

What Is a Hybrid Event? 6 Hybrid Event Examples



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Hybrid events are increasing in regularity, driven in large part by the new normalcy of remote work models springing up in the wake of COVID-19. More companies are returning to their offices now, but things have changed. More businesses are adopting a mix of remote and onsite work models. This will increase the need to create successful hybrid event models that incorporate the best of these two worlds. Which companies have mastered mixed event planning and what can we learn?

What Does “Hybrid Events” Mean?

By now you’re probably familiar with the virtual event. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, most companies have grown accustomed to virtual events, where remote audiences go online to participate. Before COVID-19, many companies held on-site or live events. Now, virtual meetings have become the new norm during the pandemic.

A hybrid event incorporates elements of a live and a virtual event. In a hybrid event, a live audience participates in an office or conference center setting, while a secondary audience joins virtually. A hybrid event seeks to combine the best of the in-room meeting or event with a virtual online component by using video streaming.

The key to a successful hybrid event is to seamlessly blend these experiences for true collaboration between these two types of meeting formats.

6 Hybrid Event Examples

The opportunities and challenges of hybrid events are vast. Event organizers are tasked with designing and managing two distinctly different audience tracks. They must somehow bridge any gaps between these experiences while still engaging these audiences. Blending the experience can take many forms:

- A large onsite trade show at a conference center with an event app, online content, and virtual participants.
- Live streaming a product introduction to a mix of onsite employees and virtual public attendees.
- Educational seminars that open the door to both onsite and online attendees.

Hybrid events, while complex to pull off, are worth it for the sheer extension of your reach. Organizers can bolster their community and generate revenue in a paid event with both

traditional onsite and geographically dispersed remote attendees. Companies with travel bans can still participate in a virtual event. An onsite event with 100 attendees can grow into the thousands with the right content and effective promotion.

Which events are hitting these numbers and what can we learn from them?

1. Apple Special Events

Apple is the unquestioned leader in hybrid events. Their Special Events often center around new product launches that reach millions of people. They've been taking advantage of the excitement generated by live speakers and audience interactions while broadcasting live to a virtual audience for years. Since COVID, Apple has shifted its approach to special events that were virtual or pre-recorded. As California reopens and lifts its venue restrictions, keep an eye on what's next from this hybrid conference leader.

2. Empower 21

Empower 21, a Christian mission-inspired conference, was one of the first hybrid events to take place in 2021. Put on by the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC), this event promoted more than 100 channels for their ministry to families and individuals in their community. There are more than 40,000 Southern Baptist churches around the country that were the target audience for this event. For those that attended Empower 21 onsite in Texas, social distancing and mask wearing was a part of the event. Online attendees participated safely from afar and the event was simulcast to attendees around the U.S. and abroad. Empower 21 was also recorded for on-demand content.

3. INBOUND by HubSpot

Oprah spoke at the INBOUND hybrid conference, and if that wasn't enough to draw you in, there were numerous other big-name speakers to engage audiences in this three-day live and online event. HubSpot is the marketing content management platform and true to their level of expertise, this event made the best use of this hybrid event model. The event, which is scheduled to occur again in October 2021, leveraged live sessions with on-demand recordings after the fact. During the event, online and live audience members could mingle and network, which was one of the goals of the event.

4. LiveWorx21

LiveWorx focuses on digital innovation. It's a top conference for enterprise organizations and digital startups looking to use these tools to maximize productivity. Before COVID, the event was usually held in Boston each year. Given the conference's focus, it makes sense that they pivoted to a virtual conference in 2020 and 2021. But the show has always been a leader in the hybrid event channel, and for years conference organizers recorded and archived their content for all-year on-demand reach. In the future, watch for LiveWorx to go back to the hybrid model that made them such an engaging, exciting conference on our digital transformation.

5. MozCon

MozCon is the nation's leading hybrid conference on search engine optimization (SEO). This live and virtual event brings together leaders in search marketing, local search, SEO, mobile, conversion optimization, and much more. It's a particularly important annual conference for marketers given that SEO changes so rapidly in the virtual space.

6. Social Media Marketing World

Of course the live Social Media Marketing World conference brought in a digital audience. The goal of the event was to share best practices around social media promotion, and it was filled with influencers from Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and more. The event billed itself as the “largest gathering of social pros, period!” and the speakers had a wealth of experience in these channels. Key to the success of this hybrid event was the private networking groups and live online meetups that allowed live and remote attendees to mix and mingle. Hybrid events are a great way to tie social media promotion in with live conference planning. The Social Media Marketing World event did a great job blending these two audience experiences.

Engaging Your Audience with a Hybrid Event

If you're ready to engage your audience with a live stream and online hybrid event, it's time to start the conversation with a veteran hybrid event solution.