

STEP 1 Select the Virtual Event

1. Go with a virtual event now that is paired with an in-person event down the road (ex. If you are honoring someone or awarding one individual or more, have a ceremony now online and a meet and greet in 2021).
2. Do something creative at a local business on Facebook LIVE (panel discussion, live interview, night out with a celebrity). Use local stores and restaurants for a venue. Doing this now helps businesses count on your support and they can be counted as early sponsors/partners (something to add to your event marketing).
3. Get creative with a virtual offering that partners with local artists or artists in your circle – a virtual concert, a virtual paint night, etc.
4. Have some fun with a virtual galas. Most people can't even imagine putting on a gown or tux during this time but could there be a fun themed party that would get your donors and attendees excited to log on. Dressing up as your favorite childhood literary character, most admired person in history, etc. So many possibilities for costume prizes and other activities around the theme.
5. Create a trivia or game night. A trivia themed event is a great interactive activity that attracts all ages and can also be a series (every few months or twice a year). Not a high grossing event, but a low maintenance event that keeps your donors engaged with the organization during a crisis, plus they learn about your mission.

STEP 2 Determine the Online Platform

Gala Event Management Tools:

- GiveSmart (registration, donation management, data tracking) <https://www.givesmart.com/resources/webinars/pivot-to-a-virtual-fundraising-event/>
- Classy: turning in-person event into a crowd-funding campaign <https://www.classy.org/>

5Ks and other sport events:

- Nonprofits are leveraging wearables and fitness trackers, like Fitbits, and mobile corporate giving apps, like those by [MoveSpring](#), to make it easier to organize active campaigns virtually.
- Online gaming tournaments: to maximize donations during the tournament, consider using a platform like [JustGiving](#) or [Tiltify](#) to let your participants collect donations during their live-streams. Participants can set up their Twitch streams to contain a donation link to your nonprofits main profile page on the platform so viewers can easily make a

donation while they watch. (An alternative for a golf tournament or great for kid-focused organizations).

- Offer swag and perks for virtual participants – make them feel part of the larger movement.
- Another resource for interactive fundraisers:
<https://blog.bonfire.com/virtual-fundraising-ideas/>

Other online platforms:

- Fundraise through Facebook (peer to peer fundraising) <https://www.funraise.org/>
- Vimeo: more sophisticated video platform
<https://vimeo.com/features/virtual-events?vcid=37949>
- Zoom: basic, inexpensive video platform that many people are comfortable with (best for holding smaller events and gatherings) <https://zoom.us>

Costs:

Depending on the service and level, the price can be based on the number of registrants or a monthly subscription (cost can range from \$20 per month to more than \$200).

STEP 3 Checklist for Starting to Event Plan

Elements that make up a virtual event:

- Event website
- Event registration
- Live presentation content
- Live, one-way audio/video
- Question and answer
- Live polling
- Note taking/favorite slides
- Recorded content
- Interactive video conferencing
- Feedback surveys

Questions to Ask When Planning a Virtual Event:

- Will content be live, on-demand (pre-recorded), or a mix?
- Have you created a guide for attendees before the event that explains how to join keynotes, attend sessions, and use messaging tools?
- What are your objectives for the event – recognition, fundraising, relationship building/cultivation?
- What happens if you have connectivity issues?
- Will you charge for your event or offer access for free?
- How long will on-demand sessions be available after the event?
- What will be the length of the event?
- What tools will staff and Board have to follow-up with attendees – individual follow-up and mass follow-up?

Data Gathered at Virtual Events:

- # of Registrations
- Demographic Attendee Information (through registration)
- Session Registration (if providing more than one activity during the virtual event)
- Email Open and Click-through Rates
- Post-Event Communication Results (surveys and other post-comm tools)
- Event/Session Ratings
- Event/Session Feedback
- Social Media Engagement and Reach

STEP 4 Mapping the Fundraising Plan to Raise \$10,000

1. What kind of energy will surround the fundraising?

* First, name the characteristics of the campaign (inspirational, high-energy, educational, mission-boosting?)

* Now, let's break it down to make it more achievable. Raising \$10,000 can seem like a lot especially if you don't have enough folks working on it. The key is to break it up into manageable amounts.

* Third, let's look at where it's going to come from.

Sources of revenue and how many at each level:

Major Donors: \$500, \$1,000, \$1,500 (10)

Individuals: \$25-75, \$100-250, (10)

Foundations: \$1,500 (2)

Small business: \$500 (5)

Other?

* Fourth, let's not look at why you need or want these resources, rather how you are serving the donors' desire to make a difference?

What's the message behind the event?

Why \$10,000?

Why now?

What will be different?

What will be better?

Will your fundraising effort have an incentive? a match? What will be its fun and unique offering?

Four Critical Steps to Raising \$10,000 at your Virtual Event

Leverage what you already have! Many of us feel that when we are about to fundraise, we're staring at an empty white board. Today we start by filling that white board with what you have!

1. Know Your Campaign and Plot it to the Last Detail. Begin plotting them on a blank 8 1/2 x 11 inch piece of paper.

Now write your goal and start date and end date!

Then...

2. Share a Story, Don't Pitch an Organization. Draft your story-driven content. Think about the Marshal Ganz framework. This isn't a foundation proposal. This is a narrative. What's the story that will draw in your supporters? What will stop them in their tracks and click the "give now" button?

3. Tactically Sign On Supporters. We often just throw out a fundraising campaign and cross fingers. Successful campaigns are best when seen from a 30,000 foot view and played like a chess game.

a. Be your first donor. Any amount works; just show your support.

b. Make your list and work that list. List out the first 10 people you will invite, asking them if they will sign on to give before the event. Get their permission to share their amount and name at the event. Then, send them the link and thank them for making a gift before the event.

c. Incentivize and engage. After someone makes a gift at the event, what's next? Don't lose them yet. Have the thank you pop up box show a box that says "Yes, I will invite 1 person to give the same amount as I just gave". Then pre-written text that is simple and easy to use. And personal. Also, encourage people to give multiple times during an event, as they are inspired to do so.

d. Involve your most loyal supporters out of the gate. You don't want this campaign to detract from a donor's pledged gift. Invite them to make a 2nd gift on top of their already generous support. As with the event overall, present them with why a second gift, why from them, and why this campaign will boost the organization overall? Donors want to know they're part of unleashing something that couldn't be done otherwise. Make a strong, specific, personalized case then invite them in a sincere and genuine way.

4. Finite is the key to engaging staff and board. People are successful when they're given an opportunity to succeed. Often though we don't give enough specifics to help them feel they've succeeded. If we say "help us sign new donors to give to our event", what does that mean? How many donors? at what level? new supporters? lapsed people? How will I know if I've really helped the organization?

Be specific. For example,

We need 25 supporters to make this a success. 10 of these will be current. 15 will be new.

"Can you take on the role of bringing in 5 new people? Could you sign on 3 people at \$250, 2 people at \$100 and 1 person at \$75? And if they're new we have a donor who will match prospect gifts up to \$2,500! This means your outreach to 5 people will total= \$1,850."

4. Follow-Through and Follow-Up. Have you ever given to an event, gotten an electronic thank you and that's it? Did you hear back if the event met its goal? How the funds were spent? Were you given success stories? Were you told how your participation made it a success?

Often we get the money in the door, thank the person and then move on to the next fundraising goal. The problem is that these people who just signed on our part of the next fundraising goal, but only if we update them, engage them, and show them success.

Take time now to map the 3 things you'll offer to a donor/ new donor (in addition to the thank you letter) after they've joined your campaign and add it to your work plan to follow up after the event!

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