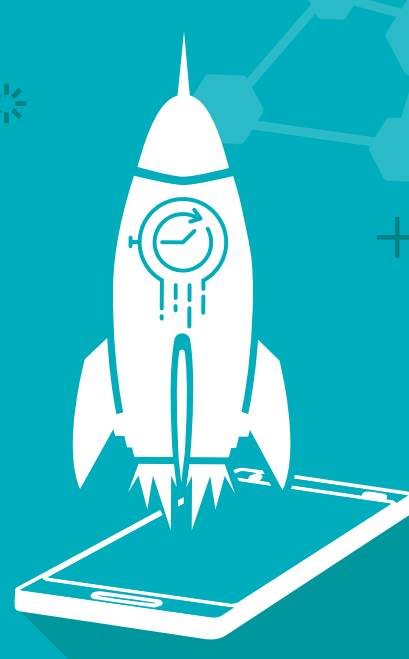


# Virtual Event Planning Timeline



Virtual events have become the new normal, but planners are still learning the ropes when it comes to delivering an engaging virtual conference. Planning for a virtual event is more than simply moving your in-person event online and takes considerable thought and planning to execute successfully.

To help you get started on the right track for your virtual event, we've developed a sample timeline with some of the key steps and milestones for planning a successful virtual event.

## 1

### PHASE ONE: 12-9 MONTHS PRIOR



- Establish your event goals

*\* Identifying your event goals from the beginning will make the planning process easier and more successful*

- Identify your event stakeholders

*\* Think about each group that your event will serve including attendees, speakers, sponsors, and exhibitors*

- Define your event strategy
- Complete analysis of previous events

*\* What worked last year that you can include again? What session topics were most popular? By analyzing your previous events you can better understand what will help make your virtual event more successful*

- Create a plan that will help meet your event goals
- Pick an event theme
- Determine your event design and desired experience

## 2

### PHASE TWO: 8-6 MONTHS PRIOR



- Identify key elements to include in your virtual event

*\* A successful virtual conference typically includes education, live engagement and networking, entertainment, exhibitions, and sponsorships.*

- Evaluate virtual event platforms and software providers

*\* Think about the key elements you want to include for your event when evaluating event platforms. This will help determine eligible software providers based on the features of the platform*

- Review demos and select your virtual event software
- Recruit Speakers
- Design graphics and wireframe for event website and event platform
- Develop and publish your event's website
- Begin event promotion

*\* Don't wait too long to begin your event promotion. Get the word out ASAP using social media, targeted email campaigns, and promoting to your key stakeholder groups to increase registrations*

## 3

### PHASE THREE: 5-3 MONTHS PRIOR



- Build your event and create all event components in your event platform

*\* Input your event sessions, calendars, attendee profiles, and more to your event platform*

- Train your stakeholders

*\* Train each of your key stakeholder groups on the event platform so they understand how it works and where to go to ask questions if needed.*

- Record content and request slide decks

## 4

### PHASE FOUR: 2-1 MONTHS PRIOR



- Upload content

*\* All pre-recorded sessions, exhibitor content, and more should be uploaded to your event platform before final testing*

- Review event platform for final edits
- Test event platform from all user interfaces

*\* Be sure to test your event platform from all user experiences – attendee, speakers, exhibitors, etc. – to make sure everything is functioning correctly*

- Dress rehearsal with speakers

*\* Schedule time to do a test run with your speakers so they feel comfortable with the platform and can ensure their audio/video equipment is working*

## 5

### PHASE FIVE: GO LIVE!



- Generate enthusiasm each day of your event
- Send a daily newsletter with event info

*\* Inform and excite attendees about the schedule of events each day by sending a daily digest newsletter with highlights for the day to come and maybe a recap of the previous day's highlights. This will keep enthusiasm running high.*

- Gather feedback from attendees at the end of each day

*\* Send a short survey at the end of each day to get feedback from attendees so you can make changes in real-time*

- Thank and promote your sponsors throughout the event

## 6

### PHASE SIX: POST-EVENT



- Measure event success through data analysis and post-event surveys

*\* See how many people registered vs. attended, send post-event surveys to each key stakeholder group for feedback*

- Provide reporting for sponsors and exhibitors

*\* Be sure to provide reporting for sponsors and exhibitors so they can accurately calculate their ROI. Share metrics that will allow them to see the impact or level of exposure they have achieved at your event.*

- Evaluate the event and plan for next year

We understand the months of planning and amount of work it takes to plan and deliver a successful virtual conference. We hope this timeline helps you through the planning process for your upcoming virtual events. If you have questions or need assistance planning your virtual conference, please contact us at [eventtechgroup@communitybrands.com](mailto:eventtechgroup@communitybrands.com). We'd be happy to help.