

Freeman¹

Best practices


Virtual events behind the scenes

The right team and the right testing

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At a live event, it's always key to have the right team in place, from the event producer to the stage crew. There is only one chance to impress your audience and deliver a high-quality attendee experience.

What does this kind of team look like?

Here's what you should expect from your tech partner:

Quality assurance

Catches any performance issues before your attendees notice.

Development operations

Ensures proper processes are followed and communications are shared quickly across tech teams.

Customer support

Interacts with attendees to answer questions and resolve issues in a timely manner.

Understanding the virtual landscape

But more than just having the right team assembled, it's important to work with them to conduct thorough and detailed testing on every aspect of the site before, during, and after your event.

Top reasons virtual events fail

You can't plan for every possible interference, but a smart and seasoned team will help find critical errors and bugs at every stage of event execution to keep your virtual event from going offline.

1. The tech provider wasn't prepared for a high volume of traffic hitting the site at once.
2. Integrations (data coming together from different sources) fail.
3. Users abandon the experience due to slow page speeds, poor video or image quality, or a poor mobile experience.



01 Before the event

The trifecta of testing

It's common practice to test your site prior to launch — think of this as your rehearsal. Your tech team will ensure that they've tested for bugs, as well as site performance and scale. Thorough testing practices must be in place or issues could arise when your attendees arrive!

Automation Testing

In most cases, running a virtual event involves multiple tech providers exchanging data behind the scenes. This exchange of vital information is key to an attendee receiving the best experience possible. Automation testing quickly goes through thousands of individual pieces of data to ensure everything matches up. Imagine it like this: you're going through all of the name badges to quickly check they are all accurate and accounted for. Now, if only we could automate that in a live environment

Pro tip Some providers will run an automation test based on a sample set of data, like the first 1,000 records. But in order to catch every error, they need to be running tests on all of the data. Just because Bob's last name starts with "Z" doesn't mean his name badge doesn't count!

Load Testing

You can't plan a buffet lunch for 5,000 with the same setup you'd have for 50. In the same way, load testing simulates something like a lunchtime rush, ensuring the site is set up properly for the expected attendance. This involves detailed modeling to envision how users will interact with the site. For example, you can imagine that a large percentage of your site traffic will be viewing the livestream during the general session. Load tests must be carried out with very stringent success criteria — "good enough" doesn't work when you have one chance to make an impression.

Pro tip "Tech-spertise" isn't enough when it comes to targeted load testing. You need to work with a partner who deeply understands events and can model load tests after expected attendee behavior.

Browser Testing

This phase of testing compares the site experience across a range of devices and operating systems used by attendees. This helps ensure a consistent experience for attendees. Poor browser testing would be like planning an event for one venue, but actually hosting it in another — all of the same elements might be there, but may not work as seamlessly because the space is different. If attendees show up to a virtual event and can't navigate or access content, they'll most likely abandon the experience.

Pro tip We recommend testing on all popular browsers (Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Microsoft Edge) and all devices (desktop, tablet, mobile).

02 **Real-time monitoring**

During the event

Testing doesn't stop when your event starts. You'll need to make sure you have a team monitoring real-time site performance. Regular notifications and seamless communication are key to catching small errors before they become real issues. And if your attendees should experience any issues, you'll need a support team that's easily accessible and able to swiftly address the problem.



Synthetic monitoring

An active approach to monitoring your site. This means problems are fixed before your attendees even notice. Your QA team is there to make sure the user's experience is top-notch, with all pages live and active, and a high site speed even with lots of content to load.

Real user monitoring

Another tool used to understand how actual attendees (versus synthetic data) are using the site. It is used to evaluate trends and inform best practices for providing the best possible virtual event experiences.

Pro tip Make sure your virtual event provider has dedicated QA staff and provides real-time monitoring during your event. Measure them against our benchmarks: 3-5 second site response time / 99.99% site availability.

03 **What's next in your plan?**

After the event

After your keynotes and livestreamed content conclude, you will still likely have on-demand content available. Virtual event programs tend to space out content more, but your attendees' experience should not suffer just because all the content isn't happening at once. Synthetic monitoring should continue until the site comes down.

Choose the right tech team

Remember, a good technology partner will manage all of these details so you don't have to. The attendee experience is just as important when dealing with digital formats and virtual events as it is for an in-person event. Small errors can have a huge impact on the attendees' perception of the value of the event, and finding the right partner means they understand all the little details that make the difference between not just a bad experience and a good experience, but a good experience and a great experience. Those details can make or break how your attendee feels about your event and what they recall. Remember all of those surveys where attendees loved the event content, but the room was too cold? A good team can help you avoid the virtual equivalent!

Need a partner?

Whether you're looking to create a hybrid experience or a fully virtual event, it's key to have the right tools and teams in place for success. Freeman is a trusted partner in online events with solutions that can meet any event need. From content strategy to production to our all-in-one virtual event platform, we can help you meet your goals and create the perfect online experience for your attendees. Find out how we can manage and elevate your next virtual event.

Let's go!