

**Hybrid Events: The Next Evolution of Fundraising
Webinar Hosted by Nonprofit Pro and FrontStream
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Q&A Transcript**

Q: Can you give examples of platforms for hosting nonprofit events beyond Zoom? Any cool tools?

Answer: Use your fundraising platform and fundraising pages to host events. To make it exciting and cool you can embed videos from YouTube, Facebook or Twitch on your fundraising or donation page, which is a great way to utilize your fundraising platform and engage your audience. This way you don't have to drive traffic to other sites, and your donors and supporters won't lose interest in your fundraising page or auction. You can continue to showcase the importance of your mission directly on your branded fundraising pages with some excitement and fun!

Q: How can you engage both a virtual audience and an in-person audience at the same time? Answer: Look at streaming videos or preparing a prerecorded video, this helps everyone focus. You can also look at creating a silent auction, live auction, fund a need/cash call/donation appeal and include raffle draws. Establishing Facebook groups or other dedicated online spaces also gives your dual audiences an opportunity to create a sense of community without having to physically gather. They can share photos and comments and experiences in one online platform. These engaging activities and programs will help engage an in-person and a live audience.

Q: How do you keep online attendees actively engaged so they will donate big? It is easy to get in-person attendees to donate when they see their table mates raise paddles. How do you translate this to an online crowd? Answer: This would work well with a streaming feature. You can stream via YouTube during the paddle raise so the online audience can see people raising the paddle and donating. Supporters not at the event can use a donate now button on their fundraising page (such as [BiddingforGood](#)) or on their donation page, highlighting the need for a paddle raise. To engage the online audience, you can also include leaderboards with your livestream. Think about hiring a professional, like an auctioneer, to help with an auction program and/or use social media to create groups where donors can connect.

Q: If our event is normally a dinner/dance/concert with up to 200 attending, how do you get people interested in attending an online event? Nothing can replace the energy of a live event. Answer: You could offer something that will engage the online audience such as a guest speaker (person affected by your cause) or performance, something that the audience would be willing to watch or buy a ticket to or a live chatting option - something that can be part of the livestream program. Think about creating exclusive experiences like a performance or a concert.

Q: Is it feasible to hold an online auction at the same time your live auction is taking place if COVID regulations allow 100 guests on-site? Answer: Many events have a silent auction that continues into the dinner program and is closed right before the live auction starts so people pay attention to the live auction. You could keep the online/silent auction open- possibly until after the live auction ends so everyone gets a chance to bid on the items that support your cause.

Q: Looking for the best ideas for replacing a black-tie gala event and a small "friend raiser" cocktail party
Answer: Look at creating an online auction and include a livestream to your event. Host a virtual concert or livestream a program (similar to [Girls Inc](#) did and created a successful online auction). Ask some of your top donors from previous years what they would like to attend and participate in. You could create a brief survey to engage and ask your audience and consider making calls to top donors and supporters.

Q: We are a nonprofit that relies on local donations and smaller auction items (think \$50-\$100 or \$300-\$500 at the very highest few. How do we do this with restaurants etc. That are struggling. What items can we offer?
Answer: Try connecting with organizations that want and need support. Look at airlines giving out flight vouchers because they need their pilots flying (if they are offering any travel coupons, ensure it expires in a few years so bidders are confident about using it). Restaurants are not the only industry that gives back. You can look at examples in FrontStream's [ApproveForGood](#) to give common in-kind donations. Many restaurants have added takeout and delivery to their usual offerings. Some also offer curbside pickup of fresh food or "take and bake" items. Talk to your usual sponsors and ask what's working for them right now and see how you can work with them to come up with new ideas. Consider items that are new to you- like meal kits, grocery delivery, restaurant delivery services like GrubHub, Uber Eats, etc. Create additional benefits that give the sponsor promotion- like emails to distribution lists, placement on event website, etc.

Q: We want to host a virtual/hybrid fundraiser and include everyone but have many families who have been adversely affected by the pandemic and aren't able to pay an entry fee. How can we include everyone while also trying to make money for our school?
Answer: Here are some ideas: You could consider asking for a 'pay what you can' or a donation as a ticket, that will ensure everyone is giving something and some people may give more than what is expected. You could make it a suggested donation with registration instead of a ticket cost and ask donors to contribute what they can. If you're having an auction, make sure to include lower cost packages, perhaps in the range of \$25-\$50 with items families may already be purchasing, for example: grocery gift card, meal delivery, household items. Or give donors the option of giving a smaller monthly donation- so instead of charging \$50 per ticket, the donor can commit to a recurring donation of \$5/per month. If there's an in-person element and virtual element, consider offering virtual for free but still provide donors with the chance to donate whatever amount they can afford.

Q: We would like to use these hybrid events to reach new audiences, particularly in different parts of Illinois where we do not usually host in-person events. How would you reach new audiences?
Answer: This is the amazing thing about technology and fundraising platforms, there are many ways to encourage your audience to promote your organization's event and fundraising pages on social media, on their own platforms. Having a platform with social share widgets, like [Panorama](#) is a great way to expand your audience and create deeper and stronger connections with your supporters. Try and look for a platform that integrates with a bigger community (like [BiddingForGood](#), where customers have access to a bidding community of 1.7 million). This community is a great way for more than just your own supporters to see your auction items and your event, it's a great way to engage people partaking in your auction, and they can become part of your donor base.

Q: What obstacles are there to employing hybrid events? Answer: Engaging an online audience, having guest speakers, performances, even a magic show is hard for people to get up and leave while at an event. An online audience can leave anytime without anyone noticing them. You need to have minimal downtime during the live event for increased engagement and excitement, ultimately helping you raise more funds for your cause.

Q: Ideas/examples of hybrid events? Answer: While some may say a hybrid event is only defined by both an in-person and a virtual element, [FrontStream](#) believes there's a wider definition. A hybrid event is a fundraising campaign incorporating multiple strategies simultaneously in order to optimize results. It can be any fundraising campaign that employs more than one type of fundraising approach. Some examples include:

- An elementary school that hosts an outdoor fundraising event as well as an online auction to engage multiple audiences and help raise more funds for the cause.
- A cancer research organization that holds an event with a variety of digital components including a virtual run, golf tournament and a silent auction happening at the same time.
- A pet shelter running an online campaign with recurring giving opportunities that leverages live streaming to promote pet adoptions and celebrates the event and participants.
- A food bank that partners with a corporate food distributor to run an online employee giving campaign and a virtual corporate endurance challenge to raise funds to fight hunger.

Q: What do you suggest for easily being able for the donors in person and virtual attendees to be able to communicate and see who is bidding against each other in the same auction? Answer: You can embed, on your fundraising event page, a YouTube or Facebook stream during the paddle raise so the online audience can see people raising the paddle and donating. You can look at hiring an auctioneer and another staff or volunteer to help manage the online and in-person crowd. There could be fun ways to engage each audience, perhaps getting double of the same item and allow each audience to compete and see who raises the most. There are lots of fun ways to bring in the online audience, just look at them as another aspect of the in-person event.

Q: We present an annual Arts and Crafts festival that attracts over 80,000 each year. We did create an online alternative. But we did not earn any funds from the virtual alternative. This event is held in October. By the time we got to October, we saw comments from the online community that indicated virtual fatigue. Can you address that reality? Answer: There are many ways to engage your audience in a virtual setting. You may want to look at your data and find out more information about your constituents and use your engagement tools, like in [Panorama](#), to help target and segment messages. Find out information about your supporters through surveys, online registration questionnaires to know more about how they want to engage with you. You can find out information about the types of programs, events they are interested in even how much funds they normally donate, and you can speak to them in a more meaningful way. Virtual fatigue can happen when using the same platform for your own work and personal life. Using videos, social share tools and features within your fundraising platform with engaging content, you can talk directly to your audience about how their funds support your cause –inspiring and satisfying your donors as they are committed to your cause.

Q: Great presentation! Will you please address the issues of expenditure for doing both an in-person major live gala combined with a livestream event. Answer: Something to consider when planning your hybrid expense budget is you may be able to spend less, depending on the type of event. Things like your venue, food and beverage, incentive items and signage add up quickly. If you don't have to incur those costs, you may be able to allocate those funds elsewhere, or lower your overall expenses.

Q: Why do you call your examples "hybrid" when the examples you showed were all virtual? Answer: [FrontStream](#) believes there's a wider definition for the term hybrid event. The word hybrid means having or produced by a combination of two or more distinct elements. It can be any fundraising campaign that employs more than one type of fundraising approach, including various types of digital elements. As virtual events will likely remain part of the fundraising landscape, even when social distancing is no longer required, hybrid events will be an essential part of the new normal as they blend fundraising and technology to create unique giving experiences – anytime, anywhere.

Q: Our non-profit pivoted immediately to a virtual event in 2020 instead of our very successful in-person event. The results were less than we hoped they would be. How are you able to get your donors to follow and increase their giving? Answer: Utilize your fundraising platform that has features to help you increase funds, while inspiring and satisfying your donors. [Panorama](#) has features such as donor covers the fee, corporate matching, recurring gift options, tribute / memorial giving and monthly gifts. These are all features and tools to help create deeper relationships with your supporters while raising additional funds for your cause. Look at how your donors and supporters gave in the past and message them with mission focused messages letting them know that a small increase can help support your cause. Look at engaging sponsors and their employees and try and encourage healthy competition to help raise more than they did the previous year. Use your technology to create messages that target your audience based on giving trends. See FrontStream's [State of Charitable Giving Report](#) where you can see what generation gives more and why you should use personalized message to talk to your constituents.

Q: I work for a nonprofit that has been providing services in our community for seven years. We have never done a major fundraising event -- we've focused on foundations, corporate support, and major donor cultivation/personal solicitations instead. We are now considering moving into the events arena -- but are dragging our feet a bit. We know how much time goes into events and how that redirects our resources from other areas. Do you think now is the time to jump in? Virtual and/or in-person? We haven't found the volunteer leadership for this work yet, but if we had folks who wanted to do it, we're willing to consider it. Thoughts? Answer: Virtual and hybrid fundraising is an opportunity to get your organization in a space to generate awareness and buzz and raise funds while giving participants a great experience. You can plan new or shift virtual peer-to-peer events and online auctions with [Panorama by FrontStream](#). Ensure that you look at vital tools, including mobile experiences, participant communication and reporting solutions, to create comprehensive virtual event experiences. If you're planning a more traditional in-person event such as an auction or gala, you can create a registration option specifically for virtual participants who can't attend your event or prefer to participate digitally. Ensure you can easily pivot your event to a completely virtual experience in case the need arises, to ensure you don't miss out on revenue from all your supporters.

Q: How many hybrid events are too many to make the ask to your donors/network without overwhelming them? Answer: Engage the right audience, email them targeted and personalized messages, and you will see that there is no such thing as too many. Data shows [that email results in 1/3 of online fundraising revenue](#) - so focus on the type of communication you want to have with each of your different audiences. This will get them excited about all the fun and amazing work your organization is doing for your community. With hybrid events, you don't have to rely on one source of funding, opening up different options for your network to donate and participate is less overwhelming than always asking them to contribute to one event or program.

Q: Is a nonprofit better off to infuse a digital component to an event that they regularly hold or would they be better served to create an all new digital/hybrid event? Answer: It's great to build on an existing event as your organization has the audience, participants and the donors to support this program. A great way to change it up is to introduce new digital components, slowly, to this audience. To find out the best type of digital components that will engage them the most, you can ask questions during registration, surveys during and post your event to see what would resonate the most. There will be many people who will drop in and out of an event, but when you connect with them on a deeper level, through personalized messages, you can start to find ways to incorporate different elements into your event that will be well received by your constituent base.

Q: Please clarify, in this context, "hybrid" means two or more different types of technology-based programming? NOT a combination of live/virtual programming? Answer: While some may say a hybrid event is only defined by both an in-person and a virtual element, [FrontStream](#) believes there's a wider definition. A hybrid event is a fundraising campaign incorporating multiple strategies simultaneously in order to optimize results. It can be any fundraising campaign that employs more than one type of fundraising approach, including various types of digital elements.

Some hybrid events include an in-person walk and an online auction while others may host a digital peer-to-peer campaign and an online fund-a-need drive. One of the main benefits of hybrid events is flexibility, allowing your organization to adapt to supporters' specific needs, preferences and abilities. One of the main benefits of hybrid events is flexibility, allowing your organization to adapt to supporters' specific needs, preferences and abilities. Nonprofits will need to leverage technology to engage and execute these hybrid events and provide an experience that is easy and engaging for all audiences.

Q: I work at a Senior Center, where some members are not very tech savvy. Is there info on ages that embraced virtual events? Answer: Any kind of center where you can engage staff and get them to set up a video and showcase how the group can get involved is a great way to engage a large group of people. A great way to engage this group could be to get them to bid on items in an auction as there may be items they can't get so they can support a good cause and indulge in items that are meaningful to them.

At FrontStream, we're dedicated to helping nonprofits raise more funds for causes that affect positive change. Our **all-in-one, integrated digital fundraising platform**, [Panorama](#), enables nonprofits to easily and quickly plan, manage, promote, report and securely process [auctions](#), [peer-to-peer and DIY](#) fundraising events, [hybrid events](#), and [donation campaigns](#).