

Virtual Events in the Age of COVID-19

To clear up any misconceptions at the outset...an event, whether virtual or live, is just an event, right? Right. The key difference is where your audience is watching. Instead of corralling people into a ballroom after they pick up their lanyards, your audience for a **virtual event** is clicking a button from their inbox and participating at your event from their living room or home office. That's the power and immediacy of virtual events.

All the other elements of planning and executing a live event remain. Your audience still needs to register. You still need to produce great content and creative that captivates. You still need to provide networking opportunities for attendees to get the information they're looking for. You still need to follow-up.

But we've entered a new phase for virtual events in light of what's happening right now around the world, and **Enterprise Events Group** is here to help you get your stories online. Now in our 25th year, we have helped plan and execute live and virtual events for some of today's biggest brands and a bunch of up and comers, too. And we can do the same for you.

AMP UP YOUR VIRTUAL GAME

With the state of affairs globally right now, businesses are scrambling to up their virtual game to ensure crucial connections to customers and prospects are not lost. The pressure is on, but our message to our customers is “You can do this.”

You’ve been doing it all along. The focus now is transitioning your live event to a digital space. Your story still needs to be told in a captivating and compelling manner. And despite what you may think, the technology part is easy. Plug and play is the name of the game with virtual events today. This allows you to focus on your message and story—which should be the centerpiece of your live event and what you produce online anyway.

The bonus? Solidifying your virtual plan-of-attack now sets you up for greater success when we come out of this fog. Your event strategy will then cater to both online and live efforts, giving your customers the content the way they choose to receive it. And that bodes well for your brand in the form of increased trust and goodwill from those most important to your business.

As we said at the outset, an event is an event regardless of where it takes place. But moving from a live event to a virtual space does pose challenges to keep top-of-mind.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN GOING VIRTUAL

Engage and Win

Given your virtual event will sit in a web browser on your target audiences’ device of choice, they are a single click away from tuning out to your message. The good news is that today’s streaming platforms include engagement tools like live polling, chatrooms, and the like. And cool apps like Braindate™, Grip™, and Brella™ are changing the game for online gatherings and meet-ups in virtual environments.

Time is Valuable

We all don’t have enough of it, so you should make it your goal to ensure that the content and “show” you produce rewards your audience with relevant, exclusive content that isn’t available elsewhere. This could be in the form of special guest speakers and keynotes, product demo “sneak peeks”, and the like. And offering incentives such as free trials, training discounts, or passes to future events delivers the message that you value their time.

FOCUS ON YOUR EVENT STRATEGY

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Production Matters

Whether it's live or virtual, your **production** matters. Lighting, staging, and A/V are front and center when going virtual, so it's important that you have the right team to help you deliver your story in a compelling and creative way. Whether it's pre-taping "live" segments, livestreaming, or a combination of both (which we recommend), working with a crew that can help you deliver a tight, cohesive show is one of the biggest hurdles when transitioning to online events.

Focus on Your Story

Control, focus, and bite-size messages—that's the mantra when delivering content virtually to an audience one click away from tuning out. It's actually sound advice for live events, too, of course. So break up your content and engage with your audience to take them on a journey from Point A to Point B to Point C. Distractions happen, so be proactive in your content planning.

String together pre-taped video segments with livestreaming, and throw in interactive elements such as live polling, Q&As, or on-the-fly contests to keep everyone engaged. Most of your competitors are already online in some form or fashion, so best to jump in now if you've been hesitating.

Creativity that Captures

Creativity abounds in the virtual events space—not just in the possibilities of what you can do, but the technologies to back your creative aspirations have never been better. Think of your event as a live TV broadcast and compare what you're planning to do with your local news or entertainment program.

The same principles apply to telling *your* story. Video bumpers, animations, provocative video segments, and live banter keeps your audience watching. And don't forget that whatever you produce for your online event can be taken and re-edited and repurposed across all your other online channels post-show. This gives you broader reach, an amplified message, and more opportunities to bridge your virtual efforts with your live **event strategy** downstream.

TAKE COMMAND OF YOUR STORY AND CREATIVE

Think of your event as a live TV broadcast. The same principles apply to telling *your* story. Video bumpers, animations, and live banter (that is short and sweet) keeps your audience watching.

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THE 6 ESSENTIALS FOR GOING VIRTUAL

Depending on the type of event, scale, and audience, there are probably up to a dozen or so key elements you should consider when planning and executing a virtual event. EEG has boiled them down to the Top 6 for this white paper.

The “Essentials” include the (1) streaming platform you plan to deliver your event on, and the (2) registration system to get your attendees registered and to your digital hub. And once they get there, it’s all about the (3) content and the creative. As previously mentioned, an event is just an event whether virtual or live, so having other assets like (4) digital sponsors to offset costs and promote key partnerships/joint customer stories can play a big role in the overall success of your event. Increase your abilities to touch different segments of your target audience with a variety of content options.

The beauty of online platforms today is that every single click is (5) information you can leverage for follow-up. How long they stayed online with you, what they clicked when they were there, what they downloaded – all that data is immediately in your hands, so your follow-up is informed. We think of it as ‘cutting to the chase’ because it really is. Customers and prospects appreciate that.

Everything you produce can then be edited down and (6) repackaged for follow-on online efforts, landing pages, social media campaigns, etc. Repurposing content saves a huge amount of money but more importantly, your messages get amplified in a multitude of ways which only helps your sales and marketing efforts. Your CMO will thank you.

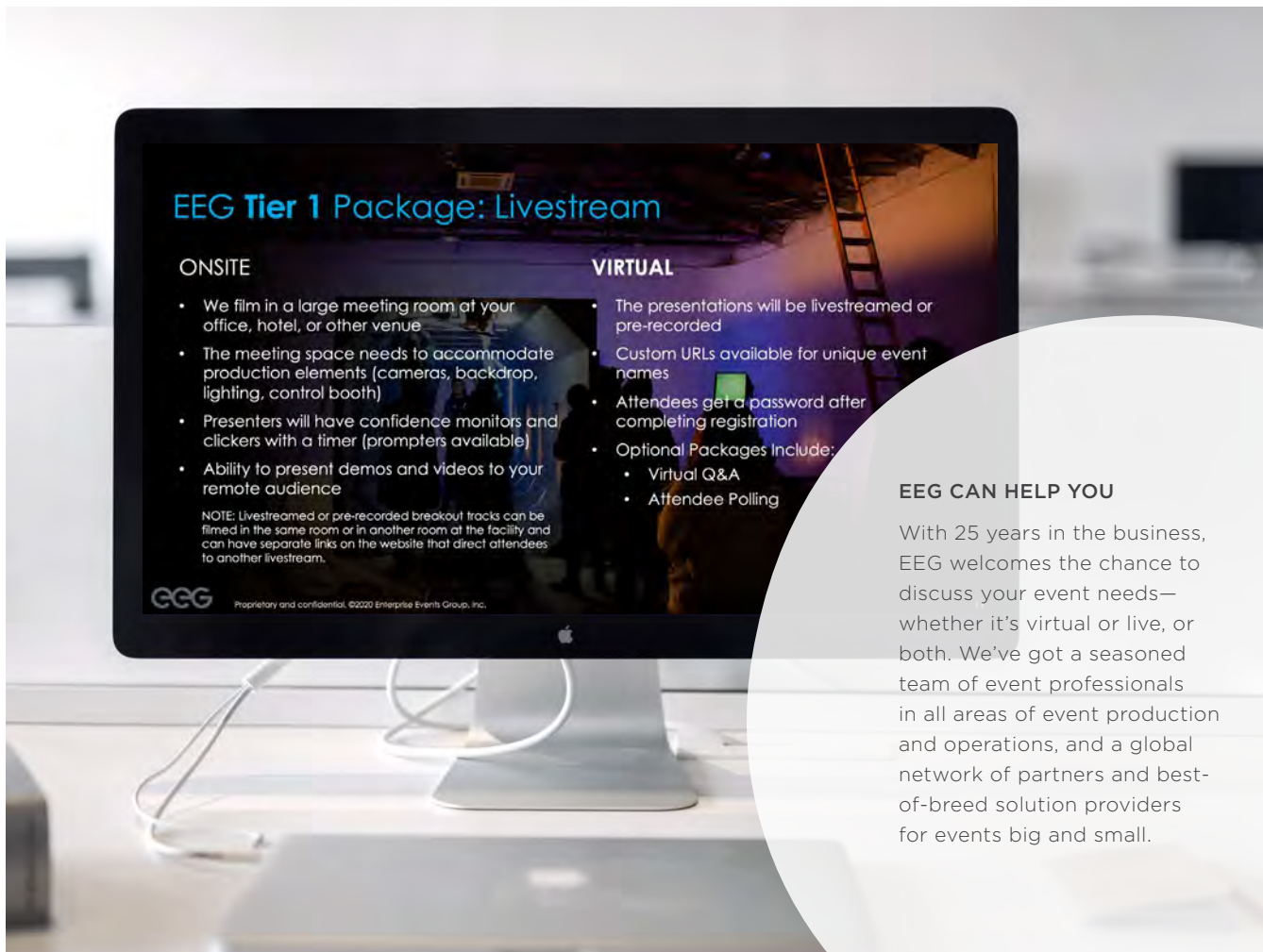
CLOSING: THE PROS AND CONS OF VIRTUAL EVENTS

Nothing replaces the power, connectedness, and impact of live events. However, virtual events should be part of your event strategy. The pros? The biggest plus is overall cost. No more room blocks, no more ballroom rentals or onsite signage...everything physical at F2F events goes away. There are fewer headaches without the worries of F&B issues, attendees stuck in traffic, and the inevitable day-of snafus of live events.

The real power of online events is the focus and control it gives you. With pre-tape segments in addition to livestreaming keynotes, the ability to fine-tune your story is front and center. And with cool videos and captivating creative, your capacity to share your story in a cohesive manner makes it that much more impactful. Finally, you’re only limited by the total number of your platform seats, so your audience can easily scale.

The drawbacks? F2F interactions and spontaneity with your most important customers are probably the biggest drawbacks. Another drawback is the ease at which attendees can lose attention and just click away. And we can’t forget that outside of our Silicon Valley bubble, technology can still be intimidating. Ensuring your attendees are equipped with info to mitigate problems on event day is an important step on your pre-event checklist.

Here’s the net-net: Live events move people in ways that are difficult to replicate online. However, with the right planning and a laser focus on telling your story succinctly and with great creativity, virtual events can and should be a powerful vehicle in these trying times.



EEG Tier 1 Package: Livestream

ONSITE

- We film in a large meeting room at your office, hotel, or other venue
- The meeting space needs to accommodate production elements (cameras, backdrop, lighting, control booth)
- Presenters will have confidence monitors and clickers with a timer (prompters available)
- Ability to present demos and videos to your remote audience

NOTE: Livestreamed or pre-recorded breakout tracks can be filmed in the same room or in another room at the facility and can have separate links on the website that direct attendees to another livestream.



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VIRTUAL

- The presentations will be livestreamed or pre-recorded
- Custom URLs available for unique event names
- Attendees get a password after completing registration
- Optional Packages Include:
 - Virtual Q&A
 - Attendee Polling

EEG CAN HELP YOU

With 25 years in the business, EEG welcomes the chance to discuss your event needs—whether it's virtual or live, or both. We've got a seasoned team of event professionals in all areas of event production and operations, and a global network of partners and best-of-breed solution providers for events big and small.

LET'S TALK!

Complete and submit our quick and easy **online form** to schedule a call with one of our Business Development team members. **EEG** can help you weather the storm. Stay safe out there.

ABOUT EEG

EEG is an award-winning global leader in the **event management** industry. Our seasoned, passionate team delivers exciting, inspiring events that embody and shape your brand. From boardrooms to stadiums and everywhere in-between, the EEG 360-degree approach delivers exceptional experiences. With an impressive 95% customer-retention rate, we serve Fortune 500 companies from diverse market sectors and have operated programs in more than 50 countries. Our account teams provide service in the areas of **event strategy**, creative/brand activations, **production**, full-service **event logistics**, and more.



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