HYBRID EVENTS

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We're confident this guide will serve as a benchmark to begin your planning and believe it is applicable to meetings and events of all shapes and sizes.

WHY GO HYBRID?

Let's face it, hybrid events are here to stay. A few years ago, hybrid events only went as far as to connect the outside world to the inside of the event. Today, we are able to connect friends, family, and colleagues together in a deliberately designed immersive experience, no matter where they are located. Never before have we been able to use technology to bring this type of experience to your brand, business, or organization. Hybrid events allow you to engage with your target audiences, foster meaningful relationships via creative networking, and compile data offering a new vantage point on the experiences that you intend to provide.

We have changed the way in which we meet but, one thing that hasn't changed is our passion to come together, network and engage, continue learning, and become inspired.

HYBRID EVENTS provide meeting and event professionals, sponsors, and presenters a platform to reach more people.

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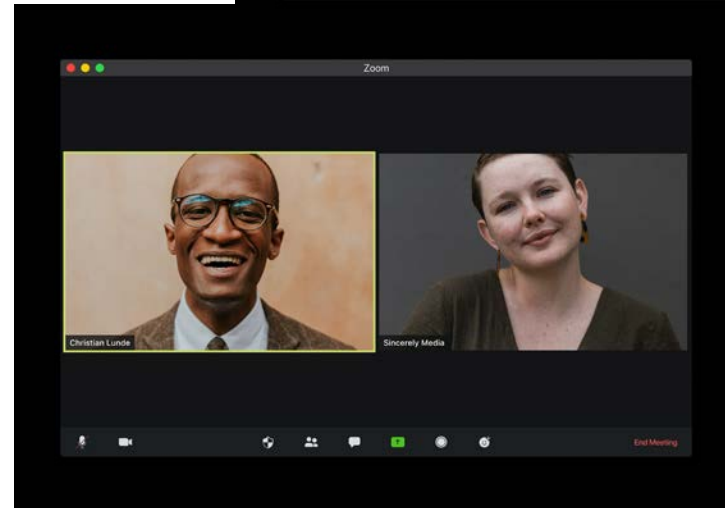
SIX KEY *PILLARS* TO A SUCCESSFUL HYBRID EVENT

- **ENVIRONMENT**
  - **EXPERIENCE**
    - **PARTICIPATION**
      - **CONNECTEDNESS**
      - **CONTENT**
        - **PRODUCTION**

These six pillars are the glue that holds a hybrid event together, working in unison with one another and supporting each other from start to finish. As we talk through these pillars, our goal is to identify what can be managed by your team and determine what elements would benefit from having additional support. From planning to execution, we'll show you how to cater to both your virtual and in-person attendees using robust content and give you the tools to manage their engagement effectively.

At Oncore AV, we have over 10 years of experience producing hybrid events. We take great pride in our commitment to offer an industry leading experience.

READY TO GET STARTED?

LET'S GO! >>

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GETTING STARTED
FOUNDATION OF A HYBRID EVENT

Before we dive into each pillar, we need to establish the objectives of your hybrid event.
Below are some of the foundational building blocks to consider:

EVENT PURPOSE
- What are you trying to achieve with this event?
- What should each party (virtual and in-person attendees, presenters, sponsors) gain from participating?
- Is there something that you can provide each party that no other event can? What is it?

END-TO-END ATTENDEE JOURNEY
- Consider all points in which an attendee, whether virtual or in-person, interacts with your event. Are there places in the journey that are weaker than others? Are there any areas where you can add additional value to the program?
- This section is all about looking at the event through the lens of the attendees and maximizing their experience.

SETTING SUCCESSFUL BENCHMARKS
- Set goals that you can measure throughout the event planning process.
- Create ways to measure and achieve the goals that you have set – also known as Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).

GETTING TO KNOW THE AUDIENCE – VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON
- Is there a difference in sizes of your virtual and in-person audiences?
- How does your audience like to interact with each other? How can we incorporate their preferences to the virtual experience?
- What are the different audience types that will attend? How will different audience types prefer to attend?

TELLING THE STORY
- How many presenters will you have? Will they be presenting virtually, in-person, or both?
- How will the needs of the presenters differ from virtual to in-person?
- Will the event be recorded and available on demand for attendees to revisit, if needed?

PILLAR ONE:
ENVIRONMENT

Every event has a purpose, it is crucial to create a place where attendees want to be. Strategically planning your environment lays the foundation in which to build an outstanding event.

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

- **Safety** – The in-person attendees will need to be properly social distanced in accordance with the state and local guidelines.

- **Room Set** – Audience engagement is critical, so although attendees will be socially distanced, consider how your meeting room will be set up. By maximizing the way the audience is seated, you create the ability to facilitate engagement.

- **Lights, Camera, Action** – Cameras will be capturing all facets of your event, highlighting your audience, your message, and your brand. Having proper lighting creates a polished, broadcast level appearance.

- **Décor** – What look are you trying to achieve? Is this an upscale event looking for a sleek and polished design? Maybe something on the casual side?

- **Cut Out the Noise** – Eliminate as much ambient sound as possible. We want the event to be the center of attention, not what's going on around you.

- **Control** – Consider what you can and can't control.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How will my audience attend? Will there be more virtual attendees than in-person attendees or vice versa? Is this a global audience or a regional audience?
- Does the experience change based on how audience members attend? What solutions can be implemented to maximize the experience in each environment?
- Is there one session or multiple sessions running at the same time?
- Does the in-person event take place in one space or do multiple environments need to be created?
- Do enhancements need to be made in-person in order to create a more vibrant virtual experience?

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PILLAR TWO:
EXPERIENCE

The best meetings leave a lasting impression. Engaging content keeps your audience focused on what really matters. Whether attending in-person or streaming live, cultivate a positive experience that your attendees can revisit on demand, or later in their mind.

- **Design** – The design of your room has creative power to set the tone and mood for the event. From furniture selection, wall decor, stage pieces, and seating arrangements, these details should be practical and purposeful.

- **Capturing on Camera** – To create a more impactful virtual experience consider using multiple camera angles to capture your event. In-person, be strategic in placement as to not interfere with your attendees' line of vision.

- **Hit Record** – Why limit your event to a specific time and place? Recording the event allows you to capture the full experience, giving you the option of viewing it later as well as the option to repurpose content for future events, advertisements, and marketing campaigns.

- **Manage the Expectations** – Transparency is key. Set the proper expectations for your attendees. This increases their comfort level and will help them decide whether to attend in-person or virtually.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What motivates your attendees to come? Why should they be here?

- Do the ways in which you motivate your attendees change if you decide to utilize the virtual component?

- What vantage points and angles do you want to capture on camera?

- What do we need to do to make sure we achieve the intended outcomes both during the event and after the event?

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PILLAR THREE:
PARTICIPATION

Regardless of how you choose to manage your event, whether it's a hybrid event or one that is completely virtual, attendee participation and engagement needs to be a top priority.

- **Analyze** – Information can tell you a lot about how your audience engages and learns. Analytics allows you to capture information about your audience, presenters, and you, the meeting planner.

- **Q's, and A's** – Question and answer portions of the program drive audience participation. Allow your attendees to up vote their favorite questions to presenters to further drive this engagement.

- **Play a Game** – Simple things like multiple choice questions or live polls help to drive the engagement. Sharing the results as you go can make it even more enjoyable.

- **Socialize & Collaborate** – One of the most attractive elements to any event is knowing that there will be an opportunity to meet new people and expand your network.

- **Moderators** – A good moderator can help drive participation and control the flow of your program.

- **Stuff We All Get (Swag)** – Who doesn't love free stuff? Consider sending your attendees something in the mail to get them excited for the event. This is a great opportunity for one of your sponsors to put their brand in front of attendees before the event.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Does the platform you're using for the event possess all the tools to drive attendee engagement and participation?

- What information should you be capturing that best serves you, the presenters, the attendees, and your sponsors?

- How do you want your attendees to interact with each other during and after the event?

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PILLAR FOUR:
CONNECTEDNESS

Ensure your venue has the bandwidth capability to support a strong streaming experience from the live venue to your attendees wherever they are in the world.

- **Onsite Tech Support** – Having onsite support is a critical component to a hybrid event. Should anything go wrong, having trained people by your side can make getting back online a seamless task.

- **Virtual Connectedness** – Offer recommendations on how your virtual attendees can maximize their experience.

- **Bandwidth** – There are a few ways to make sure that your event has the internet infrastructure to support it. From individual Wi-Fi connections to direct hard lines, the network needs to be tailored to support what it is that you're doing.

- **Set Clear Expectations** – Make sure to communicate clearly to your attendees and presenters exactly what they can expect. Prior to the event, test the features that you're using. This allows you to hone your program and troubleshoot as needed.

FOR VIRTUAL ATTENDEES
- Consider wired versus wireless. Using a hard wire from your router to your computer eliminates the unpredictability that can come from Wi-Fi connectivity.
- If possible, be the only one on your network while you're attending virtually. The fewer number of devices sharing your bandwidth, the better overall experience you will have.
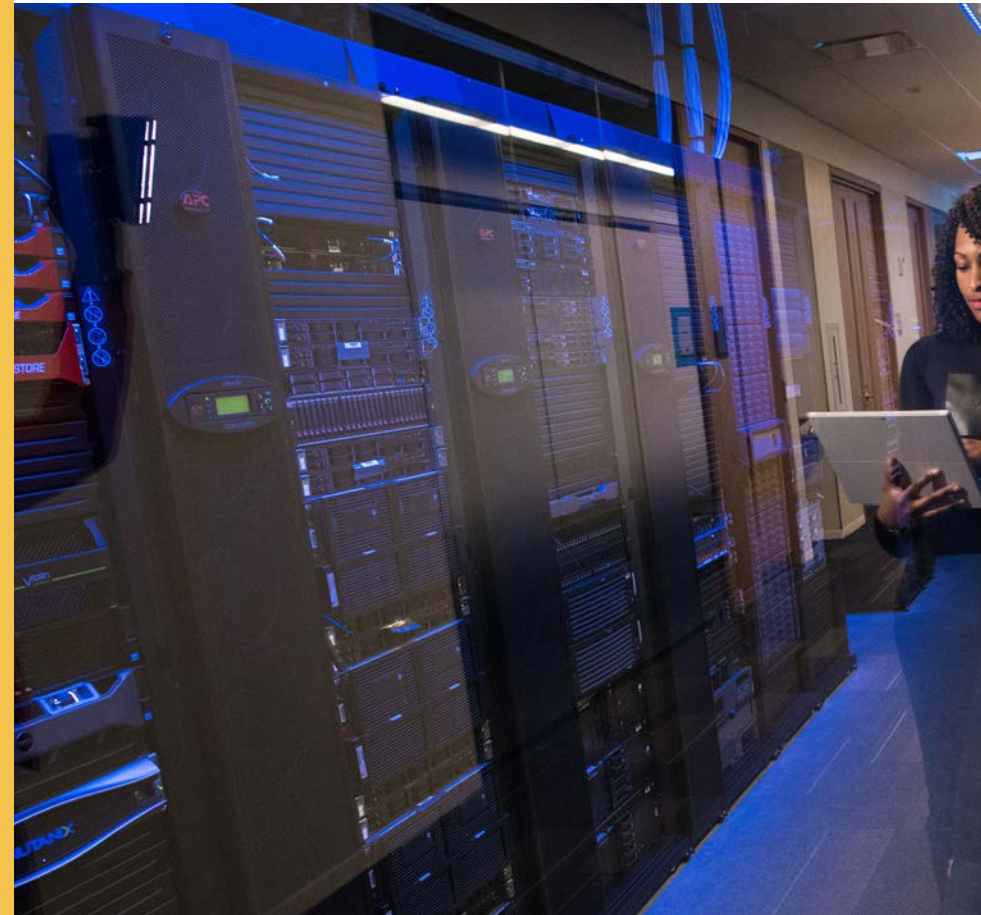
QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Is the event platform you're using a cloud-based platform that has a high-performance uptime?

- What kind of tech support do you need? Can your team handle any onsite issues, or would you benefit from having a dedicated tech team?

- Do your virtual attendees have the proper connectivity to enjoy their event experience?

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PILLAR FIVE:
CONTENT

What type of experience do you want your attendees and presenters to have? Think through each participant's view – virtual attendee, virtual presenter, in-person attendee, and in-person presenter and strategically map their journey from the start to the end of the event.

- **Theme** – create a unified experience for both in-person attendees and virtual attendees by establishing a cohesive theme and brand.

- **Tell the Story** – Does your program effectively use content to tell a story? Build a clear and concise beginning, middle, and end. This provides a sense of cohesiveness to not only your content, but to your overall event.

- **In-Person Content** – Look for places on-site that allow you to share your video feed. This is a great way to reuse your digital assets at a later time.

- **Digital Content** – Do you have useful resources already created? Upload them in advance of your event for both your in-person and virtual attendees.

- **No One Size Fits All** – Keep in mind all of the ways your attendees will see content. Not all content looks the same on different screens. Test each way an attendee might consume a piece of content.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Will everyone be consuming the same content simultaneously?

- What assets, both digital and physical, can be repurposed for my event?

- Does each attendee – virtual attendee, virtual presenter, in-person attendee, and in-person presenter – have the ability to consume our content in the same way?

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PILLAR SIX:
PRODUCTION

Depending on how complex your event is, production has the ability to set the stage for a professional, immersive, and engaging event experience.

- **Overall Production** – Conventional event production services that you are accustomed to, combined with our digital and hybrid expertise, deliver an unparalleled experience.

- **Flow of the Show** – Often participants are in different locations and are on different schedules. Keeping the show aligned and in focused draws in attendees and keeps their attention on the task at hand.

- **Trust the Process** – Success isn't an accident. Develop an end to end timeline of the event and hold yourself and team accountable. Remain flexible to challenges that arise, you've got this!

- **Own Your Role** – Once you have your end-to-end timeline built and your team members are assigned their roles, identify areas where you'll need production support.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Does your timeline take into consideration the presenters, sponsors, and other outside vendors? How can you align your timeline to make it as seamless as possible for everyone involved?

- How will your virtual experience differ from your in-person experience?

- Have you contemplated all roles you may need? (i.e., emcee, event manager, technical director).

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WE'VE GOT THIS!

With your ideas and our production team, together we've got this. As a team WE have the skills and the acumen to get this done, all in a creative and immersive way that comes in under budget and on time.

Oncore AV has the unique capability of helping you position yourself to acquire new data metrics, provide ease and flexibility to virtual attendees, and build a benchmark for events yet to come.

NOW IS THE TIME TO START THE PLANNING PROCESS!

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