



THE HYBRID EVENTS FUTURE: 22 Ideas for Your Next Events in a Post-Pandemic World

Ninety-seven percent of marketers agree: Hybrid events are coming — and they'll be here to stay. As you consider adapting your upcoming events to the next new normal, use these quick ideas to jump-start the conversation.

01 Organize an event that is digital-first but with a physical component. Imagine inviting VIP customers to attend in-person while others can experience your core event content remotely. You could attract those VIPs with special amenities throughout the event (tours, meals, hands-on demos).

02 Combine a “main” virtual event with smaller local events. Perhaps you might use a virtual event to kick off an in-person roadshow.

03 Bring virtual showmanship to surprise and delight.

- Draw in key leaders, experts or celebrities (surprise guests are always fun)
- Use presentation technologies like Prezi Video to augment the presenter's camera with text and visual effects
- Use a virtual whiteboard to draw real-time illustrations

04 Bring your demos to life. Whether in person or virtual, video content and technology can transform product demos into something remarkable:

- Prerecorded video demos (great to repurpose as digital content)
 - Live video demos (also can facilitate a robust conversation)
 - Interactive 3D models (can allow your prospect to explore)
 - Augmented reality (places the product in your prospect's world)
 - Virtual reality (invites the prospect into your world)
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05 Acknowledge ALL attendees. If you're hosting a hybrid event, be sure to engage with in-person and virtual attendees. Make everyone a part of the experience.

- Display the online chat feed on a prominent screen
- Address questions for the chat in real time and in person
- Take lots of polls and create moments of interaction to keep in-person attendees engaged with the virtual crowd

06 Encourage interaction. By using digital event platforms, both in-person and virtual attendees can collaborate and participate:

- For physical attendees, encourage digital participation:
 - Real-time chat (on event platform, websites, social media)
 - Live video Q&A
 - Real-time polling
 - For virtual attendees, help them stay in the loop:
 - Use live video to let them “enter” the room
 - Ensure they can hear questions from the in-person audience during Q&A
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07 Rethink networking. If you’ve ever tried an online happy hour, you’ll know: Some experiences don’t quite translate to virtual. Try some of these experiences to cater your virtual networking opportunities to the virtual realm:

- AI-generated connection recommendations
 - Chat rooms or “Birds of a Feather” sessions (breakout rooms based on topics)
 - Virtual speed-networking (pairing attendees)
 - Online roundtables
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08 Tie in elements of FUN!

- Concerts (virtual — provide a chat event with artist after concert)
 - Cooking events (virtual — send cooking kits ahead of time)
 - Movie night (virtual — watch over chat)
 - Wine or chocolate tastings (virtual — send the treats in advance)
 - Health/well-being activities
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09 Incorporate swag. And don’t leave out your virtual attendees — swag can always ship! These items can also spur engagement as giveaways on a virtual show floor. Digital swag bags ([igiftbag](#)) are gaining attention, and you can also consider rewarding participants with points, virtual tokens or “branded bucks” that attendees can redeem for merch.

- 10** **Always leverage your content online.** Make your presentations, videos and handouts available for download after the event.
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- 11** **Set expectations for both in-person and virtual experiences upfront.** Guests (in-person or online) will want to understand exactly what they'll get from their experience. Consider promoting "exclusives" to attract potential attendees from either group.
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- 12** **Don't forget about social media.**
- Establish a hashtag so attendees can share and communicate online
 - Provide digital photo booths for in-person and virtual attendees to share on their channels (with your custom hashtag, of course!)
 - Use live social video (YouTube Live, LinkedIn Live, etc.) during the event to show your followers what they're missing
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- 13** **Leverage prizes and giveaways.** For example, virtual conferences have given away electronic gift cards (via email) upon a series of completed activities.
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- 14** **Try something different.** Based on your desired outcome, maybe a nontraditional event is the way to go. If you want to educate your customers and don't need live interaction, consider an "online event" scheduled to take place throughout a certain month during a time that's convenient for them.
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- 15** **Leverage event apps.** Virtual event tools like [Hopin](#), [Pathable](#), [Attendify](#) and others can facilitate a range of capabilities, including customized session recommendations, Q&A sessions and spots for downloadable marketing materials.
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- 16** **Consider points of digital integration at physical events.** Scannable badges, links within apps, QR code integration — all of these access points help you tell a richer story through engaging digital content.

17 **Incorporate touchless applications.** As in-person events may continue to account for social distancing and safety practices, touch-free technology will become even more commonplace:

- Badges and wristbands that use **near-field communication (NFC) technologies** for secure information exchange without swapping, swiping or scanning
 - **Facial recognition** creates a personalized, efficient welcome: state-of-the-art systems greet the attendee by name, verify registration and print a custom badge in seconds
 - **EventBots** that, for example, answer common event questions through SMS or social media
 - **Lead retrieval apps** gather visitor information for touchless lead capture
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18 **Unite in-person and digital attendees through a common goal.** If you're hosting an internal event, consider supporting a community organization that aligns with your core values. If the event reaches a certain engagement goal, perhaps the company will donate a specified amount to that organization.

19 **Assign team members to virtual chat and Q&A sessions.** Increase engagement and interaction by making sure the conversation keeps up with seeded questions and casual chat interaction.

20 **Keep attendees in the loop.** Whether in person or virtual, use digital updates and notifications (event apps, emails, website, social media, news posts, etc.) to keep your audience updated, to hype them pre-event, to keep them engaged as your event unfolds and to seek their feedback after it's finished.

21 **Offer interactive workshops.** Learning is a key element when attendees consider an event, and a "how to" session — in person or online with key experts — is a great way to increase attendance.

22 **Consider event time frames.** While people can engage at in-person events for a full day, shorter sessions spaced out over two or three days can help with digital fatigue for online attendees.