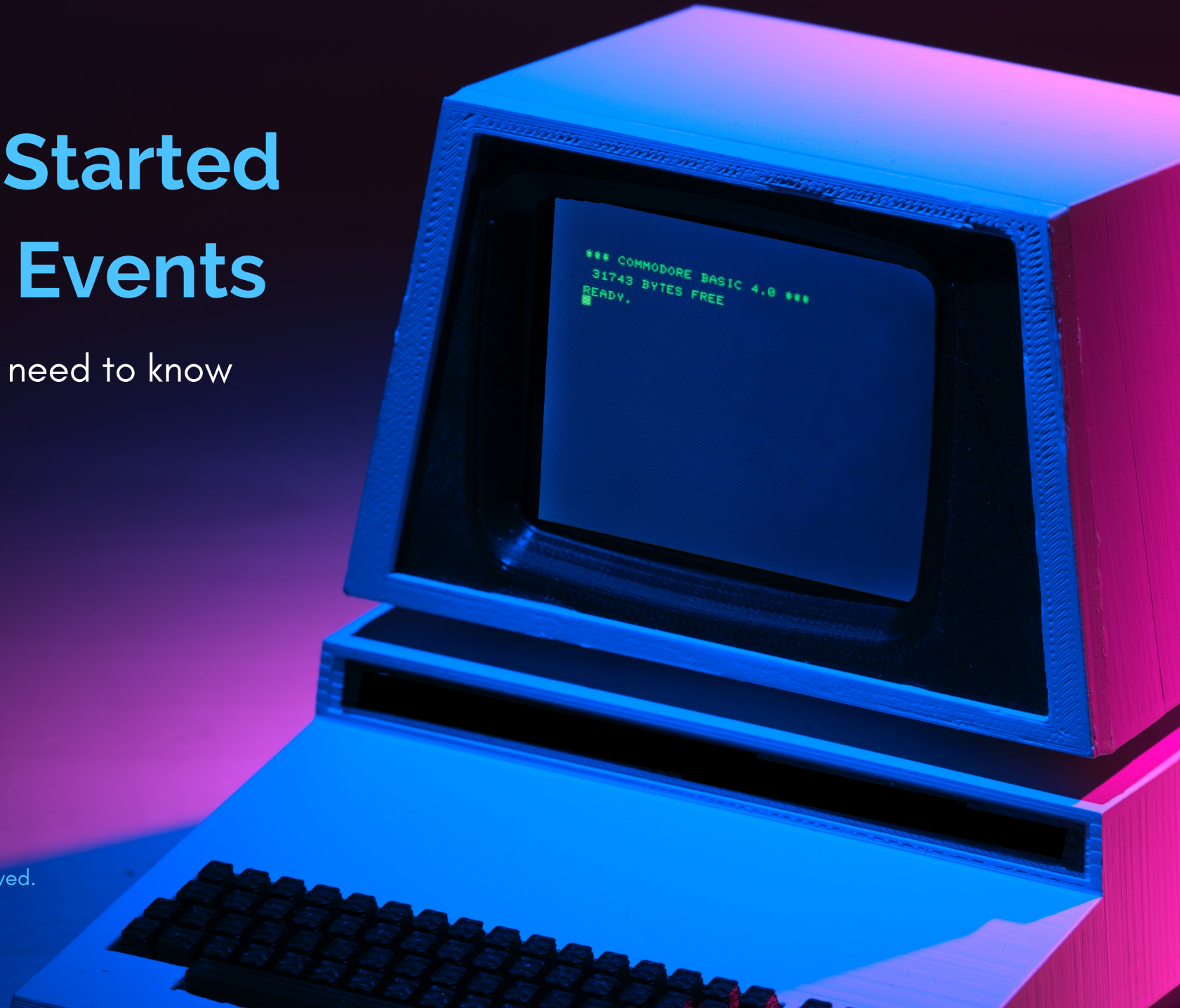




How to Get Started with Virtual Events

A guide on everything you need to know
about virtual events.



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— Introduction

Virtual events offer an adaptable and innovative way of building, engaging, and monetising your community.

Since March 2020, virtual events have seen a 1000% rise, according to an article in the Forbes magazine. Rather than cancelling an event, shifting it to a different platform has proven to be the better option for most industry professionals. But the process of shifting from a conference hall to a virtual lounge still needs some getting used to which raises a question for community managers:

Will virtual events replace in-person events?

The argument “will virtual events replace in-person events” is a never-ending one. But, event marketers have realised the potential of the virtual platform. Recent event marketing statistics published on the bizzabo site show that a majority of marketers (93%) want to invest more on virtual platforms.

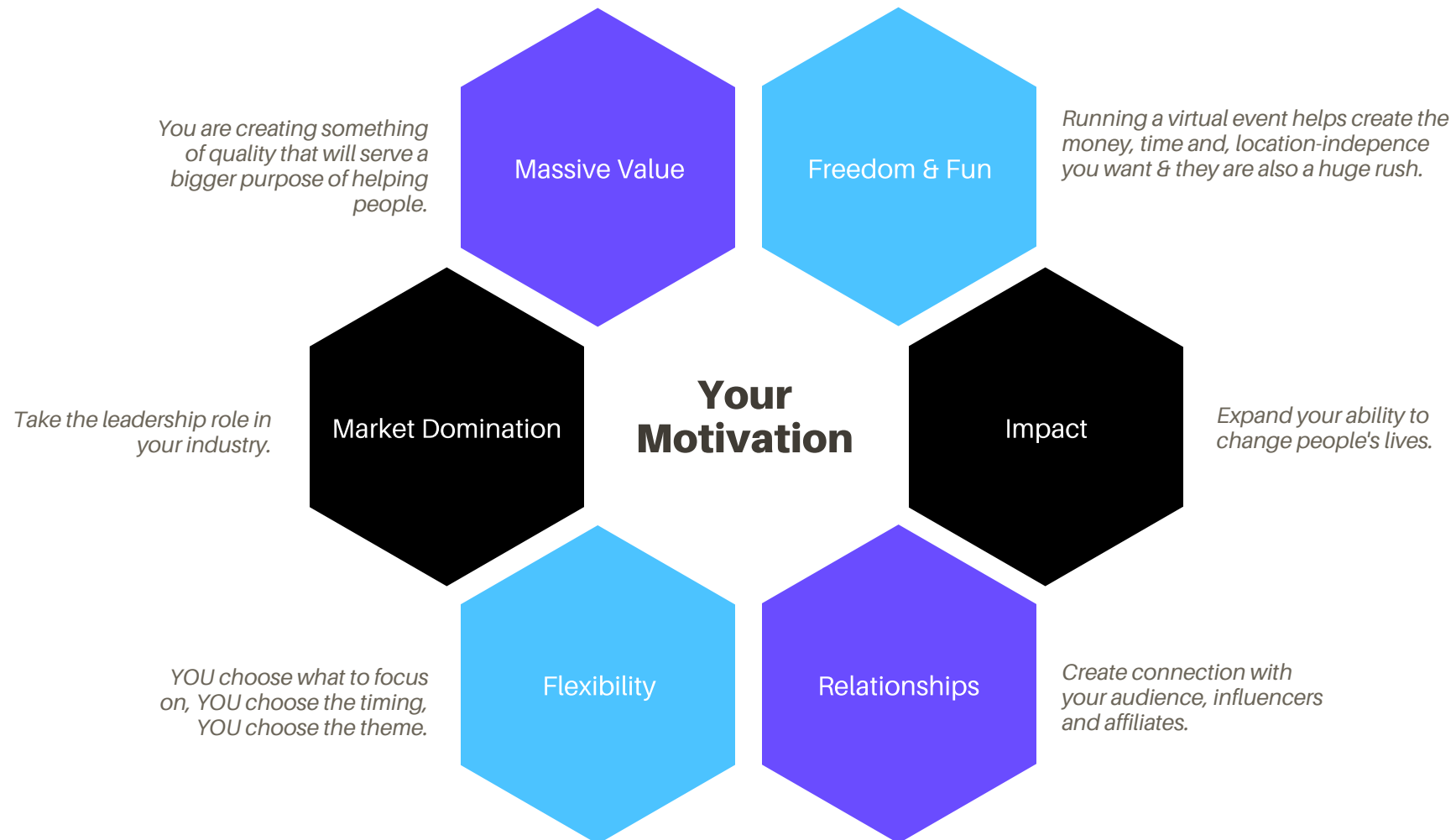
Hosting an event on an online platform like Airmeet is gaining popularity across the spectrum. For instance, **the average turnout rate for all events hosted on Airmeet since July 2020 is 70%.** This stat is one example of how choosing the right virtual events platform is an important criterion to engage your audience and increase y

No great event, however, can be organised at the drop of a hat. It requires meticulous planning, research and some amount of practice at the event organisers end.

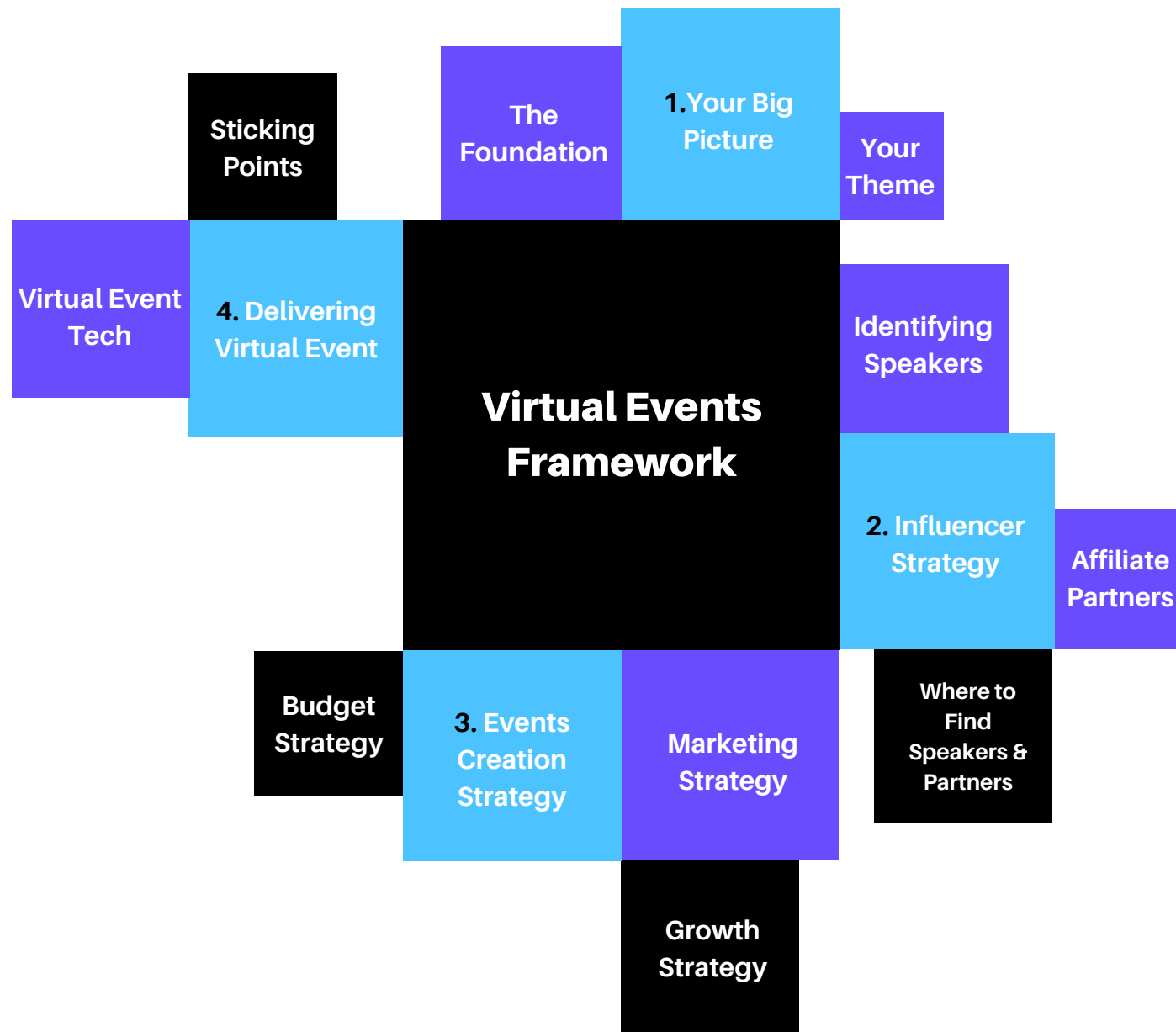
This e-book is an all-in-one guide that talks about planning, research and implementation of virtual events. This book is perfect for those who are starting to organise virtual events and also for those who feel something amiss in their event organisation skills.

— Your Big Reasons Why

Below is a mind map of the motivational factors that will help you define your 'why' when creating virtual events.



— Blueprint for Getting Started with Virtual Events



So, how do you organise a virtual event?

Now that we've seen a blueprint, let's get our basics right & dive into some simple starting points for your [virtual event](#).

1. What's Your Goal?

Every plan starts with a blueprint. Similarly, goals and objectives are the foundation for any event. Very often, the terms goals and objectives are used interchangeably. However, both of them are different.

Goals are specific and measurable, whereas objectives are the steps and ways you would adopt to achieve your goals.


So, how to define your goals? Industry experts say that an event goal should be specific. Some guiding questions that can help you to elaborate on your goals are:

- What do you want to get out of this event?
- As a host, what can you do better for your audience?
- What should be the take away for your attendees?
- Why should anyone attend the event and stay until the end?
- What do you want from a virtual events platform?



Depending on the kind of event you have in mind your answers to the above questions will vary. Also, remember that your goals should be measurable too. Once your goals are clearly defined, you can break them down and determine the objectives that would be employed to achieve your goals.

— Data Points You Could Look For in a Platform

Features	 Airmeet
Hd Video	✓
Q&A	✓
Screen Sharing	✓
Group Chat	✓
Video Attendee Limit	Upto 100,000
Video Session Limit	Unlimited
Event Assistance and Training	Complete hand-holding from demo to hosting
No. of attendees	Upto 100,000
Raise a hand	Yes. Invites participants to join the stage with speakers & host
Share contact cards	Yes
Ease of use	Intuitive design with dashboard

2. Budget Setting

The next crucial task while planning a virtual event is setting the budget. Though the task seems tedious, it is not so!

However, once you have your objectives outlined, creating a budget isn't that tedious.

So, what are the essentials to remember while preparing your event budget?

- Include all possible expenses
- Describe each line item, so everyone is aware of the details
- Assign a significant part of your budget for speakers and technology
- Decide on your virtual platform and the costs involved there
- Include charges for recording and on-demand play
- Do not forget to include expenses for promotion and goodie bags
- Be honest while budgeting
- Set aside an emergency fund

Remember that it is challenging to conduct an online event on a shoestring budget. One may be saving on certain expenses in comparison to a live event. But a virtual event has its unique and essential expenses which cannot be compromised with. So, prepare your budget at an early stage so that expenses are planned and controlled as well.

3. Select Your Team

Executing any event is teamwork. If you do not have an existing team, this is the next step for you while planning an event.

You will need to hire speakers/content experts, technology experts and personnel for marketing and promotion. A pro-tip would be to allocate a bigger budget for your speaker. A popular speaker directly translates into a bigger audience.

Now, there may be a few who wonder if it is essential to hire a team? The answer is yes. Some of the advantages of having an experienced team are less stress, and faster problem solving and work being accomplished at a faster pace.

It is also essential to have roles and responsibilities chalked out clearly for all team members. It avoids overlapping of work and ensures every member has the space to show their creativity.

Lastly, assign team leaders for the technical and marketing teams. It reduces the stress for you as the organiser as you will be interacting with limited people.

Working in a team leads to better learning for all. So, put together an outstanding team and learn while you enjoy executing an event.

4. Decide on Your Event Type

The next task while planning a virtual event is to decide the kind of virtual event. Based on the goals and objectives that have been defined, you need to select the kind of virtual event that fits your needs.

There are many kinds of virtual events that one can host using online platforms. Some of them are listed below:

- Training/workshops
- Webinars and conferences
- Panel discussions
- Meet-ups (private and informal office meet-ups)
- Trade shows and job fairs
- Chats/fireside chats/Q&A sessions

As mentioned earlier, the format of a virtual event is dependent on the goals, no.of attendees and outcome of the event. Besides this, two other factors that affect the selection of the format are the expertise of the team and the budget available.

A combination of these factors helps one decide an appropriate format for the event.

5. Securing Sponsorship

Getting sponsors is another critical aspect of event planning and management. The advantage of getting sponsorship means more money for the event and better profits. But, how does one secure sponsorship?

The first thing to do would be to highlight to your prospective sponsors what they can gain from the event. Sponsors are attracted to events where they know they can secure some leads, connect with the audience and also get some visibility. Market your event based on these points. If possible, assure them of some exclusive interaction time with the audience.

Next, how can you give visibility to your sponsors? Some of the ways you can do this are:

- Sponsor tables in the Lounge/interaction area
- Sponsor logo on the home screen
- Logo display during the live event
- Gamification during the event (developed and hosted by the sponsor)
- Logo and visibility on the check-in and log-in page
- Email marketing

You could also brainstorm for other innovative ways to engage and give visibility to the sponsor.

[Click here](#) to see how you can avail all these features and more while creating an Airmeet.

Also, you could proactively provide some data to your sponsors at the end of the event. This data can include the number of attendees, social media reach, leads captured and similar details which can be of use to your sponsor as well.

Providing data of this kind also helps to build trust with your sponsor and will prove to be of help in the long run.

6. Choose Your Event Platform

There are many things to consider while selecting your events hosting platform. Based on your event budget make a list of must-haves, as the long-term requirement.

Security, quality, usability, web-based are some of them. Other technical factors that you must look for are listed below.

- **Customisation:** Organisers and sponsors both desire a platform that can be customised so that their branding is visible to the audience.
- **Automation:** Automation features make life easier for the event manager. While checking on the automation features, ask the vendor if the systems of the platform are automated and if you can see their back end functioning.
- **Live broadcast:** Is this feature available with the event vendor, do they support multi-speaker sessions, can the vendor provide subtitles in different languages?
- **On-demand replay:** Can the event be recorded and how long will the content be available for on-demand viewing?
- **Engagement features:** What are the engagement features available on the platform like chat, polls, surveys, Q&A, speed networking?

[Read](#) how you can network like a pro with Airmeet's 'speed networking' feature.

Watch a comprehensive walkthrough of Airmeet by [clicking here](#).

7. Event Registration

Next step is to get registrations for the event. Remember if you manage to register an audience of high calibre, then your lead generation will also be of good quality.

Event landing pages should be designed specifically for each event. It should be simple and should intrigue the reader. Some of the salient points to remember while designing the event landing page are:

- **Clean:** It should look slick, simple, and professional instead of cluttered
- **What:** Details of the event
- **Who:** The people behind the event for event credibility
- **Outcome:** What can the audience expect to learn from the event
- **Speakers:** Brief details about your speakers with their picture
- **Offers:** Mention early registration offers if you have planned for it
- **Registration link:** The call-to-action button should have the boldest colour and should be placed at strategic positions

You also need to mention the sponsors of the event and give them ample visibility.

8. Event Promotion

Regularly promoting the event increases its visibility and thus affects conversion rate. This is where the role of your marketing team comes to the fore.

Events can be promoted through:

- **Emails:** Sending emails to your previous attendees, and in your sponsor's circles.
- **Speaker videos:** If you have some outstanding speakers, you can post a video of them. The video will focus on what he/she will be speaking about and the event dates and timings.
- **Customer feedback:** Satisfied customers from previous events can be asked to share their experience. This can again be a video or a written testimonial.
- **Teasers:** If you are launching a product or have an entertainment event planned post teaser videos to attract the audience.

Most of the promotion ideas mentioned above can be posted on all your social media handles. Also, you can promote the event by placing an ad or inserting an article in leading dailies.

9. Content is King

In your physical event, there is a lot of activity and energy around. In such times the audiences may even forgive mediocre content.

But in your virtual event, content is the primary reason why they are attending. Hence, there can be no compromise in this area.

There are three cardinal rules while creating content. These are:

- **Length:** The length of your content should be just right. The attention span of the average audience is about 35-40 minutes. Ensure that you wrap up your presentation within this time.
- **Relevance:** The content should be such that your audience can relate to it. The content creator should always question if the content being created is what the audience wants and meets the set objectives as well.
- **Design:** Visual appeal is as important as mental stimulation. Design content that will attract and fascinate your audience. Keep it light in text. Use visual and graphs which are more engaging than plain text.

Lasts but not the least remember your slides should be changed after every 15-20 seconds. So have more slides than what is needed.

10. Technology is Queen

The most amazing content needs the support of technology to make the right impact.

Hence, technology is often called the queen. So, what are the must-have tech essentials?

- **Computer:** Your laptop should be charged and must have an uninterrupted WiFi connection.
- **Camera:** An external camera with high resolution ensures good quality video and better viewing of the presentation.
- **Microphone:** Use an external mike for better sound quality.
- **Lights:** Lights should be placed in front and sides of the speaker so that his/her face is in focus.
- **Background:** If shooting at home, use a white background. If it's a pre-recorded and edited event, there are multiple tools available that can change the background.
- **Power backups:** The last thing you want in the middle of a live event is a power cut. Make arrangements for a power backup that will turn on within seconds if needed.

Also check your laptop, its battery, wi-fi connectivity and if your webinar platform has to be downloaded and ensure that the same is done well in advance.

11. Event Reminders

Most people have short memories. If you opened up registration a month or two before the event, your attendee might have probably forgotten that they registered for such an event.

That is why event reminders are essential. Email reminders are the most popular. Along with the content of the reminder, the frequency of the reminder emails is of equal importance.

Experts advise four reminders tops. The first reminder is to be sent two weeks before the event and the second one a week before. The third and fourth reminders are sent a day before the event and on the day of the event.

Your email reminder should be addressed to the attendee, have the event details, a teaser video and a link to join the event.

Also, you can have a countdown timer on your social media handles which counts the days/hours for the event to begin. Lastly, check if your event platform offers the feature to add the registered event to the attendees' calendar.

12. Test Run

A trial run of the entire event is non-negotiable. Why? Trial runs help you understand the look and feel of your event and also helps in making corrections wherever needed.

The checklist below is a comprehensive list encompassing all test runs for components.

- **Equipment:** Camera, lights, mic, laptops, internet, power should all be tested here.
- **Webinar software:** As a team log in to the webinar software so that all concerned are comfortable with the interface.
- **Presentation:** Test the entire presentation, along with anecdotes and pauses. Get feedback from the team.
- **Timing:** Check if your entire event from start to finish is achieved in the set time limit.
- **Record and review:** Record your presentation and review it. It helps review playback quality and effectiveness of the presentation as well.

As a team, review the entire process, give honest feedback and make corrections wherever necessary.

On the day of the event log in an hour before the event so that you have time to check the webinar interface and all technical aspects.

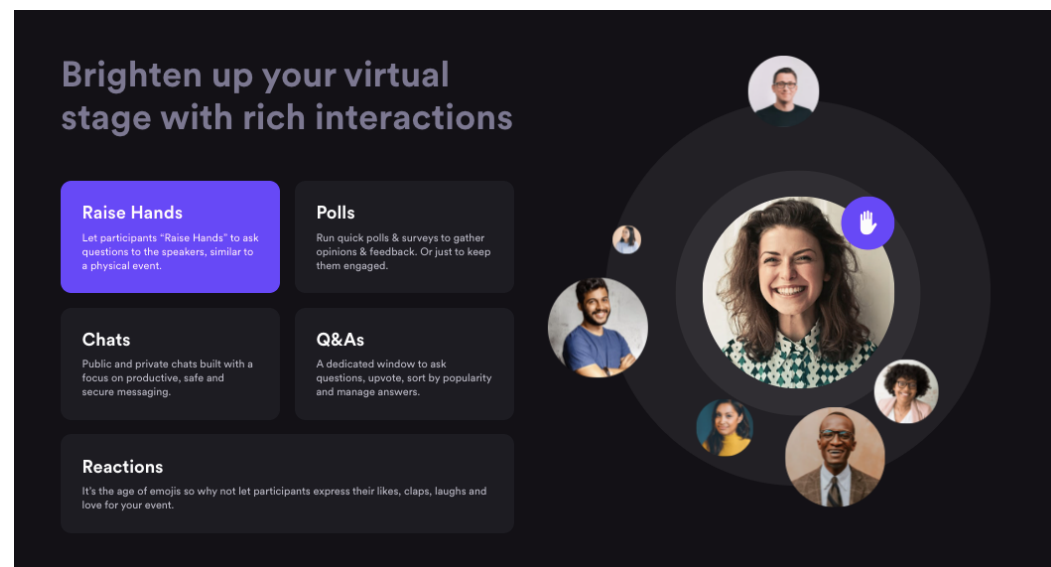
13. Create Networking Opportunities

The one complaint that many have from virtual events is the lack of networking. New age interfaces, however, have taken care of even this need.

Choose a platform that offers you networking and interaction features.

In virtual events, networking can be arranged at different times throughout the event. They are detailed below.

- **Pre-event:** Before entering the webinar room, participants can hang around in the social lounge. Here they can either browse through sponsor information, upcoming events or some product information. In smaller events, the host can ask participants to introduce themselves.
- **Live event:** Active networking during an event can be distracting. Hence one can limit interactions to the group and individual chats during this time. If your event is long, schedule breaks between sessions and enable networking then.
- **Post-event:** The choices at this point are many. Social lounge moderated Q&A, chats, discussion forums and tables are popular ways of post-event networking.



14. Thank You & Follow-Up

The end of your event marks the beginning of work for the sales team. Ensure that each attendee is sent a personalised thank-you mail.

Apart from thanking the mail can also contain a link for on-demand video or snippets from the actual event.

The final step of your virtual event would be to follow-up with the attendees — follow-up at regular intervals (but not too frequently). Provide your attendees with more product information, offer one-one online product demo, some research information about your product and the competitors as well.

These are ways to engage and follow-up with your attendees, and if done right, it can drive conversions.

15. Conclusion

Host Immersive Events and Build Real Connections, Online.

Physical distances don't need to hamper growing, work and enjoyment. That's the key take-away for virtual events hosts and attendees.

We invite you to brighten up your virtual stage with rich interactions while you make a move to shift from handshakes to headsets and take your in-person events online.



I've spent this morning at an @lotTribe event using @airmeet_com. I'm so impressed by the experience, both as an attendee and a speaker. Of all the virtual events I've attended in the last few months, this is the closest to one that recreates the real-world experience.



Alex Basin
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[Visit our website](#) to host a free virtual event.