**How to Run Great Virtual Events**

Hello everyone and welcome to "how to run great virtual great virtual event ." I'm so pleased to be here and share a little bit of my knowledge with you around running virtual events. I know I know especially with the given circumstance, a lot of people are moving online and moving forward with their businesses virtually. And so this seems to be And so this seems to be a pretty hot topic and relevant topic. So I'm excited to share my expertise and my background in running virtual events with all of you today. Let's go ahead and get started. Hosting events has always been a great way to fuel your business and keep it powering on. Events allow you to connect with your prospects and customers. It allows you to help build relationships and even create enthusiasm for your business, and and your organization or products and services you might be selling. Due to the current state of affairs, you may find yourself moving online to run your very first virtual event. And since it is your first time or maybe not your first time, you may also be feeling a little bit nervous about this, which is little bit nervous about this, which is completely understandable. It doesn't necessarily feel natural to be doing these types types of events. We like face-to-face interaction. So that is okay. But let me assure you that when you know what to expect, me assure you that when you know what to expect, how people -- or I'm sorry, how you know how to prepare and have tips to get you going, you can run a great going, you can run a great virtual event too. And so today, we are grateful to have you join us for this webinar and this session where we will be able to discuss the following topics. We will talk a little bit about how to prepare for your event. So the So the things you need to think about ahead of time and getting set up and ready and setting yourself up ready and setting yourself up for success. We will talk about how to run your virtual event and keep people engaged along your virtual event and keep people engaged along the way. And how to follow up after your event. And that is a big topic people forget to deal. So we will spend some time talking about the best ways to spend some time talking about the best ways to follow up with your participants or your attendees. With that, we will go ahead and go through the presentation. I anticipate it will be about 20-30 minutes. Hopefully we will use the rest of our time to answer any questions that of our time to answer any questions that you have. So with that, let's go ahead and dive right into preparing right into preparing your event. Before you start an event, we really need to think about the things that are happening beforehand that will really help you set up for success. We don't want to just jump into We don't want to just jump into an event and guess or anticipate that it will go well. We want to be prepared and that we have everything ready to be prepared and that we have everything ready to go. One of the very first things I think about when I'm planning my event are some of I think about when I'm planning my event are some of these things. So the very first thing that I think of is the format of the event. So we want to think about, what type and events are we hosting, especially online. Is it some sort of fitness workshop? Are you doing some sort of DIY workshop? Showing people how to do something. Are you doing more of an Are you doing more of an educational presentation? Thinking of the type of the events that you are having will also lend itself to helping you understand your format and do you need to have some sort sort of interactive platform. Do you need to have some sort of slide deck or presentation? Is it a platform that allows you to showcase what you are doing and have people follow along? You want to think about, what is the ultimate goal? What are people trying to learn doing and have people follow along? You want to think about, what is the ultimate goal? What are people trying to learn or do by the time your event is event is over. And think about the best format to present or deliver that material.

 The second thing you want to think about is the to think about is the promotional schedule. We want to make sure we are having the event but making sure people are getting there and that we have allotted having the event but making sure people are getting there and that we have allotted enough time for people to be able to register and for us to announce our event and remind people about to announce our event and remind people about the event and to register for the event. Some helpful tips that I would suggest in terms of promoting your would suggest in terms of promoting your actual event, one of the things I always say is, if you are constantly doing events, you could always think about the content you are using for the content you are using for your event from your previous event. So some of the questions you may be getting in your question box or your chat window. You may want to think about using it for topics for your upcoming event. The reason that helps with promotion is because because you are finding topics that are genuinely interesting to your audience. So more people are going to be interested in that specific topic. In terms of your actual schedule, I would say anywhere from 6-8 weeks is typically a really good from 6-8 weeks is typically a really good solid amount of time to promote your event. Typically when I do virtual events, I don't do anything less than about a months worth of promotion. That allows you enough time to use That allows you enough time to use e-mail marketing, to send out e-mail invitations for people for people to register. And we usually say, send an announcement, a reminder and a follow-up e-mail. So a three part series. It also allows you to post on social media and it allows people to make sure that you are letting people know what they can expect when they attend. So allow yourself enough time to get the registrations and think about, where is the audience you are targeting? Are they on social media? Are they on your e-mail list? What channels will you use to promote your event and allow yourself enough time to schedule promotions. Some other tips with promotions too. If you are connected with other businesses in too. If you are connected with other businesses in your community or if you are partnering with other businesses for your virtual event, that is always great too because you are getting double the promotion. So just some things to think about when you are promoting the schedule. Some other things that I think think about when I'm preparing for my virtual event is the time and the date. We want to consider the lives of our audience. Who are the people we are trying to target to attend our event? And what are their lives like? What are their schedules like? lives like? What are their schedules like? If we are, say an educational -- I have seen a lot of children's day of children's day care is moving online events. Doing book readings for kids and things like that. So yes, the audience is kids but even more so the target audience would be more so the target audience would be the parents. These are probably working parents. So when would be a good time for working parents to be able to log online be a good time for working parents to be able to log online for the children to watch a book reading? May be early in the morning or maybe late or maybe late at night depending on their daily schedule. Think about who the audience is and and when it is best for them to attend. You also might want to think about, this is ideally when we would want to host the event and when we think people could attend. However if if something comes up and because they are human, human, things happen, different schedules conflict or unexpected things happen. Will you make it readily available for people who unexpectedly cannot attend the event. I know we saw questions earlier on before we started earlier on about, will this earlier on before we started earlier on about, will this be recorded? It is great for people who in the middle of the virtual event, something takes place and they have to leave. Maybe they want to rewatch it. Think about the date to leave. Maybe they want to rewatch it. Think about the date and the time and if they can't attend, will you make it make it readily available to them afterwards? Registration data, this is important. I treat registration much like I treat registration much like a survey. If you add too many questions or you add too many required fields, then people tend to not want to fill to not want to fill it out and it damages the registration process. But if you think about, what information do we need to collect to be able to communicate with people after the event, that can be really helpful for you as a business. Sometimes putting in a custom question field, what kind of question do you have for the presenter today? Or if you have for the presenter today? Or if you are a yoga studio or a fitness studio and you want you want to allow your clients to ask you questions about certain movements that you are doing throughout the virtual event, just allowing people to engage engage with you and that sort of sense provides a lot more involvement for your event. They feel a little more vested in vested in that they are actually connecting with you. That is one of the things with live events that is great. You get that face-to-face connection. You can build those can build those relationships easily. We don't see that as much with the virtual events. So allowing people to participate and ask questions within the registration data, it allows them to feel the registration data, it allows them to feel more involved but it gives you information for future events or future marketing purposes too. That is what people want to learn during what people want to learn during the event. Or how will the data be useful to you for future events or for future events or for future promotions? So these are some of the things that I think about when I'm preparing for I'm preparing for my events. The format, how I'm going to be promoting it and how long I will be promoting it, the time and long I will be promoting it, the time and the date best for people to attend and the registration data. Another thing important to think about before you host your event is the content. Content is super important too. Because if you are just talking at you are just talking at your audience or you are sharing the information relevant to you but not necessarily them, then that is going to be a problem. People will not be as engaged. They won't be as excited. as excited. You basically want to think about the content. Let me me think about great tips for content.

 Again, we want to think about who is the audience? What is interesting to them? What kind of questions do they have? What kind of needs do What kind of needs do they have and how do you create content around those topics? If we are just -- I always compare this to dating. A first date. It is kind of an awkward metaphor. But stick with me here. If you are interacting with somebody and all they do is talk about themselves the whole time or things that are interesting to them, are you going to want to interact with that person again? Probably not. You want to think about interactions that go back and forth, and allow people to have a conversation. So who is your audience and what is interesting to them and building the content around them. And the interest topics relevant to them. And then we want to think about learning objectives. So a learning objective is essentially a goal. What is your goal for the content or the virtual event? A learning objective is, what are you trying to teach them? And how are you going to teach them? This is important especially when you are building out out the content because the want the audience to to have expectations of what they are able to know and do when they leave your event. It is always important to share those learning objectives with your audience before you even get started. You may have you even get started. You may have noticed that, in this presentation I said, these are the three things we would things we would cover today. Ex, why and Z. So when we leave today's webinar, today's webinar, I can set those expectations and say, did we learn these things? Yes or no? It is good for you as a presenter or someone hosting a virtual event to say, these are the things I want you to be want you to be able to learn, no and do when you leave the webinar today. And it is a good expectation for that person who attended to say, I did or did not learn those things and to follow up appropriately with them. The learning objectives are really important, to keep you keep you on track and keep your content relevant to those expectations. And this is kind of the same type of outline based on the learning objectives. Typically when I say you are building some sort of presentation or you are doing you are doing some sort of virtual event, make an outline. And if your topics or your subtopics you are talking about do not directly tieback to one of your learning objectives, then it shouldn't be in then it shouldn't be in the presentation, right. You can get really off-track and you can fall down rabbit holes and you can go off on tangents if you are not tied directly to the learning objectives. And it is so helpful to create an outline based off of what you will talk about and make sure that they are directly tied to make sure that they are directly tied to those goals.

 And how much time is allocated to each topic? When I give my virtual events, I always have some sort of timer or clock sitting next to me. I have my outline here and my my outline here and my script here. I have timestamps on my outline. As I'm outline. As I'm going through, I can keep an estimate or a gauge on how long on how long or short I'm talking about something and that helps me to keep on topic and also helps me keep on time. Because if I'm telling you that I want to give you time to ask questions at the end and then I'm running up to the very end and I don't allow for the questions, then that is difficult very end and I don't allow for the questions, then that is difficult for your audience. So just allow yourself enough time to talk about certain topics or to leave questions for the end for people to engage to engage with you. And then your content it's also going to tie into what kind of platform you are using. If I'm doing some sort of demonstration or some sort of workshop, maybe getting away with Facebook live is fantastic, right. There are plenty of free platforms out there. Facebook live, Instagram live. Live streaming platform called twitch. There are different platforms different platforms out there that you can do presentations and you can demonstrate things for free. However, if I'm doing more of an However, if I'm doing more of an educational presentation or I need to make sure that people are -- say I want to demonstrate how to use Constant Contact specifically. I will need to use a platform that allows my participants to engage and interact with me a a little more so that I can maybe pass them control and they can control and they can control the screen of where they click. Think about, what are you trying about, what are you trying to teach? Do the participants or attendees need to be able to be able to show that they can do those things back back to you? That will lend itself to what kind of features and tools you need in kind of features and tools you need in a platform. Today we are using global meet. And it meets all of our needs in terms of presenting the slide deck and being able to take questions. There are other platforms out there that allow you There are other platforms out there that allow you to actually break out into different rooms and do breakout sessions or to click on the screen and type in what you want. It really depends on the extent of what you are trying to teach of what you are trying to teach or do that will lend itself to the platform you are using. So we have talked a little bit about how to prepare. We talked about the format and the promotion and the timing and the date. And the registration data and the date. And the registration data and even the content. Now it is time for your event.

 Now we have gotten to the day of the event. What are your event.

 Now we have gotten to the day of the event. What are some tips for running your event and keeping people engaged? Let me Let me talk about suggestions I have for you here. The first one is to practice, practice, practice. This is super important. Even if you have you have done webinars a thousand times and you have done virtual events a thousand times, it is okay to be nervous. I always still get, as soon as you press the start or record button, I get little butterflies in my stomach. Think about it this way. It is okay to be nervous. It is another form of excitement but it is another reason to it is another reason to make sure that you are prepared. If you have some sort of script, make sure you go through your script and practice your script. If you are doing it offhand and you don't have a script, you probably want to have one when you are practicing and run through it a few times so that it naturally comes out. Practicing allows you, to record yourself when you are practicing. This allows you to identify if you are talking too quickly or too slowly or what kind of tone you are using. You can see if you are using a lot of filler words a lot. And those things will always come out. We are human. And I We are human. And I actually find that some of those imperfections are more authentic versus just reading from a script the whole time. You want to make sure you feel prepared. Even when you get nervous, I take a minute or two just to breathe before I begin. Don't forget breathe before I begin. Don't forget to grab a glass of water or something to drink. Of course when we get nervous, our mouths get a little dry and it helps to regulate your body a little bit more when you to regulate your body a little bit more when you are presenting. In terms of other things to help you run your event, make sure that you show up early and have sure that you show up early and have a checklist. So before I log into my event, I always like to restart my computer to get a fresh connection. Another thing is bandwidth. We want to close out any unnecessary programs. I shutdown my e-mail or any other chat windows. I put my phone on, do not disturb. I have the I have the check line and the outline. I make sure everything is set to go and I have some sort of go and I have some sort of backup plan. Even if you don't end up using it, it makes you feel more prepared you feel more prepared and confident. Speaking of feeling more confident, we want to make sure we are feeling our best during our best during the presentation. So today you cannot see me through the WebCam. I could be in yoga pants and a sweatshirt or I could be in black or business casual clothes. Regardless of what you are wearing, what do you want to do is make sure you is make sure you feel comfortable and confident. When you are talking, that is being portrayed through your tone and through your voice as well. I and through your voice as well. I make sure people can see me. I take a nice hot shower in the morning. I have my coffee and I feel awake and ready to talk shower in the morning. I have my coffee and I feel awake and ready to talk and go.

 Now, when you are using WebCams where people can actually people can actually see you, it is even more important to fill your best. Think about the kind of wardrobe you are wearing and how that is portraying and how that is portraying your brand. Are you a more casual business where you want to feel more approachable? Maybe you could be in more casual could be in more casual clothing where maybe you are a consultant or a lawyer or a CPA. You still want lawyer or a CPA. You still want to portray professionalism. So maybe you dress up a little more. Think about feeling your best and portraying the brand that you want to be to your client, to your customers or to the brand that you want to be to your client, to your customers or to your members.

 You always want to make sure you have a backup have a backup plan too. It is interesting that we talk about this. Evenabout this. Even Alexa and I today, we have been doing webinars for years and years and years. Even with these webinars, we have these webinars, we have a rehearsal a few days before to login and make sure the slides are uploading correctly and that she can hear me through my phone line clearly and even on the day of, we login 30 minutes beforehand and we just make sure everything just make sure everything is connected. She is a fantastic moderator. She always says, after talking, I hear your voice getting faint and I hear cracking in the phone line. So it is always good cracking in the phone line. So it is always good to test these things. Be aware too that we are working with that we are working with technology here. Sometimes it happens where technology, you get a glitch in the system or the Wi-Fi doesn't work or the phone is breaking up. Have a backup plan. Right next to me I have a microphone I can plug into my computer. I me I have a microphone I can plug into my computer. I have my air pads I can plug in if my regular phone isn't working. I have my separate Wi-Fi connection in case my Wi-Fi case my Wi-Fi goes out. You want to make sure you have a little bit of an extra plan in case you have a little bit of an extra plan in case something happens. If something happens, be aware too, especially given the circumstances we are end, people are a little more forgiving too. People don't expect perfection. too. People don't expect perfection. They expect to hear babies or crying in the background or dogs barking in background or dogs barking in the background. You have seen those videos on the Internet where they crack me up every time where someone is on a professional interview every time where someone is on a professional interview on TV and the kid comes walking and in their underwear or something. It in their underwear or something. It happens. We are all human beings and we laugh at and we laugh at these things. It's okay. Don't beat yourself up for it. But you want to have some sort of But you want to have some sort of backup plan. I can give you many suggestions. You can contact me if you have questions. I can give you suggestions on different tools. The thing about that too is that it doesn't have tools. The thing about that too is that it doesn't have to be expensive. My backup microphone, I got $20 off I got $20 off of Amazon. Depending on what you are trying to do and what you are trying to portray. It doesn't have you are trying to portray. It doesn't have to be extensive but have those things set in place to to be successful. Think about too with your technologytechnology, the working environment and Eurotech set up. Especially on a WebCam. You want to make sure your You want to make sure your work environment is clean and you have no proprietary information on your desk that people could potentially see. I make sure that my blinds are closed. So I desk that people could potentially see. I make sure that my blinds are closed. So I don't get the backlighting. You can get ring lights. If you want to get you want to get a 12-dollar ring light on Amazon, you can do that. So think about your environment and what you are wearing and how you are portraying yourself and have a backup plan in case things a backup plan in case things go poorly. Those are tips for running your event. How do we keep people engaged? This is one of the more one of the more difficult tasks. Especially with virtual events. Just because face-to-face, you can see the nonverbal communication. We can see people's eyes drifting. We can see people doodling. We can doodling. We can see people dozing off or daydreaming. We can draw them back in many different ways. Virtually, it is more difficult to do. Here are tips to keep your are tips to keep your audience engaged so that they are paying attention to what you to what you are doing. You can use a technique called multiple voice. We are actually using that today. Multiple voice is one you have multiple people presenting or moderating the panel. So if I am going through my presentation and you are kind of dozing off a little bit and then all of a sudden a little bit and then all of a sudden you hear a different voice, psychologically that is going to capture your attention, right. It is always great to have panel discussions with multiple people. It gets more difficult with these discussions because you have to be worrying about everybody's technology. But they are super effective if you can get multiple people, multiple people, guests come experts, speakers or moderators. Alexa today is one of our fantastic moderators with score and I always enjoy working with her. It is good to hear her voice pop and every once in a while and it helps to capture and it helps to capture that engagement.

 You can also utilize features and tools in utilize features and tools in the platform. Many platforms out there allow you to send out different polls and surveys. This one we have a surveys. This one we have a chat window. There are different tools out there that allow people to raise allow people to raise their hands and ask questions. That is always great to integrate into your presentations always great to integrate into your presentations as well. You can also engage your audience -- and I will say everyone-3 minutes. If you are just sitting there watching a screen and nothing is moving and nothing is happening and you can find yourself dozing off or off or getting distracted, try to use animation. Prompting questions to your audience and saying, what kind of events are you running or hosting right now? And you can type that into the chat window. I know before hand we say, type in the questions before hand so we can answer the questions toward can answer the questions toward the end. For me personally, depending on the presentation, depending on the platform, sometimes I like to answer those questions as I go along. That might take a little more practice practice for you just because again you have to regulate the time and how much you talk about certain topics which can be a little more difficult. certain topics which can be a little more difficult. As you get better with doing presentations or virtual events, it gets a events, it gets a little easier. For this type of presentation, where I'm talking in the beginning, I want to make sure I have some beginning, I want to make sure I have some kind of animations or that I am provoking stuff within my audience. And then you are stuff within my audience. And then you are still engaged even before we get to those questions toward the end. You can also get your also get your audience involved by participating and some fun things like live tweeting. You can tell your audience before hand as I'm going through this presentation, feel free to send me a question this presentation, feel free to send me a question on Twitter and tagged me with this. I have seen people do photo contests. Take a picture of yourself and post it when you are watching the webinar and tag me and it or hashtag this. And the presenter or the facilitator can go back this. And the presenter or the facilitator can go back and answer those or engage with those photos or tweets afterwards. Including trivia or games. Depending on what type of profession you are in and what you are trying profession you are in and what you are trying to accomplish, trivia or games can be really effective in terms of making sure people are understanding what you in terms of making sure people are understanding what you are teaching. And so, I may ask some sort sort of question. And let's do this right now. Let's do this right now. I want you in the chat window to type in the want you in the chat window to type in the four things. Give me four things -- actually, let's do one thing. Give me one thing that we talked about and preparing your event. What was one of the things we talked about that would be helpful in preparing for your event? thing. Give me one thing that we talked about and preparing your event. What was one of the things we talked about that would be helpful in preparing for your event? Go ahead and type that into the chat window. For some of you who started to doze off a to doze off a little bit and got distracted a little bit when I asked that question and asked you to do something, that is when it pulled you back in. So it is really easy to something, that is when it pulled you back in. So it is really easy to do that. Manage distractions appropriately. So this can be this can be really difficult. For you as a presenter, you need to focus not only on the points you are making, the talking points you are providing but you are providing but you also are having to manage questions in the chat window and and that is actually really helpful going up to that point number one and having number one and having a moderator. Alexa is very helpful in that. Right now I don't have to necessarily pay attention too closely to the questions because I know she has flagging them for us. If I were doing this on my own, I would want to make sure to have open my chat window so I could respond appropriately to people talking in the chat window. Sometimes you can Sometimes you can get hecklers. We were talking about this before we about this before we hit record. We found being in this profession and doing public speaking and virtual events so frequently that there are scammers out there or bots that will enter into your webinars and type really random questions that are completely off base just to distract you. You might also receive some negative comments in the you. You might also receive some negative comments in the chat window. And you have to use your own discretion in terms of, is use your own discretion in terms of, is that something that is appropriate for me to address right now? Or is it something I can address afterwards? Is it something I should address Is it something I should address at all? Try to do your best to manage those feelings and not take it personally as you are presenting. Just because you need to stay focused with what you are talking about and what you what you are talking about and what you are doing. But that can be something you might run into. Hecklers that come in and say random things or in and say random things or inappropriate things and you have to gauge, is this is this something I can handle right now or do I need to block this person out of the platform? Is it something I I can address with something I'm saying? Just try to be aware of those things. Other distractions you might find. Make sure distractions you might find. Make sure other technology is closed it down and you don't have other chat windows app. I always put my phone on, do not disturb. So I'm not getting text messages or hearing my phone ring. I am in my office ring. I am in my office right now. I actually unplugged my land line as well. If somebody calls through the landline when I'm giving a presentation, that can be a presentation, that can be a distraction. Things like, dogs barking or barking or babies crying. Family members walking in. There are only so many things that you can or cannot control. So try to gauge those ahead of time and just be prepared for gauge those ahead of time and just be prepared for those. Last but not least, show your excitement. When the passion of your presentation, the passion of your virtual event is coming through the tone of your voice and what you your excitement. When the passion of your presentation, the passion of your virtual event is coming through the tone of your voice and what you are talking about and you are passionate and you are sharing the love for what you do, that gets people people excited too. If you are a crafter and you and you are doing a do-it-yourself craftwork shop online, why do you love it? Share your stories. Share your stories. Share anecdotes. If you are may be a boutique, a brick-and-mortar boutique, why not have a fun fashion show and show why you love certain pieces. Why you like to be in this style industry. I have seen a lot of beauty and wellness people doing show why you love certain pieces. Why you like to be in this style industry. I have seen a lot of beauty and different demonstrations on haircuts that they are doing or are doing or makeup tutorials. May be for sporting and fitness, you want to do some sort of demonstration of demonstration or workshop on how to swing a golf golf club appropriately. How to adjust yourself on the golf course or how to do a Burpee correctly. Think the golf course or how to do a Burpee correctly. Think about all the things you want to teach people but why you want to teach it. Why you are excited about it. That will come through in the tone of your voice and keep in the tone of your voice and keep people engaged. Now that we have talked a little bit about preparing a little bit about preparing for events and ways to run your event, also keeping people engaged during your event, let's talk about the follow-up after your event, let's talk about the follow-up after the event. I will say this. Even when it is a Even when it is a virtual event, you put everything that you have have into it. Sometimes after the event, you are so exhausted from running the event even if it is just a webinar that people kind of forget, I just a webinar that people kind of forget, I have done it and now I'm really done. I did my webinar or webinar or my event and they just don't follow-up. And that is one of the most important things you can do for your business or the most important things you can do for your business or your organization. So I went to make sure we give you a some really helpful tips in terms of how to follow up with your audience and what that can do for your audience and what that can do for your business. First and foremost, think of feedback as a guest. I mentioned mentioned this when I was talking about distractions. Sometimes you will Sometimes you will get feedback during your event in your chat window or during the Facebook live or you will get an e-mail or a chat or e-mail or a chat or a text while the event is happening. And again, try not to get too distracted by those in get too distracted by those in the moment.

 I know that sometimes they can take things personally and it can hurt to hear personally and it can hurt to hear that feedback. But use it as a motivation to make your future events better. What can you do a motivation to make your future events better. What can you do to improve? It doesn't mean you did a bad job. It just means there did a bad job. It just means there are ways being yourself.

 With the circumstances, we are craving interaction and we are craving to be close to people. If you are showing that authenticity and your passion for what you you are doing, that is going to mean more than any type of well polished presentation. They want to hear who you you are and why you love what you do and to really see the value and authenticity and that. Get mileage from your event too. too. So after you get the recording and you send that out, think about other think about other ways you can post or share your recording. Maybe want to get mileage from your event by putting it on YouTube or taking clips. There are tons of free tools out tools out there that you can crop your video and slice it so that you can put previews on the social channels or the social pages. Think about how you can get how you can get the most out of that presentation.

 And then going back to making sure the audience gets what they need. Make sure to recap and to circle back with them to make sure that you provided what it is they really wanted to learn. Those are some final thoughts in terms are some final thoughts in terms of follow-up. But just your presentation overall. My biggest one is just to have fun and be conversational be conversational and authentic to who you are and what your businesses and people will really see that shine through. With that, I'm going to go ahead and pass it off to go ahead and pass it off to Alexa for some of the questions she may have seen in the chat window so we can hopefully answer some of those before today's today's session ends.

 Right. thank you so much. We will go ahead and move into the Q&A portion of the webinar session and we will do our best to address as many questions as we can with the time remaining. I want to kick to kick this off. We have a lot of really fantastic questions that have been coming in throughout the webinar. So the first one I want to address, this is the most popular question being being asked today. Which platform is best to use? And there are so many variables in determining this. Can you determining this. Can you talk about how they can identify a platform that is best for their specific needs?

 Again, I think it really depends on what you are trying to accomplish. As you said, Alexa, there are so many variables that go into this. One of the biggest ones I know for small businesses biggest ones I know for small businesses is budget. How much are you willing to spend? And that might depend also on how often you are hosting often you are hosting the events. I know for Constant Contact, we use a lot of lot of different platforms. For more professional presentations or webinars, things that we need more functionality for. need more functionality for. We use, log me in. They have different types come even within log me in, different types of platforms. There is, go to webinar, GoToMeeting. There is a premier event platform that a premier event platform that they have. It kind of scales depending on what functions we need and tools we need. But also requires that we budget and for certain licenses. So maybe if you are more into educational space or the professional space, you need you need more functionality. You might want to look into a company that actually company that actually provides licenses and you have a subscription with them. If you are more of a a casual business, you don't need to take payments or take registrations. You just want to just want to go live and showcase what you are doing or how you are helping a customer or client. Some of those platforms like Facebook live are Some of those platforms like Facebook live are more appropriate. So it is really hard for me to say either way. It really depends on what you are teaching, the functionality you need and the budget that you have. Honestly, too, you can go out there and Google different platforms. There are quite a few. The top contenders typically The top contenders typically pop up. Do your research. A lot of them have different trials or sales reps you can talk to to ask about the functionality. They have comparison charts on the website and terms of what they can and cannot do. I would say, I would say, start small. For your first virtual event, try Facebook live or try Google Google hang out. Those three tools that have basic functionality. They should work just fine. As you grow in scale, maybe that is when you look into the ones that are little more expensive and have are little more expensive and have more functionality.

 Okay, Jenna. There have been a lot of questions around promoting events and best of questions around promoting events and best practices there. So some of these questions are asking, how far in advance should how far in advance should you promote the webinars? Are their best days or times as well to consider holding your event?

 days or times as well to consider holding your event?

 I really feel like this depends solely on your audience. solely on your audience. If you are trying to provide education to people who are busy during the day and they have nine too jobs. Maybe it is best to host an evening or in day and they have nine too jobs. Maybe it is best to host an evening or in early morning type of events. I think it I think it depends on what you are teaching and what your goal is. I work a lot with different chambers of commerce and score chapters and different small business influencers. And a lot of the virtual things a lot of the virtual things that they have been doing lately are early morning coffee hours or morning coffee hours or happy hour. That will take place for those times of the day. Think about the audience and when it is best for them. Going back to and when it is best for them. Going back to the point of if they register and they plan on attending but something comes up, what will make it easily and readily available afterwards? In terms of days it easily and readily available afterwards? In terms of days and times, for me, I find that anywhere from Tuesday until Thursday is a good day to host a virtual event. I try to think of time zones. If I'm doing a national webinar, I try to think zones. If I'm doing a national webinar, I try to think of a time, usually 1-2:00 p.m. Eastern time is good. Even on the Pacific coast, that is 10:00, Pacific coast, that is 10:00, 11:00 a.m. Everybody is awake and has kind of gotten the kind of gotten the day going. And so just think about -- I hate to give you the runaround answer on that but it really does depend on who the audiences, where you are and what you are doing and just keep them in mind when you are you are doing and just keep them in mind when you are planning it. In terms of how long you should be promoting it for, I think ideally, you want to give yourself 6-8 weeks to give yourself 6-8 weeks to promote it out. To e-mails and social posts. You don't want to nag people to register for your event but you want to remind them enough to do people to register for your event but you want to remind them enough to do those things. I typically say to do some sort of a three-part sort of a three-part e-mail series where you are announcing the event. Maybe you have 1-2 reminders of reminders of the event and then you will have a follow-up e-mail obviously that we talked about e-mail obviously that we talked about as well. Keep that in mind. I personally, for virtual events, do not do anything less than a than a month promotion. I just find that I really don't get the amount of people that the amount of people that I want unless I give myself at least a month to promote a month to promote that out. And so keep that in mind. But test it too. You can always try a month or six weeks or eight weeks or what works best for you getting month or six weeks or eight weeks or what works best for you getting those registrations. And I don't know, Alexa. Maybe you have Alexa. Maybe you have some insight as well. You worked in the space quite a in the space quite a bit too.

 Yes. I agree with the answer you just provided. As far out as we can regarding As far out as we can regarding the promotion, we typically start the promotion about two months months in advance. Anywhere between 8-12 weeks if at all possible and that has proven effective in the larger audience sizes. Days of the week, Tuesdays and Thursdays based on the data has proven Tuesdays and Thursdays based on the data has proven to be the highest attended webinar days. And the same time Jenna mentioned Jenna mentioned as well. We are right in line with that.

 We will move on to the next question. We have had several folks asking about if you could talk about when you are utilizing other folks to assist with your webinars such as the moderator. Can you you are utilizing other folks to assist with your webinars such as the moderator. Can you talk about what the moderator responsibility actually is? And are are there other roles that you should consider having that part of your event rather than a presenter and rather than a presenter and a moderator.

 You will hear different terminology for different roles within a presentation. You might hear the presenter or different roles within a presentation. You might hear the presenter or the demonstrator or the facilitator. Those of the main people providing the education and the content. The moderator is here to support. You will see that Alexa opens up the up the session today with a welcome. She goes over goes over housekeeping items. If at any point during the session something goes wrong or the audio goes out, she is the one behind the scenes who was heavily communicating with me through chat like you are breaking up or can you plug in your headset? or can you plug in your headset? She -- think of the moderator as the producer for as the producer for the event. Whereas also, when you have multiple guests, those are typically panelists or referred to as panelists. And what you have decided ahead of time. In this one particularly Alexa is the producer and she is heavily supporting me to make sure producer and she is heavily supporting me to make sure that my presentation is being delivered successfully. There may be a different presentation where we actually go back and forth forth in conversation. What I would say with those types of presentations or virtual events, you want to make sure you have a rehearsal and have a very clear outline. If I'm on a panel with four other people, I want to make sure outline. If I'm on a panel with four other people, I want to make sure ahead of time that I have said, here's the outline outline and here is the flow of how I see the virtual event is the flow of how I see the virtual event going. These are the kinds of questions I'm going of questions I'm going to ask or conversation starters. This is how much time we should talk about each topic. And again, you want to make sure to have some sort of rehearsal with them to clarify any of those things and check And again, you want to make sure to have some sort of rehearsal with them to clarify any of those things and check the audio and check the tech issues or the WebCams or things things like that. But those ones, you would have to -- those would involve a little bit more teamwork. But they are well worth it. I think people just get so much more out of those types of presentations and you are get so much more out of those types of presentations and you are using that multiple voice. They are hearing multiple voices which psychologically triggers their brain to engage with psychologically triggers their brain to engage with the presentation. You can call people whatever they want. Whether it is moderator, presentation facilitator. As long as you have a common understanding of what that is and you have a designated those roles and responsibilities ahead of time, then you will you have a common understanding of what that is and you have a designated those roles and responsibilities ahead of time, then you will be successful.

 We have time for one or maybe two last questions today during the last questions today during the live session. We have had a lot of questions come in around the come in around the event engagement. Some of the questions are asking, if you could elaborate on some creative audience activities to utilize in webinars elaborate on some creative audience activities to utilize in webinars or events for that audience engagement participation.

 Truly, I think it depends on what type of business you are. I tried to give some examples. I know a lot of a lot of industries like the fitness industries like the fitness and wellness industries have moved a lot of classes online or dance studios have moved classes online or dance studios have moved classes online. And that can be difficult because, especially those things are so heavily -- those instructors need to see the movement of their clients or of their students in order to help them and make sure they clients or of their students in order to help them and make sure they are improving. And so those kinds of activities where I think you are demonstrating something and then you have them demonstrate it back something and then you have them demonstrate it back to you as best you can is always great. I think maybe and those fields where -- I look at the restaurant industry even and some of the virtual events restaurant industry even and some of the virtual events I have seen. There was my favorite restaurant restaurant in Chicago. It is a pizza place. They are heavily known for their wild and crazy branches on Sunday and one thing I thought they did really well was thing I thought they did really well was just try to portray that brand. Even when we were on lock down and you couldn't eat in restaurants. They still did this brunch bingo. And it was during the week where you could buy your the week where you could buy your bingo cards. And on Sunday, everybody would log into the live stream and they the live stream and they would do live bingo through live stream and people could interact. They had this very funny commentator doing the bingo session. But he was commenting to people about what they were saying in the live stream and they were commenting back all when they were doing bingo. they were commenting back all when they were doing bingo. So it was fun. There was really no goal other than to create this wild and crazy brunch atmosphere from the comfort of your own home. If you can think about your brand and what you are trying to crazy brunch atmosphere from the comfort of your own home. If you can think about your brand and what you are trying to accomplish and just try to make people feel like they have interaction with each other and have relationships, like they have interaction with each other and have relationships, may be you are more of a professional services type of business. Maybe you do some kind of question and of question and answer session. If you are a consultant for small businesses, that would consultant for small businesses, that would also be a great virtual event. I would totally logon to see someone who is an expert in small businesses and talking someone who is an expert in small businesses and talking about how to best utilize PPE or stimulus packages or different ways other ways other small businesses have been powering through the pandemic. So just trying to connect people with you and your business I think is probably the biggest thing. I I think is probably the biggest thing. I think that should give you some anecdotes on how to on how to be creative.