

IEEE Virtual Events - Lessons Learned



Opportunities

- ▶ Planning with key roles and responsibilities and timelines is key; virtual roles deviate from in-person events
- ▶ Audiences want to have an integrated experience
- ▶ Virtual can reach larger, more geographically-dispersed events & address new audiences (underrepresented groups, students, young professionals, industry etc.)
- ▶ Virtual events are not free; care must be taken in pricing to achieve financial goals (consider 50-75% of price)
- ▶ A variety of tools are needed depending on requirements & desired outcomes (platforms, social, marketing etc.)
- ▶ One size does not fit all: mostly produced; small/medium/large; single session/parallel tracks, live/pre-recorded
- ▶ New opportunities to engage exhibitors & sponsors (sponsored tracks/sessions, networking, pre/post events)
- ▶ Pre-recorded sessions mitigate technical risk, provide options to presenters & authors
- ▶ Concentrated in-person meetings are not bound to a small # of days & can be offered as extended virtual events
- ▶ Opportunities to innovate abound (gamification: points for attending sessions & quizzes; escape rooms; scavenger hunts; networking roulette; lightning tech demos; social media contests; mailed swag bags)

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Challenges

- ▶ Deadlines are important! for speaker rehearsals, session chair trainings, providing content, etc. Adhere to them if you want the event to run smoothly.
- ▶ Facilitating spontaneous encounters, networking, & delivering value to exhibitors can be done and requires expertise & planning
- ▶ Virtual events require a lot of underlying technology: be sure you are familiar with your needs and what is provisioned so that there are no surprises
- ▶ Sessions chairs, volunteers may need to quickly learn new technical & facilitation skills that were not necessary for live events
- ▶ You likely need professional technology and AV support for live streaming
- ▶ Vendors abound: be sure your vendors' and your expectations align. Gain agreement. Sign. Execute.
- ▶ Don't skip security. What are your plans to secure your virtual event and the IP?
- ▶ Contingency planning if things don't go as planned (rain date, alternate contact methods, pre-scripted, communications).