

Factors for Virtual Event Success

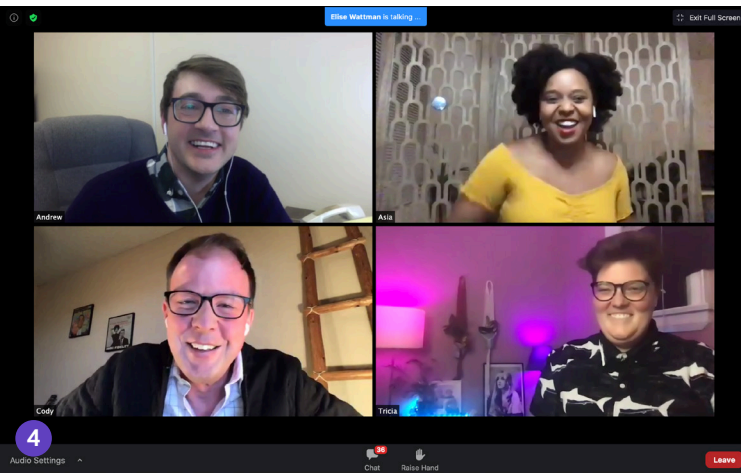
Organizations experienced both successes and failures in 2020. Virtual events that fell flat tried to replicate the in-person experience too closely, without consideration for the special needs of the attendees and sponsors, or the technical challenges of delivering a complex event in a completely new way.

Design failures included:

- Virtual agendas that were too tightly scheduled or packed too many sessions into concurrent timeslots (allowing no breathing room for attendees)
- Events that didn't properly prepare speakers for the virtual environment (some excellent in-person presenters aren't cut out for virtual delivery)
- Over-emphasis on pre-recorded sessions (which took away any attendee incentive to participate "live")

Events that succeeded took into consideration what the virtual experience would look like for attendees and sponsors, and what a reinvented event would require from a planning and technology perspective. Major success factors for virtual events included:

- Event design with plenty of "white space" so that attendees could take breaks from their screens
- Options for platform "portability" so that attendees could move about and participate from multiple devices (desktop computer, tablet, mobile phone, television)
- Varied session formats so that attendees could participate in a mix of "live" and on-demand sessions
- Dedicated "face-to-face" networking opportunities and break-out sessions so that attendees could engage with one another and with sponsors
- Panels, activities, and resource sharing where sponsors could demonstrate their expertise and gain visibility
- Social events and activities that encouraged "fun" and provided a sense of connection



“Brilliant – should become part of the convention every year.”

Virtual Convention Attendee