

The Complete Guide to Hosting A Virtual Event



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Introduction

Events are an integral part of any business, be it brand awareness, product launch, business networking, knowledge-sharing sessions, building community and many such objectives are achieved through events.

Businesses aim to do something different with events every year in order to scale them and subsequently its impact. But physical locations and venues have their own limitations.

This is where the idea of virtual events come into the picture, taking it beyond a physical location, making it accessible to people beyond their travel & safety limitations and offering high scalability.

Hosting virtual events is easier and more cost-effective than ever as a lot of software and event technologies are available now to help you.

Comprehensive virtual event planning and execution will pay you off huge and transform your event business into a whole new event world for you and your attendees.

Virtual events will give you and your attendees flexibility, visibility and reach to scale up your events.

What are Virtual Events?

Virtual events are events that happen over the internet (online). No matter where you are in the world, what kind of devices you use, when you're available, virtual events come with great benefits and scope for everyone - attendees, event organizers, speakers, etc.

As the internet and technologies become more affordable, the future of human to human interaction will become more and more remote participation centric.

With the changing landscape of digitalization and the key developments in digital events management, it's going to revolutionize the entire event fraternity, so event technology.

Virtual events will outweigh physical events. They are more value-based events. People get to scope out the way they want to do. Flexibilities are immense. And it's a tremendously cost-effective solution.

Virtual reality-based events will get bigger.

Note:

Virtual Reality is the term used to describe a three-dimensional, computer generated environment that can be explored and interacted with by a person. A virtual event may or may not have a virtual reality environment. Both are independent of each other and do not resemble at any point.



What are the Different Types of Virtual Events?

Any events that take place physically at any venue can be transformed into virtual events.

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Conferences | 2) Meetings |
| 3) Keynote speech | 4) Partner events |
| 5) Workshops | 6) Product launches |
| 7) Trade-shows | |

1) Conferences: Virtual conferences allow people to attend their sessions over the internet. They can interact with their fellow attendees and network throughout the conference. People can use their computers or mobile to attend the events no matter where they are.

You can live-stream your speaker sessions for your attendees and keep them engaged during the conference.

Develop your virtual conferences into a valuable asset for your business.

2) Meetings: Virtual meetings are interactions between two individuals or across a group of people online. They can communicate or e-meet with each other and share their insights, experiences, or anything.

Any project team meetings, sales meetings, internal review meetings and/or corporate meetings can be virtually held seamlessly.

Meetings that demand minimal interaction or meant just for educational purposes can be held using tools like Skype, Zoom or Go-to Webinars.

However, for meetings that require much active interaction and engagement among the participating audiences organizers often take the help of a virtual event platform.

3) Keynote speech: A keynote speech is the “feature speech” that sets the tone for the entire event. This is crucial as it lays down the objective and purpose of the event.

It is not necessary for a keynote speaker to be present at the venue for his speaking session. The internet and video conferencing, on the contrary has provided a shortcut to it. The key-note speaker can be anywhere and speak virtually.

Technologies enable remote delivery of keynote speeches through various mediums such as Skype, Zoom, etc.



4) Partner events: These web-based events are ideal for keeping the valued members of your partner program engaged.

Your partners can attend your events online and meet their fellow members.

The objective of such an event generally is to share product knowledge, product use cases and future roadmaps with partners.

Often these events hold a discussion forum, where your associates come up with their queries related to the product, services, market scenario, or pricing, the scope is vast and every organizer should dedicate time to set the scope of such meetups.

50% of marketers have attended a virtual or hybrid event. Those that have attended a virtual event are 51% more likely to attend another one. (Westuc, 2015)

5) Workshops: Organizing workshops online is quite effortless. While setting up a presentation, the speaker utilizes a laptop and a projector screen so the attendees can watch and learn comfortably.

Webinars, on the other hand, are one of the greatest examples to host virtual workshops

. You just need a hands-on tool, a walk-through it and there you go. All ready to present a live workshop for your attendees!

Note: Also, some of the virtual platforms like GoToWebinar and Hubilo's Virtual Event Platform has an integrated functionality of having a Live QnA, Live Polls and so on.

6) Product launches: Virtual product launch events allow you to manage and extend the exposure and reach of your new product/service to international audiences and viewers. You can do it in a cost-effective way and in a timely fashion.

It can help you decide on how you want to do it. Whether you want to go as a stand-alone product launch event or mix it with your standard event program.

7) Trade-shows: A virtual trade show is an online version of an event for demonstrating and exhibiting your goods and services (specific industry).

Attendees can watch the product demonstration online and can also e-meet exhibitors.

Trade Show planners are leaning towards virtual tradeshow events to keep up with the new trend and tremendous ROI opportunities.

Hosting a Virtual Event: Things to Do

Virtual events and virtual conferences have become a formidable course of action for event planners and managers.

You can reach out to a large pool of audiences and prospective attendees. And attract the best speakers to speak at your event.

You can boost your creativity and add up to the taste of your attendees.

[Transforming your physical events into virtual events](#) is the best option to democratize your experience.

1) Create a complete plan for your virtual conference event:

Be clear about why you want to go virtual. What kinds of technologies you need. Create your game plan. Understand your audience types.

Consider optimization for mobile. You, attendees, would also want to access the event on mobile, not just on computers.

2) Define the timeline for your virtual event:

What kind of events you organize, define a clear timeline for your event. Segregate the tasks and activities you need to complete for your full event.

The timeline is the most critical aspect of your virtual conference. Set the timeline for pre event and after event engagement and activities too.

When you manage or need to manage a team working under you, ensure that you communicate the project deadlines to them clearly, covering their responsibilities and duties.

3) Resource planning:

This is people management. How you plan your people into performing activities for the whole skeleton of your event and how you get your work done by them will help you envision your overall event success.

Have full visibility into the skills and abilities of your team members and assign the tasks to them accordingly.

Never underestimate the power of clear and timely communication with anyone, including your teammates. They need to have clear and full information and direction on how you want them to establish and perform towards the conference.

4) Costs consideration:

Virtual events are more cost-effective than physical events for sure. However, there is a need to consider all the costs of your virtual conference. Virtual event software provider, video conferencing, marketing, good internet, etc.

However, there wouldn't be any cost to attendees' accommodation, foods & travel. No need for this as your conference is virtually happening over the internet.

5) Make your virtual conference a huge success for speakers:

When you [execute your event](#) right, it's going to be a great victory for you, your online guests and speakers.

Provide some unique opportunities to your speakers so that they will be more motivated to provide their knowledge bombs to their listeners.

Allocate more time for them to speak. Allow them to have some marketing or branding opportunities for them while speaking and delivering on their subjects.

6) Develop the right event marketing strategies:

When you go virtual, marketing becomes all the more critical for you. You want to solidly spread the word of your event to your target audience in your target countries.

With the boom of social media and digital technologies, you can easily optimize your marketing efforts and best capitalize on the available pool of marketing techniques and tools.

Consider these:

Email marketing | Blog marketing | Social media marketing
Listing on popular event sites | Paid marketing if feasible | Video marketing

7) Use social media platforms:

It's clear that we need to be where our audiences are.

Your guests and attendees are on social media platforms - such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc. You can strategically target them on social media and push your early registrations.

You also have an excellent opportunity to run your ads and further penetrate into the audience you want in.

8) Consider preparing great content:

Content is still the king in 2020. This is especially for those who have their business and events online. Great digital content can pay you off big times and make your events look far more professional and engaging.

Consider sharing short videos, images and GIFs along with blogs to attract your attendees and speakers too.

9) Sponsor and exhibitor booths:

Virtual events can make it extremely easy for you to set up virtual sponsor and exhibitor booths for your attendees to visit.

Host sponsors videos, product demos and documents

Get visitor analytics.

10) Form an online community:

When you're online doing your events, you can increase your community engagement exponentially.

People are online and they like human to human interaction. Create an online community to keep them engaged and updated about your current event and others too happening in the future.

11) Record presentations:

In virtual conferences, many attendees would demand pre-recorded videos of presentations. Always record presentations given by speakers.

There are chances that some of them would not be able to attend a few of the live sessions. It's better to have the recordings ready for them.

Utilize those videos for your next event marketing purposes. Show off to your potential attendees how your last event went - sessions, interactions and quality content.

12) Make attractive and flawless landing pages:

You want a hub where you can direct your attendees to see and register for the event.

When you have an event website, make your event registration landing pages super attractive and flawless. Use a short video and provide compelling content.

Make sure that the landing pages are error free from both the perspectives - technically and content wise.

13) Send reminders to attendees:

Reminders are key to keeping them informed about your event and any changes you need to make.

Ensure you provide them updates in a timely fashion.

14) Test things:

Once you have everything up and running, do test all things you developed before the launch.

Try to track any errors and glitches. Sort them out and optimize. Make it ready to go.

15) Launch:

Once you're assured that you have all running perfectly, It's time to launch your event.

Ensure you go as per your plan and keep tracking its progress. Make changes if you need them.



- **Bonus tips to catapult your virtual conferences**

16) Address time zone differences properly

This depends if you're inviting attendees from outside your country.

If you invite attendees from other countries too, keep a time of your event that should be suitable for most of your attendees.

Imagine your e-attendees are from the USA, UK and Australia. Work out the best time for your event, schedules, sessions, etc.

17) Make registration easy for your attendees:

Make it hassle free for your attendees. Do not put a lot of questions for them to answer.

They would also want to register on mobile, so ensure that you make your registration mobile-friendly too.

18) Pre record presentations (if streaming videos fail):

You may face any technical glitches and you would not be able to live stream your presenter sessions.

In this case, it's advisable to keep your pre record presentations ready. You can use it for your attendees if anything unfortunate happens.

19) Plan for Q&A and networking:

When you go online, things will be fast and demanding for more networking and engagement.

Live Q&A during the sessions will be one of the best ways to keep your attendees captivated. You can present the same on the screen so that everyone can view it.

Your people would still want an advanced level of networking while being virtual. Consider all sorts of networking strategies for the same.

20) Understand your audience requirements:

Try to understand your audience's requirements. What they want and need. What kind of content can make them happy?

Mould that into your content including speaker sessions.

21) Look to implement their suggestions to the content:

Suggestions are great. But know what to take and what to leave out.

When you implement your attendees' suggestions, they will be excited & delighted. They will feel more important.

22) Designing pre event activities:

Let's just not stop at registration. But figure out a way how you want to engage them before the event begins.

List out your engagement strategies and go for them. Your event ROI is judged on content and networking & engagement opportunities.

Virtual networking and engagement can immensely help your attendees.

They can access the attendee list.

Exchange business cards | Conduct virtual meetings
1-1 chats | Polls | Global feed hub
Contents | Access to sessions & much more



How to Present at a Virtual Event?

With virtual event capabilities, presenters have wonderful opportunities to present their sessions at the event using different technologies. However, it depends on you as event organizers how you want your speakers to present their sessions.

There are basically two types of presentations that you can run.

1) Live sessions - Live streaming:

You use live streaming videos and speakers present their sessions live.

Consider good mic and voice quality. Ensure to have a good background when a speaker presents.

Request speakers to take care of logistics things on their end in advance.

Run live Q&A with speakers. Allow your attendees to ask questions.

Decide on what kind of questions you want/need to take during the sessions.

Allow your attendees to share their comments while it happens live.

Begin sessions on time, but ensure to notify your attendees on session start.

Pre decide on what kind of video conferencing tools you want to use - YouTube, Zoom, etc. A good virtual conference management will provide you with a video conferencing facility/tool with the software itself. This means you wouldn't have to get a video conference tool separately, but you get everything with one software.

2) Pre-recorded sessions:

Your speakers can record your sessions in advance and provide you with the video recordings that you can embed with your conferencing tool.

Take questions from your audience for your speakers in advance. Let speakers answer the most important questions to impart his knowledge to them. Speakers can tell who asked those questions.

Your speakers can watch those sessions as per the session time.

It's up to you when you want to make your sessions live after you have the recordings available.

Ensure that you convey to your speakers about the ambience you want to see in the background.

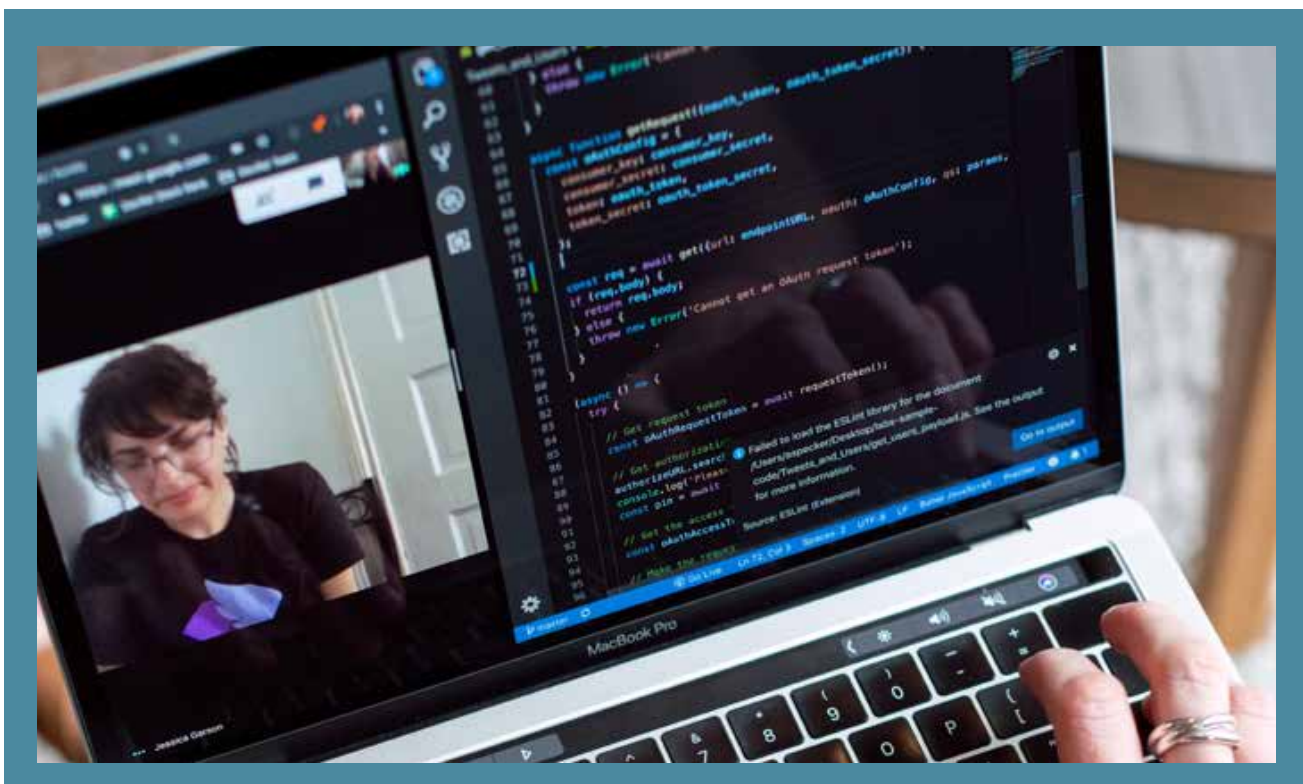
Ensure your speakers use a good mic system for quality voice.

Even they can use whiteboard or other presentation techniques to present to their speakers in the most interesting way.

LinkedIn learning and educational videos are pre-recorded. They're the best example for you and your presenters.

Let them know how and with which video tool you want them to record their sessions.

Define the time duration of sessions.



Going Virtual During Crisis Times!

You may face any crisis for your events. You might want to step back and cancel/postpone your events.

In a recent survey by the [PCMA Education Foundation](#), 67% of respondents expected to leverage technology to remotely participate in events in the next three years.

However, nothing can stop you from conducting your events and smashing them virtually.

Stay in the hunt!

1) Rethink your event policy:

You may have your event policy in place for physical events. It's time to rethink them and frame a virtual event policy that can win the hearts of your attendees and meet all the guidelines for the event.

2) Plan out strategies with the use of stats and information:

You must be aware of what it will cost you if you cancel your conference and how your attendees would suffer.

Obtain the information and stats on your cost, negative impact it could have, etc.

Develop strategies that can help you salvage the situation and become more powerful to still execute your event.

Provide updates to your attendees and relevant virtual delegates about your virtual event launch and further information regarding schedules.

Going with online events are a far better option than cancelling your events. It will be more cost-effective too.

3) Have space for exclusivity:

This depends on your event types. You would certainly want to create exclusivity as per your event.

If you're running a close event or a town hall event, you want to make it exclusive for the invited people only.

It's not necessary to live stream the event on every platform that you possess.

4) Partner with the right solution provider:

You will need video conferencing and other functionalities to execute your event online and roll out networking and engagement programs.

Know what your top options are. Do quick research. Ask for the necessary details. Compare solutions and choose the right one.

5) Information flow:

Your delegates should be made aware that you're going to conduct the same event virtually.

Ensure to provide information and details to your attendees, speakers and other concerned people as well about how they can use their system to attend the event.

Share proper guidelines.

Keep your stakeholders as well updated on the progress of the event.

6) Optimize and make it mobile-friendly:

When we talk about virtual events, we must emphasize on mobile use too for event activities by your attendees.

Your people would want to use mobile and make it extremely easy for themselves to connect and share through the event programs.

7) Attendee support:

As everything is online, attendees would want customer support too. They can get back to you with their issues and queries. You can provide them with solutions instantaneously.

Your virtual event pricing strategy

For sure, physical events are more expensive than virtual events. Moreover, they are tedious to manage and you have some sort of field work/operations to handle.

Your pricing structure depends on your event logistics requirements too for physical events. Whilst virtual events/conferences eliminate onsite attendee handling and logistics expenses.

I've got great news to share with you on virtual event pricing for your events.

Wondering what's new and unique about virtual event pricing?

Virtual event pricing is super easy to structure and based more on VALUE rather than cost. Let's talk about how you do it:

1) Value-based pricing:

What's really valuable for your attendees and speakers?

A - Rich knowledge content, networking opportunities and ability to attend?

B - Gifts, lunch, snacks?

They would always go for option A. And that's what brings value to them and why they pay money for your tickets.

When you have a good value-based pricing structure for your guests, they appreciate it more.

Imagine you invite the CEO of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg to virtually speak at your event (online) and your ticket price is slightly higher than the standard virtual conference ticket price.

Nevertheless, people would love to attend the event to listen to him and learn. Education is really important. But its value depends on who imparts it.

2) Session-based pricing:

When you host online events, you can price your tickets as per sessions you're hosting with speakers.

Allow your attendees to attend their preferred sessions. Do not bundle out the entire event price as one price for them, if you want to go for it.

3) Standalone pricing:

When you host online events, you can price your tickets as per sessions you're hosting with speakers.

Allow your attendees to attend their preferred sessions. Do not bundle out the entire event price as one price for them, if you want to go for it.

4) Speaker-based pricing:

One of the best parts of virtual events is that you can branch out your ticket price as per the quality and reputation of speakers.

This enables you to capitalize on the best speakers you're inviting.

5) Full event pricing:

Here, you can bundle your price for the full event. This mostly depends on a low number of speakers and attendees from the same industry attending your events.

6) Offer bonuses, discounts:

Try to offer bonuses and discounts on your tickets.

Early bird discounts

Group registration discounts

Free materials, tips, e-papers as bonuses

7) Special event pricing:

Black Friday sales, Christmas sales, etc, can help you spread the buzz of your events faster.

8) Competitor-based Pricing:

Research your competitor pricing. Understand how and where you can increase or decrease pricing.

• Cost elements to consider while developing your event ticket pricing strategy

- You will not have to consider costs of travel, accommodation, food, physical venue, onsite facilities, (lights, stages, chairs, etc.).
- Consider the price you need to pay for roping in speakers.
- Providing promotional opportunities to your clients will be a great marketing opportunity for them.
- It's always good to use only one virtual event management software partner rather than multiple partners. Take your software price into consideration.
- Ensure you have a good internet facility - can't neglect the cost of good internet.
- Customized service offering to specific clients allow you to meet their event requirements. Establish a good pricing structure for those clients who want to have your standard pricing to be modified as per their needs.



Myths & Lies about Virtual Events

1) Virtual events lack the quality of on-site events

Virtual event quality depends on execution quality of event organizers & marketers. How they're marketing their events and what techniques they deploy to motivate their potential attendees. Not all organizers are hosting virtual events. Webinar sessions are not virtual events, virtual events are one that replicates most aspects of physical events online.

The organizers who hosted virtual events are more likely to host them again for their audience.

Virtual events have almost the same quality of onsite events. It leverages freedom, flexibility, ability to attend, multi-task ability, easy process to meet each other, interactive session engagement, networking, etc.

Your virtual events are more cost-effective than physical events. It tremendously increases its reach to a wider audience across the globe. The people who can't attend your onsite events, can easily attend and participate in your events digitally.

2) Online events do not offer high event engagement and networking opportunities

Another myth and lie that we all encounter is that online events do not offer high event engagement and networking opportunities.

But the stark reality is that virtual events present more opportunities for high attendee engagement and event networking. Because it enables people to join your events from anywhere in the world. They can save their time in meeting their fellow attendees. They are not worried about their travel, accommodation and food.

They also get the best content from the speakers as the events are highly focused on quality events - emphasizing on class educational content.

3) Attendees feel isolated as they join sessions/events online from different parts of the world

This is not true by any stretch of imagination. On the contrary, people are more aligned and linked with each other. They are on the same tool and interact with their fellow attendees.

When they are able to e-meet new people, they do not feel isolated, but enthusiastic and more engaged.

They have a better chance to attend those events due to its lower ticket price, and no travel and accommodation costs.

4) High risk event operations

Effective and timely planning can help you with making your event operations smooth.

Better allocation of your team, their responsibilities and duties help you execute it better.

You wouldn't have to manage your onsite logistics like catering, stages, lights, mic system, event production, etc.

What you need to manage and handle is all online. Thus virtual events have lower risk event operations compared to onsite events.

5) Complicated event planning and management

It's not complicated at all. What you plan and manage for your physical events, you need to do the same for your virtual events.

Moreover, you have your burden of managing different vendors for foods, venues, etc. eradicated. The full volume work shifts to your online activities management.

If you inspire your team members to do it properly and hold them accountable, your virtual event planning and event management will become a really simple process.

6) Can't provide high quality content value.

This is a big surprise that some event managers argue on the content quality of virtual.

Let's understand that when you host online events, the event valued is more on high quality content. That's your big win.

You can invest more in quality speakers and handling of it from your budget. You don't have to spend a single penny on physical logistics requirements. So this has already been removed from your total budget.

7) Your audience is not digital or on social media.

This is the era of internet, technologies and more importantly, social media.

Your potential attendees are online and on different social media platforms consuming their preferred content.

The onus is on you how you want to target them as part of your event marketing and networking strategies.



8) Lack of seamless attendee experience

Wrong!

Online events can give you a great attendee experience if you play your cards right.

Some research on attendees' sentiments, wants and likes will put you in a strong position to determine how to go about your event experience plans and strengthen their experience.

Human to human interactions are key to your event experience. Technology helps you fulfill that for you and your attendees.

It's become super easy with the right virtual event technology to streamline your attendee experience.

Plan in advance. Focus your event strategy more on event experience based strategy.

Figure out what your guests want and don't want. and smash your events

9) Too much involvement of technologies

No doubts that when we talk about virtual events, we have to use technologies to execute and manage events.

However, using technology should ease up your work and make you faster.

Keeping this view in mind, using virtual event technologies is always a good option for you.

Your people are consuming different technologies, so they wouldn't find it hard using them.

One good virtual event management software covering all required functionalities will be really helpful and useful in planning and executing your virtual events like a pro.

10) Difficult to set realistic expectations with stakeholders

Wrong!

This is the same as you would do for your physical events.

Get a clear outlook of virtual events and their combinations and permutations. You do not have to do anything new here. Research different events data. Understand the latest virtual event trends.



13) Can not have attendee data/analytics or not tracking the right metrics is fine

This is 100% myth.

In 2020. It is possible to get full analytics of your virtual events and your attendee engagement with easy-to-use virtual event management software.

Even you can learn more about specific trends being followed by your attendees. New sentiments they are attached to. Their constant content consumption behavior.

Track these important metrics:

- Number of registrants
- Attendee engagement
- Attendee satisfaction
- Attendee behavior
- Attendance throughout the event
- Attendance across sessions and days (if it's a multi-day event)

C onclusion

Virtual events are an untapped solution for most of the event marketers and organizers. However, the concept of online events is rapidly growing. It all depends on how quickly event professionals realize its value, advantages and capabilities. 2020 is the best year to implement your virtual event strategies and host them for amazing attendee and speaker experiences.

MURTUZA ALI



Ali is a passionate and clear writer of anything Event Technologies. He takes immense interest in following and writing the latest and key trends in consultative sales, events and digital marketing.

Ali aims at sharing a wealth of knowledge with keen readers on the new event technologies and platforms. He provides actional insights and tips that can make your work-life a lot easier & awesome.

He is a valuable contributor to Hubilo blogs and content strategies. Check out his blogs on blog.hubilo.com. Connect with Ali on LinkedIn @ [Murtuza Ali](#)



With a vision of building a one-stop solution for any type of event - may it be a conference, a seminar, a workshop or an off-site event, Hubilo helps you in executing a dynamically interactive event by setting up the entire online management suit required for the event within a few minutes!

Say goodbye to the mundane task of doing things manually and allow the event management software to do it an easier and much more efficient way. Automate the whole process and get your event powered by Hubilo.

The value addition that Hubilo offers is equivalent to the services offered by 7 vendors, making it a perfect recipe for successful event planning. From event creation, event promotion, event engagement to analytics, we tech-care of all your event-tech worries.

Virtual Event Platform Feature Set



Set-up
Attendee Profiles



Access Open
Sessions



Buy Tickets to
Special Session



Visit
Sponsor Booth



Post on
Social Wall



Host Live & On-
Demand Sessions



Host Live Q&A
and Live Polling



Host
Presentations



Host Digital
Keynote Speakers



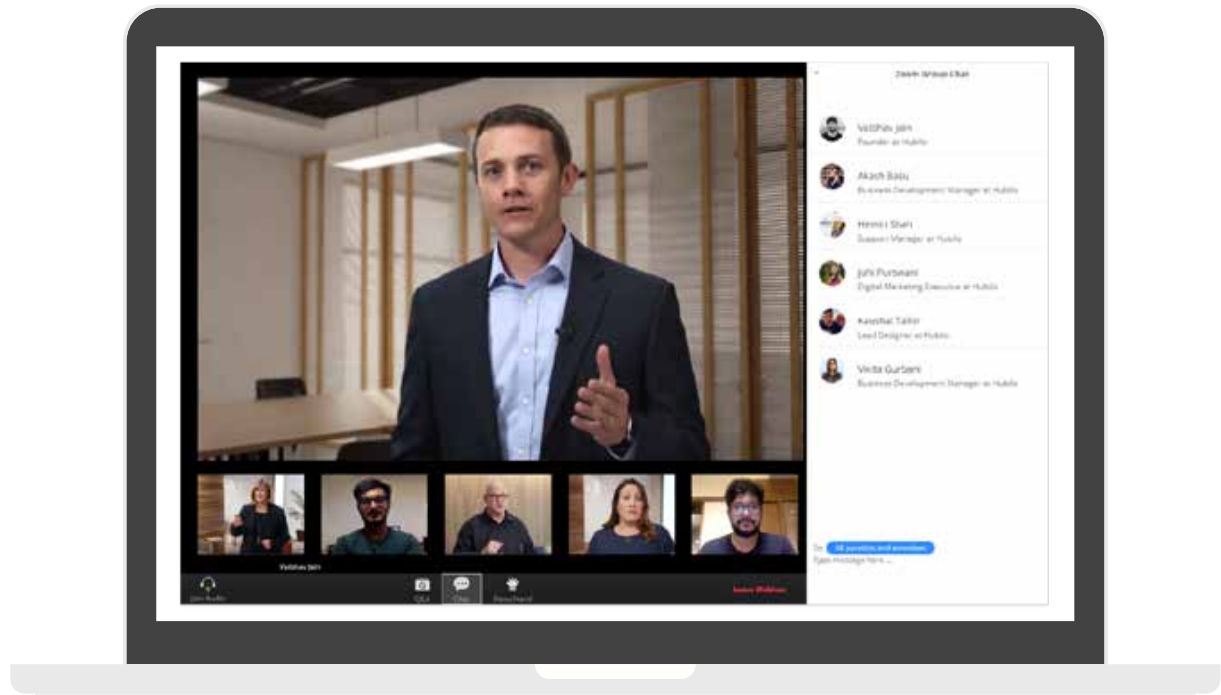
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