

12 TIPS FOR TAKING YOUR FUNDRAISING EVENT ONLINE

Moving your fundraising event online? Here are some quick tips to help you put on a successful virtual event.

TIP #1:

An online event is not the same as an in-person event!

Don't try to plan your online event like you would an in-person event. Embrace what an online event can offer—such as broader reach and opportunities to bring in speakers and special guests from further afield—and really run with it.

TIP #2:

50 Minutes is the Sweet Spot

With guests tuning in from home, expect to be competing for their attention. Keep the program short and engaging, and make your ask within the first 15 minutes of the program. Our experience tells us that making several calls to donate throughout the event works best.

TIP #3:

Make it special

Zoom fatigue is real! Differentiate your virtual event from just another meeting by adding in some level of production to create an experience or atmosphere that sets it apart from another video conference call.

TIP #4:

Production is the new food and drink budget line

While it's likely you'll spend less than an in-person event, you'll still need to budget for production, including video, design, and livestreaming platform, as well as any tech staff you might need to hire to run a livestream.

TIP #5:

Plan your pitch

If raising money is the purpose of your event, some careful thought and planning should be spent on your pitch, from who will make it to how guests will actually make a donation. Some things to consider:

- **Auctions:** A live auctioneer is still worth the cost and will more than pay for itself.
- **Donations:** Make it easy for your guests to donate in real time via text or web interface like a pop-up window on the event screen.
- **Donor recognition:** Add excitement and fuel competition by reading names aloud or posting names on the screen as donations come in.

TIP #6:

Use royalty-free music

If you are going to livestream your event on platforms like YouTube or Facebook Live, avoid copyrighted music. Getting usage rights can be costly and time consuming. We suggest redirecting those precious hours to refining scripts and rehearsals; just search "royalty free music" for a multitude of options.

TIP #7:

Your event doesn't have to be live

Your event doesn't have to be 100% live to be successful. Pre-recording certain speakers as "live" while keeping your emcee and auctioneer/pitch person actually live can make coordinating the program more manageable.

TIP #8:

Keep your format dynamic

Vary the format throughout the event to keep the energy up and guests engaged. Instead of having one speaker after the other in the center of the screen, for example, intersperse videos or bring up two live speakers side-by-side. If you have the resources, you can even bring in a live or pre-recorded musical performer.

TIP #9:

Bring in your best Emcee

A strong host/emcee personality is critical to keeping the energy high from start to finish in a virtual event. This should be someone who can be flexible, pivot on dime when something unexpected happens and fill-in in a pinch.

TIP #10:

Don't forget the tech checks!

Make sure your speakers all look, and more importantly sound, good by spending time going through their mic and camera set up. This includes testing the lighting and their mic options, scoping out the best background, and making sure their internet connection is good (hardwire connection is highly recommended).

TIP #11:

Rehearse (again and again and again)

A complete rehearsal, from start to finish, with your full cast and crew is highly recommended. The number of full rehearsals you should do will vary depending on people's experience but plan for the same number of rehearsals as there are live speakers, just to be safe! The transition time between speakers and videos is immediate and it takes practice to make it all flow smoothly.

TIP #12:

Plan for the unexpected

Let's face it, we can plan every detail to a tee but something can still go wrong. Review all possible points of failure and have a back-up plan ready.