CLARITY STACK

Driving Revenue with a digital event

Ebook

The challenges associated with digital events

Of course, as with all things digital, there are always going to be a few challenges along the way that you need to overcome to host a truly successful digital event.

Firstly, with the potential for such a large audience it's key to keep everyone engaged. When they are sitting in an auditorium listening to someone speak live on stage it's not as easy (or comfortable, at least) for some to get up and walk out of the room if they find that the talk isn't that inspiring or they feel they're not learning something. Online, however, they are only ever one click away from leaving the room and you don't want their lasting memory of the event to be that they've wasted their time or digital entry fee.

You will also face technology-based challenges. Holding a meeting on online platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams is one thing, but a digital event with hundreds of people tuned in is a completely different animal.

Organising a virtual event is going to be tough as you never quite know how your technology will react to the sudden demand, so having dependable, knowledgeable tech support on-hand throughout will be vital to keep you online and to ensure that your systems are able to cope.

Security is going to be another key consideration, and something that affects all live events. There is always the risk that someone will take advantage of well-intentioned events by attempting to hack their way in so it's vital that you protect not only the platform and system you're using, but also the details of those who are in attendance and who have given you their personal details (and money).

So how can a digital event drive revenue?

Conferences and events have always been a great way of bringing in revenue for the organisers, despite the outlay on the venue and associated equipment, social event and merchandise costs.

Reducing costs

One of the best things about a digital event is that, depending on how you go about things, there is very little outlay. With even a small digital ticket fee you can start to cover any costs associated with purchasing new equipment and paying for the time of your keynote speakers. You might not choose to charge the same sort of price as you would for a ticket to an in-person event, but you're already well on the way to making money from your event - and that's before anyone invests in your brand!

Increase exposure

That is, of course, the main purpose of any event. To increase exposure and encourage people to invest in your products or services. If you have a particular platform that you're looking for people to subscribe to then you're going to be promoting it and encouraging people to sign up for a package. Similarly, if you offer a suite of software packages or if you've developed a unique tool that can benefit businesses, you want to show them through your event that you're a reputable business with an incredible range of products that are worth investing in.

Incentives

You might choose to offer all attendees an incentive to sign up with you, that only those in attendance can capitalise on. For example, you might offer a percentage off all annual subscriptions or a discount code that can be used at the checkout on your website to get money off their chosen investment. While you don't really want to be giving too much away, these people have already bought a ticket to your event and are now interested in buying your product - it's all revenue, which is a big tick and a huge step towards calling your digital event a success.

Promote your services

The event is the prime opportunity to get your name out there, and to promote your services without having to pay for a stand at an event. Instead, you can brand all of your associated event materials including email newsletters and ticketing - even event merchandise if you like - and this is all additional exposure that could eventually lead to purchases or subscriptions meaning more revenue.

Event sponsors

Furthermore, there is a great opportunity to negotiate with event sponsors. Many in-person events have headline sponsors and supporting sponsors all keen to increase their own exposure even if it means handing over a bit of cash to you to get on the promotional banners, emails, social media posts and merchandise. This is even more revenue for you, all for putting their logo on a few emails or on the digital tickets, and for tagging them in your social posts to help build their following.

Making an impact

Once you have your plans in place, it's time to consider a few top tips that will help you turn what might be a good event into a great one.

1 Live and interactive

There's nothing quite like a live event. Whether it's sport, music or industry exhibitions it's always best to be there in person to feel part of it, rather than watching back after the event. By going live and enabling your audience to interact you can create a much more powerful connection with your virtual audience.

2 A personal approach

Always consider your target audience when it comes to planning the event and the topics you're going to cover. This will help to maintain their interest and engagement throughout.

3 Get immersive

By factoring in some immersive sessions or workshops you can allow the attendees to come together and speak to each other, as well as the hosts.

4 Stay on-brand

This is your event, so don't forget to promote your own brand and what you stand for. Make sure everything is done according to brand guidelines and ensure that your name is the one they remember.

5 Encourage audience participation at the planning stage

By enabling your audience to get involved and ask questions you can tailor the event accordingly. When they register, ask them questions about the topics they're most interested in, and then you can adapt your schedule to suit. You can then tailor any follow-up questions, messages or blog posts afterwards to the audience to show that you took their comments on board.

6 Maintain personal involvement throughout

Just because your event is virtual it doesn't mean your attendees can't enjoy a few little in-person surprises. Capture registrants' mailing addresses and send them some in-person event mementos to get them excited and start connecting with them prior to your event. We've already spoken about the potential to provide event merchandise, but you can also provide things like partner giveaways or food delivery gift cards for a virtual lunch so they don't have to leave their desks during your event.

7 Have a clear post-event CTA

What do you want people to do once they've attended? Do you want them to sign up for something, do you want them to share the slides you've compiled? Make it clear for all so that they know what you're looking for them to do from the start, even if it means offering a discount code.

8 Capture additional insights on your attendees and their experience

This information will not only be valuable to help improve future events but also to tailor your event follow-ups. Ask a question to allow the attendee to tell you what the next best step is in their journey: do they need more information about an element of your service, or would a product demo help to convince them to convert?

What happens after the event?

What you do after the digital event is every bit as important as what you do before and during. This is where you gauge the success of the event in terms of registrations, sales or leads and it's vitally important that you follow-up on each and every opportunity, and at the very least thank your attendees for coming with a personalised message.

You should always look for feedback from those who attended, whether it's in the form of a survey or a poll as they look to leave the event in real-time. Whatever approach you take, here are some tips to help keep the conversation going after the event:

1 **Follow-up with an email**
The day after your event, make sure you have an email ready to go out to those who attended, thanking them for their attendance and asking for feedback. This opens the door for further conversations and enables you to take their views on board to shape your next event or future content.

2 **Keep delivering what interests them**
They might be completely hooked on your brand and product offering, but not quite ready to convert, so keep sending them what attracted them in the first place. Take the sessions they attended into consideration and tailor content accordingly, sending this out via email in the form of a blog link or piece of gated content exclusively for them which will help to convert them.

3 **Don't by offended by people who sign-up, but don't attend**
If you've had registrations and then non-attenders, don't worry, something may have come up. You could send them a message asking if they are still interested in you and your services, and you could always send out a link to where the recorded version of your event or individual sessions are saved.

4 **Reach out directly, not generically**
Create a personalised follow-up by having a member of your team reach out directly. This can be even more beneficial if it's someone who has spoken at your event to help build their own personal brand.

5 **Capitalise on marketing leads.**
Leverage insights from reports to qualify leads and utilize key marketing integrations to funnel any leads into sales.

We hope this gives you plenty of food for thought and enables you to organise the best possible digital event. Ultimately, each event is aimed at increasing brand awareness, engagement and sales but each is different. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to digital event planning, but hopefully - fully equipped with these recommendations - you can not just achieve your targets, but smash them.