



ON24

PLANNING AND RUNNING A HYBRID EVENT

ON24 MARKETING PLAYBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

In B2B marketing, the shift to digital — for both buyers and companies — has opened up opportunities to reach new audiences, measure performance and deliver significant impact to the bottom line.

However, making the most out of today's technology requires skills and knowledge that are different from the B2B marketing tactics of old. While we're still looking to build relationships with real people and drive revenue, there are now many more touchpoints and channels that influence the buyer's journey.

Fortunately, we're here to help. By sharing our own marketing playbooks, we want to reveal how we've grown our annual revenue to more than \$100 million and became a tech unicorn in the process.

How to use our playbooks:

The ON24 Marketing Playbooks break down the key steps to inspire your marketing efforts and campaigns. Some ways you can use this specific playbook include:

- ✓ Decide whether a hybrid event is the right choice for your company.
- ✓ Use the steps and checklists to plan your next hybrid event.
- ✓ Create and refine your own processes based on our suggestions.
- ✓ Share with your peers and coworkers to spark ideas and conversations.

WHAT'S IN THIS PLAYBOOK:

Professional marketers use the ON24 Digital Experience Platform to drive engagement and revenue. By delivering high-quality experiences and events that deliver insights and data, digital marketers can increase pipeline, scale results and transform the way brands connect with buyers.

While 2020 put face-to-face events on hold, our [Future of Events Report](#) found that 95% of B2B marketers believe that a hybrid approach will become more widely used in the coming years. In addition, three-quarters (74%) have a hybrid event planned for the year ahead.

However, delivering a hybrid event that offers both an immersive experience for virtual attendees and provides digital engagement options in-person requires thoughtful planning and execution.

This playbook distills the key steps we follow to plan, promote and optimize our own hybrid events. We also explain how a hybrid event can significantly improve your reach and the results you generate long after the event.

So what are you waiting for? Grab your coffee, put this playbook on your desk and start to make your hybrid event a success. We look forward to seeing the experiences you'll create.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN – WHAT IS A HYBRID EVENT AND DO YOU REALLY NEED ONE?

Whether it's the desire for human contact, or the noises made by those with a vested interest in seeing business practices return to what they were, many marketers have been thinking about resuming face-to-face interactions. While hybrid events look like a perfect solution for B2B marketers, they are not always the answer.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED SINCE 2020

2020 changed how the business world worked. With social distancing in place, professionals that would otherwise meet in person had to do so virtually. But through these changes, many valuable lessons were learned. When previously face-to-face events were brought online, attendee numbers exploded — [as Salesforce found out when it put its Sydney roadshow online and saw 80,000 attendees](#). And even though ON24 has always been online, [we saw webinar attendees grow by 251% in a single year](#).

This shift has been welcomed by both buyers and the marketers looking to reach them. [A study by McKinsey](#) found that more than 70% of B2B decision-makers prefer remote interactions or digital self-service. Our own [Future of Events Report](#) showed that 97% of B2B marketers are satisfied with the performance of their online events — and **78% agree that virtual events deliver higher ROI than physical events.**

However, marketers still want the chance to connect with buyers in person. Naturally, hybrid events offer the potential to offer the best of both worlds, combining the benefits of face-to-face and virtual interactions. Indeed, the Future of Events Report also revealed that **95% of B2B marketers believe that a hybrid approach will become more widely used in the coming years** and three-quarters (74%) have them planned for the coming year.

But the study also suggests that **B2B marketers might fail to make their hybrid events a success.** Just 24% claim to be adopting a new strategy in this area, while 33% will simply mirror their physical event strategy.

WHAT A HYBRID EVENT IS – AND WHAT IT ISN'T

Hybrid physical/digital events mean a lot of different things to different people. Unfortunately for many, a hybrid event is really just a physical event where the presentations are also streamed to a digital audience.

In these cases, the hybrid event is really only eventful for those physically at the venue. For a virtual audience, it's just staring at a screen without much else to do. What's missing for remote attendees is the experience.

[A true hybrid event means delivering a great event experience for every attendee, regardless of whether they are there physically or digitally.](#)

This means **your digital experience should be just as immersive as your physical space**, from the event branding to all of the available activities. Meanwhile, **the physical experience must be as interactive as the digital experience** — and deliver engagement data that will help you improve both future events and marketing results.

Because delivering a successful, high-quality hybrid event requires a significant investment in both time and money, you should think carefully about whether it is the right approach.

WHEN YOU SHOULD CONSIDER A HYBRID EVENT

In short, you should use a hybrid event when you have a strategy to provide both virtual and physical audiences with an engaging event experience. But that's a bit like saying you should only start painting when you've successfully reproduced a Van Gogh.

So what scenarios lend themselves well to hybrid events? Here are five scenarios:

- 1. When you want to increase the reach of an event.**
Hybrid events are a great solution for extending the reach of a live event. They help you to involve your extended community, include top-of-funnel prospects and can provide a virtual participant with a budget and/or travel-friendly means of participating.
- 2. When you want to deliver a large event across multiple geographies.** Running an onsite event alone limits your brand's reach — even if it's a massive user conference. A hybrid approach changes this dynamic and allows you to scale your event anywhere.
- 3. When you want to extend the life of an event.**
Events have a predictable shelf-life. You promote them, run them, then end them over the course of weeks or months, depending on the size of the event. Hybrid, however, changes this dynamic. Sessions can be accessed on-demand long after the live event and attract new registrants, while those who previously attended can revisit presentations and access supporting content such as slides, white papers and more.
- 4. When you are running training or enablement events.** Training and enablement events are essential to both upskill your staff and provide value to your customers, but not everyone is able to attend a one-off event. A hybrid event solves this problem by empowering remote teams to tune in and participate in the training, no matter where they are or when they're watching. They can also ask questions, download resources and come back whenever they want.
- 5. When you want to offer more value and reach to sponsors and partners.** Hybrid events are also a great way to incentivize others to invest in and participate in your activities. That's because hybrid events provide two unique opportunities: first, the ability to brand a dedicated digital environment; second, the ability to measure engagement and immediately identify promising leads.

WHEN YOU SHOULD NOT RUN A HYBRID EVENT

However, there are occasions when a hybrid event would be an inappropriate use of time and resources. Below are examples where you may see more success with an all-digital approach:

- 1. When you cannot provide an equal experience for all attendees.** First and foremost, avoid running a hybrid event when you know you cannot provide an equally engaging experience for attendees.

For example, if virtual attendees cannot interact, cannot engage and are generally treated as an afterthought, then going all-in on physical tactics may be a more appropriate approach. There are also times when — by its nature — an analog-only approach is suitable. These examples can include small networking events and white-glove experiences where you need to pull out all the stops to impress critical accounts.

- 2. When you need an experience fast.** Hybrid events are not a great tactic to fall back on at the last minute. They take a lot of planning and a lot of coordination to pull off right — and if you don't plan, you risk alienating your virtual audience. If you need an event fast, go digital.

- 3. When you don't want to add to the expense/travel restrictions of hybrid/in-person events.**

Let's face it: for many, travel to a live event is tedious, uncomfortable and sometimes expensive. That's not to mention potential travel restrictions given health conditions around the globe. If either your budget is limited, or you believe that your audience will not want to travel to an in-person event, stick to digital-only approaches.

ON24 TIP: MAKE SURE THAT A HYBRID EVENT WILL PROVIDE THE BEST RETURN ON ENGAGEMENT.

When audiences engage digitally, they provide data that allows you to personalize and accelerate their buyer journeys — driving increased marketing-sourced revenue. To find out how brands such as Zendesk and SAP use digital engagement to drive demand, [download our ebook on “Going Virtual: How 10 Companies Maximize Their Return on Investment.”](#)

DEFINE A HYBRID-SPECIFIC STRATEGY, OBJECTIVES AND EXPERIENCE

If you've decided a hybrid event makes sense, delivering success requires clarity on what you are looking to achieve before committing time and resources. This starts with having a solid strategy, clear objectives and an understanding of the experience you want to deliver.

START WITH YOUR OVERALL MARKETING STRATEGY AND RESOURCES

Your hybrid strategy should not stand separately from your other activities. It should tap into your overall marketing strategy and align with your broader goals and objectives. As such, revisit your existing marketing strategy and look for opportunities where a hybrid event can help.

In addition to looking at your overall marketing strategy, look at the resources and budget you have available and weigh those against the expected return. By doing so, you'll be able to check the feasibility of producing a hybrid event and the return on engagement your hybrid event will need.

DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE AND KEY MESSAGES

The first step in any marketing strategy is to identify your target audience. It's no different when creating a hybrid event. Who exactly are you looking to reach? What type of organizations do they work at? What criteria can you use to segment and target them?

Keep in mind that the cost is highest for the physical event, so think carefully about the location and offer. Consider the cost of travel and craft an offer to entice physical attendees. Another element you may want to consider is matching the buying stage of an attendee with the experience they're provided.

Indeed, there may be several target audiences you wish to reach — and a hybrid event that contains personalized tracks for virtual attendees can help with that goal.

It helps to map key messages to the buyer's journey. By doing so, you can more easily address the needs of an audience at a certain stage and help move them down the funnel. Sit down, put yourself in your customer's shoes, and ask a few questions that could help them move along their

buying journey, such as:

- “How can I improve my organization?”
- “What results have others seen with this solution?”
- “How can I get more out of your solutions?”

At the awareness stage, make your audience broadly aware of their own challenges and how to think differently about them. For those at the consideration stage, be clear on why your product or service should be on their solutions shortlist. Finally, for existing customers, identify how they can get the most out of their investment with you.

Similarly, your speaker strategy will be different according to whichever stages of the buyer journey you're targeting. For example, you might want to consider technical experts if you're targeting skilled professionals close to making a purchase. To widen your reach at the awareness stage, an industry influencer or a leader at a well-known brand might help draw people in.

With your virtual audience, you can think more broadly and attract a wider audience using personalization and localization. Just like with your physical audience, map their experience and messaging to their buyer journey and make sure it aligns with their needs.

ON24 TIP: TIE YOUR HYBRID EVENT TO YOUR OVERALL LEAD-TO-REVENUE PROCESS.

Organizations with a clearly defined and agreed-upon process for the buyer journey will find it easier to develop their hybrid event plans. If you want to create or revisit your existing processes, [check out our workshop with Heinz Marketing on “A Playbook For Building Predictable Pipeline.”](#)

SET OBJECTIVES BASED ON STRATEGY

You probably wouldn't go on a vacation without mapping where you want to go and what you want to experience. The same goes for planning a hybrid event. Understanding whether your event will succeed requires that you first define what success will look like for you and your target audience.

Determine what you want to achieve. For example, are you looking to book demos? Do you want to target key accounts? Or, maybe you are trying to drive engagement. Is it top-of-funnel, middle-of-funnel or bottom-of-funnel? Figuring out what your KPIs and objectives are early on will help inform your overall strategy. Ideally, these goals should be SMART:

- **Specific** — In a statement, what do you want to achieve?
- **Measurable** — How will you quantify success? What KPI are you influencing?
- **Achievable** — Can you realistically meet or contribute to your objective?
- **Relevant** — Why does this objective really matter?
- **Timed** — By when do you need to achieve your objective?

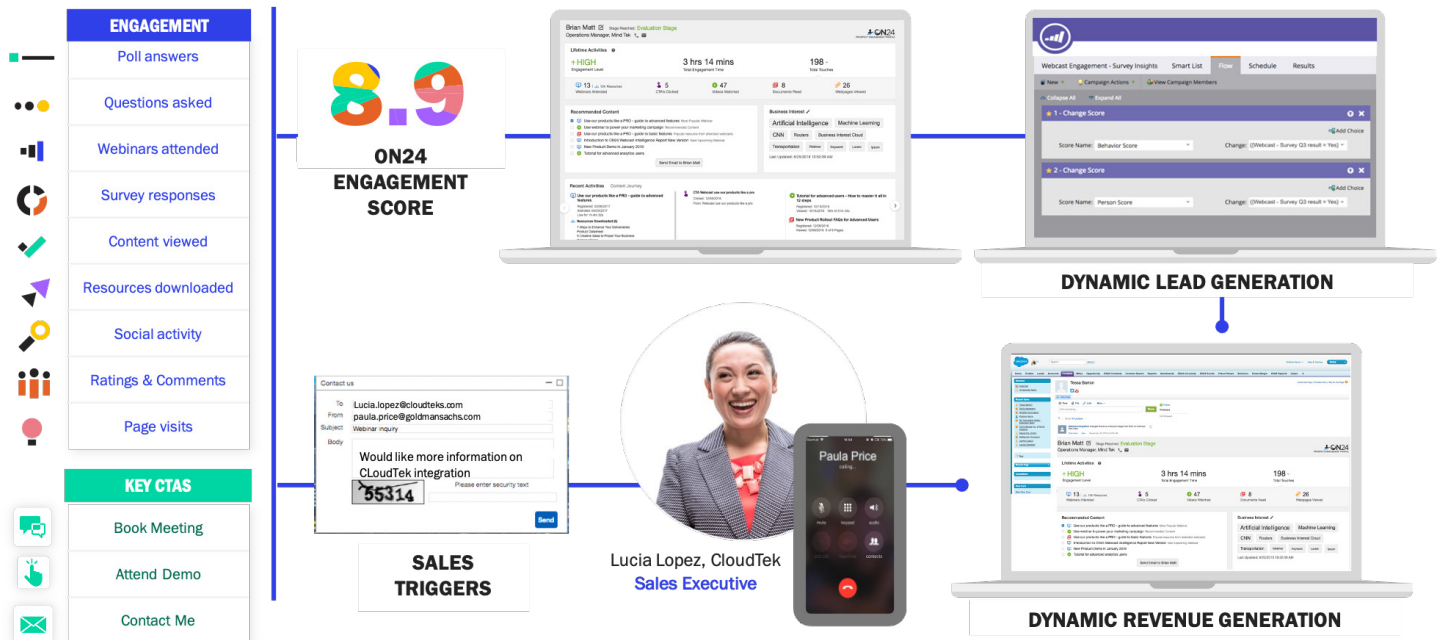
Not only will you want to set objectives and KPIs for before, during and after the event (including on-demand viewers),

but you will also split them up by virtual and physical attendees.

It's also important to align with those who interact with your event's registrants and attendees. In most cases, this will be your sales team, but this may also include your coworkers in customer success. Let your sales team know what you are doing and share your goals and objectives with them. This will help with event follow-up and empower sales to act as valuable partners. For example, they can offer suggestions, promote the event and avoid conflicts with any existing sales plans. Remember: coordinating with the wider organization will improve the overall experience for your target audience.

Finally, make sure you plan your hybrid event with data in mind. This type of event provides a rich stream of data that goes beyond who registered and who attended. This data can be integrated into your marketing automation systems and used after your event is finished.

When you have determined your goals and KPIs, think about which data points to evaluate to measure success. For example, if a prospect has a high **Engagement Score**, this may influence the lead score or determine what happens after the webinar. By choosing your metrics early on, you'll be able to track them throughout the program.

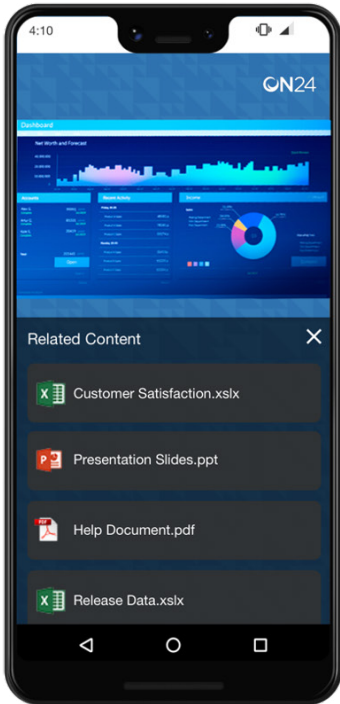


DEFINE THE KIND OF EXPERIENCES YOU WANT TO OFFER

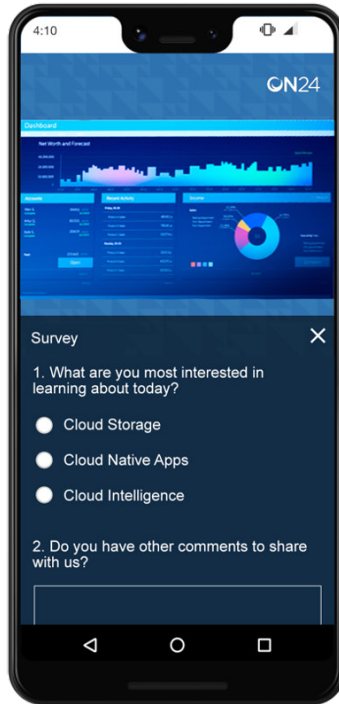
After nailing down what your target audience is and determining the objectives and KPIs that will act as measures of the success of your hybrid event, it's time to define what experiences you will offer your audiences both at the physical event and for those who will visit virtually.

For example, consider adding interactive digital elements to your physical events. This can include providing in-person audiences with the ability to participate in the same polls, Q&As sessions, surveys, CTAs as their virtual peers.

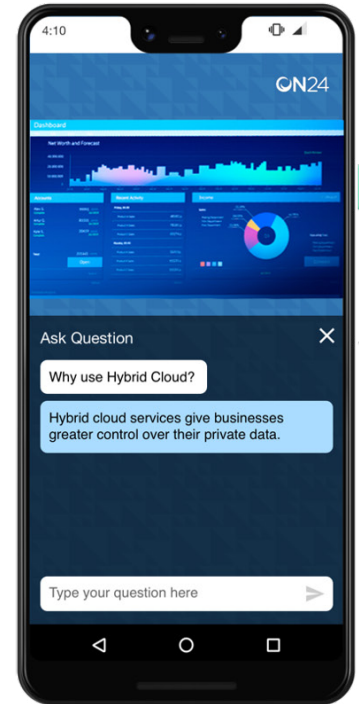
IN-PERSON ATTENDEE EXPERIENCE



Download Content



Polls & Surveys

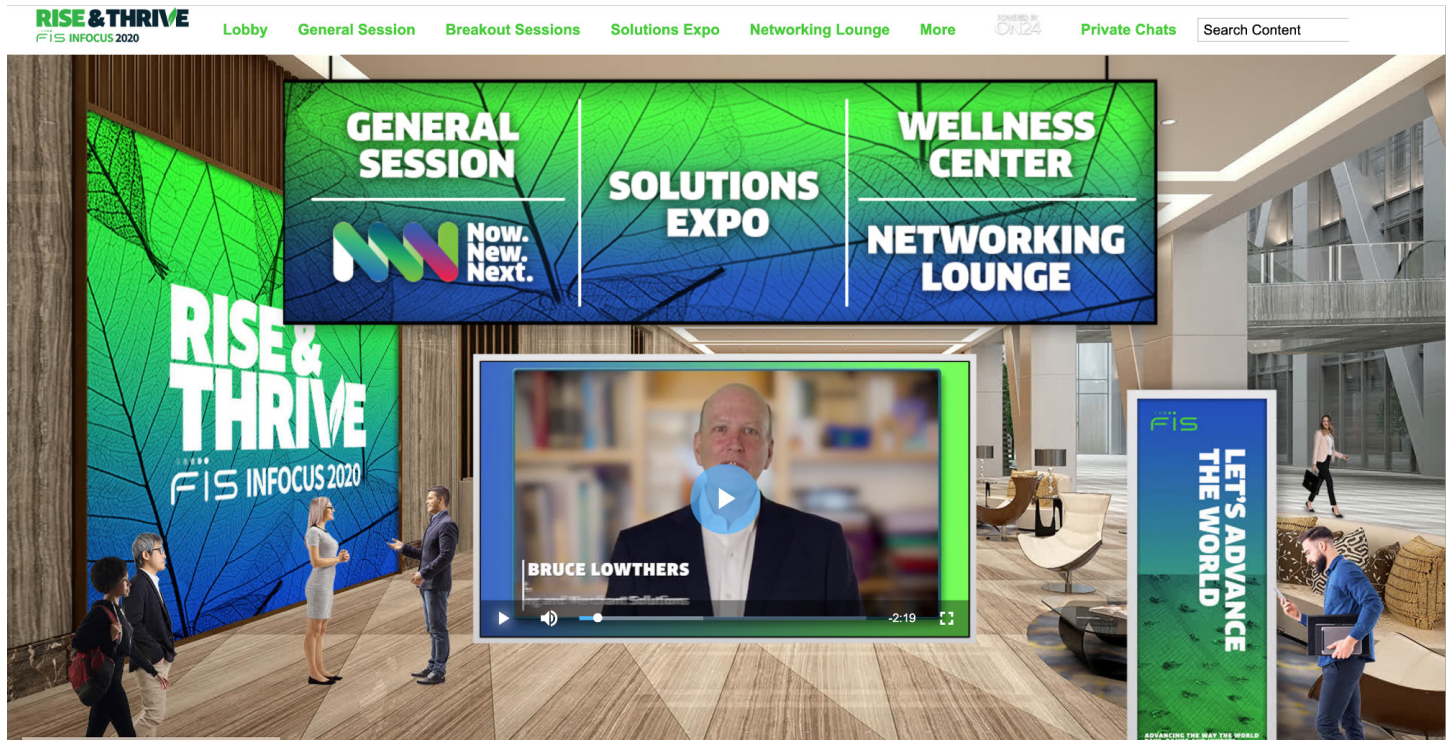


Q&A, Chat

There are also several options for creating an engaging environment and experience for virtual attendees as well.

For example, you can go all-out and treat your virtual attendees to 3D multi-room environments that can replicate the actual physical experience, including having the hall, break-rooms and anything else your physical event provides.

There's also the option of using 2D environments. These flat but polished environments can either be a single room or multiple pages where attendees can access all the event has to offer. Or maybe you'll want to use a single webinar-based console to present the entire experience.



ON24 TIP: ATTEND OTHER HYBRID AND VIRTUAL CONFERENCES TO GAIN FURTHER INSPIRATION.

There are so many different ways you can bring the physical event to your virtual attendees. To find out how others have used these kinds of experiences, check out the [10 Great Virtual Conferences You Have to See](#) lookbook. It's sure to spark some creative ideas you can put into action for your hybrid event.

OUTLINE A THEME AND AGENDA THAT WILL ATTRACT AND ENGAGE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCES

At this stage, you should look to develop an idea of the content you will offer for your hybrid event. This will be based on themes that are attractive to your target audience, the experience you want to offer, the opportunities for engagement and interaction, and of course your objectives.

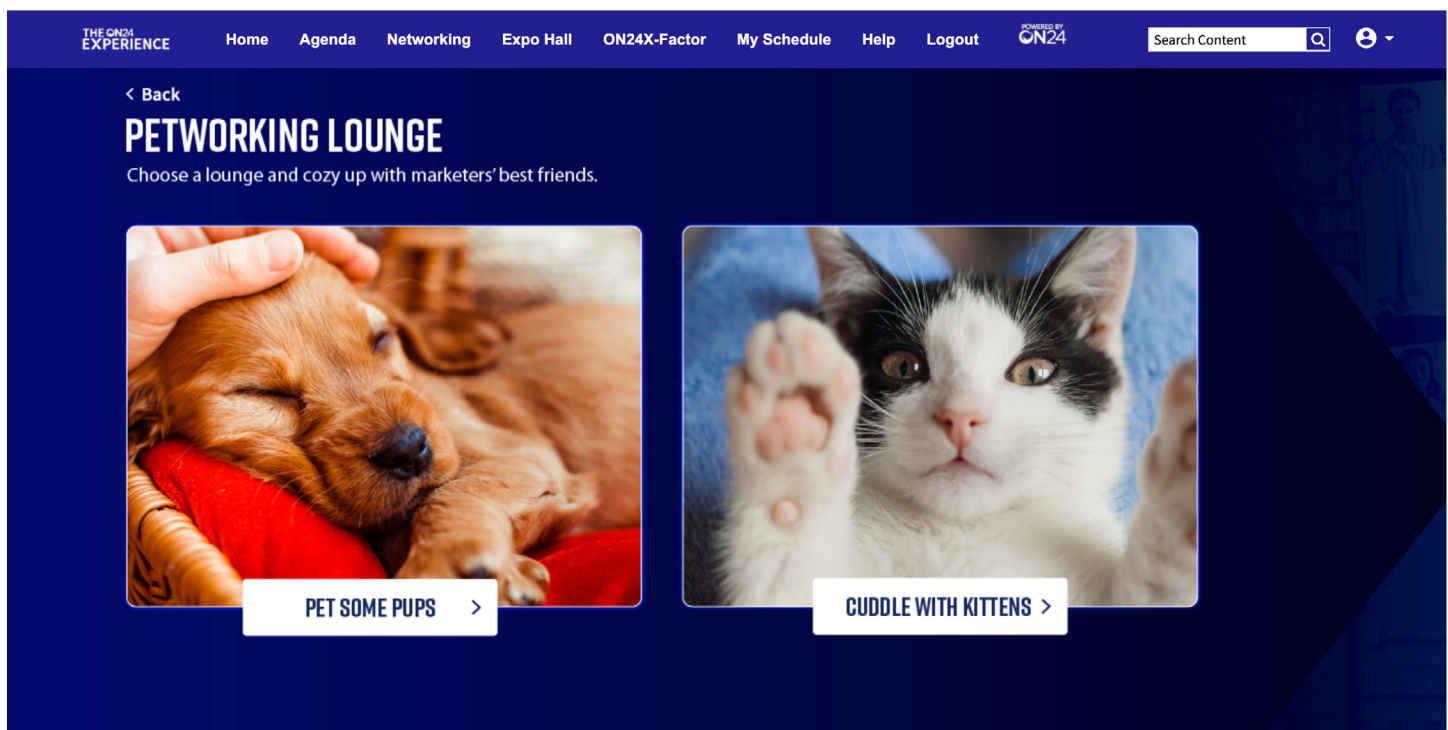
Once you have some ideas, check them by asking yourself the following three questions:

1. Are the title, theme and sessions compelling enough to drive registration and attendance — both physically and virtually?
2. Does the agenda offer the opportunity to drive engagement and interaction, collecting data as a result?
3. Can we achieve our SMART objectives with this theme and agenda?

If not, revise accordingly until you can be confident that the time, effort and money you put into your hybrid event will pay off.

It may be helpful to create a flowchart detailing the different routes your audiences can take, based on whether they are physical or virtual, the geographies they are in, and the other segmentation criteria that will help personalize their experience.

Finally, remember to include items just for fun or excitement! As an example, ON24 turned a virtual networking lounge into a chance to cozy up with some furry friends.



The screenshot shows a web interface for a virtual networking lounge. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the text 'THE ON24 EXPERIENCE' on the left and 'Home', 'Agenda', 'Networking', 'Expo Hall', 'ON24X-Factor', 'My Schedule', 'Help', and 'Logout' in the center. On the right side of the navigation bar, there is a search bar labeled 'Search Content' with a magnifying glass icon and a user profile icon. Below the navigation bar, the page title is '< Back' followed by 'PETWORKING LOUNGE' in large, bold, white letters. Underneath the title, there is a subtitle: 'Choose a lounge and cozy up with marketers' best friends.' The main content area features two large, square images. The left image shows a close-up of a person's hands petting a small, brown puppy. Below this image is a white button with the text 'PET SOME PUPS >'. The right image shows a black and white kitten with its paws raised. Below this image is a white button with the text 'CUDDLE WITH KITTENS >'. The background of the interface is a dark blue gradient.

Once you know exactly what you want to achieve with your hybrid event, you can now start the hard work — preparing and planning to make your hybrid event a reality.

PLAN THE END-TO-END EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGEMENT TOUCHPOINTS

With your theme and agenda set and matched against your hybrid event objectives, you can now start to plan the end-to-end experience that your audiences will see.

However, the experience isn't just about the event itself. It includes everything from the first touches to drive awareness and registration, through the interactions and conversations they will have afterward.

Before the event

The interactions you have with your target audience before the event will play a significant part in its success — from driving registration and attendance to making them ready to have sales conversations during and after the event.

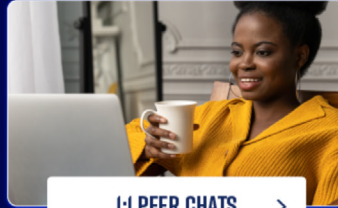
Ask yourself the following questions:

- 1. What channels are we going to use to promote the event and drive registrations?** Examples might include email, paid media, phone outreach from sales, promotions from other partners and sponsors. For more tips on promotion, [read the ON24 Marketing Playbook on Webinar Promotion Strategy](#) — which can also be used to reach physical attendees.
- 2. What will the registration experience look like for each of our target audiences?** If your event sign-up page isn't compelling, your ability to drive registrations will be limited. Furthermore, you want to ensure that each potential registrant sees the sign-up page that is best for them — for example, there may be little point in someone being driven to register for a physical event if they are unlikely to travel there.
- 3. How will we remind and incentivize people to attend the event?** At the most basic level, you should set automatic reminder emails before the event and offer “add to calendar” links or calendar invites. You may also wish to involve your sales and customer success teams or key members of staff in sending out personal reminders. For incentives, you may wish to offer a coupon code for lunch delivery for live virtual attendees and unique offers/prizes for both physical and virtual attendees.
- 4. What experiences and content can we offer in the run-up to the event?** As well as tactical plays to boost attendance, the period before the event offers an opportunity to drive excitement, word-of-mouth and further chances to interact with your audiences. Consider sending out teaser content to registrants such as video clips, suggest on-demand webinars or even direct mail.
- 5. On the day before the event starts, what can we offer early attendees?** For physical events, early attendees will typically grab their name badge and a coffee before joining a group to network, chat one-on-one with another attendee or strike up a conversation with sales. Look to offer a similar experience for your virtual attendees.

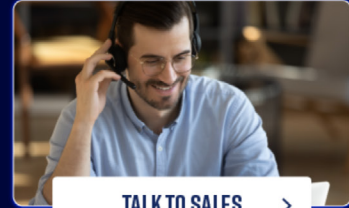
ENGAGEMENT LOUNGE



GROUP NETWORKING >



1:1 PEER CHATS >



TALK TO SALES >

More ways to engage!

NETWORKING >

VIRTUAL PHOTOBOOTH >

WEBINERD COMMUNITY >

ON24 TIP: CONSIDER USING DIRECT MAIL TO DELIVER PHYSICAL ELEMENTS TO VIRTUAL ATTENDEES.

Just because someone is watching an event virtually, it doesn't mean they can't get hands-on. Methods to consider might include a physical notebook with templates to complete during a workshop, drinks for a wine-tasting masterclass, or even a recipe kit to use during a session with a celebrity chef! To hear more examples, [watch our on-demand webinar on Activating Your Hybrid Engagement Strategy](#).

During the event

With your theme and agenda in place, think about the engagement touchpoints you will offer within every session. This will not only improve the overall experience, but also generate data that you can use to measure the [digital body language](#) of your attendees.

For both your physical and virtual attendees, consider using the following:

- **Polls and surveys** — which any attendees can answer using a smartphone, tablet or computer.
- **Live Q&A** — which can be answered on stage by the speaker or event host.

- **Content downloads and links** — so attendees can access the slides, supporting content or dive deeper into a topic.
- **Group chat** — so both virtual and physical attendees can talk live with each other.
- **Calls-to-action** — so any attendee can sign up for a demo, a future event or a meeting with sales.

Think creatively about the above and how they can apply to any session. For example, if you have a wine tasting for a happy hour, use polls so both physical and virtual attendees can score the wine. Likewise, for a post-event music set, a live chat or Q&A can be used to submit requests to the DJ.

After the event

Once the event is over, the engagement shouldn't stop. Whether attendees were physical or virtual, watched live or viewed sessions on demand, the time after the event is critical to help you achieve your objectives.

Questions to ask yourself include:

- **Who will get a follow-up from sales and customer success based on their engagement and profile?** A hybrid event provides many ways to read the digital body language of your audience. Figure out the elements that identify someone as sales-ready.
- **What data can we use to personalize email and other follow-ups?** For those who aren't quite sales-ready, you can still progress the buyer's journey. As an example,

you could use a survey question from the event to add a prospect to a nurture path or send them to a relevant content hub.

- **What content and engagement options will be available after the event?** As well as being available to watch sessions on-demand, think more broadly about unique content experiences that are only available to those attending the event.

For example, ON24's "After the Webinar" event is a lower-pressure after-party, where the audience can ask questions and engage in discussion with our host. It's like a virtual version of the lobby at an in-person conference. It can offer further resources and information, but sales representatives can use the space to start valuable conversations.



DEFINE THE DATA AND TECHNOLOGY TO POWER THE WHOLE HYBRID EXPERIENCE – BEFORE, AFTER AND DURING THE EVENT

With the vision for your hybrid event in place, make sure to connect with your marketing or revenue operations team (or whoever is responsible for your CRM and marketing automation systems) to get agreement on the data and technology that will power your hybrid event.

Points to share with them include:

- **Your hybrid event objectives.** Providing this early on will help your operations team to suggest methods you might not have previously considered, or identify areas for improvement.
- **The audiences you want to reach and what data you will use to segment and define them.** Consider including account names, geography or region, lead or account score, firmographic criteria and previous event engagement.
- **The channels you want to use for promotion.** Whether you'll use email, paid media, direct mail, or all of these and more, each requires different data and requires different technology.
- **The experiences you want each audience segment to have before and during the event.** At its most basic, a hybrid event will segment into physical and virtual attendees. But you may also have specific tracks based on industry or sessions that you want to be localized for virtual attendees in markets far from the physical event. Don't forget to include the registration experiences you want for each segment.
- **The experiences and engagement you want after the event, based on the data you want to collect from the event.** Discuss how you want to identify in-market buyers for sales follow-up or the nurture content you want to send to those early in their buying journey.
- **Your ideas for the technology platforms you plan to use.** While your operations team should already know your core marketing technology and tools, don't assume they know what you want to use for the hybrid event. By raising it now, you can reduce the likelihood of any issues and help them to look for solutions.
- **How you want to protect data and gain consent where needed.** Many event vendors control the use of your attendee data, collect it for their own purposes or have limited options to gain consent or opt-in.
- **What you can do as a marketing team and what you absolutely need their help with.** Those in marketing or revenue operations often have a long list of competing priorities that they have to deal with. By being clear on what you or your partners/colleagues can take on and what you must have from them, you increase your chances of buy-in and getting everything done together.

In terms of technology for your hybrid event experiences, ON24 has several products that can support your objectives and the experiences you want to offer your audiences.

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Create engaging event experiences with seamless opportunities to connect audiences, nurture attendee-to-attendee networking, 1:1 sales meetings, Q&A sessions and more.

WEBCAST ELITE

Create and deliver engaging audience experiences with live, simulative or on-demand webinars that captivate audiences with interactive engagement and conversion tools to extend their content consumption and buyer journeys.

ENGAGEMENT HUB

Create an engaging, dynamic and content-rich hub that audiences can reach on-demand both before, during and after your hybrid event. Provide the resources your audiences need — from webinars and reports to videos and blog posts — when they need it.

TARGET

Create personalized content experiences for your attendees that showcase tailored content and accelerate buying journeys.

INTELLIGENCE

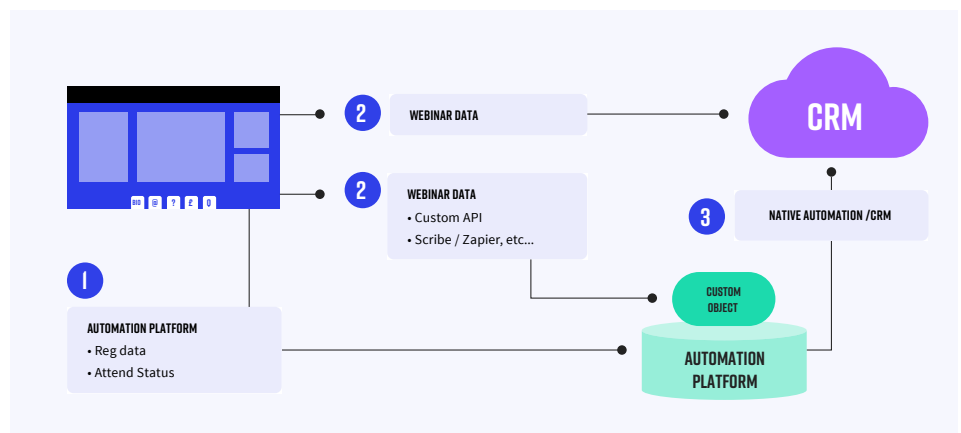
Track and analyze engagement at the individual and account level across all your events and sessions, from registration to attendance to content consumption. Know how engaging your content is, easily report on, and share results with a single, dynamic web link.

CONNECT

Seamlessly integrate ON24 engagement data across your tech stack, helping you and your operations team to inform, orchestrate and trigger actions before, during and after any event.

Furthermore, make sure your operations team has already integrated your event technology into your CRM and marketing automation platform or will develop it before the event. At its most basic level, an event delivered through a single webinar experience can collect registration, attendance and engagement data.

INTEGRATE DATA INTO MAP + CRM



ON24 TIP: USE NATIVE CONNECTORS AND INTEGRATIONS TO QUICKLY GET DATA IN AND OUT OF YOUR EVENT PLATFORM.

Even if an event platform offers an open API, developing custom integrations takes time and skills that you might not have. To make things simple for both marketing and operations, use native integrations such as **ON24 Connect** to speed up your processes and ensure your engagement data is available where you need it.

BE CLEAR ON PEOPLE AND PROCESS

Before you start in earnest, it makes sense to ensure that the key people you need are available to help you pull your hybrid event together.

When recruiting speakers and presenters, remember that you can pre-record their sections and deliver them as simulive experiences on the day for virtual-only sessions.

This can help you offer a wider availability for speakers to participate and reduce the chance that technical issues will get in the way.

Also, make sure your other colleagues and partners are available for your planned agenda. These may include:

- Your marketing colleagues or agency.
- Design and creative.
- Sales, customer success and revenue operations.
- Product experts.

- External partners such as agencies, event organizers, AV team, your venue manager, and catering.

In addition, once you have secured availability and buy-in from the people who will help you put your event together, make sure you are all clear on the process, specifically:

- Who will project manage and supervise the hybrid event and its key components?
- What are the key tasks and responsibilities for each person and team?
- When do the key tasks and actions need to happen?
- What are the key handoffs and how does this happen? For example, handing over qualified leads from marketing to sales, the transition from a live to on-demand events, the process for localizing the hybrid event.

ON24 TIP: UPLOAD PRE-RECORDED AND EXISTING CONTENT IN ADVANCE TO SAVE TIME AND PREVENT ISSUES.

Digital event technology provides a way to prepare many of the normal elements for an event well in advance. From pre-recording sessions using simulive to uploading poll questions and downloadable content, use these options to free up your time in the chaotic period before the physical event date.

PREPARE THE PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL LOGISTICS

Finally, make sure the logistics are in place to ensure your hybrid event goes smoothly for both physical and virtual attendees. Some areas to think about are included in the table below:

PHYSICAL LOGISTICS

- Identifying and securing the venue location and rooms, plus any catering.
- Ensuring good internet connectivity (bandwidth, failsafe connections) for both the event team and attendees.
- Checking AV and any broadcast to virtual attendees.
- Plans for any apres-event (e.g. drinks/dinner).
- Travel arrangements for staff, speakers and attendees.
- Briefings for moderators, speakers and other key staff.
- Arranging creation and delivery of any other physical items such as marketing collateral or pop-up stands — including any timelines or specifications from those creating and printing this material.

VIRTUAL LOGISTICS

- Running tech checks and dry runs with any speakers or event hosts.
- Testing data, technology and process to ensure all is moving smoothly.
- Testing and checking the attendee experience based on segment.
- Pre-recording content where possible and relevant.
- Localization for virtual events in other regions or countries.
- Organizing any direct mail or physical items for virtual attendees.

CREATE THE MAIN EXPERIENCES AND ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS

Delivering worthwhile hybrid experiences requires many components, each of which should both visually delight your attendees and encourage them to engage. Follow these steps to make that happen.

DESIGN THE CREATIVE IDENTITY AND ASSETS

You have several options when it comes to giving your hybrid event an identity. At its most basic, your hybrid event can have exactly the same visual look and feel as your own brand, the same key messages and use existing assets and material with little modification.

However, given that the production of a hybrid event requires a significant investment — and can produce a significant pay-off long after the event date — you may wish to consider giving your event a particular identity or design.

Be clear on your event identity

Before you have any assets designed, you should define the look and feel of your event. It may be very much the same as your brand's current tone and identity, or you can make it a distinctive and unique sub-brand with particular appeal to your target audiences.

Ask yourself the following questions before taking any steps forward:

- **What do you want the audience to feel and experience?** If the identity of your parent brand has a significantly different tone and personality to the experience you want to deliver, a new event identity may help.

- **Does having a significantly different identity for the event help you with your objectives?** If the answer to this is no, it will likely not make sense to invest significant time and money into a new event identity.
- **Are there any regions or audience segments that we should consider?** For example, when reaching audiences in different regions, cultural considerations should be made to make sure any new identity doesn't result in embarrassment or damage to your parent brand. This should also apply to the name or acronym of your hybrid event, which could sound very different before or after translation. Similarly, heavily regulated or more conservative industries may require more caution.
- **What other events, trademarks and brands do we want to be clearly differentiated from?** Make sure anyone who designs your event identity doesn't accidentally create a logo or identity similar to a competitor or a brand you don't want to be associated with.

With these points in mind, speak to your brand and design managers. Whether or not your hybrid event will have a new identity, they can either create or share guidelines and specifications for the rest of your event.

Once you have made a decision on your event's brand, look to include the following elements where needed when briefing in the design of your event materials:

- Event name (including any localized variations).
- Tagline and key messages for the event.
- Details on any segments that require personalized or localized assets (for example, a different start time for virtual attendees in different time zones).
- Agenda(s) or tracks for each segment.
- The brand identity specifications for your event — especially if they differ from your main brand.

Assets to consider for design:

Use the below list as a suggestion of assets to include for your hybrid event. Note that the digital assets can also be used in-person and vice versa where relevant.

PHYSICAL ASSETS

- Stands and signage
- Name badges
- Printed collateral
- Promotional items, gifts and swag (also send these to virtual attendees!)

DIGITAL ASSETS

- Registration pages
- Confirmation emails
- Images for use in social, email, display ads and any other promotional channels
- Virtual experience console backgrounds, icons and calls-to-action
- Presentation deck design
- Content hubs and personalized pages for before, during and after the event
- Teaser videos and promo reels
- Any variations on the above based on attendee experience (virtual or physical, live or on demand, regional or localized)

To help you with your promotion and digital experience assets, below is a list of the items that ON24 creates for each virtual experience and webinar.

WEBINAR PROMOTIONAL ASSETS

SUBITEMS	SPECS	ASSET COPY	ASSET CREATIVE
Blog	500x300	Webinar Title	
Elite Login Live	471x381	Webinar Title Date + Time CTA Register Now	
Elite Login OD	478x106	Webinar Title CTA Watch Now	
Email Header Live	650x200	Webinar Title CTA Register Now	
Email Header OD	650x200	Webinar Title CTA Watch Now	
Email Thumbnail	500x300		Transparent
Facebook Live	1200x628	Webinar Title Date + Time CTA Register Now	
Facebook OD	1200x628	Webinar Title CTA Watch Now	
Featured Content Live	500x300		
Featured Content OD	500x300		
Linkedin Live	1200x627	Webinar Title Date + Time CTA Register Now	
Linkedin OD	1200x627	Webinar Title CTA Watch Now	
Thumbnail	500x300		Thumbnail BG
Twitter Live	1024x576	Webinar Title Date + Time CTA Register Now	
Twitter OD	1024x576	Webinar Title CTA Watch Now	
Upcoming Webinar	300x500		
Webinar Title Card	1950x1080		

ON24 TIP: SAVE AND REPURPOSE YOUR CONSOLE DESIGNS AS TEMPLATES FOR FUTURE USE.

If you've done the hard work in ensuring your virtual experiences are laid out correctly and look visually appealing, make future events easier by saving them as a template. To get a hand on designing yours, [download our selection of templates for your next virtual experience.](#)

DESIGN THE PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE

Assuming you have decided on a venue or location for the in-person element of your hybrid event, make sure everything is where it should be to make sure your physical attendees have the best experience possible.

When creating the floorplan and deciding on the layout, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Is there sufficient wifi coverage where attendees will be present — and are the login details prominently advertised?** Without an internet connection, your physical attendees will not be able to engage digitally and you will miss out on the chance to capture key data.
- **Can physical attendees easily access digital engagement options — and is there a compelling reason for them to do so?** Don't assume links sent to an email inbox will be easy to find. Instead, consider using and displaying short URLs or QR codes that direct to a single page where physical attendees can join any of the sessions on their mobile devices or laptops. Equally, make sure there's a good reason for them to join digitally — tell them about the further content and assets they can get online and consider offering prizes or other incentives to participate in polls, surveys or Q&A.
- **Is the attendee engagement data available to all key staff?** For example, if an attendee asks a question, or if high-value contacts are showing strong engagement, your sales and marketing team should easily be able to take action.
- **Do we have recharging options for attendees?** Consider distributing charged, branded battery packs or offer charging facilities near your sales or demo stand.
- **What signage is needed and where should we place it?** For example, if your event is at a large hotel or venue where people can easily get lost, make sure signage directs them clearly to your event. Also, consider using signage to link to the digital engagement options.
- **Where will physical collateral be given to attendees?** For example, you might choose to hand everything over at registration in a tote bag or leave much of it on tables or seats in the main rooms.
- **Are our main stands positioned where attendees will congregate?** Your sales team will be happy if their stands are right next to where prospects will network, grab a coffee, or eat.

DESIGN THE VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

As we stressed earlier, the virtual attendee experience should be just as immersive as your physical space, from the event branding to all of the available activities.

Given that first impressions count, you should make sure that the virtual experience delivers an impact. Take the agenda, sessions and tracks and use the below as a checklist:

- **Is the pre-event experience enjoyable?** Consider offering virtual networking areas or peer-to-peer chat for early attendees.
- **Can attendees clearly find the sessions and tracks that matter to them?** Whether your hybrid event is contained within a single environment using [Virtual Conference](#) or uses [Engagement Hub](#) to signpost attendees to events and sessions, make sure they can easily navigate to (and back from) any of the sessions and experiences you offer.
- **Is the event console visually appealing and in line with your desired identity?** Check each experience to see they are all stunning.
- **Are the engagement options and calls-to-action clear and easy to find, regardless of screen size?** Make sure your attendees can see everything they need — from slides and polls to Q&A and content downloads — regardless of whether they are on a smartphone or a high-resolution monitor.
- **Is all the promised content available within the console?** For example, if your speaker says the slides are available, check it's uploaded.
- **Have we made measures for accessibility and localization?** This may include adding [automated captioning](#) to your sessions to improve accessibility, [using a live translation service such as Interprefy](#), and offering content in different languages or accessible formats.

ON24 TIP: MAKE SURE YOUR VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE IS DESIGNED TO IMPRESS.

Your virtual audience should have an experience that is just as good as those attending in-person. So make sure the look and feel of your virtual event doesn't let attendees down. For more tips and recommendations, [download our Event Console Branding Guide](#).

DEVELOP YOUR POST-EVENT PLAN

Getting the most out of your hybrid event isn't just about what you do during the event, but also what happens after the event. Specifically, how you continue to engage with the registrants and attendees and how you drive results from those joining on-demand.

SET TRIGGERED FOLLOW-UP AND ACTIONS FOR ATTENDEES AND REGISTRANTS (BOTH PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL)

As mentioned earlier in the playbook, you will have met with your operations team to discuss how you can use the data in your CRM and/or marketing automation platform, along with your event and other marketing technology. After the event, you will now have the data collected from the event that will help you tailor the post-event journey and follow-ups.

To get started, it is helpful to define attendee profiles based on the data you have and determine the route these profiles will take.

For example, if an attendee showed interest in or clicked on a CTA to “Book a meeting” or “Schedule a demo,” then these individuals should be emailed with a calendar invite for those options. If the attendee has a high engagement score — performing actions such as answering poll questions, taking part in Q&A or downloading content — consider triggering an automated or personalized sales follow-up.


ATTENDEE PROFILE	EXAMPLE DATA/ENGAGEMENT	EXAMPLE ROUTE
In-market buyer	Demo request or meeting booking via CTA.	Calendar invite sent by email for demo or meeting.
Engaged buyer in consideration phase	High webinar Engagement Score and/or high overall lead score.	Automated and personalized sales follow-up.
Buyers at early stage	Low webinar Engagement Score or interaction with an early-stage asset/resource.	Nurture program and content recommendations.

The route each profile will take will require you to configure your marketing automation platform, CRM or other tech stack component to make it happen. Set aside the time to do this or have someone commit to doing it for you.

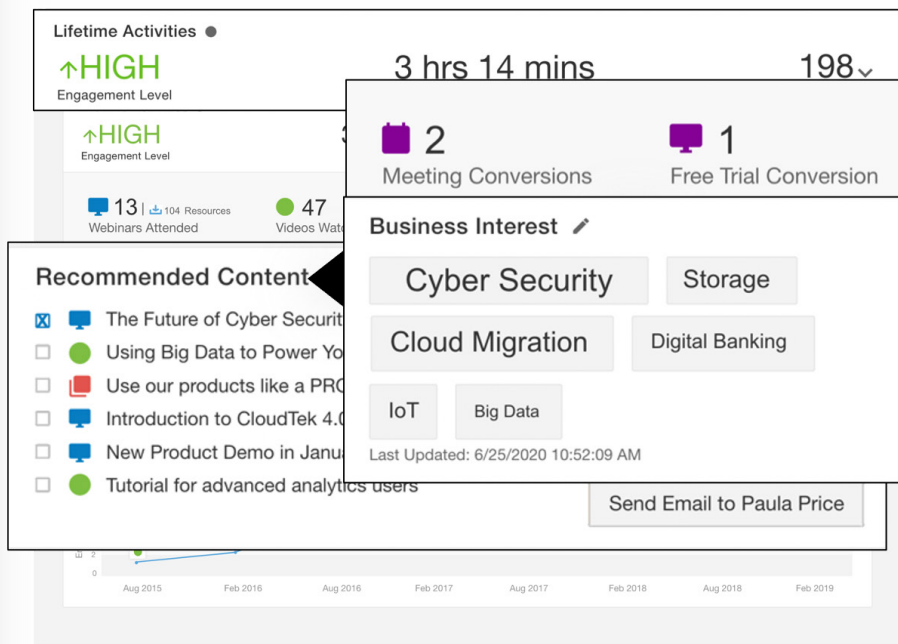
And while engagement data will help with routing prospects, it also helps determine your best-personalized approach. For instance, if you collect details on an attendee's use case with a poll question, then use that information to direct them to a specific nurture program.

Sales can also use the data from an attendee's [Prospect Engagement Profile](#) to reveal any questions they asked or how they answered a poll question, in addition to engagement with other content and events. This gives sales insights and a lead-in to approaching the prospect via email in a more personalized manner — getting the sales conversations rolling.

Measuring Event Engagement



Paula Price
Vice President, Network Security
Metropolis

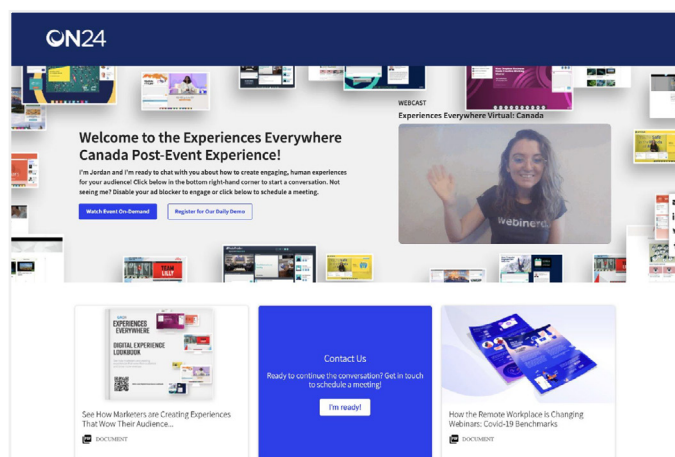


The dashboard shows engagement metrics for Paula Price. Key features include:

- Lifetime Activities:** Engagement Level is **↑HIGH**.
- Engagement Level:** **↑HIGH**.
- Webinars Attended:** 13 (104 Resources).
- Videos Watched:** 47.
- Business Interest:** 2 Meeting Conversions, 1 Free Trial Conversion.
- Recommended Content:**
 - The Future of Cyber Security
 - Using Big Data to Power Yo
 - Use our products like a PRO
 - Introduction to CloudTek 4.0
 - New Product Demo in Janu
 - Tutorial for advanced analytics users
- Business Interest Topics:** Cyber Security, Storage, Cloud Migration, Digital Banking, IoT, Big Data.
- Last Updated:** 6/25/2020 10:52:09 AM.
- Action:** Send Email to Paula Price

Part of your post-event planning should also involve considering what needs to happen after the event regarding follow-up resources and experiences.

A prime example of keeping the conversation going even after the event can be seen with [ON24's Experiences Everywhere Virtual Conference](#), where attendees were given the opportunity to chat with a salesperson in their region directly after viewing the session.



The screenshot shows the ON24 interface for the 'Experiences Everywhere Virtual Conference'. Key elements include:

- Header:** ON24 logo.
- Section:** 'Welcome to the Experiences Everywhere Canada Post-Event Experience!'.
- Text:** 'I'm Jordan and I'm ready to chat with you about how to create engaging, human experiences for your audience! Click below in the bottom right-hand corner to start a conversation. Not seeing me? Disable your ad blocker to engage or click below to schedule a meeting.'
- Buttons:** 'Watch Event On Demand', 'Register for Our Daily Drive'.
- Webcast:** 'Experiences Everywhere Virtual: Canada' with a video player showing a woman.
- Footer:** 'Contact Us' button with text 'Ready to continue the conversation? Get in touch to schedule a meeting!' and 'I'm ready!' button.
- Additional Content:** 'See How Marketers are Creating Experiences That Wow Their Audience...' and 'How the Remote Workplace is Changing: Webinars, Covid-19 Benchmarks'.

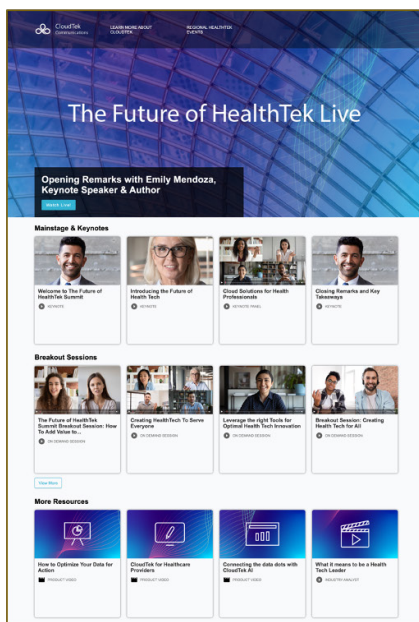
Additionally, create a strategy for reaching out to registrants, whether they attended the event or not. This could involve sending out an email promoting the on-demand experience with different, yet personalized, messaging for both no-shows and attendees. Or maybe consider creating a blog post or guidebook with highlights from experience.

You can also create a short 30-60 second recap video that can be shared across social channels, sent out via email and featured on its one landing page on your website. It's also

worth thinking about creating a post-event content hub filled with further resources for download.

To that end, a true hybrid experience means making sure your physical and digital audience have the same opportunity to engage with all available content and sessions regardless of where they are. Of course, this extends to your on-demand audience, as well, so make sure all sessions from the live experience are made available on-demand.

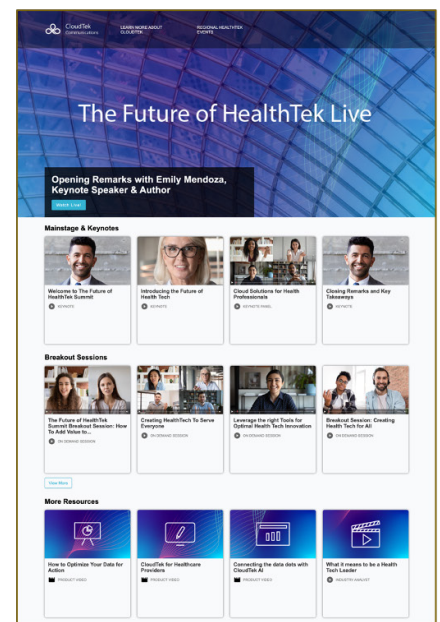
HYBRID EVENTS: MORE THAN JUST A MOMENT IN TIME



Live Experience



Months



On Demand Experience

On-demand experiences serve serves a couple of purposes. First, it allows those who attended the live event the chance to catch up on sessions they may have missed. Second, it allows for new attendees to enjoy the same experience as the live attendees did for months to come.

PREPARE FOR THE SWITCH TO ON-DEMAND

It's important to prepare in advance to switch your hybrid event for on-demand so that once your event is over, communication and engagement switches smoothly from

driving registration to driving on-demand viewings. Think about doing the following:

- Adapt the copy on the attendance registration page to make it clear the session is on-demand.
- Change confirmation emails to on-demand and don't include the date.
- Add it to the past events page on your website.

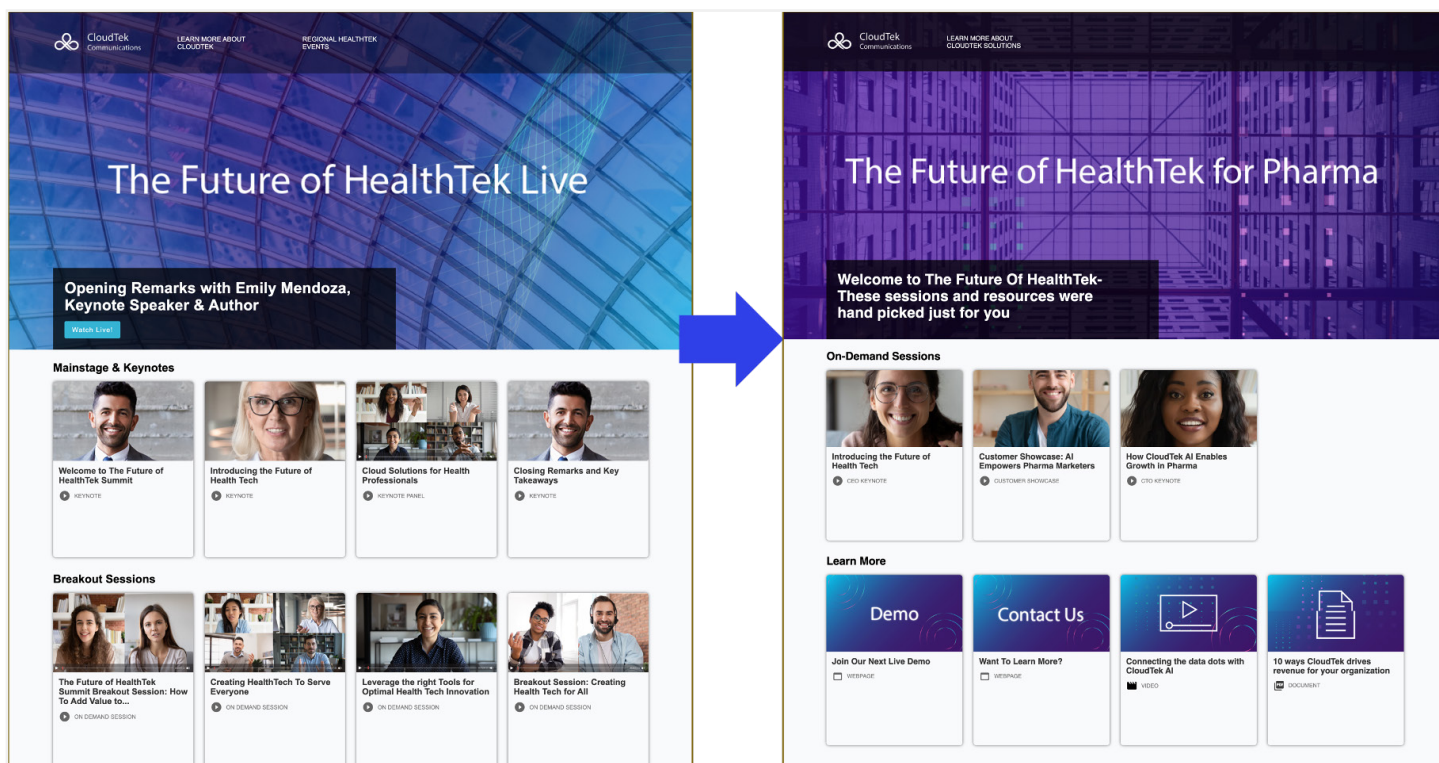
DRIVING CONTINUED RETURN ON ENGAGEMENT

Even long after your live event, your efforts can continue to drive engagement by using a 3R approach: **Repurpose, Refresh and Reactivate**.

Repurpose your event

Consider repurposing your event content for target audiences. While having your entire event available is important in bringing a general audience, creating separate [Target](#) pages or [Engagement Hubs](#) for specified target audiences can really hone in on a specific industry or account you want to attract.

REPURPOSE EVENT CONTENT FOR TARGETED AUDIENCES



Refresh your event

You can refresh live event content in several ways. For example, try running one or more sessions as a simulive experience, using the original session recording, including offering poll questions, chat and Q&A, all while having your sales team on hand to answer questions and chat with the audience.

Maybe run a new webinar using the notes, slides, promotional materials and other assets and run from one of the live sessions. Or, try mixing some of the sessions from the event with live content, either by using clips of the previous sessions intermixed with a live webinar session or running it as a simulive webinar before rolling over to a live audio feed.

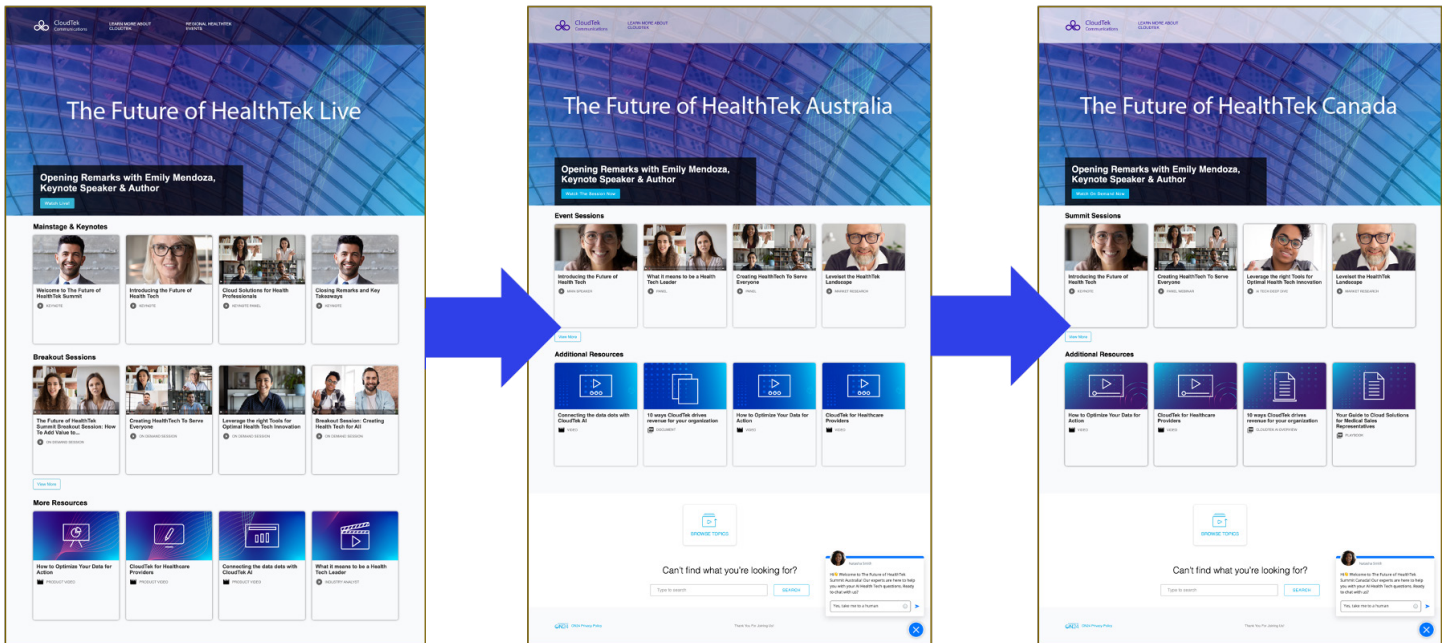
Reactivate your event

Lastly, think about reactivating the entire event as a simulive event or rebroadcast it in a different region or time zone. Or repackage content and key takeaways from the event into a downloadable guide, making it valuable content to support other sales or marketing efforts.

LOCALIZE FOR SCALE

One of the benefits of running a hybrid event is reaching a wider audience that may not be able to attend an onsite event due to travel restrictions or budget issues. Another benefit is the ability to scale your event after it's over to reach multiple geographies. By translating (when necessary) and localizing the event's content and branding, you can reach a global audience.

REPURPOSE FOR UNIQUE GEOS OR LANGUAGES



This can be done by customizing the flow of the experience by the region or time zone and creating a more individualized experience by offering local engagement opportunities. Or perhaps by setting up unique content hubs based on region or even language.

One thing to keep in mind when providing content for various regions is that what works well for one region may be a flop in another or, even worse, cause offense to the audience.

ON24 TIP: SPEAK WITH LOCAL COLLEAGUES WHEN LOCALIZING YOUR HYBRID EVENT.

Your coworkers in different regions and markets can be a valuable source of information when localizing your events, providing insight into what will work well and what should be avoided. To hear more tips, [sign up for our on-demand webinar, "Going Global: How To Create Local Experiences For Regional Audiences."](#)

THE ON24 HYBRID EVENT

CHECKLIST

The below checklist summarizes the key steps from our Planning and Running a Hybrid Event playbook. Keep it at hand when planning your next hybrid event.

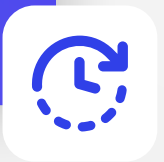
BEFORE YOU BEGIN – MAKE SURE A HYBRID EVENT IS RIGHT

- ✓ **Do you have enough time to plan and deliver a hybrid event?** Hybrid events are not a great tactic to fall back on at the last minute. They take a lot of planning and a lot of coordination to pull off right.
- ✓ **Are your target attendees able and willing to travel to meet in-person?** If your audience can't or won't show up to a face-to-face event, stick to virtual.
- ✓ **Will adding to the expense of making your event hybrid pay off?** If the costs are unlikely to deliver an adequate return, a virtual-only event (or running several virtual events for the cost of one hybrid event) is likely to be the best option.
- ✓ **Can you offer an experience that is equally good for all attendees?** Avoid the trap of simply streaming your physical event to a live audience.



DEFINE A HYBRID-SPECIFIC STRATEGY, OBJECTIVES AND EXPERIENCE

- ✓ **Start with your overall marketing strategy and available resources.** Any hybrid event should align with your overall marketing strategy and be a wise use of resources.
- ✓ **Define your target audience and the key messages to deliver.** Figure out the data you will use to identify those who you wish to attend and create messages that align to their needs according to their stage of the buyer's journey.
- ✓ **Set SMART objectives for your hybrid event in line with your strategy.** Make sure they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.
- ✓ **Define the kind of experiences you want to offer.** Identify the digital elements you can incorporate into the in-person experience such as content downloads, polls, surveys, Q&A and live chat. For your virtual attendees, decide how their experience should look and feel.
- ✓ **Outline a theme and agenda that will attract and engage your target audience.** The content, sessions and interactions on offer should be irresistible. Make sure to add an element of fun to both the physical and virtual events, from wine tasting sessions (send some to virtual attendees!) to live music.



PREPARE AND PLAN YOUR HYBRID EVENT



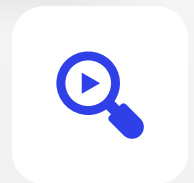
- ✓ **Plan the end-to-end experience and all engagement touchpoints.** To have the greatest success, think about what you'll offer before and after the event, in addition to what you'll showcase on the day.
- ✓ **Define the data and technology that will power the whole hybrid experience.** Speak with your operations team to get their support and help and make sure the technology you choose will deliver against your goals and objectives.
- ✓ **Be clear on the people you need and the processes to put in place.** Figure out the team members, partners and suppliers that will make your event a success. Ensure everyone knows what they need to do by when and who will lead the project management of the event.
- ✓ **Prepare the physical and virtual logistics.** From securing the venue and ensuring good internet connections, to running tech checks for your virtual presenters, be clear on the elements you need to make your hybrid event run smoothly.

CREATE THE MAIN EXPERIENCES AND ENGAGEMENT TOUCHPOINTS



- ✓ **Design the creative identity and assets.** Will your hybrid event have its own sub-brand? What physical and virtual assets do you need to source or design?
- ✓ **Design the physical experience.** In addition to the agenda and sessions, make sure you have the items in place so your in-person attendees can engage digitally, such as reliable internet connection and places to charge their devices.
- ✓ **Design the virtual experience.** Make sure it's visually appealing, usable and has the engagement opportunities your audience will want.

DEVELOP YOUR POST-EVENT PLAN



- ✓ **Set triggered follow-up and actions for all attendees.** Make sure the engagement data you collect during the event helps to personalize their after-event experience, from being provided with relevant content to receiving personalized follow-up from sales.
- ✓ **Prepare for the on-demand switch.** When your event moves from live to on-demand, all elements of your virtual experience should reflect that. Prepare this ahead of time.
- ✓ **Drive continued return on engagement by repurposing, refreshing and reactivating your event and its content.** While original attendees and registrants should be offered the same on-demand experience, you can also take the content from your event and spin it off in many different ways.
- ✓ **Localize your hybrid event for scale.** While a physical event is fixed in one location, a hybrid event can be rebroadcast in any location and at any time. Translate and localize your hybrid event to make its impact global.



TAKING IT FORWARD

Now you've seen the steps we follow in delivering our hybrid events at ON24, we hope you are inspired to create both in-person and virtual experiences that will both be loved by your audience and help you achieve your goals.

Every passing year, figures from [ON24's Webinar Benchmarks Report](#) show professionals have turned to webinars in increasing numbers. Research by SiriusDecisions also highlights [the power of webinars in driving engagement and surfacing buying signals for new and existing audiences](#).

It should be no surprise that the difference between companies will increasingly be determined by the quality of experiences they offer. As a result, virtual events will be a key component well into the future, while in-person attendees will increasingly become accustomed to having digital engagement options at any face-to-face event.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING THE EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCES YOU'LL CREATE. MAKE SURE TO CONNECT WITH US TO SHARE HOW YOU HAVE DELIGHTED YOUR AUDIENCES!