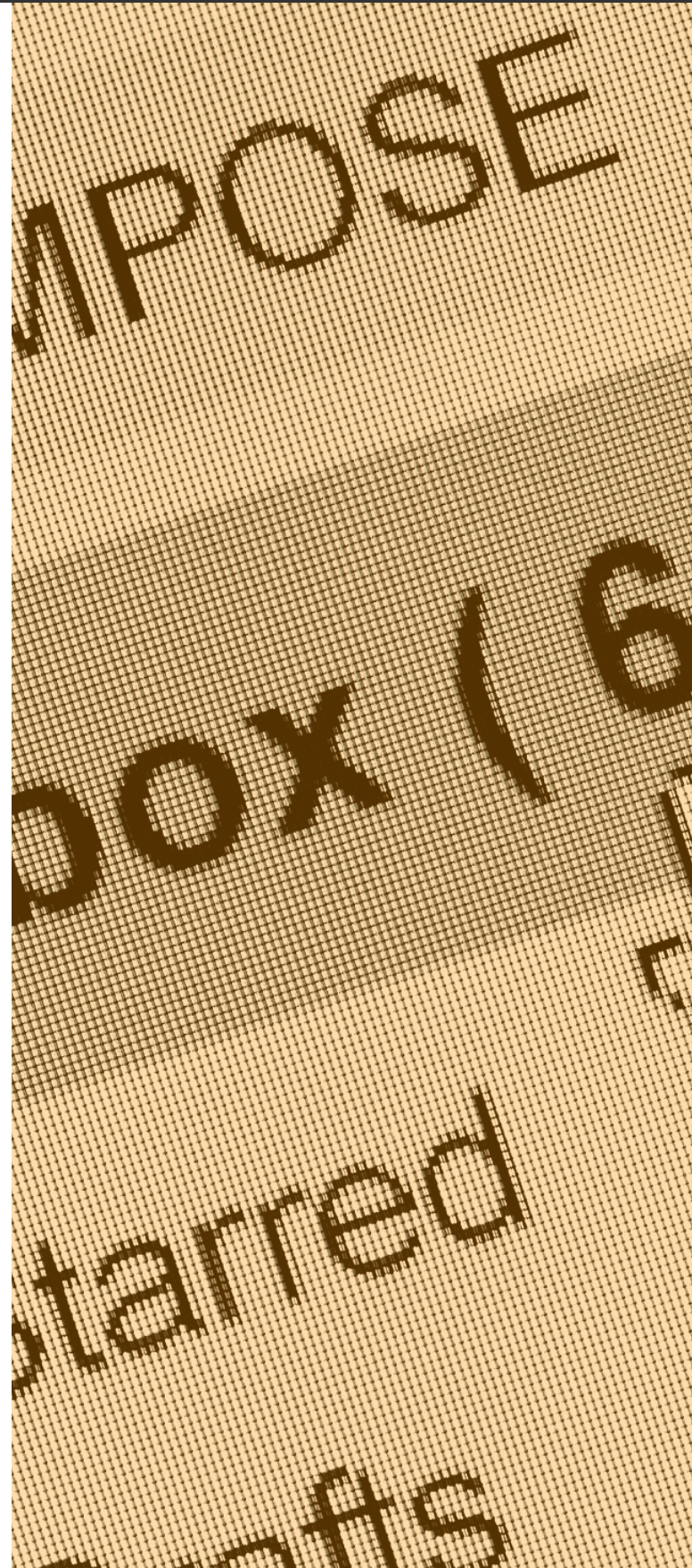
10 | PICKING THE WRONG PARTNER

If this hasn't been made clear yet, pulling off a successful virtual event takes a lot of time and effort. Picking the right partner to help you navigate these uncertain waters will not only allow you to delegate tasks. It will also lower your stress levels before, during and after your event!

Having access to event software is fine, but the real value comes from a partner who can walk you through the process, provide individualized attention and put your mind at ease.

Qualities to look for in a partner include:

- 1-to-1 time for onboarding, training, and other tasks
- Dedicated team to assist in all areas of your event
- All-in-one capabilities to avoid hiring multiple partners
- Process and detail oriented group that looks to improve with each event

VIRTUAL EVENTS WITH LESS STRESS

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