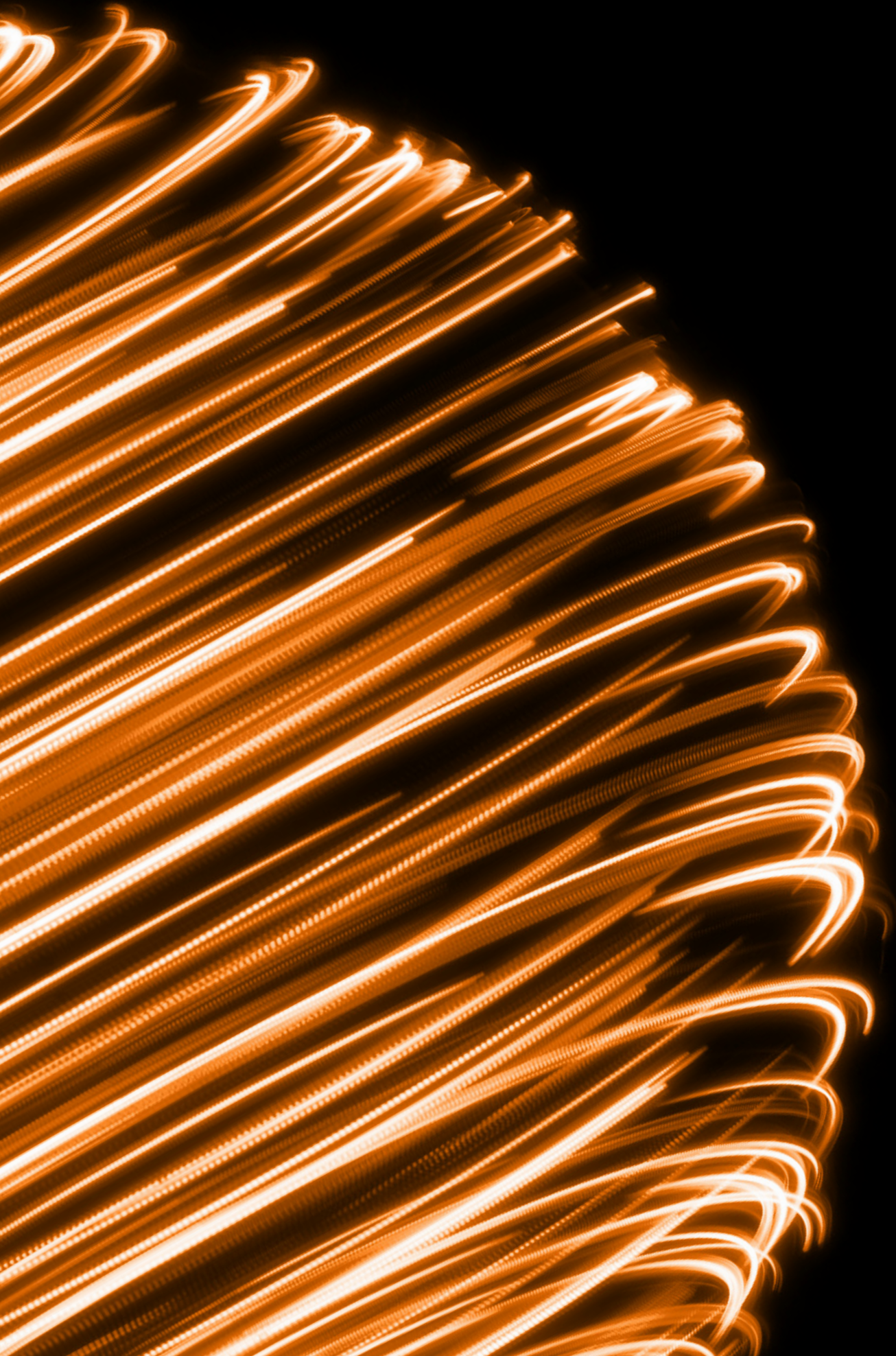




# ***VIRTUAL EVENTS:*** ***BEFORE, DURING & AFTER***

Some best practices from the Cramer perspective.

**CRAMER**



While nothing can compete with the power of a face-to-face, virtual events can be powerful too. It's a matter of shifting your perspective and understanding the unique character of online engagement. From simple webcasting to full virtual and hybrid events, [Cramer has done them all](#). Here are some [best practices](#) from our team of strategy, creative, and production experts.

# ***VIRTUAL EVENTS:*** ***BEFORE, DURING & AFTER***

Some best practices from the Cramer perspective.

CRAMER

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**01** Getting started

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**02** Picking the best platform

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**03** Designing the right agenda

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**04** Social media

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**05** Broadcasting from home

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**06** Event content

Making an event virtual is easy.

Making it great takes

**STRATEGY, CREATIVITY and  
TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW.**

***GETTING STARTED***  
*WITH VIRTUAL EVENTS*



A photograph of stage lights in a dark setting, with two prominent spotlights casting beams of light across the scene.

# 5 KEY INGREDIENTS FOR A GREAT VIRTUAL EVENT

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Virtual events can run the gamut from simple video conferencing to full-blown digital experiences. But, at its core, every successful virtual event pays close attention to these five elements:

## 01

### STRATEGY

Virtual events are like any project; to be successful they need a plan. That means thinking hard about your goals, your audience, and your expectations—then devising strategies to successfully reach all three. Here's a quick punch list of key strategy assets to help your event hit all the right marks:

- Audience profiles
- Learning objectives
- Event value proposition
- Message map
- Agenda
- Speakers and presenters
- Dedicated event website
- Timelines and show flow

## 02

### CONTENT

When people tune into your event they're sitting in front a screen, which creates a lot of viewer expectations whether the audience realizes it or not. To hold everybody's attention you need to create a TV-like experience, which is why broadcast style content works best for most virtual meetings. Friendly and engaging hosts. Short but informative interviews. Pre-packaged video segments to break things up and add production value. It's a winning formula because it's instantly familiar and achieves the right balance of informative and entertaining.



# 03

## PLATFORM & TECH

There are LOTS of virtual event platforms out there, each with their own advantages and costs. Which is right for you? That depends on your content and objectives, but these two factors should always drive your technology choice—not the other way around. Also, there are often company-specific IT requirements that need to be met. When working with our partners, we consider all factors before making recommendations on which platform will best fit your needs.

# 04

## EXECUTION

You only have one shot to do your virtual event right. Not knowing exactly how your chosen platform works is no excuse for lag time, dropped audio, broken links, or any other hiccup that takes your audience out of the moment. In the virtual arena, experience is vital for flawless execution—you either do lots of homework upfront or partner with a company that knows these technologies inside and out.

# 05

## ANALYTICS

One of virtual events' biggest advantages is the wealth of analytics they offer. Digital meetings can provide amazing insight into your business-critical data; information you can use to strengthen all of your communications going forward. It's why we offer post meeting intelligence reports, so you have a much clearer understanding of your meeting's successes and potential areas for improvement.

### ***Social Media is your virtual event's BFF***

Broadcasting some or all of your content on social platforms can do wonders for engagement, sometimes generating 5X the viewership.

## **IF YOU FAIL TO PREPARE, YOU'RE PREPARING TO FAIL...**

Just like with live events, successful digital meetings require a good deal of planning. There are production schedules to make, agendas to write (and rewrite), content to map and create, etc. It's a lot to juggle. The only way to make sure nothing gets dropped is to have an airtight system that tracks all moving parts and continues to push you forward. In our 20+ years in the virtual event business we've found there are a few key areas that require special preparation but don't always get the love they deserve.

### **TRAIN FOR THE TASK AT HAND**

Presenting during a virtual meeting is different than talking at a live one. Even seasoned speakers should receive specialized coaching so they're comfortable and more natural on camera. Having speakers who project a confident and authentic tone is vital for getting your messages to stick; make sure you're giving your presenters the training they need to deliver.

### **GIVE YOURSELF ENOUGH TIME**

Live events require months of lead time. Virtual events can come together much faster, but that doesn't mean you should wait until the last minute. Timelines are dependent on the size and scope of your event. However, like with any project, the more time you have to prepare the better the final outcome.

### **DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF THE BIG PICTURE**

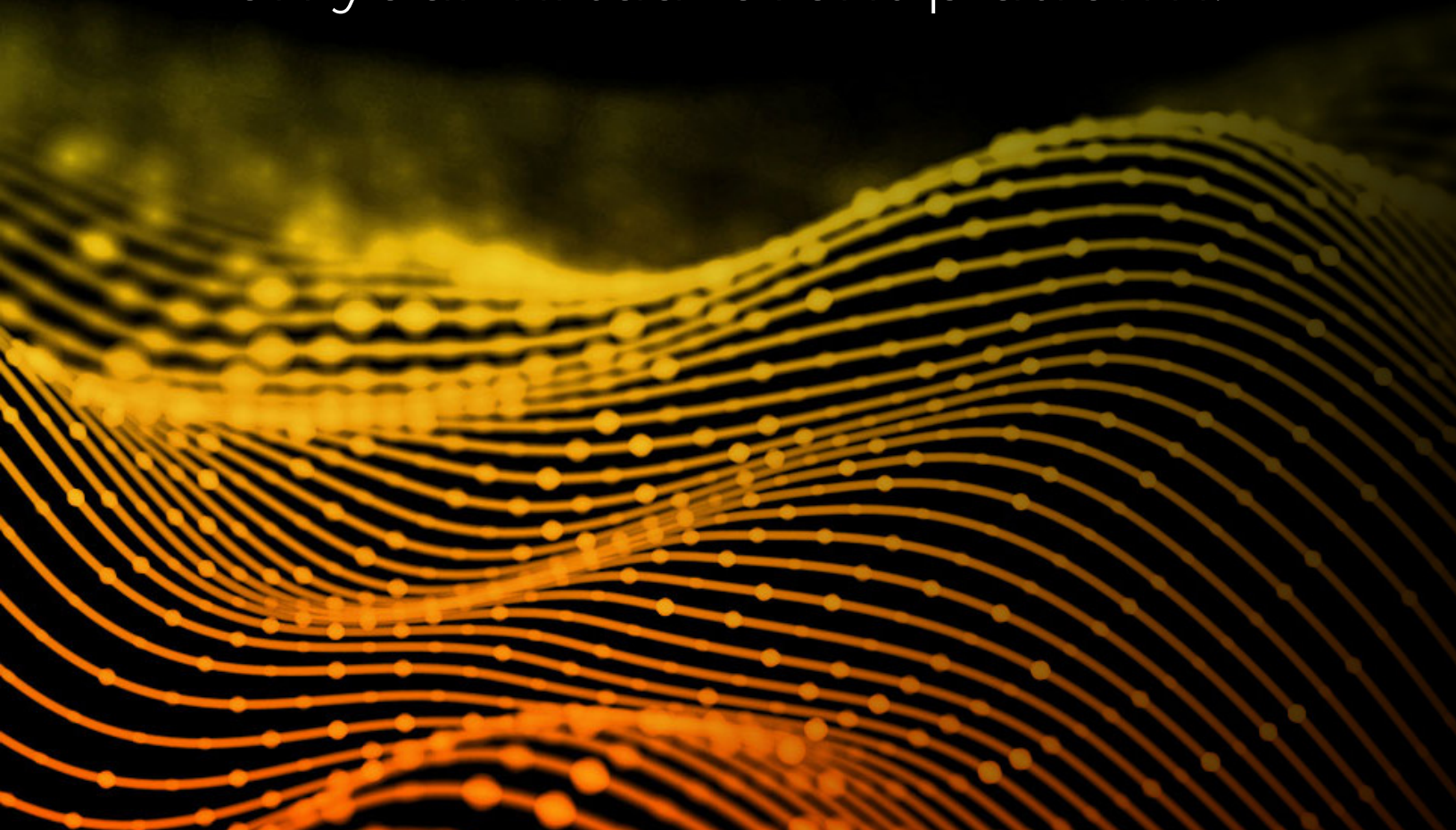
Virtual events are made up of a thousand little details. If you get too deep in the weeds, without coming up for air now and again, you may lose sight of what really matters: the audience's experience. When thinking about production elements and content, keep your viewers top of mind. Remember what they're hearing and seeing—from the moment they log in to the final sign off—and look for ways to keep things upbeat and entertaining. Little moments of fun can lead to big returns in engagement.

## SUCCESS AT A GLANCE

There are many [different formats](#) for virtual events from studio broadcasts to webinars, but they all have these success measures in common:

- Have a strategy
- Know your audience
- Design content specifically for digital broadcasts
- Understand how different technologies will help meet different objectives
- Adjust preparation schedules and routines to match the platform

How to **MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS** when deciding on your virtual event platform.

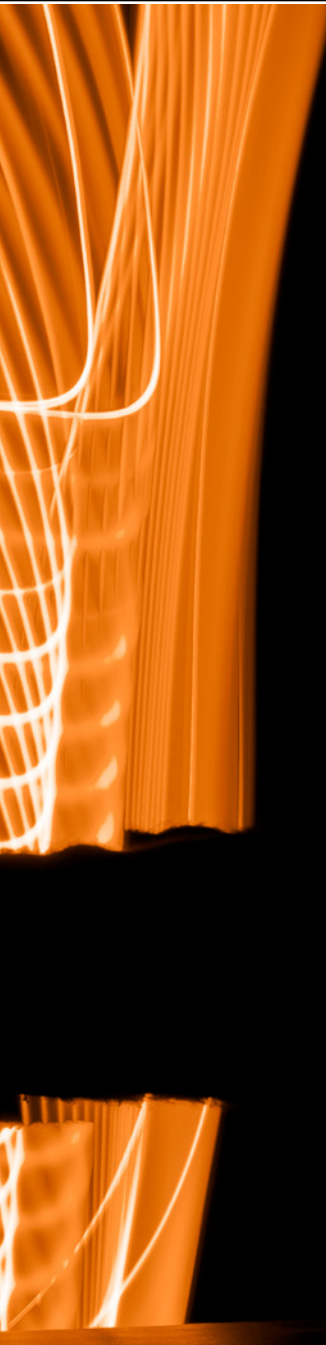


*PICKING*  
***THE PLATFORM***  
*THAT'S BEST FOR YOU*

# FIRST THINGS FIRST

**BROADCASTING PLATFORM**





If you're like most people, the moment you became interested in hosting a virtual meeting you checked Google for info on how it's done. And like most, you probably got plenty of responses on the technologies available, but not a lot of clarity on what they do or how they differ. **Relax, we can help.**

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If you're new to the virtual event world, don't make the rookie mistake of picking a broadcasting platform too early. Deciding what tech will best fit your event is a major decision. Before you choose a platform, you need to think through several of your event objectives and expectations. Doing so will let you narrow the field and pick the platform that's right for you.

When helping our clients decide which digital platform they should use, we consider these factors:

## **AUDIENCE**

Is this an internal or external meeting? If the content is sensitive and meant for internal eyes only, we recommend platforms that have stronger protection methods. (i.e. a registration wall, password protection, white listed email domain, etc.)

## **LIVE, RECORDED, OR A COMBINATION OF THE TWO**

Broadcasting live adds an element of excitement and exclusivity to a virtual event. A prerecorded session gives you more control over the content and technical elements. And a virtual meeting that combines the two—where live presenters talk in between pre-recorded segments—can offer the best of both worlds in many circumstances. Having a sense of whether you want to go live, stay pre-recorded, or do both can have big implications on which platform is right for you.

## SPEAKER LOCATION

It's ideal to have all presenters in a professional studio because it gives you more control over the presenter performance and broadcast. However, getting all speakers in one room may not be in the cards. If that's the case, you can "beam" presenters in from various locations (just know that some platforms work better than others for this approach).

## INTERACTIVITY

There are platforms that specialize in interactive experiences, including virtually recreating elements usually seen at a live event. If retaining this sense of connectivity is important, there are specific technologies we recommend.

## SIZE AND SCOPE

How many people do you anticipate? Having at least a ballpark estimate of your virtual event's attendance is important because it could have budget implications depending on your platform.

## SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

If you typically partner with sponsors to help defray event costs, you can still do that virtually, it just may be slightly different than what you're used to. Knowing how many sponsors you'd like to work with, and what experiences they'd be interested in co-branding, could help sway your choice as these options vary greatly from platform to platform.



**CRAMER**







***DESIGNING THE  
RIGHT AGENDA***  
*FOR YOUR ONLINE  
EXPERIENCE*

# VIRTUAL AGENDAS: YOUR ROAD MAP TO SUCCESS

Every event needs a well-crafted agenda to keep things running smoothly and make sure the information flows naturally. This applies to virtual meetings too, but here the stakes are even higher. When an audience logs in from home they're contending with all kinds of distractions (kids, chores, every TV show ever created just waiting to be streamed. etc). A strategic and properly paced agenda is your best defense against losing viewers to distraction.

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Coming up with the perfect virtual event agenda is a balancing act. It requires strategic planning, creative thinking, and technical expertise to pull it off right. But you don't have to go it alone. Here's our advice for designing an agenda that's right for your virtual event.

## **AVOID WALL TO WALL CONTENT**

If you have a lot of material to cover, we suggest breaking things up into episodes, treating your program like a recurring show instead of a one-time event. This approach lets you focus your messages into tight, bite-sized bursts while respecting viewers' limited time. Plus, it's a great way to keep the lines of communication open over extended periods of time, which is especially helpful when regular channels are unavailable.

## **LIVEN THINGS UP**

Having at least some portion of your event air live can add a boost of energy and give it a sense of exclusivity. But that doesn't mean everything has to be live. In fact, we often suggest using a mixture of live presenters, simulated live segments, and pre-recorded content to give your virtual event a broadcast TV feel. It engages the audience in the moment but still works well for on-demand viewing after the original air date.

## MAKE BREAKS COUNT

Just like at a live event, virtual meetings should have plenty of breaks built in to protect attendees from being overwhelmed by info. But these breaks don't have to be content deserts. We recommend offering useful content and activities during "breaks" like live chats, networking opportunities, or sponsored content that's a little outside your regular content agenda. We believe break content should always add value to your event's programming but should remain optional; people still need to stretch their legs, grab a snack, check in with their family, etc. They shouldn't suffer from FOMO if they need to step away from their screen.

## ENCOURAGE INTERACTIVITY

A great event—either in person or online—will always offer attendees multiple chances to connect casually, because so much great information and ideas are born out of casual conversation. Orchestrating meaningful connections in a digital space is tricky but do-able with the right strategy and tools.

Here's a quick breakdown of some of our favorite technologies for generating audience interactivity:

- **LIVE CHATS.** These are a great way to get conversations happening around important topics. But use them sparingly and at pre-determined times. If chat windows are constantly popping up and don't follow a specific narrative thread, they turn into an annoyance fast.
- **Q & A's.** A classic for a reason, Q & A's let you share information with large groups while reminding people they're part of a broader community. For virtual Q & A's we really like social polling, which allows people to submit questions ahead of time and their fellow users can vote questions up or down depending on relevance.
- **VIRTUAL BREAKOUT SESSIONS.** Virtual breakouts let you segment big audiences into more manageable groups so you can facilitate real conversations and deliver more detailed content. There are tools and apps that do this really well—and others that don't. The trick is knowing your content, audience, and broadcasting platform well, and planning your breakouts in a way that adds value to attendees' experience.

**USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE YOUR VIRTUAL EVENT** isn't just for the B2C crowd. B2B events can get huge responses on social too.

***SOCIAL MEDIA***  
*AND THE VIRTUAL EVENT*

# USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ATTRACT—AND RETAIN—AN AUDIENCE

## **CRAMER <3 INSTAGRAM!**

We find it to be the most fun and effective app for brands willing to step out of their comfort zone to promote a virtual event.



Normally, too much social media at work is a bad idea. But that's not the case when it comes to promoting virtual events. In fact, of all the channels we've seen, nothing comes close to a good social media campaign for attracting audiences and continuing to engage them after the show is over.

When it comes to picking the right social platform to promote your event, all the major players—YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram—work well in their own ways. We recommend focusing on the platform where you have your biggest following. See what content generates the best reactions and then use that intel to expand the campaign to other channels.

Lately we've seen clients get the most traction from Instagram. It's very visual so your audience can get a real sense of what your complete virtual experience will look like, which is great for setting expectations.

## **STORY TIME!**

We love Instagram's Story feature as a promotion tool. It lets you post tiny bursts of content—usually about 15 seconds long—which lives on your feed for a set amount of time before vanishing from your timeline. Meant to be engaging but disposable, Instagram Stories is the perfect place to air content that's a little fun, edgy, or not quite on brand.

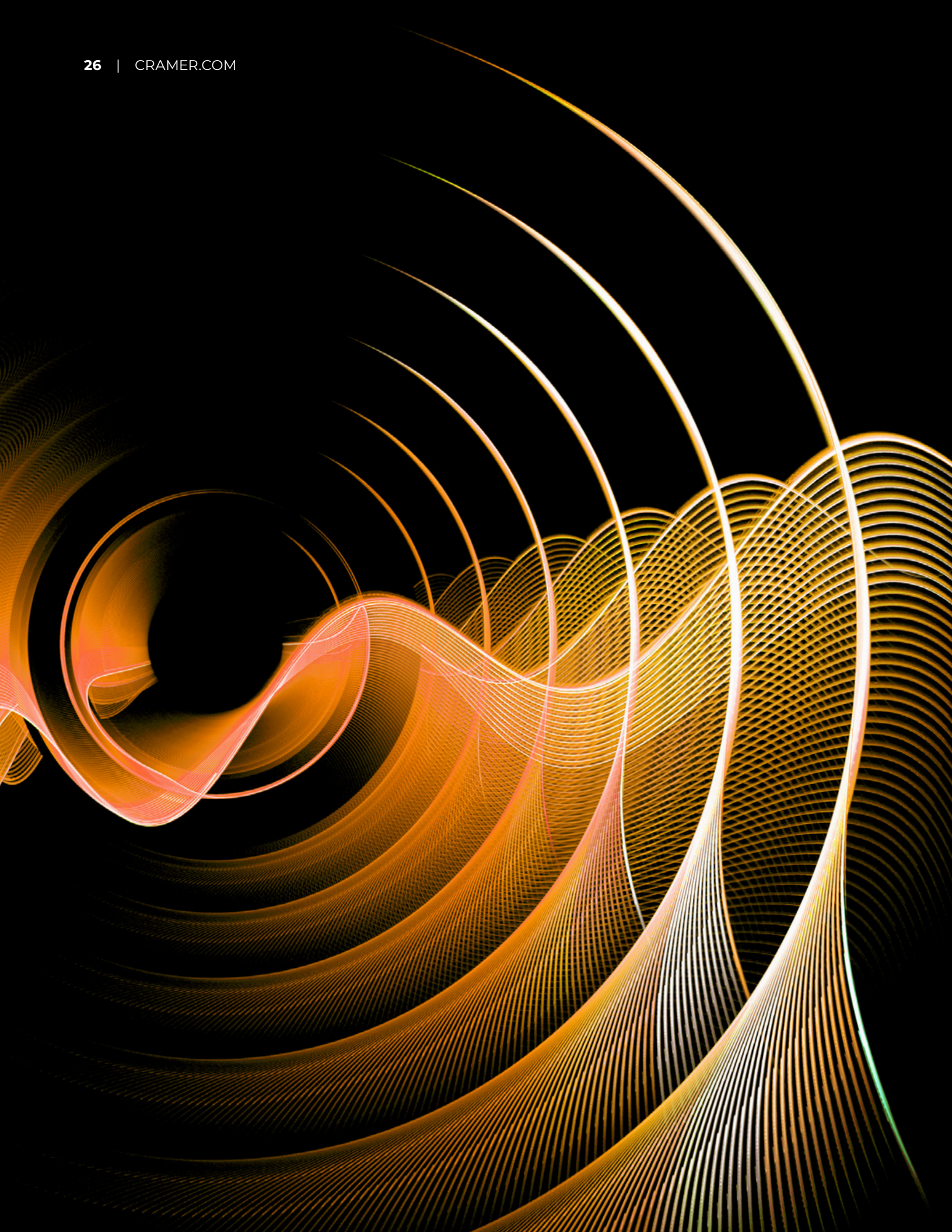
## **VIDEO MAKES THE VIRTUAL STAR**

Out of all the content types, on all social media platforms, we like videos on Instagram best for promoting virtual events. Videos on Instagram have a 60 second time limit, politely forcing you to keep your promotion short and to the point. (IGTV Video does allow up to 60 minutes, but it needs to be uploaded from the separate IGTV app.) Unlike other platforms where the user is continually bombarded by other ads and content, Instagram follows a very streamlined format to prevent its users' eyes from wandering away from hero content.

## **REWARD PARTICIPATION**

Pre-event, it can be really effective to host a contest of some kind, inviting potential viewers to share an image of themselves doing something related to the event's topic, and ask them to tag their photo with an event hashtag. It's a great way to build audience community early and get preliminary traction for an event hashtag if you're using one.

No matter which platform you prefer, social media is a great place to connect with your audience.



*TIPS FOR*  
***BROADCASTING  
FROM HOME***



How to look professional presenting from home with a laptop.

### **THE SITUATION**

You have to present during an upcoming virtual meeting.

### **THE PROBLEM**

You lack a film studio, pro video equipment, and confidence that you're ready for this.

### **THE SOLUTION**

Take a deep breath and relax. You'll be fine.

These are strange times for everyone. The last thing anyone expects is an absolute perfect presentation delivered from a bedroom. Just remember we're all in this together and the audience is on your side.

Now that you're feeling calmer, here's a few easy steps you can take to make your presentation run smoothly.

# **01**

## **FIND THE IDEAL "SET"**

The key is finding a quiet area with plenty of natural light. But, don't set up right in front of a window; that creates a back-light effect which can cast obscuring shadows on your face.

Once you've found a broadcast area you like, post up there for 5-10 minutes and listen for ambient noise that might get picked up by your mic. (Water running through pipes, traffic sounds, air-conditioning vents coming on and off, are common interferences.) If it all is quiet after a few minutes, you're in good shape.

# “I’M READY FOR MY CLOSE UP”

## 02

### SET UP YOUR COMPUTER

To frame your face well you want your webcam at eye level. Sitting at a desk or table is ideal, and you may want to put a sturdy book or two under your machine to achieve the perfect height.

## 03

### PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Once you have the perfect recording spot and set up it's time to perfect your performance, and that takes practice. Do several dry runs of your talk in front of your computer, paying attention to your pacing and pronunciation. When you're feeling comfortable, ask a friend, family member, or a co-worker to watch you do it live over video conferencing. It'll let you get more comfortable with your content, your video equipment and broadcasting platform, and gives you extra practice in front of an audience.

## 04

### KEEP CALM AND TALK ON

When presenting via video, it's very natural to want to pause for audience feedback like you would in a live session. (Laughter after a joke, affirmations for important statements, etc.) But that level of back and forth is unavailable in the virtual world. It may feel like you're talking to a void, but the audience is out there. You just need to focus more on what you're saying and less on how you think it's being received. Our best advice is to just be confident in your content. You were asked to speak for a reason and people are going to be receptive to what you're saying, even if it's hard to tell when you're all alone in your room.

### ***We promise, everyone can hear you.***

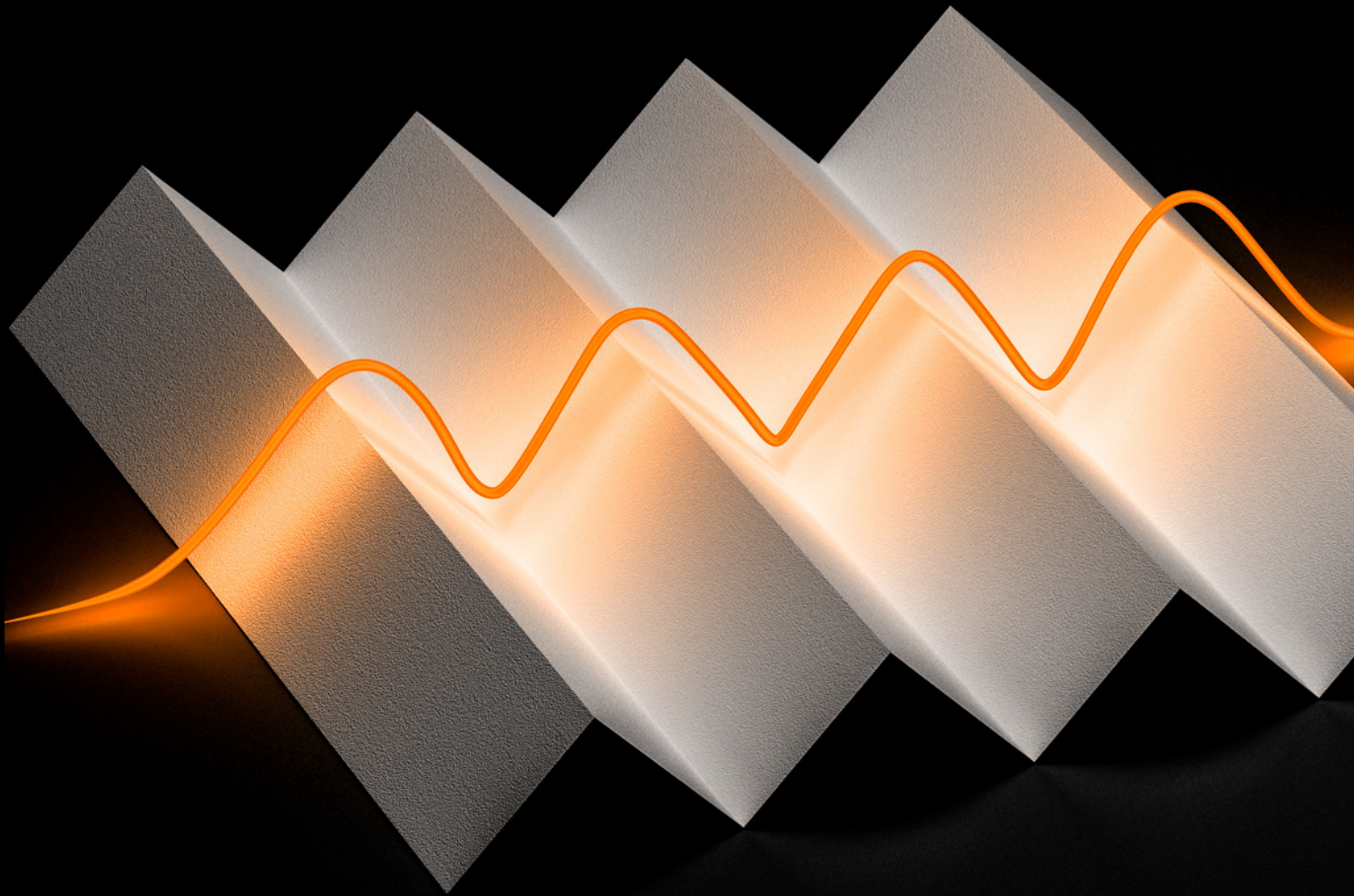
For whatever reason, everyone's default volume seems to switch to "shout" when they join a video conference. Maybe it's an unforeseen byproduct of the technology, or a natural inclination that comes from wanting to be heard over great distances. Whatever the reason, it's an annoying habit, and we all need to work hard to break it. When presenting always make sure you're speaking in a normal, conversational tone. Trust us, your audience will appreciate it.

**DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT**  
is a marathon, not a sprint.

*CREATING VIRTUAL  
**EVENT CONTENT**  
THAT PAYS OFF OVER TIME*

# CREATE CONTENT THAT LASTS

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A virtual event isn't just a moment in time. It's an important part of the communications continuum with your audience. And it's a powerful pillar in a comprehensive content marketing plan—a strategic approach to creating and distributing valuable content to connect with a target audience.

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Here's our tips for creating content that lasts:

## **01** SINGLE USE CONTENT IS A WASTED OPPORTUNITY

Almost everything you create should fit into a natural communications stream that can be used to engage audiences before, during, and after the event.

## **02** LET DATA DRIVE FUTURE COMMUNICATIONS

Virtual meetings offer a wealth of interesting analytics on your audience's tastes and habits. Use it to personalize your communications going forward.

## **03** DON'T SHY AWAY FROM STAR POWER

Since remote broadcasts are currently the norm, many high-ticket presenters and performers are available for reasonable prices. Just because a celebrity or thought leading speaker was out of budget before, doesn't mean that's still the case. Consider this when planning your content as added star power is a surefire way to widen your audience reach and boost brand recognition.

## 04 VIRTUAL EVENTS DOUBLE AS DIGITAL CONTENT ENGINES

Since all of your event's assets are designed to be viewed online, they should be created not just with your program's needs in mind, but as a way to boost your Google presence as well.

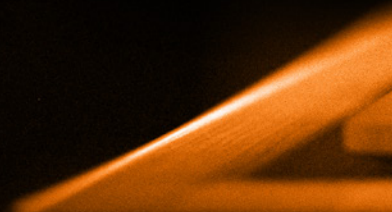
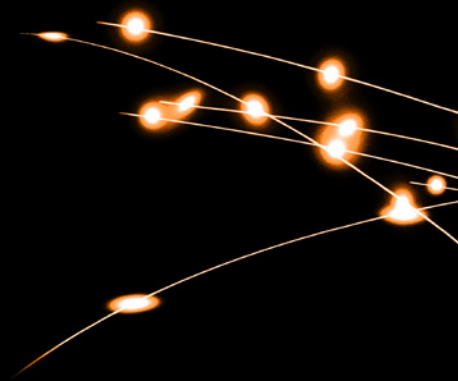
A virtual event's true success can't be measured just by how well the broadcast went, but also by how well the content resonates over time. With some strategic thinking and creative repurposing nearly every portion of your virtual event should be reusable in future content marketing campaigns or as a guide for future plans. Remember:

- Information gathered in preview sessions and post event surveys can be used to crowdsource future content ideas.
- Polls, Q&As, and networking sessions during events reveal what themes are top of mind for key audiences.
- In event content should become on demand content as soon as possible. Use view counts as a barometer for topics that matter most to your audiences.

### BEST PRACTICES

Here are some universal best practices when it comes to crafting content for the virtual crowd:

- **GET THE CREDIT YOU DESERVE.** The content you create may take on a life of its own once it hits the internet. Make sure anything you make is clearly—and consistently—branded.
- **COMMUNICATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET.** Seize every opportunity to get audience feedback on the type of content that keeps them engaged and invested.
- **THINK BEYOND THE INBOX.** Email communications are great but don't forget about all the social channels at your disposal to promote your work.
- **CONNECTIVITY HAPPENS VIRTUALLY.** Nothing can take the place of in-person interactions, but virtual events have been providing their own unique connection moments for years. Now is the time to explore and benefit from them!







## HOW CAN CRAMER HELP?

We've been using broadcast technology and virtual event platforms for years. We're well versed in the strengths and weakness of every possible technology, and can use that knowledge to help you pick the option that will best help you meet your objectives. But a good virtual event is about so much more than picking the right technology. You also need the right content, strategy, and production elements to make your event stand out from the crowd.

**We have full creative, strategy, and production teams dedicated to every element of a great event... and are ready to put them to work for you.**

CRAMER

Have a project in mind? [Let's chat.](#)

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