

Successful Hybrid Part #1

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hybrid

noun

Something that is a mixture of two very different things



The first in our series on how to make Hybrid events a success in 2021. We are gathering tips from industry experts and adding in our own experiences to assist with your planning.

Successful Hybrid meetings have the potential to combine the audience reach and increased attendance of a virtual meeting with the personal engagement of F2F. But after more than a year of lockdown, engagement with a virtual audience has improved significantly. No longer will the on-line attendee at a Hybrid meeting accept just to receive a live feed from a camera at the rear of the auditorium!

What do we need to consider...?

Event preparation needs to take account of the virtual audience from the outset. Starting with the **event marketing**, it needs to be audience focused to get the right attendance, at the right meeting, at the right time. The in-person attendee is likely to be closer to a purchase decision, more engaged with your brand and seeking a more personnel experience. The virtual attendee may be more time poor (a higher-level exec), or budget conscious (lower-level employee without a travel budget), more remote or a newcomer to your brand. One style of invite is not going to engage this wide spectrum.

Content preparation needs to consider **how it will be consumed**. Be clear if it will be viewed by both audiences or made for just one. Hybrid doesn't mean everyone receives exactly the same content. The **live, pre-recorded or simu-live options** remain for both audiences - but the choice needs to suit the content and timing. Consider re-packaging live in-person content into bite-sized chunks more suited to on-line consumption. On demand needs to be available swiftly to keep both audiences hearing the same messages and moving forward together.

Achieving **connectivity** is probably the biggest challenge: connecting virtual delegates with the rest of their cohort but also with the in-person delegates. Consider a separate Virtual Host from your event MC to engage directly with the on-line audience. Using a common App for all delegates will foster engagement as everyone takes part in polls, submits questions, books appointments with exhibitors **using the same technology**. Specific break-out sessions can be designed with cross-audience engagement in mind to have in-person and virtual audiences taking part together. In-App messaging will not replace F2F Networking but with everyone using the same technology there will be more **community overlap**.

Next time in Successful Hybrid Part #2 we consider the impacts on your venue selection, the opportunities for your sponsors and exhibitors and issues with event data.



Contact us for all your event needs!

+44 (0) 844 4542 555

info@high5events.co.uk

www.high5events.co.uk