

To provide guidance and resources to departments planning a virtual event that are not supported by CAS-Events and CAS-Marketing. Virtual events include many of the same elements as in-person events. However, virtual events focus on technology, content, and ease of use for the end user.

USF supports the Microsoft Teams platform, Teams Live Events or Teams Meeting. Before deciding which platform works best for your event, please consider the following questions.

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- This format is best used for intimate groups with formal or informal interactions, and delivery to an audience up to 250 people. It encourages collaboration through audio, video, and screen sharing.
  - It allows one-to-one or one-to-limited participant communications. A designated host or facilitator is still recommended for leading interactions and audience participation.
  - Benefits to using this platform include:
    - Attendees may share their computer screen, create a whiteboard, and actively participate during the meeting by turning on the cameras and microphones. The Teams App allows viewing from a web browser, computer/tablet or phone. Teams Meetings can be recorded. At the beginning of the meeting, request permission to record from your attendees then select the "start recording" option.
    - Meeting organizers may schedule a Teams Meeting inviting attendees within USF and outside of USF.

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/what-s-new-in->

Keep sessions short and engaging. We recommend 20 to 30 minute presentations with a 20 to 30 minute Q&A for audience participation.

Schedule breaks for events exceeding one hour. You can add 5, 10, or 15 minute breaks based on the length of your program.

Incorporate surprise elements into your event to keep your audience's attention and fully engaged to prevent outside distractions. Be creative and have fun!

Select an Event Emcee or Moderator to host your event, choose someone with a dynamic personality and excellent communication skills. May need to add a script for your Emcee, Moderator or Speaker (ie. opening and closing remarks, etc.).

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- Budget – Create an event budget
- Determine your equipment needs to produce the event. NEEDS: reliable internet (hardwired preferred, with a speed of 10Mbps Upward and 10Mbps Downward, verify internet speed at speedtest.net), a computer with an internal or external webcam and microphone (headphones or headset). Producers on Live Events need a second monitor to deliver event presentation needs. Teams Meetings organizers or presenters also benefit from using two screens.
- Website (AKA Landing page) – Do you want to incorporate a webpage to house the event information? RECOMMENDATION: Shorten the Teams URL link for easier access to the event link. (Check with the CAS-CCE technology team on how to get a URL link shortened)
  - Create or update current department webpage and shortened URL
  - Determine Content needed to include on the webpage
  - Use the site to communicate with your attendees, ie. details of the event, ways to RSVP and tips to using the livestreaming platforms to ensure a friendly virtual

- Registration, if needed
  - Set up and enable online registration, may use Qualtrics
  - Include link on webpage
  - Test links for easy attendee experience
- Begin promoting your event based on your marketing plan and schedule
  
- Schedule Test Runs for Presenters (Test Runs should be held 1 to 2 weeks from event)
- Create and prepare backup plans for all speakers/presenters
- Create event Show Flow based on the agenda
- Communicate with your attendees all details about the event, how to RSVP and tips to using the livestreaming platforms to ensure a virtually friendly experience for everyone. SHARE: Attendee Tips or Speaker Tips. These can be visible on your webpage. Overcommunicate the details to make things as simple as possible for the end-user.
  
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- Microsoft Live Events ONLY: Use Chat Box function to communicate between Producers and Presenters, send messages to remind them when they will go Live and UNMUTE their microphones before speaking
  - Moderator handles the flow of the event (introducing speakers, Q&A, etc.) as well as keep the event moving along or needing to switch speakers if technical issues arise (examples: poor internet or camera malfunction).
  - Produce event – trouble shoot as needed
  - Implement Backup plans if anything goes offline
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- We encourage follow up communications with your attendees within 1 to 2 days post event. A thank you email where you include a recording of the Live event for those attendees who were not able to attend or those who may want to rewatch the event (
  - Send out a thank you note to your speaker along with a small gift for participation.
  - Produce event reports and share stats with team, store collected data, if requested
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- Attendee Tips
  - Speaker Tips for Teams Live Event or Teams Meetings
  - Show Flow sample

These resources can be found in the Box file listed below. You are welcome to copy and customize these templates for your own use on your events.

We hope these guidelines are useful when planning your own virtual event. If you have additional questions, please contact [CAS-events@usf.edu](mailto:CAS-events@usf.edu). At times when we are not available, we are still happy to support our departments in creating meaningful and interactive virtual events.