HOW DO YOU PLAN A VIRTUAL EVENT?

Keep it short, focus on how to keep the audience engaged because they can log off at any time, and practice as much as you can beforehand. Virtual events should be kept simple, because flashy initiatives won't be as impressive on a computer screen.

1.) Understand Your Audience
You need to have a solid grasp of your audience's general psyche. Are they more inclined to partake in virtual event planning? How tech-savvy are they? What subject areas are they most interested in? How familiar or active are they with basic social media?

2.) Define Your Format
Just like live conferences, virtual event planning comes in many formats. The key is to create a unique experience, something that is different.

How long should your event last? Of course, that will depend on the context and the audience, but in general, an hour is a good ballpark to aim for.

3.) Choosing a Platform
There are so many livestreaming services out there. These services more or less offer the same basic features; it really is more a matter of personal preference.

4.) Choosing a Host/MC
Who will be hosting the event? It can even be an in-house staff member who is comfortable enough presenting live before a remote audience. Whoever the designated person is, he/she should be able to speak clearly, respond to questions fielded though social media, introduce speakers, and so on. The host should also be comfortable looking straight into the camera and not at a script in his hands.

The host also needs to respond at the spur of the moment to unexpected events. If the scheduled speaker is late, for example, could the host continue to come up with things to say to keep viewers from signing out?

Finally, keep in mind that you can also have two hosts that can speak to each other as well as to the audience. This can be really beneficial if the two hosts have a strong rapport and can respond to one another's zingers and one-liners.

5.) Market Your Event
Virtual events have to be marketed just like a typical live event. This is where social media comes into play. Yes, there's the usual methods of Facebook posting and tweeting. You have to go beyond that, though, and also incorporate other methods.

Use Instagram or Snapchat to remind viewers about the event. Given the multiplicity of virtual events happening right now, it's easy for people to forget they've signed up for one. Don't forget the pre- and post-event communication.

6.) Choosing a Time and Date
Geographical concerns are a total nonissue with a virtual event. The time, however, is still just as relevant as ever. Naturally, the best times are weekends during the early evenings. However, it's not that simple. Is there other important stuff going on at the designated event time?