

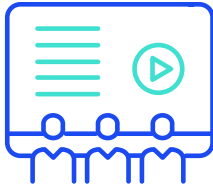


5 Ways To Take Your Events to the Next Level

Events are back in a big way. In fact, the global event industry is projected to generate \$1,457 million¹ by 2028. Events offer invaluable opportunities for companies to educate and connect with their employees and target audiences on a more personal level.

Today's event producers have access to more technologies and opportunities to personalize their events and 'wow' attendees. Companies are therefore pushing the boundaries and getting more creative than ever before with their events. To attract attendees, boost event engagement and stay ahead of their competition, business leaders are flipping traditional events on their heads. From AT&T's 5G hologram interviews with NBA players² to Dell's 360° augmented reality experiences³, event producers are innovating to create unique and memorable events.

Whether you are hosting business events in-person or online, here are five creative strategies that you can consider to help take your company's events to the next level.



Consider offering hybrid events

Hybrid events are events that offer both an in-person attendance option, as well as opportunities to attend virtually. They provide flexibility for attendees to choose how they'd like to participate. While hybrid events began as a response to the pandemic, they've showcased how brands can reach wider audiences when not everyone can attend your events in-person due to scheduling conflicts or budget restrictions. By making your event available online as well as in-person, you'll remove these barriers and engage more consumers with your event content and messaging.

Hybrid events also offer an option to pre-record event sessions to button them up and stream them to those tuning in virtually, as well as on screen to those in-person. Filming event sessions ahead of time allows for enhancements such as editing or accompanying graphics, which makes for more engaging viewing experiences. This strategy helps to produce the highest quality content, as well as eliminates the chance of technical difficulties, like weak Wi-Fi, interrupting a session. Pre-recorded sessions can also take some of the stress out of event planning.

In action:



At Adobe SUMMIT⁴, events were fully pre-recorded. Speakers took producers on a tour of their homes to make for the best setup and lighting to capture strong video. Pre-recording also meant Adobe could access celebrities who may not have been able to attend and speak at a set time and location otherwise, opening the door for notable figures to participate. Adobe also sent out training documents to help presenters capture the best recordings, from on-camera positioning to what to wear. The results were polished, well-produced presentations that participants from all over the world were able to watch. Plus, attendees were given access to the content to reference later on-demand.

Pro-tip:



When pre-recording content, add a live component to it. Whether it's a live Q&A or an analysis of what was shared with an on-stage moderator, giving attendees the opportunity to lean in, engage and discuss rather than simply watch, will help to make for more meaningful experiences.



Use technology to expand your event reach

Today, more than ever before, we have access to technology that can expand event reach and engage audiences globally. With many attendees viewing in languages that aren't native to them, keeping your event experiences inclusive and engaging to diverse attendees is key. One solution that is being used by event producers to tick both boxes is captions. Audience engagement is key to successful events and a tech solution like captioning can boost engagement when participants can visually follow along, helping you reach your international audience more effectively.

Captioning recorded and live event content such as conference sessions, workshops and networking events helps to support and include attendees. Whether it's individuals who may be watching without sound or individuals with disabilities, such as those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, captioning supports their ability to engage with your event content. Plus, you can take it one step further by turning to subtitles which provide translation of your event sessions for international audiences so that your event content can reach more individuals and resonate with those who may not otherwise be able to fully benefit from sessions because of a language barrier. These services are more than essential, they are a must according to the Americans with Disabilities Act⁵ (ADA) and, if you are live streaming content, the Federal Communications Commission⁶ (FCC). In order to help meet these guidelines, Verbit partners with companies' event producers globally, helping them to boost audience engagement and expand their reach by providing captioning and subtitling that are up to 99.9%.

In action:



LinkedIn launched its audio events platform⁷ within the LinkedIn app this year, with real-time captions included as part of each live event. Within a LinkedIn live audio event, those who join can participate in the live conversation by virtually raising their hand and joining the speakers, "on stage" to help direct and add to the discussion. Participants can also follow and message other participants during the event to enable real time connection opportunities. By adding captioning, LinkedIn has expanded the reach of their audio events by enabling an option for participants to visually follow along with the discussion. This feature has also made the experience inclusive and accessible to individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Incorporating these accessibility solutions into your event content is relatively simple. Working with a partner like Verbit can help to streamline the process by providing captioning that is designed for live events.



Dazzle attendees with Virtual Reality experiences

More businesses want to demonstrate or present an experience to their audience instead of only addressing them through lectures or PowerPoint slides. Virtual reality (VR) can be an excellent vehicle for team building exercises and business activities aimed at strengthening goals and creating a strategic focus. When it comes to learning, seeing and hearing information only goes so far. Most people have a much easier time retaining and understanding information when they can experience it. During a keynote address, instead of just talking about a subject, why not immerse the audience?

Additionally, companies are using VR to help attendees feel like they are present in-person at virtual events. An advantage of VR is that it allows attendees to feel like they're in a physical environment with other people without actually being in the same physical space. This type of experience is more immersive than only interacting with others on a computer screen at a virtual event.

In action:



At the Dell EMC World Conference⁸, a 360° VR experience was used to illustrate how Columbia Sportswear uses Dell's technology to design products. Without having to leave their seats, audience members soared through the air, courtesy of drone footage, and enjoyed a bird's eye view of forest treetops while wearing VR headsets. Creating this VR experience not only dazzled participants, but allowed Dell to literally show attendees their story of how their technology is making a difference. Dell's use of VR brought their audience as close to the action as possible, which surely left a lasting impact.

Pro-tip:



Understandably, not all companies have resources to create elaborate VR experiences on their own. If this is the case, it is always possible to partner with a company like MeetinVR⁹ that works to create custom VR experiences that are suitable for your event. There are even platforms, such as exVo by Allseated¹⁰ and MootUp¹¹, that provide immersive 3D environments for virtual events that don't require VR headsets and can be accessed through devices like smartphones and laptops.



Utilize event apps to customize your event experience

Event apps are no longer just a nice-to-have for in-person and virtual events. Tech-savvy attendees expect them, while sponsors and partners love the data that they provide after the fact. When integrated seamlessly with your events, an app can help you deliver a personalized experience at scale.

Event attendees want customized, user-friendly guidance about how to get the most out of their experience. Event apps can be customized for greater brand recognition and offer options for attendees to bookmark sessions, read about speakers and participate in networking and discussions online or ahead of the event. Many event producers encourage their attendees, whether in-person or online, to login prior to arranging meetings with like-minded attendees or potential customers to make the most of the experience. Apps make it easier for attendees to navigate your speaker lineup, exhibit hall and much more to tailor the event experience to their needs.

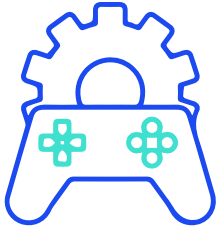
Today, there is no shortage of event apps available, but there are a few that stand out when it comes to facilitating networking and event customization possibilities.

In action:



Autodesk, Google, PepsiCo, Subaru and Sephora, all use the Attendify¹² app to create a private social network for their events. This app allows event attendees to take networking to the next level with features like a social timeline, photo sharing, messaging, likes, comments and personal profiles. Instead of merely keeping track of events according to date and time, attendees have records of meaningful connections and conversations that are specific to the event, without the complication of having to add new connection information to their contacts or other platforms.

When it comes to customization, companies like Esri Australia and BUMA Music use the Eventbrite Onsite¹³ app. You can share event information with attendees by publishing real-time updates to your entire community or send targeted notifications to specific attendee groups. It's also helpful in keeping attendees updated on last minute agenda changes that may arise. Eventbrite Onsite also helps to drive active participation through forums, live polls and fun contests for attendees.



In action:



Gamify your events

Contests and games are one of the most unique ways to engage in-person and virtual event attendees. Business conferences can focus on serious topics and still bring the fun. Games can be a simple user-generated content idea such as asking your attendees to share pictures of their settings while attending virtually. You can also launch polls, host live trivia and run virtual scavenger hunts.

Gamifying encourages a more relaxed atmosphere. When it comes to breaking the ice or helping participants learn or even bond with one another, gamification is an excellent way to get creative, have fun and give your attendees something to talk about with their peers. By hosting interactive experiences and healthy competitions, you are creating unique and memorable experiences for your guests that will ultimately generate buzz for your event.

As part of Salesforce's World Tour Sydney Reimagined virtual event, they implemented a live "battle of the apps" competition between exhibitors, called AppExchange Demo Jam¹⁴. During this session, Salesforce AppExchange partners were given three minutes each to do a live demo demonstrating their apps. The audience was then asked to vote for their favorite, and the winner was announced on Twitter the next day.

Not only was this a creative way to provide engaging demos while also getting the audience involved, this is the kind of gaming activity that will have people checking and engaging with the event's social media pages to see the winners and rewatch recorded moments.

14. [Salesforce](#)

Key Takeaways

Successful events do more than just provide information to attendees. Events that are designed creatively with participants' interests, preferences and desire to have fun prove to be the most engaging ones. If repeat attendees or larger numbers next year is what you're after- as most event producers are- these strategies can help make the event investment worthwhile to attendees. Although it may take some trial and error to see what works for your business, the best place to start is by understanding what your audience wants out of your event. Engaging them in a survey or poll pre-event is a great way to prepare.



Verbit is helping businesses further their audience reach, boost event engagement and create more inclusive experiences with solutions like live captioning and translation. By assisting companies in implementing the latest inclusive technology solutions, Verbit acts as your essential partner in creating engaging, next level events. [Contact us](#) to learn more about how we can work together to enhance your company's in-person or virtual events.