

Scaling Your Event Strategy



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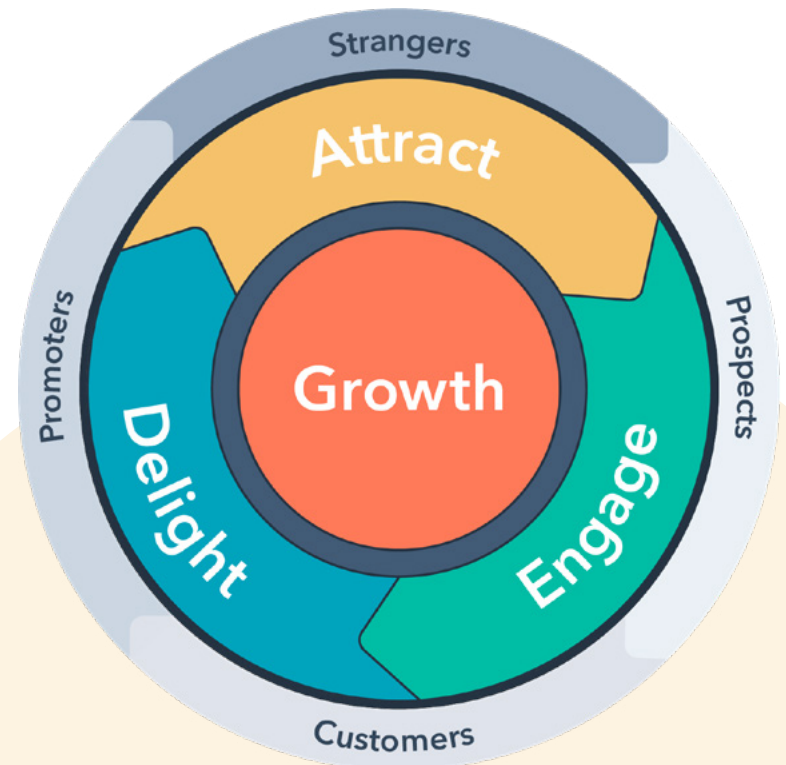
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Introduction

Event marketing is fundamental to any long-term growth strategy. A well-planned event offers an opportunity to increase brand awareness, showcase your product, and most importantly, connect face-to-face with current or prospective customers. This networking piece is critical to business growth, as satisfied event attendees can easily convert into prospects, customers or promoters. The more brand promoters you have, the faster your **flywheel** turns.

Aside from the brand awareness benefits, **event marketing** also provides you with actionable insights into your business's audience and their interaction preferences. You can use hard metrics like registrations, check-ins, social media mentions/engagement, and post-event surveys to adjust and improve your **marketing outreach strategies** moving forward.

So whether you walk away with thousands of new leads, or learn how to better connect with your customers, events are always worthwhile. Then, as you get the hang of what works and what doesn't, you'll be able to replicate your efforts, scale your event strategy, and yield higher returns.



CHAPTER 1

Going Digital During COVID-19

As **in-person events were put on hold** over the past year, online events became necessary for maintaining sales pipelines, fostering networking and knowledge-sharing, and supporting customer engagement. Marketers all over the world capitalized on the opportunity, turning traditional webinars and livestreams into full-scale **virtual events**. This virtual approach came with unexpected cost-saving benefits and, in many cases, improved user experiences.

Advantages of virtual events

Scale

No longer inhibited by the restrictions of a single location, events have become easier to scale. Depending on the host platform used, virtual events can support tens or hundreds of thousands, attendees. This increases the actual size of one-off events. Plus, with zero location-based details to determine, the event becomes more easily repeatable. Repeatability allows for ongoing adjustments and improvements, and the ability to drive greater impact.

With a repeatable event strategy, your team can offer more frequent events at a lower cost.



Participation

Events offer participants an opportunity to get close to industry experts, thought leaders and notable personalities. With a virtual event, the pool of potential speakers and panelists expands.

Online speaking opportunities more easily fit into people's schedules, so speakers are more likely to agree to participate. And with no travel or accommodation costs, for the speaker or the business, the opportunity becomes even more worthwhile.



Source: [Hopin](#)

Diversity & Accessibility

Accessible from anywhere, virtual events benefit from more diversity. And with more diversity comes more fruitful conversations and a broader sense of community. Not to mention, attendees, like the working parent that was otherwise too busy to attend in-person or the immunocompromised person that prefers to avoid large gatherings, will feel a greater sense of connectedness to your brand and the experience you offered them.

A surefire way to make sure you're considering all the ways to make your event more inclusive? Diversify your **event planning team** and speaker lineup. With many different voices and experiences, you'll be able to identify nuanced, often overlooked ways to better support all of your attendees.

Ways to make your event more inclusive:

- Add subtitles/closed captions to all video content
- Include real-time translations for different languages including ASL
- Offer live sessions as a recording
- Provide many different viewing platforms and apps (think: able to stream from any device)
- Multiple pricing tiers and options for payment

More Impact for Less (Cost-Efficient)

Overall, virtual events are going to give you the biggest bang for your buck. Virtual events are less costly in terms of time, money and effort to plan and execute than in-person events.

Instead of budgeting for a venue, special permits, catering, travel & accommodation costs, etc., you can focus on picking a high-quality platform to host your event and investing in more content and presenters. Uninhibited by traditional costs and stressors, you can spoil your guests with follow-up **swag**, celebrity speakers, or additional content that will provide maximum value to your attendees.

Moving forward, there will be more events than ever. With the opportunity to host an event virtually with a small team or budget, events or occasions that may not have warranted an event in the past will be first on the calendar. The **U.S virtual event market** is projected to grow from \$94B in 2020 to \$404B in 2027. That's more than 300% growth in just seven years.



Access to Data and Analytics

We've covered that virtual events have countless pluses, and, what's more, they offer detailed data tracking, analysis opportunities, and ways to help you improve and iterate to benefit attendees. One of event marketer/event planners' biggest gripes is tracking/ROI— virtual events help to solve that.

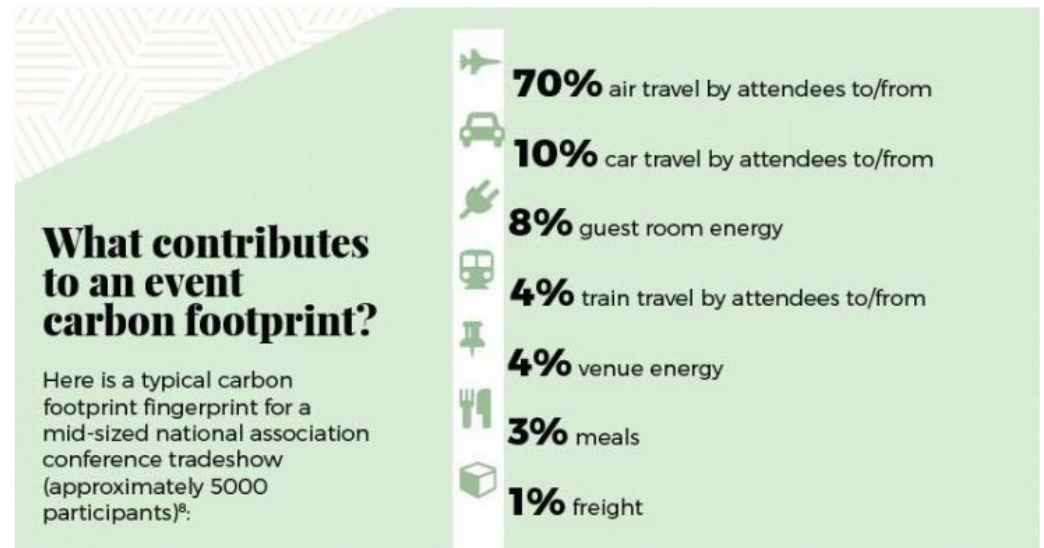
Virtual events offer:

- More trackable touchpoints
- Better ability to calculate ROI
- More value to sponsors
- A clearer picture of attendee behavior, which helps organizers/sponsors

Sustainability

Many organizations are actively trying to reduce their carbon footprint, HubSpot included (we recently **announced that we're completely carbon neutral**, something we'd been working on since 2006). The good news is that virtual events are sustainable. By reducing travel, waste, and CO2 emissions generated by activities, virtual events reduce our collective carbon footprint.


Virtual events eliminate **all the major carbon footprint contributors of in-person events**:



Source: [Event Manager Blog](#)

Community-Building

When hosting a virtual event, your guests can network with people in new and interesting digital ways. Event platforms and social media give attendees the chance to interact past the end of your event. Use a registration list to foster an online community for sustained brand-audience relationships.



Tip: Create a follow-up nurture email a week or two out from your event with an online platform for people to chat and reconnect. Share videos, clips, or additional content from the event and encourage conversations on Slack, social media, or elsewhere among attendees.



Staying power of virtual events

Originally seen as a supplement to in-person events, businesses now regard online options as key components to growth. This means that every marketer will need to know **how to plan a successful virtual event**. When in-person events are impossible or impractical, virtual ones offer an unmatched opportunity for connection and inclusion.

Given how much more efficiently virtual events can be planned, we'll likely see businesses host far more events than before.

Corporate gatherings that otherwise would not have happened at all because of high overhead costs or difficulty planning can now happen online. In addition to a yearly physical onsite, for instance, you can host company-wide quarterly kickoffs online to keep your organization connected and aligned outside of once-in-a-year occasions.

Not only will we see more events, but also more multi-layered ones. Virtual events have forced marketers to get creative with their event planning, and explore elements that they previously hadn't. Turns out, event goers enjoyed this. The Atlantic, for instance, had to take their annual event online this year. **It was such a smashing success**, with over 37,000 registrants, that they are planning to always offer a virtual option through a hybrid strategy.

CHAPTER 2

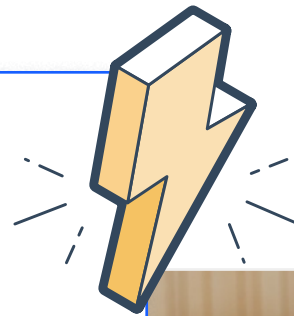
What Is a Hybrid Event Strategy?

You've likely heard that term "hybrid" tossed around countless times this year in reference to work, learning, events and more. But make no mistake, "hybrid" is not just a buzzword. It's the future of events.

What are hybrid events?

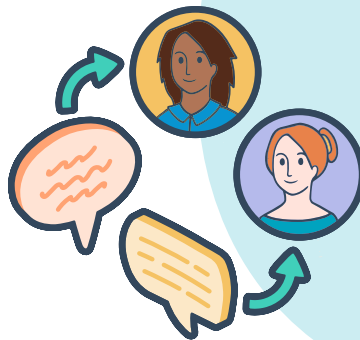
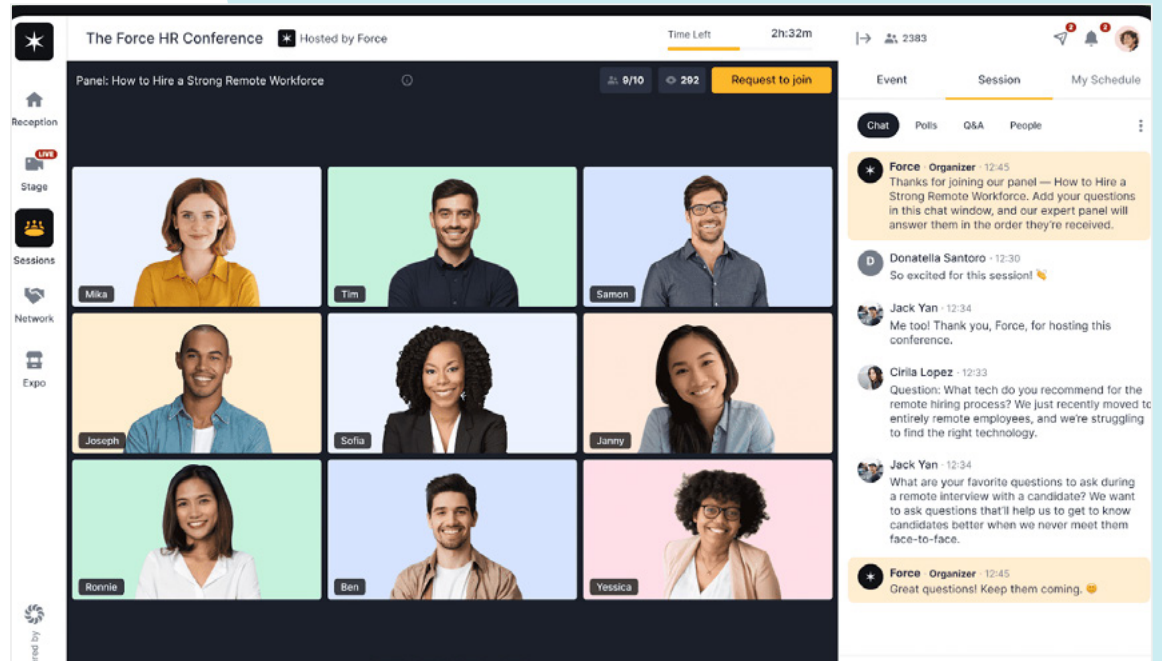
- Have a physical and online component
- Equal access for all attendees
- Include a live element

Hybrid events provide all attendees (onsite and online) with the opportunity to communicate with each other and with presenters, ask questions, shape the conversation, and participate in breakout sessions and networking events, no matter where they tune in from.



Hybrid events include both in-person and online components. They combine the best elements of each type of event in order to deliver the most value to attendees. A hybrid event strategy requires **omni-channel**-like planning in that the goal is to create a totally integrated experience. Any **in-person event**, like a seminar, launch party, or conference, can be turned into a hybrid event.

If you host a **conference**, for example, you could live stream some of the main events, or offer a mix of both in-person and online sessions. This way, an attendee has the option to attend live talks, catch an on-demand session on their phone during breaks, or attend from the comfort of their own home, all while being able to ask questions, network, and engage.



Combining Virtual and In-Person Strategies for Hybrid Events

Hybrid events offer multiple ways of consuming content – event goers have the option to attend workshops or presentations in person, online, or a combination of the two. The goal should be to provide equally rich experiences for in-person attendees and virtual attendees, without either having limitations.

Hybrid event best practices include:

- Offering ways for attendees to participate and ask questions during live sessions, whether they are joining from home or attending in person
- Providing any materials, downloads, worksheets, or speaker handouts digitally to all attendees
- Creating a virtual space for networking and easy access for those in-person to connect; try using QR codes or email to facilitate connections

With multiple ways of participating, you expand your viewership tenfold. This, in turn, expands the network of people talking about your event. The more buzz, the more leads you can expect in the coming days.



CHAPTER 3

The New & Improved Normal

Marketers have been hard at work perfecting virtual and hybrid event strategies over the past year. We've compiled some of their top suggestions and best practices in this chapter, so you can walk into your next planning meeting like a pro.

Invest in the right tools

To see your event come to life, you have to determine what tools are needed for planning, promoting, and executing. Use organizational tools like [Trello](#), [Google Sheets](#), or [Dropbox](#) in the early stages to plan everything out, working backwards from your event date. [Canva](#) and [YouTube](#) can be used during the creative process, and an email marketing tool like [HubSpot](#) will allow you to promote and follow-up on your event.

Finally, a [virtual event platform](#), like [Hopin](#), will be necessary to bridge the gap between in-person and at-home attendees. Nearly every [event marketing resource](#) you need already exists. It's just a matter of finding the ones that fit your strategy and budget the best.



Source: [Hopin](#)

Prioritize personalization & customization

A little extra planning can go a long way. If attendees have the option to customize their event experience by creating their own schedules, or joining tailored breakout rooms, they'll likely get more out of the event. The more value you deliver, the more loyal your brand followers become.

Thankfully, hybrid events allow for a lot more personalization and feedback. Many virtual platforms come with support for live chats, Q&As, and the ability to quickly hop from one session to another.

When **The Next Web (TNW)** needed to quickly pivot from their traditional in-person events, they partnered with Hopin to plan a series of virtual events called the "Couch Conferences." They created 78 unique sessions all about technology and featured 276 different speakers from companies like Google, Headspace, and Microsoft. With over 20,000 attendees tuning in to the virtual events, TNW's audience was highly engaged with the new content format.



Sync the in-person and at-home experiences

Since there are more components to a hybrid event, overcommunicating with attendees is critical. Give them a preview of the virtual platform, share event schedules ahead of time, and make sure both in-person and virtual attendees understand how to maximize their experience.

TechCrunch created a 1-minute video to show registrants the different areas of their conference, [TechCrunch Disrupt](#). The preview video, along with a website with the event schedule, videos, news, and more, gave attendees a chance to plan out their online conference experience like they would a traditional event.

To fill space between main events, consider two-way Q&A sessions, group chats, entertainment, interactive demos, sponsor giveaways, watch parties, and video networking.

Using Hopin, you can offer [1:1 video networking](#) rooms that pair attendees up at random, giving event goers a virtual networking experience that's like speed dating, but the main topic of conversation is your event. Use virtual networking during or after the event.

For your international audience, don't be afraid to provide access to pre-recorded sessions either. The team at Hopin recently replayed a recorded session from a live event for their APAC region. They hosted an exclusive live panel for the APAC region in their time zone as a way to engage that audience.

All of these elements will help distant attendees feel part of the action. Plus, in-person attendees will be excited by the additional activity options, and the idea that they're present for a globally-watched event.



CHAPTER 4

Scaling Your Event Strategy

The truth about events is that the first one is the hardest. Use your first event, or first event of a particular series, to establish a repeatable framework. Details can be adjusted each time, but the framework will serve as a guidepost to keep your planning on track.



1 Set Goals & Plan

To get started, you first need to determine your **SMART goals** and budget. SMART goals stand for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely. This goal framework helps you identify the “why,” “how,” and “what” of your events. It will also stop you from planning an event that doesn’t speak to your target audience, or won’t impact your bottom line.

In creating SMART goals, ask yourself:

- What are our current marketing goals?
- What metrics are we trying to improve upon?
- What’s our budget? What resources do we already have access to?
- What’s the purpose of our event?
- Name? Theme? Product or content to highlight?
- Who is our target audience?
- What’s our timeline?
- Who will be responsible for what?
- How will we promote the event before and during?



2 Launch & Manage

When the planning is over, it's time to bring your event to life. Create an event team with moderators, social media managers, and support members. Also, get the rest of your company invested in the event; it's an organic way to connect with your audience.

Event Support

To ensure that everything goes off without a hitch, you'll want a dedicated support team present in-person and online. This team can help solve technical issues, direct attendees to the right place, and receive feedback in real time.

Company Support

Get the rest of your company on board for the event – having direct mingling opportunities is a huge plus for every department in the organization. Use it as a chance for all teams to directly hear from and talk to customers.

Tip: Have your team add a link to the event in their email signature leading up to it; it's a great conversation starter and way to drive registrations.

Moderators

An individual or team will lead during the event, acting as a moderator who can communicate back to presenters with questions or ideas. The main role of an event moderator is to facilitate conversations between the audience and presenters and give every attendee an equal opportunity to share their voice and be an active participant.

Social Media Manager(s)

Trust us on this – assign a dedicated social media manager or team to carefully **monitor the social media mentions**. Your event goers will be the first to alert you to any technical issues that need to be addressed. Additionally, it's a fast-paced role during events and can be overwhelming for someone with other responsibilities to keep up with.

The better the experience your attendees have, the more likely you'll be able to repeat the event in the future with an even larger attendance.

Follow Up

Events can help build a community. But that community will be lost if you don't keep up with it. Directly after the event, send **follow up emails** to attendees. These can be personalized depending on the information provided upon registration. In the days and weeks after, don't be afraid to repurpose content and assets from the event either. Turn event assets into follow up blogs, emails, ebooks or social posts and keep the engagement rolling.

Analyze

It's always a good idea to set some key performance indicators (KPIs) against which to measure your event and evaluate its performance. A few common event KPIs include registrations and check-ins, cost-to-revenue ratio, attendee satisfaction, social media mentions, lead acquisition and customer conversion.

Find out how many qualified leads you gained from the event, then track how many of those leads converted into paying customers. This can help uncover the direct **ROI of your event** and help you understand which tactics worked for lead collection and conversion.

Adjust & Repeat

Like any marketing initiative, you should always have a full retrospective of your event. Consider what worked, what didn't, and what you'd like to implement next time. Adjust your framework accordingly, then begin brainstorming your next event.

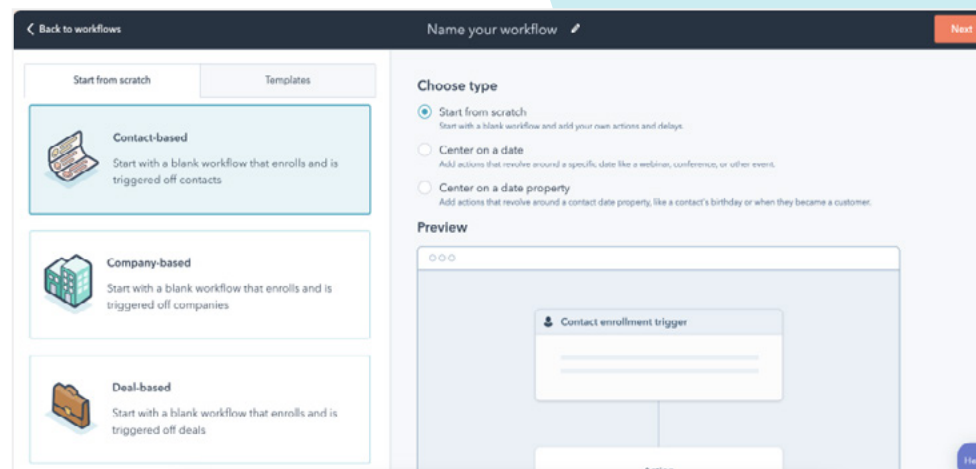


Using HubSpot + Hopin to Maximize Hybrid Event Potential

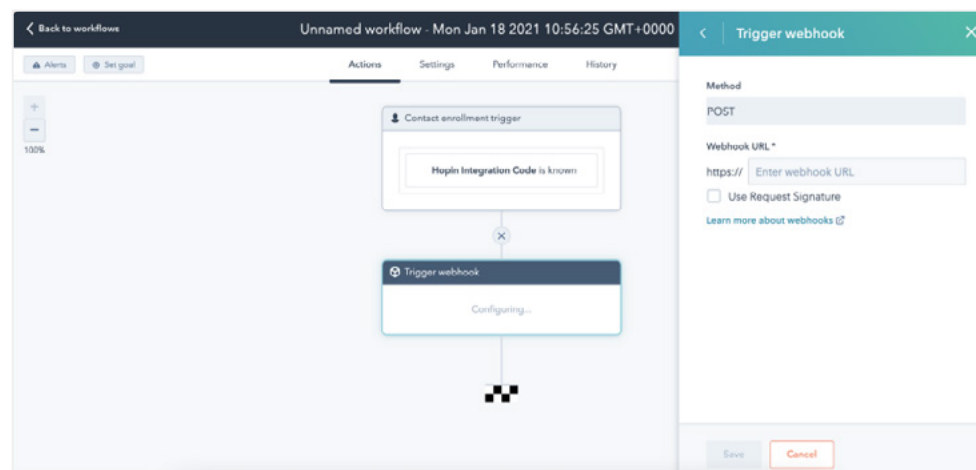
Between your virtual event platform and CMS Hub, you have the ability to create a powerful and scalable event strategy. A data-driven, integration solution is to host your event in **Hopin**, then promote it and conduct follow-up activities in **HubSpot**. The two tools together will cover all of your bases, and make for seamless event planning.

You can collect information from event registrants in **Hopin**, then upload it to **HubSpot** to create new contacts. As these contacts interact with your brand more, and move along in the buyer's journey, you'll gain a deeper understanding of your ideal customer profile. Apply this knowledge to your next event and you'll be able to deliver a highly targeted, revenue-generating experience.

With **Hopin's** event data and **HubSpot's** campaign analytics, you'll also be able to effectively measure engagement (among other metrics) before, during, and after your event. Every session attended, social post liked, blog entered, and more will be properly accounted for. "Data-driven" will become an understatement for your team.



Source: [Hopin](#)



Source: [Hopin](#)

Conclusion

In the new world of hybrid events, the possibilities for marketing teams are endless in terms of reach, engagement, finding new audiences, and learning from the data. With the right tools and preparation, you can make a big impact, no matter the size or budget of your marketing operation.



Get started with the HubSpot <> Hopin integration

With this integration, marketers can fully embed their virtual and hybrid events into their marketing workflows to drive engagement with their attendees and sponsors before, during, and after the event.

[Get started](#)



Create virtual events people love

Hopin is an online events platform with all the tools you need to host virtual events. Host video events, sell tickets, track data and analytics, and engage with attendees.

[Learn more about Hopin](#)