

HYBRID EVENT HANDBOOK

**HOW TO PLAN, MANAGE &
HOST A HYBRID EVENT OR
FUNDRAISER**



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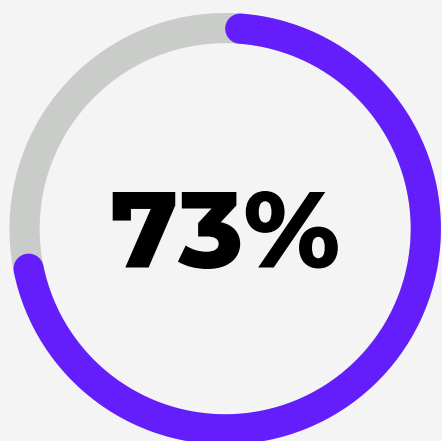
The Road Ahead: Hybrid Events & Year-End Giving

WHAT ARE HYBRID EVENTS AND FUNDRAISERS?

In the new era of events and fundraising, hybrid is setting a standard for the years to come. Nonprofits were forced to overhaul their traditional approach to events and adapt quickly post-pandemic. As events shift back to in-person, hybrid presents a secure path to scale amid uncertainty.

Hybrid events are defined as events that have elements of virtual and in-person events. In a time high on unpredictability with events, [hybrid gives organizations the flexibility](#) to adapt to shifting circumstances, without having to put the entire event or experience on hold.

Given the ability to scale amid travel restrictions and health concerns—it's no surprise that **73% of nonprofits plan to hold a virtual or hybrid event in 2021** (an increase from 54% in 2020.) Read more to discover the benefits of going hybrid, examples to get you inspired plus the tools and tips you need to guide you every step of the way so you can drive awareness for your cause anytime, anywhere.



**of nonprofits
plan to hold a
virtual or hybrid
event in 2021**

Source: Nonprofit Tech for Good

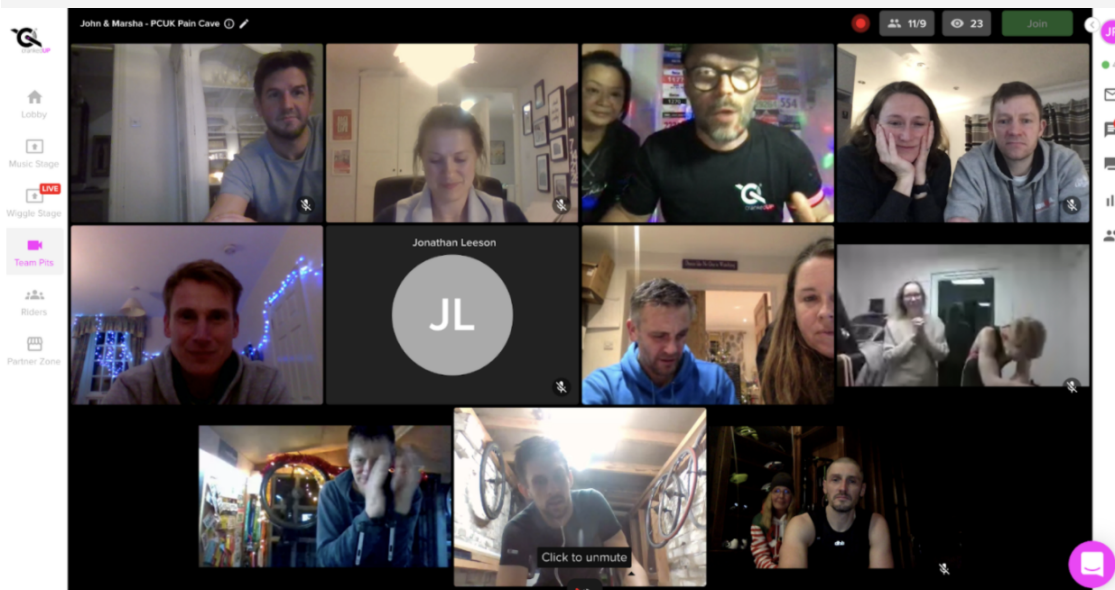
WHY GO HYBRID? 7 KEY BENEFITS

Hybrid represents a best of both worlds approach for nonprofits. The days of solely in-person events are long gone. Understanding where these events can drive value for your organization can promote buy-in to invest in one holistic solution. Below are seven key benefits from adopting hybrid:

#1. Increased reach & attendance

A major benefit for hybrid events is the ability to have less limits on the capacity of your event. You don't have to be restricted by venue size and cost and can open up your nonprofit to supporters on a global scale. Don't discount this as a component to your overall event. The lower barrier to entry will give your cause more accessibility and inevitably more interest from donors. One organization we saw pivot from in-person to virtual events— spending just 10% of his event budget by pivoting from in-person to virtual in 2020, they increased the volume of leads delivered by 5x.

**Hybrid provides a lower barrier of entry
for your audiences to join globally**

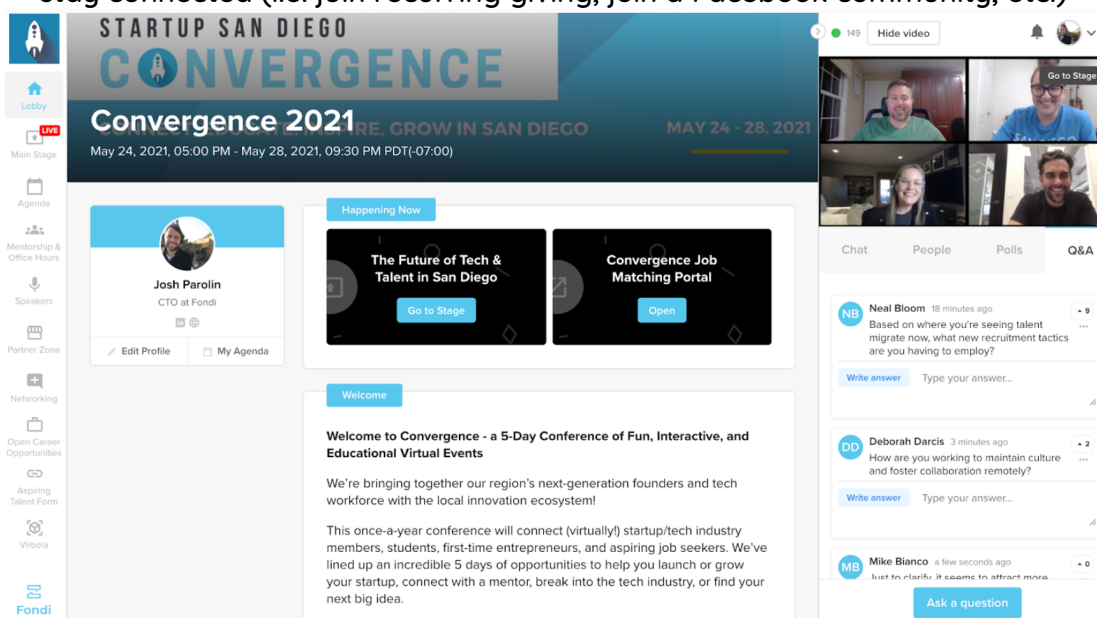


WHY GO HYBRID? 7 KEY BENEFITS

#2. Higher engagement with your audience

Another opportunity with hybrid events is the access to tools to take the audience experience up a notch. You can expose so much to users within a virtual venue and give access to in-person attendees to help enhance the onsite experience. Take this event for example, you can see everything they expose their audience to within the lefthand navigation, including:

- **Virtual Venue Lobby**—The focal point of your event for the virtual attendees, they can manage their agenda, see upcoming sessions and navigate through the event from here.
- **Main Stage**—Where your event's content will be streamed live. Attendees can jump in and out of the stage without abandoning the experience.
- **Agenda**—Create an engaging agenda so virtual attendees can build out a personal calendar and structure their event.
- **Speakers**—Encourage networking opportunities and give attendees access to key information about your event's speakers. They can link out to additional resources and calls to action for attendees as well.
- **Sponsor Expo**—Build a virtual exhibit hall that gives sponsors the ability to showcase their support and build value to enhance their lead capture opportunities.
- **Networking Opportunities**—Tools like 1:1 speed networking help to recreate authentic moments from the in-person event within a virtual setting.
- **Outbound Calls-to-Action**—Link out to donation pages or additional opportunities to stay connected (i.e. join recurring giving, join a Facebook community, etc.)



WHY GO HYBRID? 7 KEY BENEFITS

#3. More powerful sponsorship opportunities

Hybrid events hold more potential for sponsors to monetize the opportunity and gain more exposure as opposed to solely in-person sponsorships. In addition, the traditional overhead costs are higher for in-person events and lower for virtual or hybrid events. The ability to showcase sponsorships in a virtual or hybrid format is another plus, sponsors can integrate themselves into this format more easily and connect with attendees in a more personal way to drive lead acquisition.

#4. Reduced travel & environmental costs—Costly hotel rooms, flights, meals—these barriers to entry are removed for attendees eager to attend your hybrid event—opening up the reach for new attendees and new business. As an additional pro, you're also cutting down on the environmental costs from hosting a larger scale event with travel, food costs, paper costs, etc.

#5. Drive higher return on investment

Save on venue, travel and more while driving higher registrations and attendance rates. Capture more data and insights to inform your future events and understand where you need to reinvest or hone your strategy moving forward. Gain access to content and assets to supplement your post-event strategy and continue to drive value from your event.

#6. Capture valuable data & insights

Sure, in-person events promote relationship building in the moment, but a hybrid experience gives you access to more data points to help you build upon that initial engagement and hone your communication and segmentation strategy. Understand who attended which sessions, for how long, and how they engaged.

#7. Greater flexibility & adaptability

No matter the circumstances that arise from a health and safety perspective, with hybrid events you can carry the production of the event virtually should in-person attendance be impacted (environmental risks, travel restrictions, etc.). The life of your event doesn't need to hinge on as many external variables and you can rest assured that you can still execute from a virtual standpoint as a back up plan. No more wasted time and resources planning an event you can't host.

Hybrid events will continue to evolve, but the benefits for nonprofits will remain. From cost savings to adaptability and community building, this new approach brings an opportunity for organizations to connect with donors more authentically and on a larger scale.

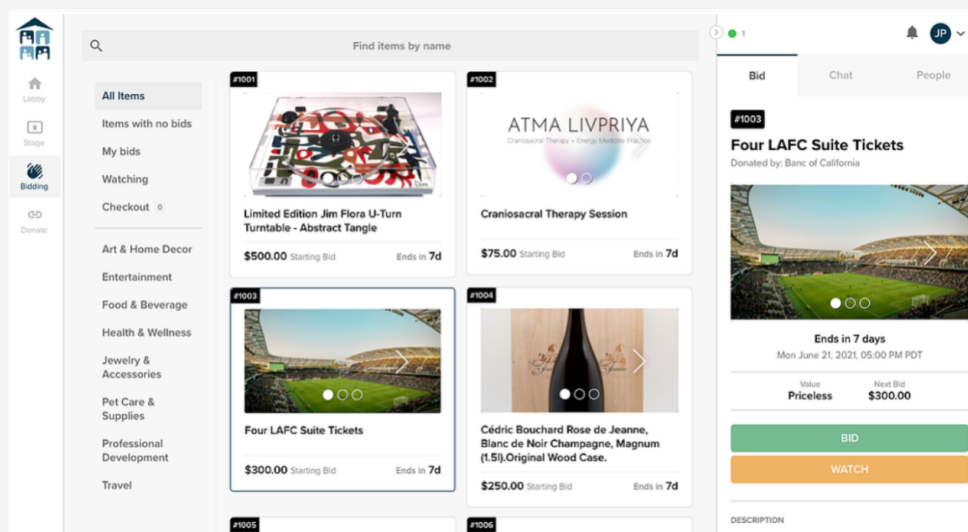
Hybrid Event Handbook

EXAMPLES OF HYBRID EVENTS & FUNDRAISERS

Given the flexibility of hybrid events, nonprofits can adapt programs and initiatives across the board. From education, to retention to driving donations, hybrid events are flexible and can be as elaborate or as simple as you need given the goal of the event.

The battle for your donor's attention has never been more challenging, and a creative hybrid or virtual event can break through the noise and provide a unique opportunity to engage with your organization. For some ideas to get you started, below are [examples of creative events](#) or experiences to explore:

- Silent auctions
- Galas
- Endurance Rides
- 5ks & Races
- Cooking Competitions
- Town Halls/"TED" Talks
- Webinars
- Toy Drive/Food Drive
- Giving Day Campaigns
- Pledge Drives
- Conferences
- Competitions
- Concerts
- Comedy Shows
- Community Workshops



A Community of Friends 2021 Hybrid Silent Auction & Gala

[Go behind-the-scenes of the event >>](#)

A major benefit to hybrid events is the quick turnaround time from planning to production with the right tool set. Things can change on a dime and many organizations need to spin up events under a tight timeframe. You'll want to find a solution that also prioritizes the mobile experience and gives access to tools like [mobile bidding](#) to drive competition among virtual and in-person attendees.

EXAMPLES OF HYBRID EVENTS & FUNDRAISERS

The right platform will have all-in-one access to these tools. Take nonprofit [A Community of Friends](#) as an example, they set up a hybrid silent auction just 10 days before their live event. Here's an overview of how they adapted to a hybrid event approach:

Challenge:

Navigating a hybrid silent auction for the first time, the Community of Friends team found themselves against a tight timeframe. They needed to find the right partner to build and host the event, integrate with their existing tools, while providing an impeccable user experience to make the in-person and virtual audiences feel fully integrated.

Solution:

A Community of Friends adopted Fondi as a one-stop shop to host their virtual gala and support their silent auction that included:

- Integration with their existing technology stack and systems
- Tools to drive real-time mobile bidding and SMS among virtual attendees
- Scale up and down to their event needs (whether virtual, hybrid or in-person)
- Access to tools that help manage, engage and convert their online bidders
- Centralized engagement data from all of their auctions and virtual events
- A platform to augment marketing, communication and engagement initiatives

Results:

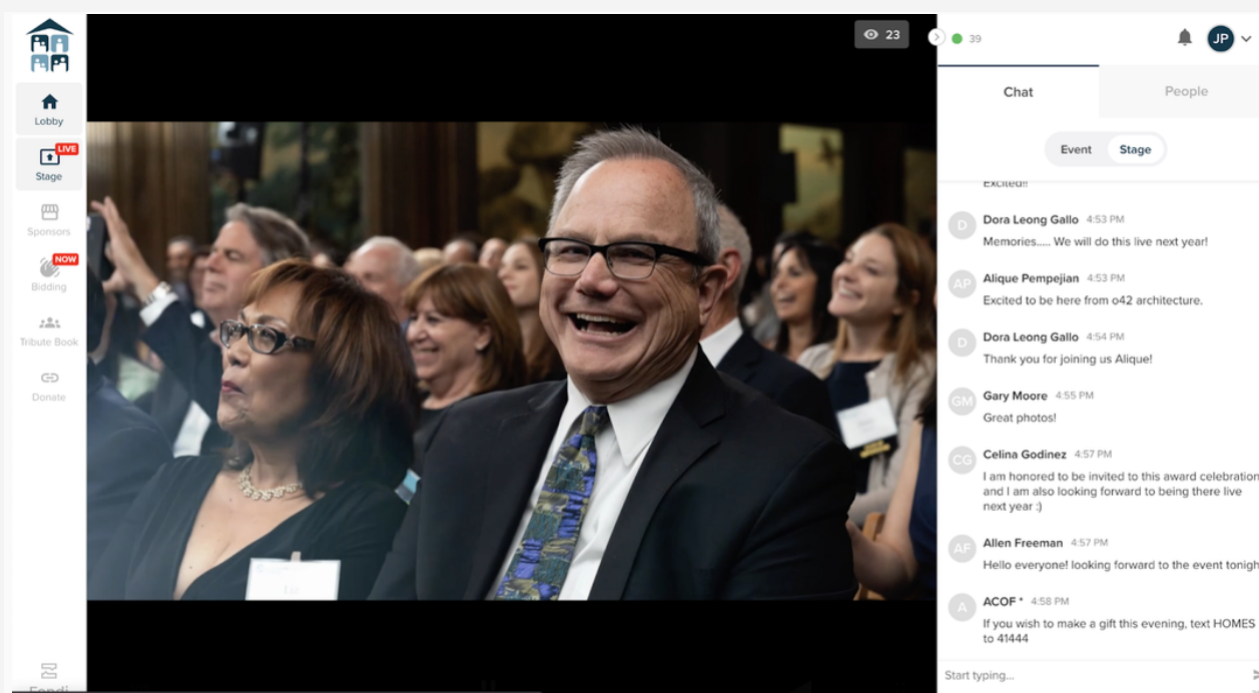
A Community of Friends chose the Fondi's virtual event and silent auction platform to host the 7-day virtual auction.

- \$10k+ raised through virtual silent auction and online donations
- 38 silent auction items listed
- 50 unique bidders across all items in silent auction
- 2.5 hours of livestreamed programming for the virtual Gala

EXAMPLES OF HYBRID EVENTS & FUNDRAISERS

“We set up Fondi for our silent auction 10 days before our live event. The platform was so intuitive, we launched our first hybrid event faster than we could have imagined.” - Alex Couri, Director of Fund Development @ [A Community of Friends](#)

Given how flexible hybrid events and technology are, there's no limit to the types of events nonprofits can explore. Now that you have a grasp on the different directions you can take your event, let's dive into the planning stages and how you will structure your content.

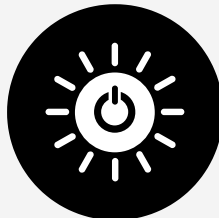


HOW TO STRUCTURE HYBRID SESSIONS

Zoom fatigue is real. When mapping out the structure for your hybrid event, it's critical to put a lot of forethought into your content and be mindful of the attendee experience. In this section we'll review:



1 HOW TO CREATE YOUR HYBRID CONTENT



2 HOW TO MANAGE AND ORGANIZE YOUR CONTENT



3 HOW TO DELIVER YOUR CONTENT

HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR HYBRID SESSIONS

CREATE YOUR CONTENT.

If you're executing a hybrid event for the first time, this process can feel like the most daunting step. Given the two distinct audiences you're serving, the content you create must serve their needs and solve their problems in an instant.

Here are a few tips to help you as you approach your hybrid event's sessions:

- **Rethink Your Event's Timing**—Given the mobility of your audiences today, try experimenting with times outside of the norm. Move beyond the traditional morning or afternoon sessions and see how it impacts your attendance rates—try evening events or sessions that accommodate a work from home schedule.
- **Know Your Audience**—Know your audience and be very intentional with the structure based on who you're trying to provide value to, what they care about and how familiar they are with the technology.
- **Use Themes**—If your event is across several days, give each day a unique theme that you can center the content and discussion around. Have the content tracks throughout the day build upon one another to maintain the theme and keep attendees engaged.
- **Build Your Venue Intentionally**—Invest time into developing your virtual venue as this will be the main hub from which virtual attendees will consume content - the user experience is everything here. You can also use this as a means to help guide onsite attendees and enhance their experience by giving access to the key information they need in one place.
- **Mix Up the Content Delivery**—Find a platform that gives you different ways to interact with attendees. From roundtables, to panel discussions and 1:1 networking—give attendees options to actively participate in the discussion and at their level of comfort

HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR HYBRID SESSIONS

CREATE YOUR CONTENT.

"Attendees got so much value from the event based on how we structured it. It was a 5-day conference so every day has a different theme and we had unique activations on each of these days. For example day 2 was about talent incubation so we had a panel discussion and then leveraged smaller breakout rooms to facilitate group mentorship with the audience. They were able to directly apply what we had just learned."

- Alexa-Rae Navarro, Executive Direction @ [Startup San Diego](#)

PRO TIP: Always have a virtual MC. No matter how large or small your virtual event may be, an absolute must-have for success is a virtual MC.

"WE ADDED DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF ENGAGEMENT THROUGHOUT THAT MADE IT EASY FOR PEOPLE TO JUMP IN, JUMP OUT, COME ON SCREEN, STAY IN THE BACKGROUND. SMALL GROUPS, BIG GROUPS—WE PROVIDED A GREAT LEVEL OF VARIETY IN THE EXPERIENCES THAT PEOPLE COULD HAVE." - ALEXA-RAE NAVARRO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR @ STARTUP SAN DIEGO

Global Goals

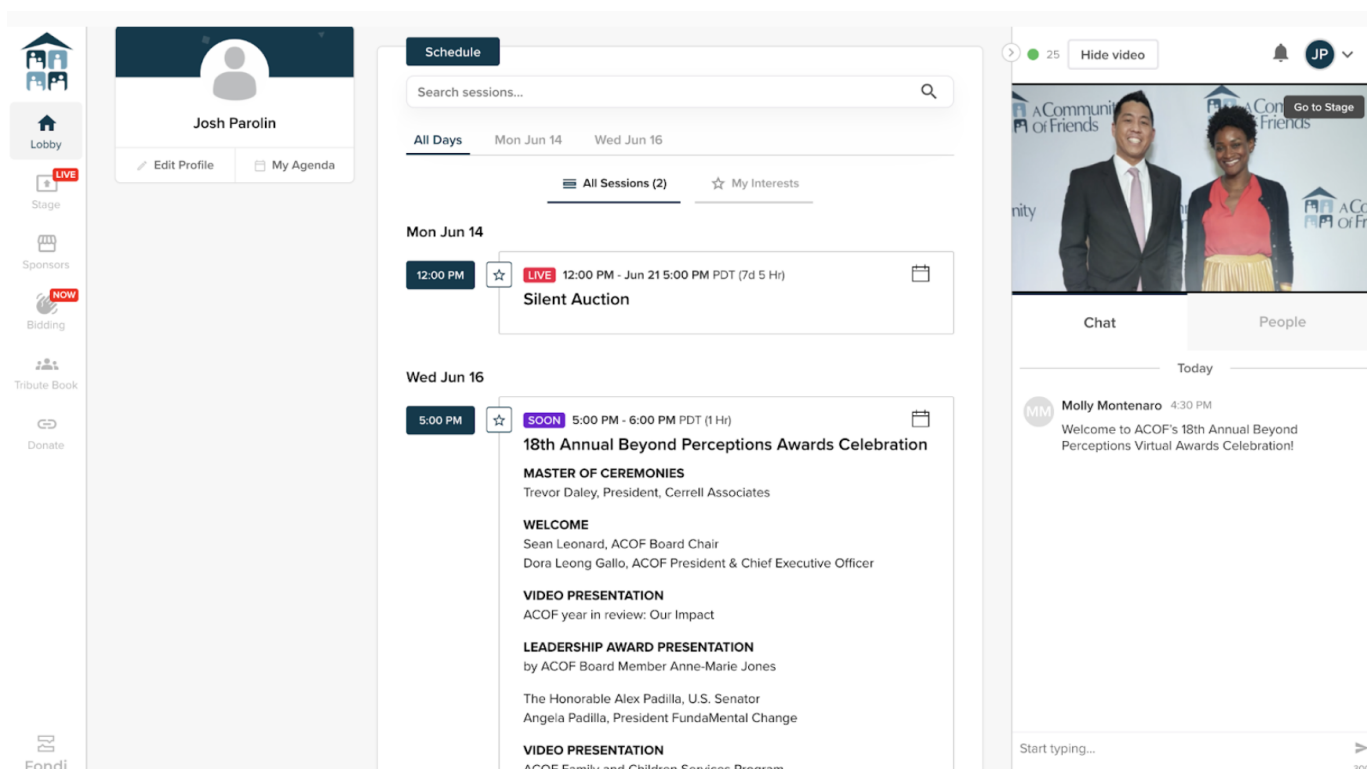
HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR HYBRID SESSIONS

MANAGE & ORGANIZE YOUR CONTENT.

Another major component beyond the creation of your content is the management and organization of it. You need to ensure your speakers are prepped, know where to go and are comfortable navigating the hybrid technology.

When it comes to managing the content from a technical standpoint, communication and access for speakers is key. When managing complex events hosting various sessions and speakers, your platform's backend experience is key. You need to ensure that the correct people have access at the right time, which can be a challenge.

Share presentations ahead of time and keep them hosted in one connected content hub that is accessible for everyone who needs it.



Keep attendees and speakers organized with an integrated agenda - attendees can add specific sessions to their interests to curate a personalized agenda

HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR HYBRID SESSIONS

DELIVER YOUR CONTENT.

Variety is key here! (And again, clear communication).

A common thought when it comes to delivering virtual content is the shorter the better. However, this isn't always true. In fact, you don't have to skimp when it comes to length. Some event producers note that long form sessions drive long term engagement virtually. Take Startup San Diego as an example. They hosted a [5-day virtual conference](#) with 34 sessions, which were structured as hour-long sessions with 15 minutes built in for Q&A—despite the longer format the event saw **70% attendance rate across virtual sessions**.

"We experimented with this quite a bit. Initially we thought folks had minimal time to participate online. Zoom fatigue is a real thing, so we kept everything under an hour—30 minutes of content and presentations with 15 minutes of networking. But we actually saw better engagement with longer sessions and how we structured Convergence. We did hour-long programming, with 15 minutes built in for Q&A." -Alexa-Rae Navarro, Executive Director @ Startup San Diego

For your onsite attendees ensure your live stream is working and everyone has access to the digital and physical agenda so they don't miss a beat. In addition, it's important they have access to the content digitally on-demand—be sure to make this available to all attendees.

The takeaway: focus less on making your sessions shorter and more on making them dynamic and engaging. Have more than one speaker in the session, try a roundtable discussion or fireside chat. Build in components like polls and Q&A and use the responses to guide the discussion. Refer to your favorite podcasts or TV shows, pick out what you enjoy about the format of the content and weave in elements into your event.

ONE EVENT, TWO EXPERIENCES: PLANNING YOUR HYBRID EVENT

Events are all about cultivating relationships. The key to a successful hybrid event is the key to any successful relationship—communication. And when it comes to hybrid communication must be shared across two distinct audiences (in-person and virtually).

For nonprofits and event planners, this is no easy feat, as [71.1% of event organizers](#) say that connecting the in-person and virtual audience is their biggest challenge when hosting hybrid events.

The key to success when approaching the planning process is to always go back to the attendee experience. Put yourself in their shoes on day one of your event. Think about questions they may have ahead of time and how you can configure your event to proactively answer them. Experience the navigation of the event and where you may encounter any challenges or stopping points. Map out exactly what they need to know to be successful from each unique perspective.

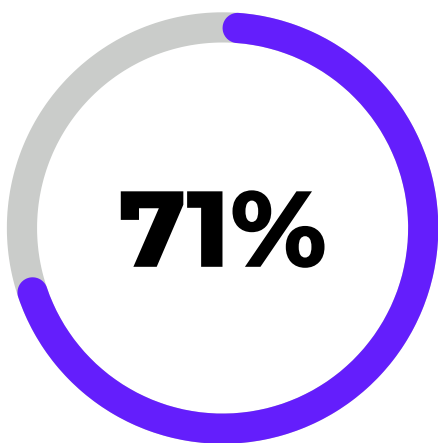
For in-person attendees your areas of focus should include:

- The physical venue (ambience, booths, giveaways)
- Networking opportunities
- Sponsor booths & exhibitions
- Giveaways & incentives
- Entertainment
- Food and Beverage
- Access to technology (i.e. mobile apps, updates, agendas, etc.)

ONE EVENT, TWO EXPERIENCES: PLANNING YOUR HYBRID EVENT

For virtual attendees, your areas of focus should include:

- Livestream capabilities and production quality
- Networking tools
- Engagement tools & gamification
- Digital or shipped giveaways & incentives



of event organizers say that connecting the in-person and virtual audience is their biggest challenge when hosting hybrid events

Source: Markletic

PRO TIP: INCORPORATE INCENTIVES FOR ON-SITE AND VIRTUAL ATTENDEES. HOST SCAVENGER HUNTS OR CONTESTS TO DRIVE INTEREST AND GIVE THEM MORE EXPOSURE TO THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF YOUR EVENT.

ONE EVENT, TWO EXPERIENCES: PLANNING YOUR HYBRID EVENT

Understanding where to focus is your first step and will give you the foundation to architect a plan that delivers on the key expectations of each audience. Explore the tips specific for the two groups of attendees below as you plan your hybrid event:

In-person planning tips:

1. Build automated email communications to confirm upcoming event sessions, changes to any locations onsite, adjustments to schedules, etc.
2. Set up SMS alerts to keep them in the action (be sure to include a field for SMS on your event's registration)
3. Give access to your virtual booths to drive engagement opportunities with sponsors
4. Plan how you will deliver the content shared in a digital format (via a shared link, follow up email, etc.)
5. Plan out in-the-moment contests and giveaways, using alerts and engagement tools to build in to the agenda

Virtual attendee planning tips:

1. After your event's registration page is live, sign up and go through the flow as a virtual attendee
2. Map out the different questions you have or challenges you face from the attendee perspective each day leading up to the event
3. Categorize your questions and challenges based on the timing of the event - determine what someone would need a few weeks out, 1 week out, 1 day out, etc
4. Build a calendar to map out the communications and specify the delivery channels you will use
5. Create the content you need based on your research (how-to videos, training toolkits, get started checklists, FAQs, etc.)
6. Constantly keep attendees aware of your agenda—this is the heart of everything they need to navigate the event with ease, save time and confusion by building out the agenda with as much detail as possible.

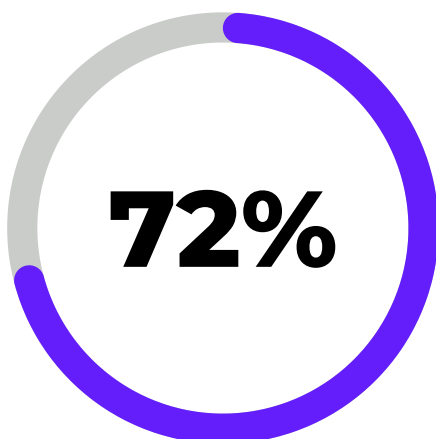
The takeaway here: plan as much as you can but also leave room for attendees to tell you what they want to learn or hear about. Maximize those unexpected moments. This is where leveraging polls, contests and Q&A can benefit your approach and build more value into your event to drive greater engagement.

HOW TO DRIVE SPONSORSHIP GAINS IN A HYBRID SETTING

Hybrid events give your sponsors an opportunity to engage with two distinct audiences, not just one. With lower cost to entry, greater reach and more engaging experiences—sponsors now have the opportunity to [drive more value from hybrid events](#) and use them into a relationship-building tool with the following benefits:

- Branding exposure across multiple mediums
- Digital booths to showcase key content and calls to action
- Data capture to maximize the value of each lead

"I think it's a sponsor's dream actually, because I think there's so many events with so much wasted sponsorship money. The audience isn't really engaging with a banner or ad or goodie bag, I just think those times are gone." - Keith Williams, Founder @ [CrankedUp](#)



of corporate sponsors interested in participating in a hybrid event, as long as they can effectively reach both audiences.

Source: Incon

HOW TO DRIVE SPONSORSHIP GAINS IN A HYBRID SETTING

The data supports this as well, with [72% of corporate sponsors](#) interested in participating in a hybrid event, as long as they can effectively reach both audiences.

The good news is that a hybrid environment adapts to these desires seamlessly, and makes it easier for sponsors than ever before to take a more structured and strategic approach to showcasing their brand and engaging with attendees.

"We can expose people to this particular content at a certain time, and that's what we did and the engagement was really really high—it was unbelievable. It was so easy to do and it's great responses for sponsors, and they really can connect with the attendees or riders in a different way."

- Keith Williams, Founder @ [CrankedUp](#)

Below are some creative ways to incorporate sponsors in a hybrid setting to drive ROI:

1. **Virtual expo booths**, full branded to the sponsor, with the ability to add videos, logos, and products, as well as meeting slots and different limits on the capacity of meetings and visitors
2. **Diversified access to communications** like marketing emails and push notifications to remind targeted attendees of sponsored sessions or live demos
3. **Dedicated speaker slots** and sponsored sessions
4. **Attendee networking** and matchmaking features and events (i.e. happy hours)
5. **Post-event surveys** for feedback for sponsors
6. **Gamify the experience**—send surprise prizes based on audience engagement—for a bit of fun and to create brand awareness!

Access to this data also enables sponsors to segment more effectively and unearth high-intent leads based on the insights captured. For sponsors navigating the uncertainty of the events landscape throughout the 2021, it's clear virtual presents a major opportunity to drive demonstrable ROI on your investment.

HYBRID ATTENDEE ENGAGEMENT TIPS

Your audience and participants need to be at the heart of your event's structure. Everything you're doing should go back to the question of how it impacts their experience. Harness the power of your hybrid event by doubling down on your [attendee engagement tactics](#) ahead of time.

Attendee engagement is a top challenge for any event planner, and a hybrid format presents unique challenges as you must cater to both the in-person and digital experience. In fact, **49% of marketers say attendee engagement is the #1 key to success when hosting virtual events**

A major component to this is content and how you're delivering it. Whether attendees are physical or digital you need to consider the different factors at play and how you can build an experience around their needs.

At a high level, here are different features to look out for to enhance attendee experience:

- **Networking tools**—help attendees forge connections virtually and maintain them beyond your live event
- **Use your polls wisely**—build authentic moments that drive discussions with polls, compare the results of your in-person attendees against your virtual attendees
- **Host a virtual treasure hunt**—Hide clues in different areas of your venue (i.e. sponsor booths, agendas, speaker sessions) encourage attendees to jump around the event and build excitement
- **Navigation of the platform**—ensure that it is intuitive. Too many features can overwhelm attendees but too simple of a platform makes execution and production of the event challenging.
- **Backend functionality**—Yes, a seamless attendee experience is key, but if you're caught in challenging tech that's overwhelming, the experience will be lackluster for your attendees. You need a platform that makes communication seamless for the event organizer on the backend so they can focus on managing the front end and engage with attendees.

With so many aspects to hybrid technology, the key area that impacts the success across the board is the attendee experience. Prioritize a solution that has tools built in like networking to make it worthwhile for your attendees. In fact, **81% of event organizers** say that networking capabilities are a key contributor to audience satisfaction of hybrid events.

POST-EVENT: USING YOUR CONTENT WISELY

The end of your event is just the beginning.

You spent weeks planning compelling sessions and hosting your hybrid event, but you're not done yet! The digital content you create for a hybrid event can be recycled and last well beyond the live event itself. Maximize the data you gather from the hybrid event (i.e. sessions attended, time in session, questions asked) to really cater their follow up experience and make it feel personalized.

11 Post-Event Follow Up Tactics

- Break out donation milestones and relive the excitement in a video short
- Share your user-generated content across social media and use it as an opportunity to give shoutouts to your donors
- Send a post event thank you email to all attendees
- Segment your data based on live polls and Q&As to inform your nurture strategy
- Build a post-event landing page to house your content from the event (HINT: recap videos, tweets, social posts, photos etc.)
- Hold a post event survey
- Nurture attendees and no-shows with relevant content based on the data captured
- Share the poll results from the event on social media or in a blog
- Send a surprise giveaway to your top donors
- Draft a blog post sharing key takeaways from the event
- Make a highlight reel from the event's most engaging moments and send it to no shows

POST-EVENT: USING YOUR CONTENT WISELY

The time and energy you invest into a strategic segmentation and communication strategy will set the stage for you to [cultivate meaningful relationships](#) with new and existing donors.

Pro tip: Use your follow up as a means to drive interest in your next big event or engagement. If it's paid, provide a discount, if it's a free event, offer them an incentive for signing up early (i.e. t-shirt, giftcard.)

This is also the time to really level up communication with your donors and event attendees. Below are some creative ways to shine the spotlight on your event after it ends:

- **Donor spotlights.** Give shoutouts to your top donors from the virtual event across your social media accounts, and be sure to tag them as you go. Show some extra gratitude and send them a personal DM as well.
- **Fundraiser results.** People want to be recognized. Share the results of your campaign and call out the donors who helped you get there. If you missed your goal during the event, this could be an opportunity to re-engage your community and encourage some post-event donations.
- **Sponsorship shoutouts.** Don't overlook the relationships you have with your sponsorships even after your event is over. There's ample opportunity for both parties to continue to benefit post-event and leverage each other's network strategically.

In the new world of virtual and hybrid events, the post event strategy is really just an extension of your live experience—don't let it slip away.

THE ROAD AHEAD: HYBRID EVENTS & YEAR-END GIVING

Where do you go from here?

As you navigate your year end giving strategy, there's a missed opportunity if you don't consider how hybrid will play into your strategy. It's clear that this format of event isn't going anywhere, and investing in an all-in-one platform is the best path forward for nonprofits that need to remain nimble in uncertain times.

67% of event organizers state that technology to ensure a smooth experience is a challenge or concern.

A hybrid approach can help future-proof your fundraising events, enhance retention efforts and drive more donations for year-end giving. As you navigate the many tools out there, here are some key features you should consider in a platform:

- Event management tools
- Live streaming capabilities
- Attendee engagement elements (both on the backend and frontend)
- Clean user experience & navigation
- Mobile bidding & donation functionality
- Networking & community building tools
- Data & reporting insights

The key is again to find [a solution that scales](#). Given the variety of events and audiences you want to engage with, you need a platform that gives the flexibility to adjust to your needs. When executed well, hybrid events have the ability to create truly transformative experiences.

**TAKE YOUR NEXT
EVENT HYBRID**

GET IN TOUCH WITH FONDI

Talk with our team about your next fundraiser or event to understand how an all-in-one hybrid platform can help your nonprofit:

- **Drive more online donations**—manage your virtual events plus incorporate real-time leaderboards & mobile bidding to convert more donors
- **Boost engagement with online community**—livestream your program, expand your reach globally & gain greater exposure across your online supporter base
- **Maximize donor retention**—create high quality giving experiences that connect supporters to your cause & keep them coming back

Request a Demo

**Speak with a hybrid fundraising &
event expert to get started.**

[BOOK MY DEMO](#)

