



Virtual Event Handbook

**CREATED BY EVENTSBYHH FOR HAAGA-HELIA
EVENT MANAGEMENT STUDENTS**

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**LAST UPDATE: 1.5.2020
CREATED WITH CANVA**



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VE* - VIRTUAL EVENT(S)

ABOUT EVENTSBYHH

Behind Events by Haaga-Helia brand stands a well-coordinated team of energetic students, who are eager to learn, and competent teachers with a big wish to pass the knowledge. Events by HH brand was established in 2014, since then we have created many great events.

What about organizing few more dozens in a virtual format with the help of this handbook?



INTRODUCTION

Many players of the event industry had to go virtual due to the outbreak of Corona virus in the early spring 2020. This brought along with it numerous challenges, but at the same time new great opportunities for online development.

Events by Haaga-Helia being directly influenced by this situation, decided to make lemonade out of lemons. This handbook will come in handy, when you need assistance in organizing virtual events. It's not meant to be simple and it is a new territory for the majority of event planners. It's high time we shifted our mindset and got even more creative! This will keep us going **#wereinthistogether**





WHAT IS A VIRTUAL EVENT?

A virtual event, also known as an online event, is usually an interactive gathering that happens on the internet, although can also be based on one-way communication (some webinars). Unlike in-person events, virtual ones aren't restricted to a single location. A remote attendee can join and participate from anywhere in the world, given he or she has access to the web.



WORDS OF INSPIRATION

**"Don't find fault.
Find a remedy".**

HENRY FORD

TYPES OF VIRTUAL EVENTS

INTERACTIVE FORUM

This is a type of key notes session/session for all at the beginning of it, and later is divided into smaller groups. This allows more interaction and specialization on certain topics which makes this type of virtual event highly interactive and social by nature

MULTISITE CONFERENCE

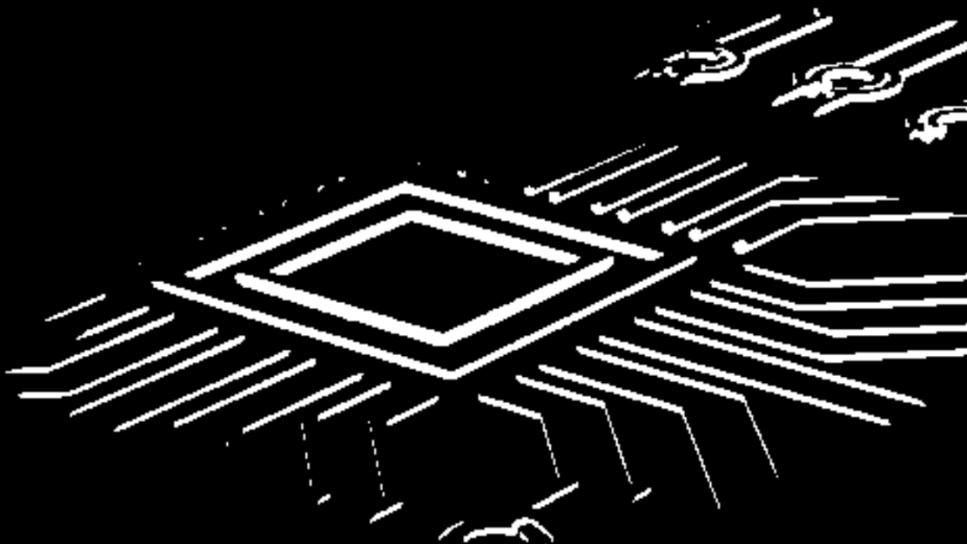
This includes a series of conferences which occur at different locations but at same time. They are all composed by equal stages and are interlinked with one another: this allows the participants to communicate between each other as well as organize common sessions on the topics at hand/of interest





CO-WORKING CONFERENCE

This type of conference is longer than the typical ones since they can last as long as a week: they combine conferences and networking with daily work. This means, for example, in the morning an employee would take part in this virtual conference and in the afternoon have enough time to proceed with his usual, daily work.



HYBRID CONFERENCE

In this type of virtual event the live event is prolonged and taken into a digital space such as through live streaming or other technology. Participants at the place of the event can learn and connect together with the people joining the conference remotely, thus connecting both virtual and real worlds into one.

VIRTUAL GOES LIVE

This type of event has its beginnings at an online community, for example, as a starting point (social media). It leads its participants from online space into the real world: meet ups are organized at proper destinations with everyone on site and continue with their usual discussions from online community at the conference.



WHAT TO CHOOSE?

There are three main types of software platforms you can choose from to conduct your virtual event:

Virtual Events Platforms are tools for organizing virtual events, where people interact in a virtual environment on the web, rather than meeting in a physical location. Used by companies to deliver presentations, training, job fairs, expos, internal and external meetings and events.

Live Streaming Platforms are video hosting solutions that allow users to upload and broadcast video content to their audience. Used for building brand awareness, advertising and providing paid access to video streaming.

Video conferencing is a technology that allows users in different locations to hold face-to-face meetings without having to move to same location. Used for holding routine meetings, negotiating business deals, and interviewing job candidates.

examples of the software platforms are listed on the page 23

HOW TO CHOOSE?

	Virtual Events Platform	Livestreaming Platform	Videoconferencing Platform
Size of event (1000+ attendees)	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Supports multiple content tracks	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Interactivity (chat, moderated Q&A)	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Amount of production resources required	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Amount of professional services needed	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Support for out-of-the-box CRM/MA integrations	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Support for on-demand content	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Relative costs of each approach	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■



PROS



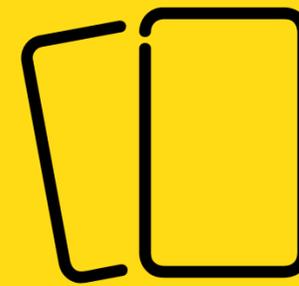
Allows easy note taking for participants



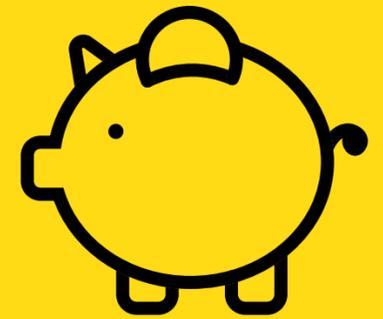
No traveling to the event's destination, less expensive, more sustainable as well as time saving



Allows the audience to attend globally can maximize your reach and create a powerful mega-event



You can live stream to more attendees for very little or no extra cost, dramatically increasing profits



No need to hire catering, pay for the venue's rent

&

CONS

More distractions available and less concentration from part of the listeners

No business vacation element - some employees view attending events in the offline world as a kind of reward

Personal connection is less effective

The whole event will be less spontaneous and more grounded than a live one

Technical challenges (slow internet) can delay or shut down a virtual conference

HOW TO PLAN A VIRTUAL EVENT?

SO, WHAT A VIRTUAL EVENT PLANNER SHOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION?
HERE ARE 10 LOGICAL STEPS -->

STEP 1 DON'T TRY TO REPLICATE F2F EVENTS

- in person events can't simply be moved online
- focus on creating a great online experience
- many of the same skills are needed (project management, organizational, communication, stress management etc.)

STEP 2 START WITH WHY

- start by defining the objectives for every stakeholder
- focus on creating a compelling shared experience that meets their needs and desires

STEP 3 PARTNER WITH PROFESSIONALS

- don't try to do everything yourself - work with the people who best understand the aspects of Event Management (managing the audience, technology, content, entertainment, engagement) - moderators and speakers should be well versed in online experience

STEP 4 DESIGN THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE

- consider the various steps of online experience, from announcement to linking the experience back
- choose time and date
- choose a venue for your online event
- keep it simple especially regarding experience design and system choices
- keep it focused and try to avoid distractions so to keep the attention of all participants
- do not forget about marketing!

STEP 5 MAP OUT ALL VIDEO AND AUDIO INTERACTIONS

- consider how participants will see, hear and interact with each other
- do not connect everyone in video and audio just because you can
- use mechanisms for live feedback when possible

STEP 6 MAKE SURE SPEAKERS/HOST APPEAR GREAT

- host should be an energetic people person, speakers
- engaging and be comfortable with looking straight to the camera
- everybody must be clearly seen and heard
- even if streaming from home, small changes can make a difference
- design slides and other visual support

STEP 7 SELECT THE RIGHT TOOLS

- consider tool options only when you fully understand the concept and plans for the online experience

STEP 8 GUIDE EVERYONE ON HOW TO USE THE TOOLS

- decide how everyone should use the tools (united way)
- remove or disable any options that are not being used
- offer guidance to all the stakeholders in the clearest way possible

STEP 9 OFFER SUPPORT

- ensure that everyone can take part in the event regardless of the tech knowledge
- offer support pro-actively
- secure appropriate resources to maintain high level of support at all times

STEP 10 TEST, TEST AND TEST

- test all scenarios on all possible systems
- test all tools including registration, polling, sound, slides, video, sound, connectivity etc.
- have a simple backup plan just in case

HOW TO INCREASE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

- Setting the tone: welcoming attendees at the start beginning with an icebreaker of sorts, such as questions attendees can answer to via chat which later can be called out (how they are, where they are calling from).
- Enabling a Q&A: designated hosts should be in charge of answering any questions during the event. Encouraging attendees to ask questions is also a good chance to collect questions and decide to answer them live or at the end (preparing questions in advance is sometimes needed to fill the gap).

- Polling: Creating 3-4 polling questions, set before the event, is a great opportunity to find out what information the audience is interested in, their expertise level and current understanding/opinions on the content shared.
- Asking for feedback: A post-event survey should be created to collect feedback and opinions on the presenters, content, audience satisfaction, etc. The URL of the survey tool is all that's needed in this step, since when attendees leave the webinar, the survey should automatically launch.



- Reactions: With some digital tools for hosting, attendees can react during the meeting by sending thumbs up, clapping, etc. to communicate their excitement or emotions without interrupting the presentation.
- The audience can be broadened through broadcasting the meeting across social channels (FB, YouTube) and livestream integration. This allows participants to join via, for example, Zoom, or watch on social media, making the content reachable to a larger audience without much extra effort.
- Attendees are advised to keep their cameras turned on for a higher level of engagement.



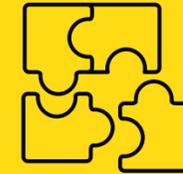
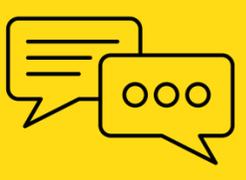
- Digital hangouts and networking spaces are great ways to replace traditional F2F networking at events. Digital hangouts are designed for “hanging out” or socializing via online video calls that can be shared with a group of people. This way, you can connect with audiences and create a human bond.





A few final tips: look at the camera, a tactic that mimics the in-person feeling of eye contact - you can gauge reactions by looking at the screen but would need to alternate by looking at the camera to make the audience feel like you're talking to them; use engagement tools such as incorporation screen sharing, annotating shared content, sending out polls as mentioned and soliciting feedback in chat all help to raise the engagement and satisfaction levels from the audience.

VR AND AR AS A FORM OF VIRTUAL EVENT CONTENT



VR, AR

The use of virtual reality and augmented reality at events is a huge trend. However, it's not just a trend, the use of VR and AR is here to stay.

Virtual reality (VR) is an **artificial, computer-generated simulation** or **recreation of a life** like situation or environment. Virtual reality is a truly immersive experience and makes you feel like you are experiencing the simulated environment. To make VR effective, at least vision and hearing should be involved. People will need **headsets to enter VR**. These headsets block out any real-world visions allowing you to only see the virtual reality in front of you. VR can be used in many ways, but it is most used for **training simulations, games, and entertainment**.

Augmented Reality (AR) is technology that **marries computer-generated images and reality**. Unlike VR which is a computer-generated world entirely, AR **enhances our real world**. A great example of AR is **Snapchat filters**. Snapchat takes your existing reality and augments it. Another widely successful use of AR was when Coachella festival used AR to **create a holographic image** of the performer.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO VIEW/CREATE VR CONTENT?

The most common ways to view VR are through a Desktop or Mobile VR.

Desktop VR needs to be connected to a **computer** for viewing.

The most popular of this type is the **Oculus Rift**.

Mobile VR combines **smartphones** with special optical viewers such as **Google Cardboard**. Unlike desktop VR mobile VR is wireless allowing for mobility and potentially more unique experiences. Other equipment like **microphones, controllers** and **trackpads** may be required if users are to interact, rather than just view the event.

First way to create VR content is by **using constructed camera rigs that use multiple cameras angled in different directions**.

The video is then stitched together similar a panorama photo but much more involved. Creators can edit the video to add special effect and mapping too. The second way to create VR content is **through computer graphics (CGI)**. This is how video games are developed. The content from either method is then installed on whatever platform you have chosen for your event such as a computer or app.

TOOLS FOR ORGANIZING VIRTUAL EVENTS:

Online event software platforms: Zoom, GoToMeeting, Microsoft Teams, Webex, InXpo, ON24, Accelevents, AdobeConnect, GoToWebinar, MegaMeeting, ezTalks Meetings, ClickWebinar, Swapcard, Glisser

Streaming platforms: Facebook, YouTube, Twitch, Ustream, Live Sream, Vimeo

Event wrapper: HeySummit, Wordpress, Hopin, Splash

Participant interaction: Slido, Glisser, Mentimeter, Poll Everywhere

Registration: Eventbrite, Cvent, Aventri, Lyyti

Email provider: Mailchimp, Constant Contact, Weber, Drip Payment: PayPal, Stripe

Meeting management: NetworkTables, e180, Remo

Awards and voting: Evalato, Judgify Virtual

Trade Show: vFairs, Communique, ez-XPO, Micebook, i-Meet

Rewards: Fanomena Events

Social promotion: Snöball Events, InGo, Gleanin, Wix, Splash, Wordpress, Squarespace

Digital hangouts: Zoom, Cisco Webex, Google Hangouts, Skype, Facetime, Houseparty

COMPANY EXAMPLES

Companies which succeed in the COVID-19 crisis either have prior virtual event experience or they have quick adaptation skills. The three main online channels that are actively emerging:

1) E-COMMERCE SERVICES ARE BEING FLOODED WITH BUYERS

Shops, restaurants and other such facilities are already declining in customers worldwide. Since most consumers are avoiding public areas and most profitable tourists are not in sight, companies are starting to shift to online delivery channels, thus raising their demand. With this strategy, more aggressive stocking and staffing sufficiency is key to ensure timely deliveries for placed orders. Companies such as **Amazon Prime**, which has operated online for years, have experienced first-hand the goods stock up and an exceptional rise in demand from customers.

2) WEB CONFERENCES ARE THE PREFERRED MODE OF COMMUNICATION

As offices shut down, work-from-home policies are adopted due to virus threat. Firms such as **Zoom** and **Webex** provide online conferencing tools for firms eager to go virtual, communication and meetings being the main targets. Companies such as **Microsoft**, **Twitter** and **Amazon** have already ensured their staff work remotely until further notice, adapting easily with their prior experience and use of technology. This way online communication tools are now essential for business survival, requiring additional funds for online subscriptions and providing departments with quick issue of accounts. The time it takes for companies to adjust will impact the productivity levels of businesses at first, but the new mode of operations can save them from total collapse.



3) **CONFERENCES & EVENTS MOVED TO ONLINE AVENUES**

Numerous physical events, conferences and trade shows have been cancelled due to the virus threat, most of the shutdowns or postponements announced for issues to public safety. Examples of such events are:

- **Google's I/O 2020**
- **Facebook's F8**
- **Mobile World Congresso Geneva Motor Show**
- **EmTech Asia**

The organizers experienced huge losses due to the cancellations (refunds, sponsorship withdrawals and lost expenses such as of logistics and marketing). F2F contact with customers is now being substituted by moving the events online. **Trade fairs in Germany** are adopting virtual event platforms and **Adobe** has already passed their **Summit** to online-only event. Universities, event organizers and corporations are seeking to replace their cancelled job fairs, trade shows and conferences with an online alternative as soon as possible. Fairs are making adjustments in order to adapt to the rise in demand and support companies that seek to present their events through visually rich interfaces, chat tools and webinars.

RISKS & CYBER SECURITY

Communication platforms such as Zoom became crucial at times such as the Corona virus pandemic, but with them came the cyber risks like meeting bombers.

Below are a few tips on how to keep your meeting safe and efficient:

- Do not share your meeting link on social media or other public forums
- Stop other participants from screen sharing
- Control who enters a meeting with the Waiting Room feature
- Lock the meeting after it starts
- Turn off File Transfer
- Always generate your random meeting ID - do not use your personal one
- Always use a meeting password
- Mute audio and disable video for meeting attendees (if unneeded)

One of the best things you can do to prepare yourself for future cyber threats is to master today's basics listed well by Zoom. Statistics show that 50% of people use the same passwords for both work and personal accounts. Try to avoid such mistakes.

You can find more detailed instructions in the link below:

<https://www.tomsguide.com/news/stop-zoom-bombing>

TO CONCLUDE...

Some of the things this handbook covers might be brand new to you, but you must believe in yourself and take a hold of this opportunity.

"It's ok to try things that don't work!"

MIGUEL NEVES

BIG THANKS FOR THE VALUABLE INPUT TO:

MPI International
Endless Events
CadmiumCD
Cvent
Eventbrite
Zoom
Forrester
vFairs



Miguel Neves
Sarah Skavron
Sonia Graupera
Maria di Fede
Valentina Voronova
Anna Junnila
Sheila Riikonen
Linda Nilsson