

The ultimate guide to **virtual & hybrid events**

Everything you need to know from the creators of the world's leading virtual & hybrid event platform



Don't fear change.

Since 2016, we've helped event organizers like yourself host engaging and captivating events online & at scale.

No matter if your event is live, virtual or hybrid, one thing never changes: **the real connections people make with each other.**

And whether live or in person, it's more important than ever to bring people together.

So take the bold step and embrace virtual. We think you'll find that it's not as scary as you once thought.

You might even find you like it.

This guide is our gift to you, full of the tips and actionable advice you need to host a successful virtual or hybrid event, whether you're doing it temporarily or hosting it as a longer-term plan.

-- The Brella team  

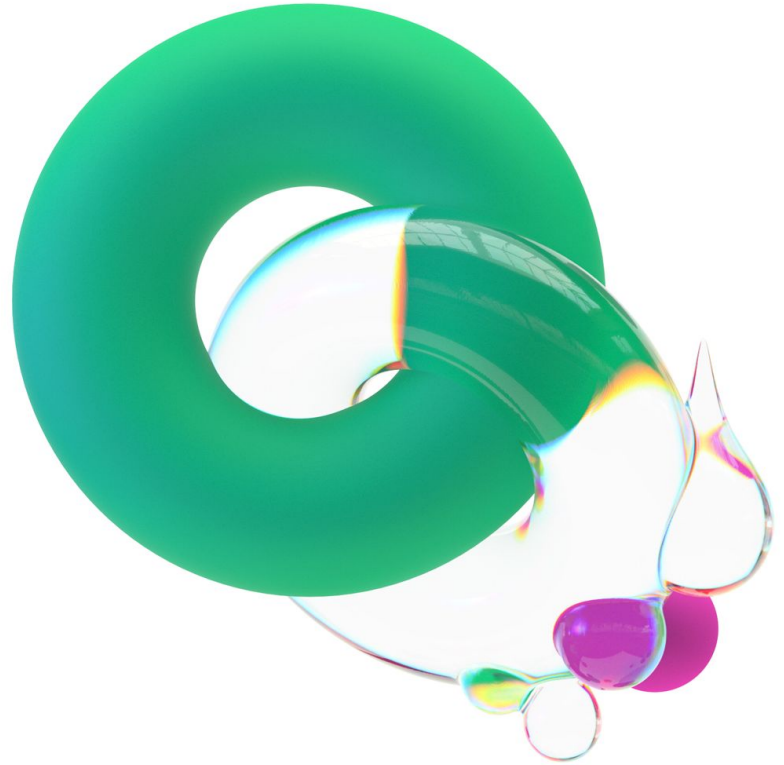


Table of contents

1. What are virtual and hybrid events?
2. The tools (and mindset) you need to succeed
3. The 3 best ways to present your content
4. Preparing your sponsorship packages (+ 4 great examples)
5. How Polar Bear Pitching and EventLAB marketed their virtual events
6. How to set up your:
 - a. Virtual event platform
 - b. Networking & matchmaking tool
 - c. Live stream tools
 - d. Participant engagement tools
7. 17 incredible tactics for keeping attendees engaged
8. Put it all together

What are virtual & hybrid events?

Why virtual? Why hybrid?

The events industry is a powerhouse. And you are a part of it.

From trade shows to exhibitions to conferences and everything in between, your events bring us together to conduct business, learn, meet new people and make lifelong memories.

However, there are times when we simply cannot bring people together in a live environment. It's happened before. It will happen again.

But there's nothing written anywhere that says an event *needs* to be in person. Before, a cancelled event was just that - cancelled.

Not anymore.

Your event *can* (and should) happen with the help of technology, either 100% virtually or with a partial live element.

A virtual event is not a trade-off or a concession - **it's an opportunity.**

An opportunity to grow, expand your event reach and connect with your attendees on a new level.

WHAT ARE VIRTUAL & HYBRID EVENTS?

Demystifying virtual & hybrid events

Virtual & hybrid events refer to **the medium in which your attendee engages with your event.**

Virtual events

Your audience interacts in a fully virtual environment, either through a video conferencing tool, a live stream, a virtual event platform, or another method.

Virtual events rely heavily on technology and provide content primarily through live streams, interactive webinars or other video-based channels.

Hybrid events

There is a mix of audience participation - but **a significant percentage of your audience participates virtually.** This could be a live session streamed to a broader audience, or an exhibition where suppliers have a presence both online and offline.

Everything is virtual!
Live stream by Jonathan Martin

Best matches watching this stream Session Details Speakers Sponsoring Company

Diane Dunn 2 days
Avavee, Analyst Pro...
MATCH IoT Individual Investor Hedge Fun
Hi I am Diane from Avavee.
I would like to meet new people

Cheryl Carter 4 days
Dabjam, Account Re...
MATCH IoT Individual Investor Hedge Fun
Hi I am Cheryl from Dabjam.
Let's connect if you are

Live Stream Chat Polls, Q&A Other Integratio

Karen Wagner
I really love the presentation. Is there a way for us to connect with the speaker or anyone from their company?

Julia Williamson
@Karen, the speaker details are given below the live stream. Also, the company details are given there you can connect with them from there.

Karen Wagner
Thank you!

Philip Hall
This is Great! How to ask questions?

Benjamin Adams
Did you check the Polls, Q&A tab? You can ask questions there to the host and also fill in polls set by the host.

Frances Nguyen
Wow! This is next level interaction in live sessions. Thank you for pointing it out. Can someone please upvote my question?

Benefits of virtual & hybrid events

Virtual & hybrid events are powerful tools for event organizers, both in times of crisis and as supplemental options for a larger event portfolio.

Reduced strain on resources

Virtual events demand far less resources and are much easier to organize compared to live events. The barrier to attend is also far lower, meaning less work can drive more traffic.

Greater scalability

Since virtual & hybrid events depend 100% on technology, it's far simpler to scale your virtual event once it's set up. This opens up realms of opportunities for your team, your brand and your sponsors.

Greater flexibility

Since there are no printouts or signs to change, anything and everything can be updated - even at the last minute.

Relevant metrics & accurate reporting

Virtual events take a lot of guesswork out of your event. Everything is hosted online, meaning you gain plenty of data to really understand how your event performed.

Set yourself apart

The virtual event space is young and the potential is still untapped. There is a ton of room for creativity and truly unique activations.

While it's true that virtual events may wane in popularity, the event industry has changed forever.

Technology is no longer a premium or a maybe, **it's an essential, need-to-have for your event.**

How do they look?

Your content is front and center, streamed live for all your participants.

Attendees can network 1:1 and video call each other.

The event essentials are present: the community, the content and the marketplace.

Better yet, they're all accessible with one click.

Brella Brella Virtual Conference 2020

People
Schedule
Stream
Speakers
Sponsors
More

Everything is virtual!
Live stream by Jonathan Martin

Best matches watching this stream | Session Details | Speakers | Sponsoring Company

Diane Dunn 2 days
Avavee, Analyst Pro...
MATCH
IoT Individual Investor Hedge Fun
Hi I am Diane from Avavee.
I would like to meet new people at this event.
Operates in: Worldwide, Finland

Cheryl Carter 4 days
Dabjam, Account Re...
MATCH
IoT Individual Investor Hedge Fun
Hi I am Cheryl from Dabjam.
Let's connect if you are interested in IoT and Investment
Operates in: Worldwide, Finland

Live Stream Chat | Polls, Q&A | Other Integrat...

Karen Wagner
I really love the presentation. Is there a way for us to connect with the speaker or anyone from their company?

Julia Williamson
@Karen, the speaker details are given below the live stream. Also, the company details are given there you can connect with them from there.

Karen Wagner
Thank you!

Philip Hall
This is Great! How to ask questions?

Benjamin Adams
Did you check the Polls, Q&A tab? You can ask questions there to the host and also fill in polls set by the host.

Frances Nguyen
Wow! This is next level interaction in live sessions. Thank you for pointing it out. Can someone please upvote my question?

Type your message here... Send

Attendees can chat and engage with others during the session, plus ask questions and more.

Instead of going to the venue, you bring the venue to their computer or mobile screens.

The tools
(and mindset)
you need

How do I go virtual?

Hosting a virtual event isn't so different from a live event. The valuable skills you've gained from planning and organizing live events are the same skills you need for your virtual events.

And perhaps the best thing about virtual events is that anyone can do it. The technology is proven, tested and accessible. However, doing it *well* is a different story (but that's what this guide is for).

There are two essentials you need:

The right tools. There are a plethora of tools available today, and they'll save you a lot of time and heartache. Using the right ones will streamline your processes and make virtual event planning a breeze.

The right mindset. Creating a virtual event isn't as simple as copying every element from a live event and searching for the virtual option. It requires an open mind and a willingness to learn - and fast.

We'll cover both in this section. Ready?

The tools

Depending on your event, you may be familiar with these tools. However, each one covers an essential piece of your event, and will make your virtual event a success.

Virtual event platform

Think of this as your virtual venue. It's where your attendees join and stay for your event, and hosts all your event info. Here your participants will watch your live streams, engage with sponsors and network with each other.

Networking & matchmaking tool

There's no such thing as virtual serendipity, so you need to create it. A networking & matchmaking tool connects your attendees together and helps create context in an environment where there is none.

Live stream tools

These can be free tools, like YouTube or Twitch, or paid tools that offer more flexibility. It also includes the equipment needed to stream, like a microphone and a camera. Your content (and how you present it) *is* your virtual event, so these tools are vital.

Participant engagement tools

These tools are how you add the element of fun and activity that keeps your attendees interested. They range from live polling to speaker Q&A and much more. Sometimes (but not always), the aforementioned tools have engagement features rolled in, so you may not need dedicated engagement tools.

The right tool for the job depends on your event.

Don't get hung up on collecting them all - as we'll cover later in this guide, it's more important to **create a plan**, then find the tools to make your plan a reality.

The mindset

Hosting a virtual event can seem intimidating and confusing. However, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Your participants still want to attend your event.

They would rather attend a virtual event than no event at all. No matter where we are, our desire for knowledge and connections doesn't change.

We still want to learn, we still want to meet new people and we still want to share an incredible experience with others.

There's all the reason to believe that your virtual event can succeed when live events aren't an option.

It's simply a matter of rethinking expectations and trying something new.

So what should you expect as you prepare your virtual event?

New forms of engagement

You need to put more effort into how your attendees connect and engage during your event. This means understanding exactly how many people participated in sessions, how many networking meetings were booked and how many people used your tools.

Put greater effort into attendee education

Virtual events may be strange or new to some attendees, so prepare to spend extra time informing your participants of your decision and coaching them on how to participate in your event.

Be patient with your sponsors

These new opportunities are new to your sponsors as well, and it may take some time to educate them on the great potential waiting for them at your virtual event.

Be willing to experiment

Virtual events are not exactly the same as live events, but the great thing is there is lots of room for creativity and experimentation. Because virtual events are so new, they're still waiting for noteworthy activations - your event could be it.

Another pro tip: **approach the planning like you were preparing a television broadcast.**

Since video content is the primary way of offering content, a stylish and professional broadcast will entice and engage viewers.

The 3 best ways to present your content

Taking a live event virtual

If you're pivoting from a live event to virtual, first of all: **don't panic**. Taking your live event online is 100% achievable. It just requires a bit of planning.

It also requires you to let go of any misconceptions you have about virtual events and how they look.

Nearly any event is possible to host online. With the clever use of technology, you can engage your audience, drive business for sponsors and create a sense of community around your brand and event.

The easiest place to start is with your goal. What did you hope to achieve with your live event? What was the purpose, and who was it targeted to? You can achieve those same goals with a virtual or hybrid event.

As well, your content is even more important, as is the presentation. Presenting your content live seems obvious, but could you offer pre-recorded content for attendees to consume at their leisure? That could save you a lot of set up.

We'll cover the main options for providing your content to your audience and suggest which one is best for your event.

What is a “live stream” and pre-recorded video?

A “live stream” is a content feed on the internet that is real-time (i.e. “live”) and accessible by an online audience. “Streaming” means to continually download content as it’s being watched or listened to.

Streaming is often done with a **high definition camera or audio device**, and the purpose is to “stream the show”. People can engage with others and the streamer in the chat **but they can’t verbally engage as they would in a webinar.**

An alternative to “live” streams is **pre-recorded content**, commonly available as streamable “**video on demand**” (VOD) or **podcasts**.



What is a webinar?

Webinars are a type of online presentation method used by organizations to inform or sell to audiences of under 100 people (typically).

They usually use a webcam, screen sharing, and are an interactive experience between the audience and presenter.

Tools commonly used for webinars include Zoom, Hangouts, GoToWebinar or Skype. The presenter often shows a presentation with some product demos, and weaves in Q&A. If selling something, the organizer will often follow-up with the viewers.



What is a webcast or conference call?

What is a webcast?

Webcast is simply a conference or a presentation that is conducted online. **Webinars or live streams are sometimes called webcasts** because they are “casted on the web”.

What is a conference call?

Conference calls are similar to webinars, and typically use a shared telephone line via online-calling software (e.g. Zoom, Google Hangouts), and often include up to 30 people.

The participants often know each other in advance, and the calls often follow a set agenda that's facilitated by a speaker.



Which one is right for me?

When should you use...

A live stream or pre-recorded video?

Streaming your content live works best when you expect a large audience for your content, more than would be feasible to host in a webinar or other video conferencing system.

A webinar?

Webinars work when you want more educational and engaging sessions. They require a host and moderators, plus also a working webcam and microphone for your attendees, depending on the format.

A webcast?

If you have a small and intimate audience, a webcast is perfect. It requires minimal setup and it's easy to engage your users. This also works for hybrid events, and you can even stream or record your webcast and use it as content! Think a pre-recorded panel discussion or something else.

KPIs for...

Live streams/pre-recorded video

Views, average view length, device viewership, live/on-demand views, audience engagement

Webinars

Participation (% of invitees), views, engagement (questions raised), next steps in sales funnel

Webcasts

Participation, views, engagement, next steps in sales funnel

Remember that it's not one over the other - you can use a **combination of these options** at your event.

For example, you can stream your keynote sessions and offer it as a VOD for later, host workshops or panel discussions in a webinar, and use webcasts for small group discussions.

Summary

- **Use a live stream** to “show the show” to your virtual or hybrid audience. They can be live or pre-recorded.
- **Use a webinar** to present a slideshow or presentation via webcam and then conduct Q&A with a smaller audience. They can be live or pre-recorded.
- **Use conference calls** for intimate audiences of people that know each other. These can be audio-only or with video, and work well for breakout sessions and discussions.
- **A webcast** is the general name for both live webinars and live streams.
- **Video on Demand (VOD)** is the term for providing pre-recorded video content in a platform for viewers to watch at their convenience. A common tactic is to record the live stream and provide it as a VOD after the event.

Preparing virtual sponsorship packages

Give your sponsors what they want

You may struggle with preparing worthwhile sponsorship packages.

Or, the struggle may be in getting your sponsors to bite.

The land of virtual sponsorships is new to them as well, so it requires a lot of patience and education to help them understand the real value.

Remember that you are now the expert in virtual events, and that a virtual partnership with you means:

Provable return on investment (ROI)

More opportunities to engage with attendees

Access to a broad marketplace

The most important thing you need to consider is **where will your attendees be** and **how your sponsors can get in front of them**.

Virtual platform sponsor

Monetize your new online venue

Just like some sponsors would help cover the venue cost in exchange for a greater presence, you can offer sponsors preferred visibility to all attendees (plus a boatload of relevant metrics).

Benefits

- Attendee exposure as the **platform sponsor** in your event emails
- Virtual eBooth
- Logo on cover image in main hub
- Promotion within attendee list (sponsor ads)
- Sponsored matchmaking category
- Push notifications

1 Welcome — 2 Availability — 3 Interests — 4 Profile



Welcome to Unicorn Hunt Conference 2.0

To help you meet the most relevant people who can help you achieve your goals, let's first create your networking profile. Brella's matchmaking with artificial intelligence will then suggest people you may want to meet.

Let's get started!

Start networking

Registration/ Ticket sponsor

Exposure to all attendees

If you use a ticketing platform, many offer customizable confirmation emails, which are perfect for promoting sponsors (as every attendee is guaranteed to get one).

Benefits

- Guaranteed exposure for all attendees registering for event
- **Logo + promotional text** in registration email
- **Trackable links** to evaluate campaign performance/traffic
- Prominent brand layout



Hi there,

Thanks for registering for Unicorn Hunt Conference 2020! 🎉📅

[Download your ticket here](#) and use this join code to join the event: XXXXX

Special thanks to our partner Google Cloud for sponsoring our event!

Because you purchased a ticket, Google Cloud is offering you **5% off your next purchase with them.**

Google Cloud Platform Anthos lets you transform your IT and build apps for the future. Anthos lets you build and manage modern hybrid applications on existing on-premises investments or in the public cloud.

Get 5% off Google Cloud Platform

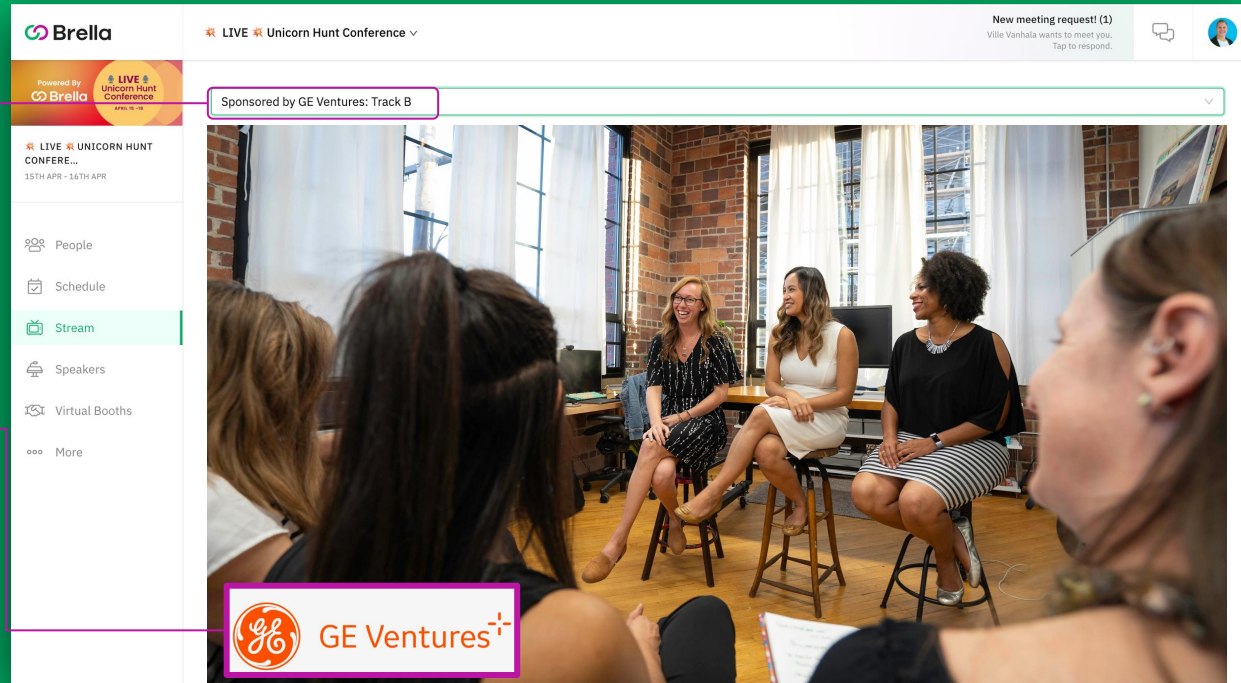
Main live stream sponsors

Turn your content into a revenue stream

The live stream is a place to flex some creative muscles. There is opportunity for promotion before, during and after the stream, and you can segment packages based on the different streams you have.

Benefits

- **Banner on main live stream**
- **Company logo & information overlaid on stream**
- Opportunity for sponsored content, advertisements, promotions & more
- Alternatively, offer a keynote session hosted by your sponsor



eBooth Exhibitor packages

More trackable leads from your event

Here you can segment your offerings, depending on what your virtual event platform allows.

Offerings

- Virtual booth
- **Live chat**
- Company introduction
- Rep presence
- VODs
- **Sharable content**
- Livestream commercial
- Full report
- **Push notifications and promotions**

The screenshot displays the Brella virtual event interface. At the top, the Brella logo and the event title "DEMO Saija getting virtual 2020" are visible. A left sidebar contains navigation options: People, Schedule, Stream, Speakers, Sponsors (highlighted), and More. The main content area shows a booth for Brella, described as "A networking company for events and communities". The booth features a central video player with a play button, surrounded by images of the Brella interface on various devices. Below the video player, there are three sharable content items: "Company_Intro.pptx", "Value Proposition.pdf", and "Company Website". At the bottom left of the booth, a profile for Benjamin Adams (Zooveo) is shown. On the right side, a "Sponsor Chat (live)" window is open, showing a conversation between Larry Ward and Kathryn Fuller. The chat messages include: "I really love your product, do you have any documents I can go through?", "@Larry, Thank you for contacting. You can find the PDF file attached below the video. Also, feel free to connect with me if you have more questions or post them in Q&A.", "Sure! I will send you a personal message right away!", "This is Great! How to ask questions?", "Did you check the Polls, Q&A tab? You can ask questions there to the host and also fill in polls set by the host.", and "I am interested in buying this solution. @Kathryn, I sent you a meeting request!". At the bottom of the interface, a sponsored content area for Google Cloud Platform is visible, featuring the Anthos logo with a "SPONSORED" tag, the text "Google Cloud Platform" and "Anthos 'Bringing the cloud to you' Transform your IT and build apps for the future Anthos lets you build and manage modern hybrid applications on existing on-premises investments or in the public cloud.", and a "Suggest Meeting" button.

Market your virtual event

Marketing your event

The good thing about marketing a virtual event is it's not much different from marketing a live event.

The bad thing is... well, it's not much different from marketing a live event.

Don't worry. The practice is the same, it just requires some different tactics.

One aspect you should consider with every message is **educating attendees about your virtual event**. This means answering questions like:

How can I join?

Do I need to download something?

How can I interact with others?

As well, think of promotions after your event too. Anything you create for your virtual event can be shared throughout the year, meaning one virtual event can be a continuous lead magnet for you.

We found a few great examples of other event organizers like you who hosted a virtual event - some with no experience at all - to give you an idea of how they marketed their own virtual event.

Pivoting to virtual – in just 7 days

Polar Bear Pitching, a unique startup event in the North Pole, was forced to cancel their event due to the Coronavirus. However, taking that resourceful attitude well attributed to startups, they decided to **pivot to virtual in 7 days**.

As something unique to their event, they decided to create the hashtag #FreezingMoment and encouraged others to share their own freezing moments on social media - the moments they were most scared.

As well, they turned that into an opportunity to create a podcast to connect with their audience and invite guests to discuss their own struggles with adversity - and how they overcame them.

All in all, a timely exercise in great marketing and connecting with your audience.

[You can read more about Polar Bear Pitching and their success here.](#)



MARKET YOUR VIRTUAL EVENT

Provide valuable content before, during and after

EventLAB decided to give a great boost to the community and offer the information they knew they needed: “How COVID-19 Will Affect The Events Industry”.

Despite having no experience in virtual events, they studied what other organizations had done to understand the best ways to offer their content to their audience.

They also began drip feeding content on their social media channels before, during and after the event to suit the different needs of their audience, because their content was no longer bound to the event itself. This ensured their audience could engage with their event in their own way.

More importantly, they placed a heavy focus on providing attendees with educational content on how to join the platform and conduct themselves at a virtual event.

If you'd like to catch up on EventLAB's valuable content, [you can find it all here](#).

EventLAB
BY HIRE SPACE

How to set up your tools

Set up

It's far simpler to host a virtual event than a live event. There is far less set up involved, and you can have a turn around in a matter of days or weeks, compared to spending months or even a year (or more!) planning your live event.

Those of you who are technologically savvy will find set up to be simpler. Those of you who are not may find some options difficult, but don't worry! This guide will help explain the tools you need, what to look for and the basics of set up.

We also recommend asking any tech friends you have, or your tool providers for assistance with set up.

But the essentials remain the same, no matter for live, virtual or hybrid events. You need:

A place for participants to meet

A location to consume your content

A tool to facilitate connections & meetings

And some engaging elements!

So how do I set up a virtual event?

The first thing to do is **prepare your virtual event platform** so you have a central location to direct your attendees to. It's no different from prepping the venue - only with a lot less stress.

Next, we recommend setting up and opening your networking & matchmaking tool. This is a vital part of your virtual event, as you can start engaging your attendees in advance. Encouraging attendees to study the event agenda and schedule meetings improves their experience.

A large part of time will most likely be planning and setting up your live stream tools. Luckily, once they are set up, all you need is the **embed code** to add them to your virtual event platform.

And finally, your engagement tools. These range from streamlined and simple to comprehensive and complex, so make sure you understand what your tools can do. Depending on your platform, there can be direct integrations, or **embed links** to embed them in your virtual event platform.

The steps in brief

Launch your virtual event platform to host your event

Open your networking & matchmaking tool so your audience can begin networking

Test your live stream tools and get the **embed links** to embed them into your virtual event platform

Prepare your engagement tools and get the **embed links**

Most of the set up involves testing and ensuring your tools work.

Leave yourself an ample amount of time to test your tools before your event, if possible.

Thorough testing beforehand means less stress the day of your event!

Set up your virtual event platform

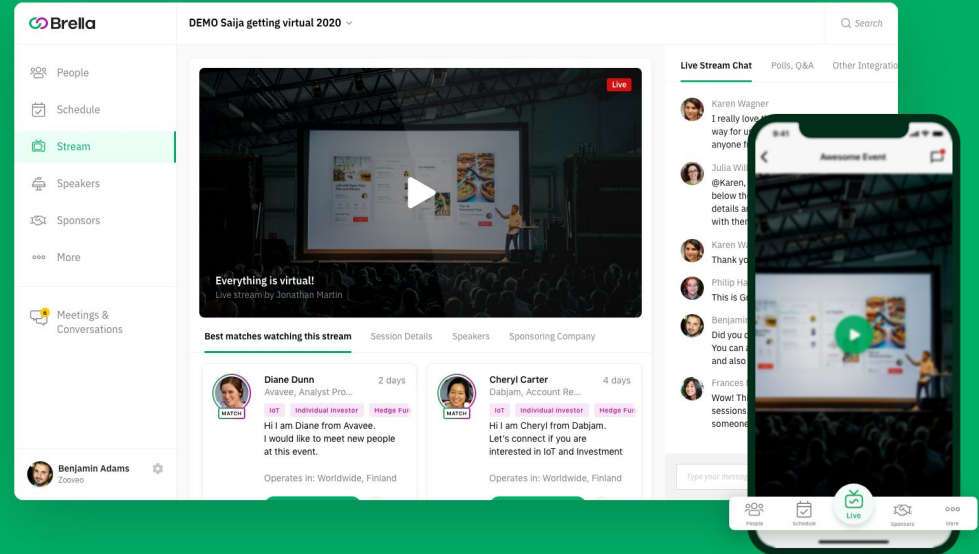
We're confident you'll find setting up your virtual event platform to be exponentially easier than setting up a venue.

There are no extra domains or web pages needed to host your virtual event - your platform handles the hosting. So all you need to do is add the relevant information and you're already done.

What do you need to add? Add your event dates, your event name, and include your event agenda. That's all you need for launch! The best thing is that you can make changes at any time, and they update instantly.

You'll get a web link to share with your attendees, but we recommend sharing that only once you add your other features - sponsors, networking, etc.

If you'd like more information on setting up a virtual event in Brella, we have a great guide for you - [you can download it here.](#)



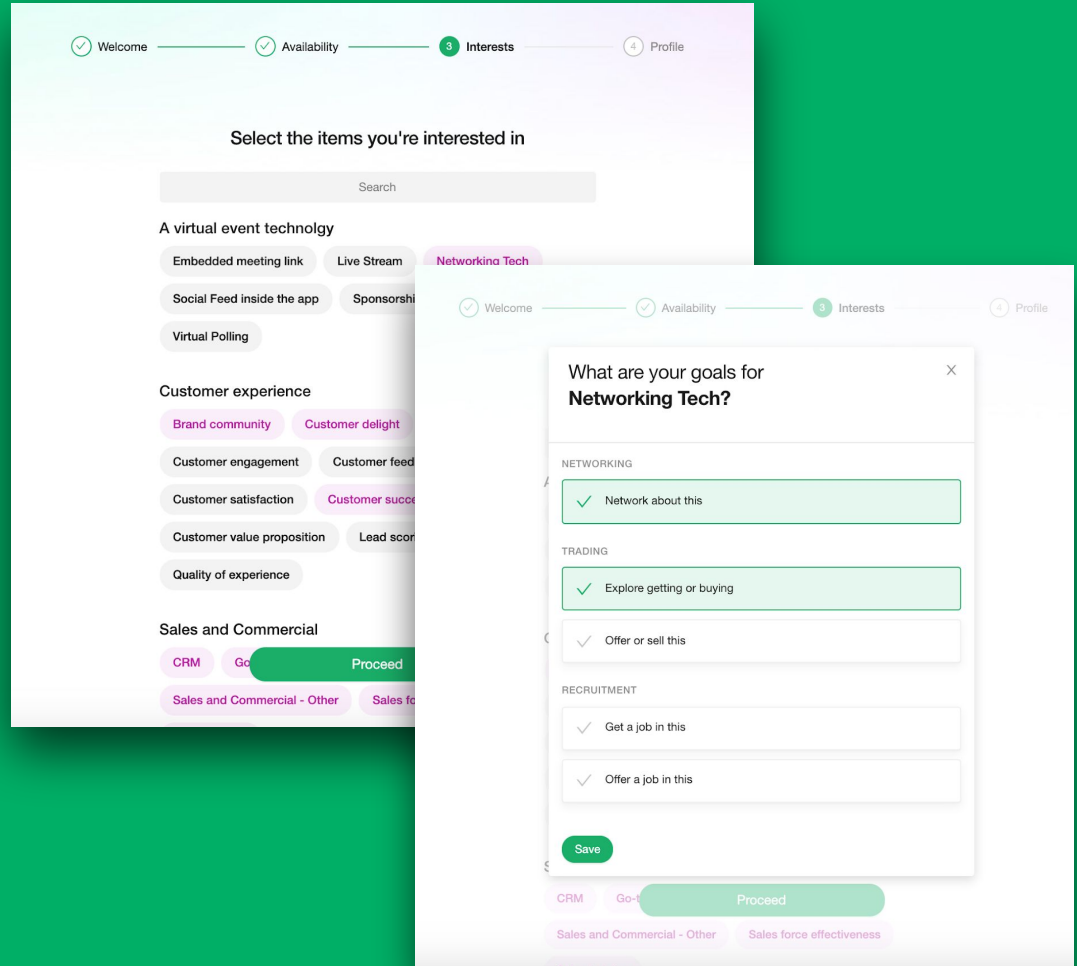
Set up your networking

The most important thing is to consider when you want your attendees to network: **during the entire event (full networking) or in-between sessions.**

Full networking means your attendees can schedule meetings with others at any time, even during sessions. This works better with multi-track agendas, so attendees can fill the time with meetings if a track doesn't interest them.

Networking in-between sessions works better with smaller events where there is one track or the sessions don't last all day. Then you can offer longer breaks for networking, or so attendees can tend to other matters before coming back to the stream.

As well, consider how your networking tool connects attendees. Look for **intent-based matchmaking**, as it provides an added filter to ensure each attendee can find the best match possible.



Simple tips for better virtual networking

Offer longer breaks in-between sessions for more valuable networking.

This helps give attendees a break between content and helps them engage 1:1. Plus, connections are a huge reason for attending events (even virtual ones), so the more the merrier!

Open up your networking 2-3 weeks before the event.

This gives attendees a chance to create a solid profile, schedule meetings in advance and start chatting before the event.

Keep your networking platform open after the event as well.

This helps attendees follow up and connect with others who maybe didn't have time to network.

Use networking as an important keyword in your marketing.

Attendees love when organizers provide quality networking experiences for them, so use that to your advantage! Promote the networking opportunities as much as possible, and explain how you will give your participants the best connections.

Relying on serendipity is a gamble even at live events.

That's why networking tools are 100% essential for virtual and hybrid events.

When there is no chance to 'bump' into the right person, networking tools serve as that way to find the proverbial needle in the haystack - no matter how big the haystack is.

What's the best live stream tool?

The best live stream tool depends on your event, your time and your resources.

However, we've done a lot of work to go through the top ones and suggest the best ones for you.

We recommend keeping these features in mind as you look for a live stream provider:

Custom branding. Are there opportunities to add your logo and other brand material to the stream?

Q&A features. Some providers offer questions, chat, ratings and more.

Avoid cluttering your video with unrelated content. Check with your provider if you can control what attendees see after the stream, as it's another opportunity for you to show related content.

Stream your content to any platform. Some providers may not allow for multi-streaming, meaning you lock your viewership into one platform.

More customizable video access functionality. If you can find out, learn how providers treat your recorded videos and their access.

More freedom for monetization. Are their options for advertisements, branded moments or more?

API documentation. If you're more technologically-minded, APIs offer greater flexibility and more customization options.

Customer support. Great customer support can ease your worries and make the live stream process much smoother.

Here are 3 quick things you can use to have a good stream:

A camera and microphone. Your phone can do, but invest into a reliable mic and camera for higher quality video.

A streaming provider. You need this to prepare your stream.

An AV crew. They can take a lot of stress away from creating a broadcast-quality stream, even remotely.

Provider / feature	Twitch	Vimeo Live	IBM Video Streaming	Dacast	Wowza	Streamshark
Live chat	✓	✓	✓	×	×	✓
Q&A	×	✓	✓	×	×	✓
Polls	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
Stream recording	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monetization	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Analytics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Encoder not always required	×	✓	✓	×	×	×
Simulcasting	×	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Price for 450 GB of bandwidth / month	Free	70\$	40\$	19\$	49\$	100\$

5 quick tips to improve your live stream quality



Special thanks to Mike Lunt from [event.video](#)

Don't skimp on the audio.

Bad audio = a bad experience for your listeners especially if they can't hear you clearly. Invest in a good microphone. We recommend a podcast microphone, headset (with built in microphone) or lapel microphone for more professional presentations and use headphones to avoid an echo.

Increase your internet speed.

Video conferencing places a heavy load on bandwidth, as we've seen with providers begging services like Netflix and YouTube to reduce quality so to save bandwidth. Consider boosting your internet connection to as fast as it can be so you ensure that your message is heard.

Position your webcam correctly.

Most webcams are not designed to be as good as a professional camera but with a few adjustments you can still get great results. Avoid sitting in front of a window as you'll be a dark silhouette. Think about what's on view behind you because yes, everyone on the call is looking at your decor!

Lighting is key.

Professional lighting doesn't need to come from expensive equipment or a crew. The easiest way is to keep your light at a 45-75 degree angle to where you are, whether natural or artificial. And keep it as even as possible, as an even spread of light means a higher quality video.

Have a purpose.

It's more important than ever to cut to the chase and keep the engagement high and the script tight. Try not to improvise whenever possible. You'll have a higher quality stream because of it, and your audience will appreciate it.

Bonus tip: **Think of your content like a television show.**

If possible, add graphics, cutaway footage, pre-recorded interviews and more.

Presentation is everything, and a few tweaks can add a unparalleled air of professionalism to your event.

event.video can help you with this. We're a cloud-based production company with crews near you. [Check out our website](#) for more examples.

HOW TO SET UP YOUR TOOLS

Set up your engagement tools

Your engagement tools should complement your virtual event.

For example, if you focus on smaller breakout sessions, your webinar tool will be more important, and you may have lesser need for live chat since everyone can speak in the same room.

On the other hand, live chat becomes essential for large live streams, as there is no way everyone can voice their opinion. As well, live polling and Q&A tools helps source questions from the audience and connect them with the speakers.

It all depends on what your event needs.

Your event will dictate the tools, but all should provide an **embed link** that allows the tool to be shown in a browser or virtual event platform.

These embed links can differ for each provider, so make sure to ask your provider how to get your embed link.



The screenshot displays a live stream interface on the Brella platform. The main video feed shows a man with glasses and a striped shirt speaking. The interface includes a left sidebar with navigation options like 'People', 'Schedule', 'Stream', 'Speakers', and 'Partners'. The top right corner shows 'New meeting requests (4)' and a 'CLICK TO UNMUTE' button. The bottom of the video player shows 'LIVE 194' and a '47:45' timer. Below the video, the title 'How The Events World Is Responding To Covid-19' is visible. To the right of the video, there is a slide deck titled 'KEEPING YOUR REMOTE TEAM MOTIVATED, HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES'. The slide deck includes a 'HIDE SPACE' button and a 'SLIDES Q&A' section. The slide content includes a poll question: 'In one word, how are you feeling today?' and a question: 'What's the one thing that government can do to support the events industry now?'. The slide also mentions 'When are the majority of your in-person events being rebooked for?'.

Keep your
attendees
engaged

How to engage your attendees?

Keeping the attention of your attendees is vital for a successful virtual or hybrid event, and shouldn't be an afterthought. Great engagement can be woven into your entire event to keep your attendees glued to their screen, wherever it may be.

We'll talk about how to boost attendee engagement in areas like:

Content. Your content needs to be rethought. How will you keep it engaging and interesting? Think beyond your event too: it's incredibly simple (and powerful) to reshare digital content.

Interaction with your audience. Just because you can't see your attendees doesn't mean you can't interact with them.

Networking and virtual trade shows. It's not so different from networking at a live event (just less movement). But it's an excellent way to engage your attendees.

Fun elements and games. It's good to have a laugh every once in a while, and a bit of fun and games can energize and engage your attendees.

Create engaging content

Keep a laser focus, a specific topic, and a tight script.

Narrowing it down to a specific niche will make it more attractive. As well, many attendees are used to professional videos that keep moving. A tight script will help prevent any ad-lib that could derail the whole presentation.

Shorter is better.

Use shorter content whenever possible, around 50-60 minutes maximum. If you must go longer, be sure to include ample time for breaks.

Consider using pre-recorded video.

There's nothing saying you need to live stream every session. A common tactic is to live stream the main sessions, and use pre-recorded content for the rest. This has the added benefit of saving you a lot of stress the day of the event!



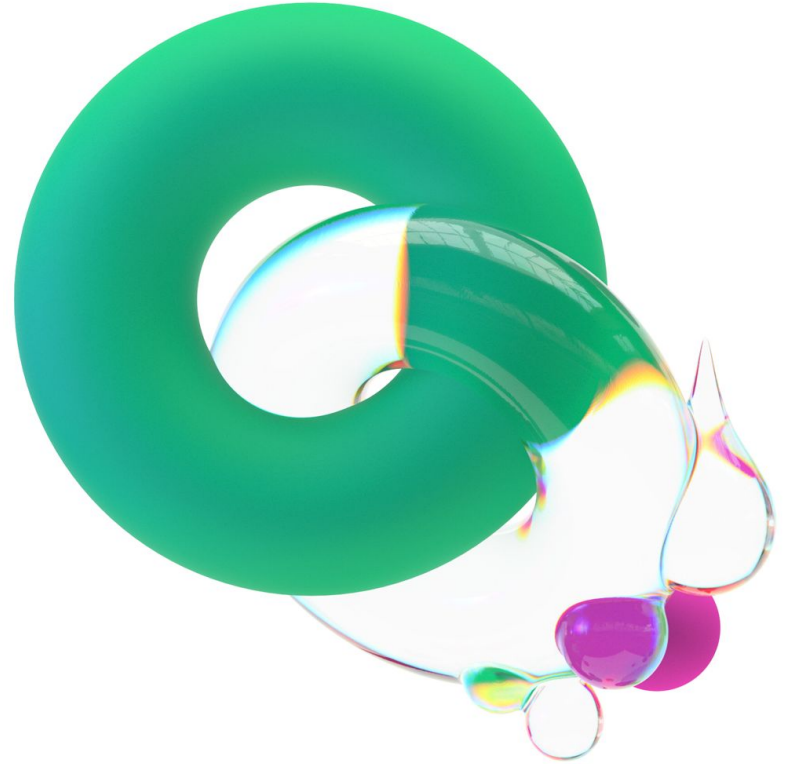
Keep interactivity high

Engage early, engage often.

We recommend having something engaging every 5-15 minutes during a session. This could be a question asked in the chat, a little quiz or something else - anything to keep the attendee interactions high!

Stay tuned to your social media channels.

Encourage your attendees to share their experience on social media, and make sure to like and share it with your own network. You can also use social media as a forum for discussion, like conducting polls on Twitter or asking questions on Facebook.



Leverage networking & virtual trade shows

Let the people meet.

When attendees network together, they're forming bonds and memories around your event, which puts your event in a positive light. So don't be afraid to offer lots of time for networking!

Put extra effort into connecting sponsors with attendees.

There are lots of options for hosting virtual trade shows. Sponsors can host virtual demos, or they can pre-record them and embed them into their virtual booth. Plus, your sponsors get new business, and attendees find quality solutions and providers.

Encourage attendees to share their networking highlights on social media.

Of course this should come at the behest of all involved, but it's great content for you to use and share when your attendees have a great time meeting other people.



9 fast tips to add fun to your virtual event

Competitions. You can use different quiz tools to let attendees compete during breaks and sessions, and award a small prize to the winner.

Add virtual receptions, happy hours and breaks. Use breaks liberally throughout your event to let attendees unwind and discuss their own 'aha' moments.

Use unique games for your attendees. You can let your attendees do something totally different like letting them play drawing charades, or have a break in a digital bar.

Share news/community announcements during breaks. By sharing news in your event, you reduce the risk that they go elsewhere to find it.

Show advertisements during breaks. Enrich your livestreams and webinars with some content from your sponsors and exhibitors.

Chair yoga, meditation sessions or wellbeing talks during breaks. Keeping mentally healthy is more important than ever, so take time to let your attendees relax.

Interview participants during breaks. After the session, give a post-session show with the host asking a few questions from the speaker. You could also involve sponsors or attendees, and a few light-hearted questions can really boost the mood.

Use social media heavily during the event. Retweet your participants' photos, encourage them to share their own, and embrace the virtual.

Use elements of shared collaboration/contribution. There are many apps that emulate a whiteboard, for example, meaning your audience can collaborate from across the world.

Engaging attendees at a virtual event is far different from a live event.

Be prepared to add more breaks and spread your content out throughout the day.

And remember that a **feeling of fun and community** is what separates your event from a TEDx video on YouTube.

Put it all together

Congrats! You made it to the end. How do you feel? We're sending you a virtual high five right now.

It's a lot to take in. But hopefully now you understand that virtual events are a useful and realistic opportunity for you during times when live events aren't feasible.

Here's a summary of what we talked about.

Make a plan. Determine your goals, KPIs, audience (and how you will engage them).

Spend extra time planning your content and its delivery. Keep it on a tight script. Consider pre-recording content to save time on the event day. Look into AV crews to take away a lot of the stress of live streaming.

Start marketing now. Tell the whole world you're going virtual, what they need to know, and how to join.

Set up your tools. You need a central location to host your content (virtual event platform), a method for facilitating 1:1 meetings (networking tool), a tool to present your content (live stream or VOD platform) and something to help attendees interact (engagement tools).

From all of us at Brella, we wish you the best of luck. You're taking a brave first step into the virtual and hybrid space.

We hope you enjoy it.

-- *The Brella team* 

Thank you

To learn more about our platform for virtual and hybrid events, [visit our website](#).

And to schedule a demo call with our virtual event experts, [click here](#).

