

hoppier

33 Proven Tactics for High-Engagement Virtual Marketing Events

Drive engagement before, during,
and after your virtual events.



2021



It's hard out here for a marketer.

With the increase in virtual events, we can now reach a wider audience, but that audience has access to dozens of free events at any given moment. **So, why should they choose yours?**

You need to offer a clear benefit to get attendees in the virtual door. But, even if you convince your target audience to register, the typical price of a virtual event — a big, fat \$0 — means they won't lose anything if they don't show.

And there's no need to attend at all if would-be guests think they can download the recording after the event.

With so little at stake, your audience may treat your virtual events like a cheap commodity. But, if you create enough value, you can engage your audience across your entire event life cycle — from registrations to attendance to follow-up sales calls.

Here are proven tactics to drive engagement before, during, and after your event. →



At Hoppier, engagement is what we do.

From adding event incentives to organizing catering options, Hoppier makes it easier to host engaging events. And we do it all with one simple tool — virtual credit cards.

Hoppier virtual credit cards allow you to send attendees a budget they can spend on food, drinks, or gifts. You can allow guests to purchase from any vendor, just like they would with a traditional credit card. Or, you can limit the budget to specific vendors so guests can only purchase food, or can only purchase from your event sponsors or your own online store.

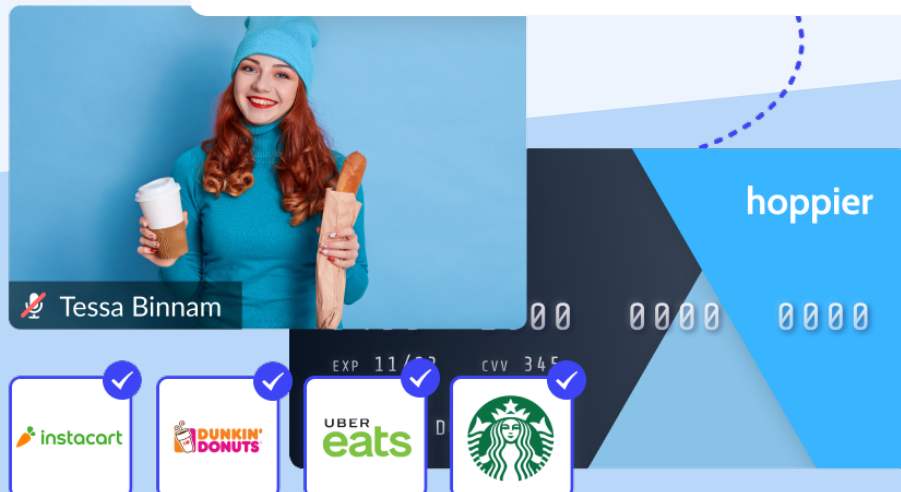
When you set your budget, you can also set a time limit. If attendees don't spend their funds by the deadline, you'll get the unspent money back. (You won't see that from a traditional gift card.)

You can send all your attendees the same budget, or use the credit cards to gamify your event — offering more rewards for guests who participate more. And you can brand every credit card so guests associate the food, gifts, and rewards with your company.

SEE IT IN ACTION



\$25 for morning breakfast





Drive engagement before the event.

To measure engagement leading up to your event, you need two metrics: registrations and attendance. Everything you do leading up to the big day should convince more of your target audience to register for and show up at your event.

But, it's not just about quantity. If you want to convert attendees into sales prospects, you need quality leads. To get a true picture of how successful your pre-event activities are, look at both the number of participants and the percentage of participants who are decision makers with the power to purchase your product.

Use these tactics to increase both the quantity and quality of your pre-event engagement.

KPIs for pre-event engagement



01 Registrations

The number of people who sign up for your event is an easy metric to track. But you can get more insights out of this number by including a few extra questions in your registration form — ask guests about their role and decision making powers. This will help you determine if you're reaching the right people.



02 Attendance

You might mistake attendance for a day-of engagement metric, but even though you learn this number on event day, it represents your pre-event engagement. The anticipation you build ahead of the event drives attendance. According to a recent study by PathFactory, the average virtual event has an attendance rate of just 26-50% no-show rate. Anything above that is a sign that your pre-event activities are working.



0.1

Conduct market research before the event.

If you want your audience to show up for your event, you need to show up for them — by making their pain points the focus of your event and offering solutions. To learn about potential clients' pain points, conduct surveys and polls, or reach out to your current clients for in-depth interviews.

Add surveys to your social media pages, send them out to your email list, or use targeted ads to ask your audience to participate. Include a few qualifying questions as part of your market research surveys to make sure you're getting answers from the right people.

Much like how you'll ask about registrants' roles and decision-making powers in your event registration form, add those questions to your survey. If any respondents aren't part of your target market, you can disqualify their answers.

To increase participation in your market research surveys, add an incentive. Offer participants a chance to win a grand prize, like a \$500 Hoppier virtual credit card (or \$50 or \$100).

The higher the incentive, the more responses you'll get, but the value should depend on your budget. Any incentive will help you increase survey responses and generate social media content when you announce the winner.



\$50

\$100

\$500



Conduct market research before the event.

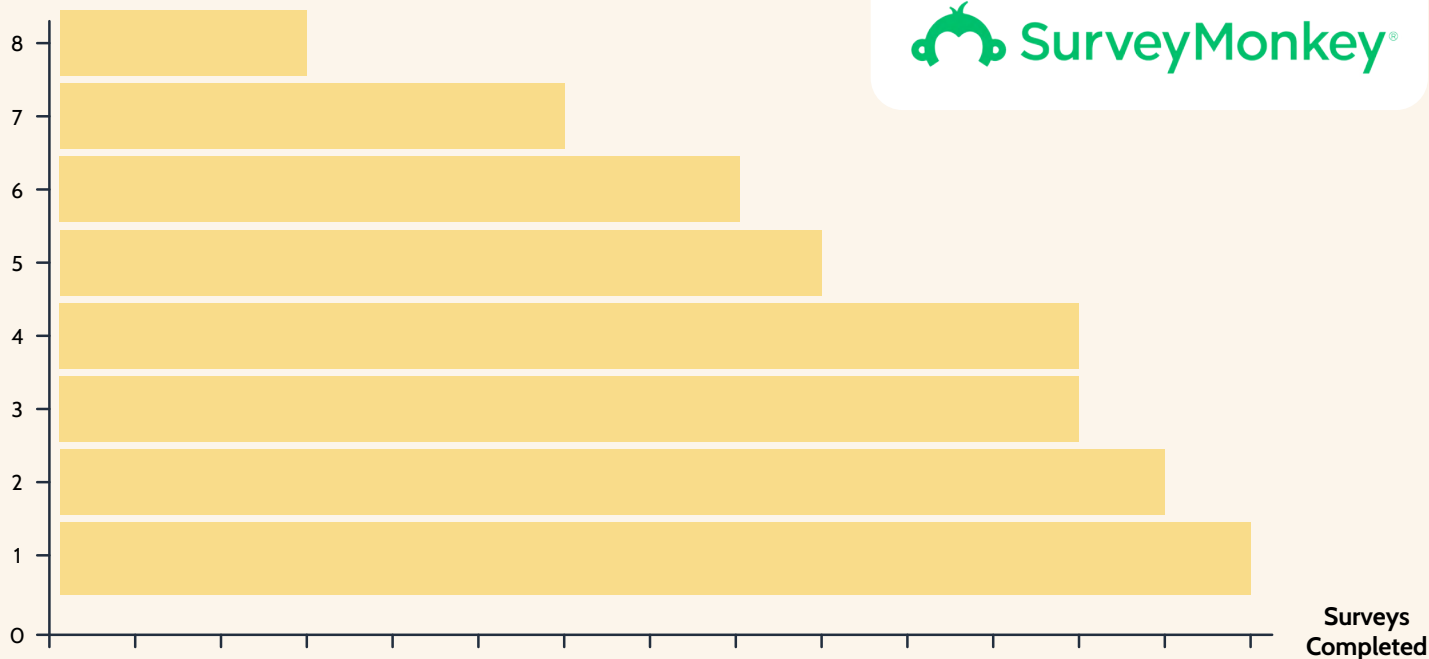
You'll find it easier to get survey responses if you keep it short. Research by **Survey Monkey** found that respondents started to abandon surveys partway through when they took **more than 7 minutes** to complete.

And the fewer questions you include, the better. Respondents spent more time answering each question in a shorter survey — so with fewer questions, you could get more thoughtful responses. It's better to send multiple short surveys than one long one.

Once you've determined what pain points your event content should solve, you can use surveys to refine the other details of your event, like the speakers guests want to see, activities they want to participate in, and days and times they'd be most likely to attend.

If conducting in-depth market research is beyond your team's bandwidth or comfort level, hire a market research firm to take on this part of the planning process.

Time Spent
(Minutes)



Choose the **right** title.

What's in a name? When it comes to event marketing, everything. Your title is going to be your target audience's first introduction to your event offering. It needs to serve as a five-second pitch — quickly demonstrating the value of your event and the reason attendees should sign up.

Choose a title that says one of these things:

What attendees will learn from your event

Who attendees will meet at your event

How attendees will benefit from your event

We apologize to your copywriter, but that clever title isn't going to garner as many registrations as a title that's direct and simple. Something like, "Market Till You Make It," doesn't demonstrate the benefit of your event as well as the simpler and slightly less fun, "Introduction to Marketing."



Use other people's **networks** to reach your ideal attendees.

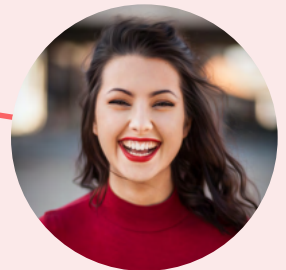
The audience we want to attract to marketing events is often niche, which means typical advertising efforts may reach too broad a group to bring in quality leads. While channels like **Google**, **Facebook**, and **Instagram** Ads will offer the best targeting, you can supplement these efforts (or replace them all together) by meeting your audience where they are.

Partner with a popular influencer in your industry to promote your event on their social media channels. Or join forces with another company that serves your target audience but isn't a direct competitor.

Before you reach out, thoroughly research all potential partners. Your partner will become a representative of your brand — make sure their values align with your company values before you commit.

Once you've identified a good fit, make sure you can offer the influencer or partner a mutually beneficial relationship.

For influencers, that often means you'll pay them to advertise for you. Other businesses will likely want a reciprocal relationship — they advertise for you, you advertise for them — which means you'll need to have a decent following to make the partnership look appealing. If you can't offer these benefits, you may be able to provide a different benefit, like free products or services, to attract potential partners.



Run social media competitions.

And while competitions can have a lower purchase intent than traditional ads, they're a strong top-of-funnel marketing technique to introduce new customers to your brand and get them to take the next step (like signing up for your free event).

To get your audience to engage with a social media competition, offer a prize that will feel, if not out of reach for most people, at least indulgent. Better prizes lead to more entries and more engagement, so think of something that will appeal to most of your audience, or offer a prize everyone can use like a Hoppier virtual credit card.

Make sure all of your giveaway content promotes your event, and try to choose a prize that connects to your event in some way. If your event is ticketed, you can offer **free tickets** and a **VIP event day experience**. You can also set up a Hoppier card that only allows the winner to spend their prize money on event day.



Congratulations!
Click here below to claim your prize.

VIP Experience

Congrat
Click here below to claim your prize.

Event Ticket

0.5

Make your event gated content.

Before you allow guests to register for your event, ask them to engage with another piece of content on your site, like a recording of a keynote speech from a past event or an article that provides foundational knowledge related to the topics you'll cover in your event.

It may seem counterintuitive to increase engagement with a tactic that's specifically meant to limit your number of attendees, but hear us out. When you make your event gated content, you immediately drive away less committed members of your audience, which means the guests who do attend are more motivated to buy into your event experience and your product.

This tactic may lead to fewer registrations, but it will increase the quality of your registrants, which helps improve engagement metrics across the rest of your event life cycle. It also makes your event appear more exclusive — a powerful marketing strategy in and of itself.

Most gated content only requires your audience to provide an email address to access it — you get their email address to add to your sales funnel, and they get a free ebook, for instance. But, you get registrants' contact info as part of any event registration form. So instead, make the gate something more challenging.

Require potential attendees to watch an introductory video or keynote speech before they can attend. This should be something that will improve their event experience — rather than a sale's pitch. And while you want to scare off a few unmotivated attendees, keep the task under 10 minutes so you don't drive away too many people.



Sign up



Watch Video



Content Unlocked

0.6

Incentivize registration, pre-event participation, and attendance.

Guests need a reason to show up at your event. The main thing that will bring them in is your event content, but you can provide that extra nudge with an incentives program. Offer incentives for every step you want attendees to take — from a free gift when they register to a food budget when they show up on event day.

You can incentivize other pre-event steps as well. Use a points system where attendees earn points for everything they do — signing up, that's 25 points, posting about it on social media, 10 points, touring the digital event space, 15 points, visiting a sponsor's virtual booth, 20 points.

Offer a tiered incentives program with lower-tier gifts available for fewer points and higher-tier gifts requiring attendees to earn more points. This is similar to an arcade — where more tickets mean better prizes — but adultified.



★★★
25 points

★★★
15 points

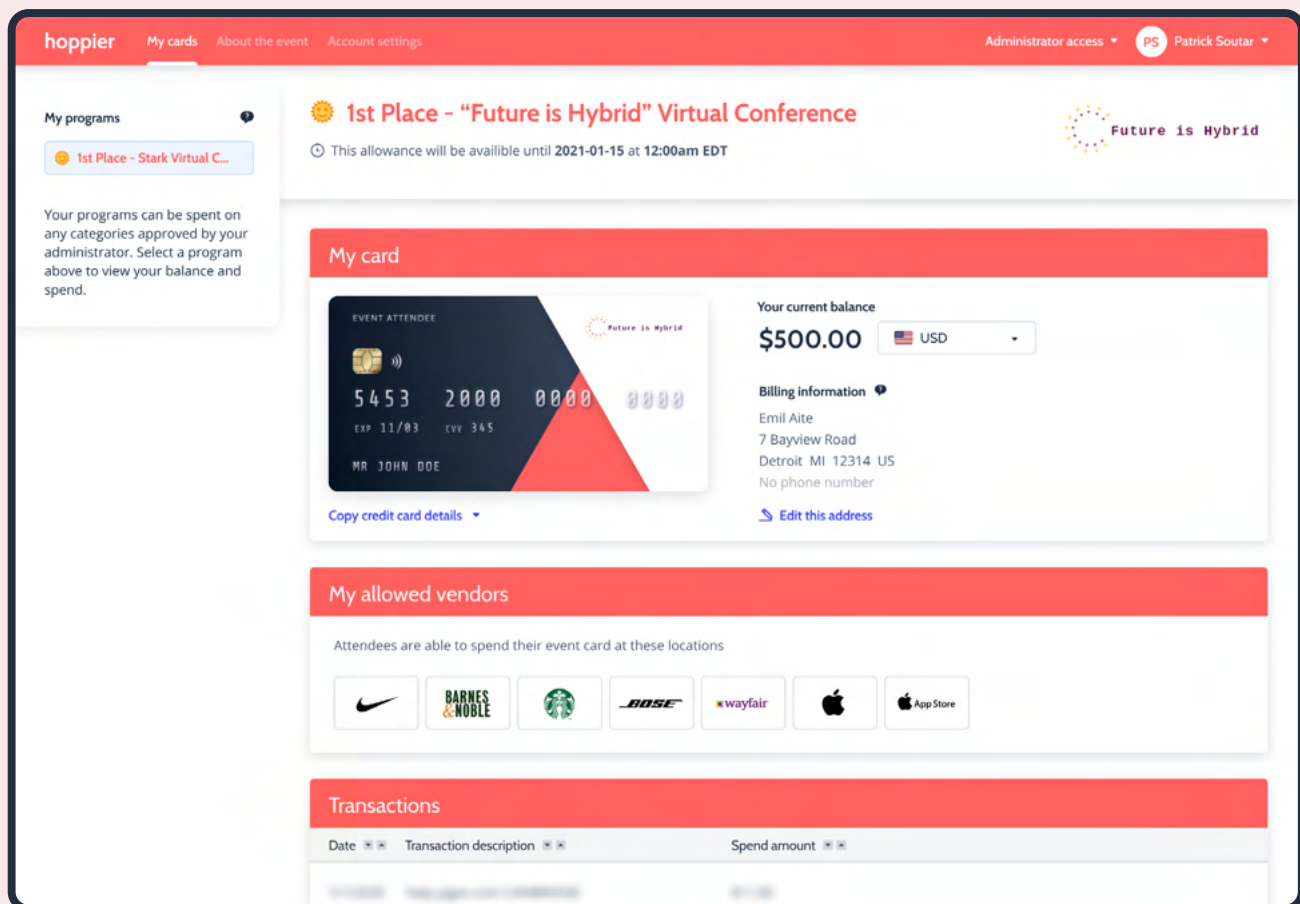
★★★
10 points



How to organize an incentives program.

Incentives can be difficult to organize and distribute. Use Hoppier cards to streamline the process. You can create branded virtual credit cards and send them to all your event attendees with just their email addresses. Then, you can add a balance to each guest's card and increase it as needed.

Guests can spend their balance on food, drinks, gifts, digital subscriptions, and so much more. You won't have to worry about finding a gift that appeals to everyone because they can choose their own — meaning your incentives program will appeal to your entire target audience.



0.7

Learn registrants' goals when they sign up.

According to Markletic's research (and our own!) the majority of people who sign up for virtual events want to learn. The next biggest reason is to network. Discover what each of your guests wants by including a short survey at the end of your registration process.

To prevent the survey from making registration too cumbersome, offer it after guests are fully registered. On the same page that tells them their registration is complete, add a section for guests to tell you what they want on event day. Ask whether they've signed up to learn, network, do both, or do something else entirely. If they're attending to learn, ask which topics they're most interested in.

This information is especially important for larger events where you have multiple activities running simultaneously. It allows you to offer a personalized experience with different recommendations and event tracts, related to attendees goals.

But even small events can benefit from this added input. While your event content and speakers will already be on the agenda, discovering registrants' goals will help you plan future events. And, it can inspire little add-ons for your current event.



For example, if you know that most of your guests are interested in networking, you can add on a 30-minute networking session at the end of your webinar. If none of your guests are interested in this, you can keep your focus on providing the most helpful content possible.

Use teasers.

In the weeks between event registration and event day, you need to build excitement so the people who've signed up show up. Stay in registrants' minds with regular social posts and weekly emails that share exclusive content.

5 pre-event teasers to share:

01 Offers from your sponsors

02 Bios for keynote speakers

03 Sneak peaks at interactive activities

04 Hints about event-day surprises

05 Quick tips from speakers & other experts

This content can help you convince more people to register and keep you top-of-mind for current registrants so that, when event day rolls around, they won't think there's something better they can do instead.

In the days leading up to the event, you can also send countdown emails. These reminders will keep attendees from no-showing simply because they forgot.

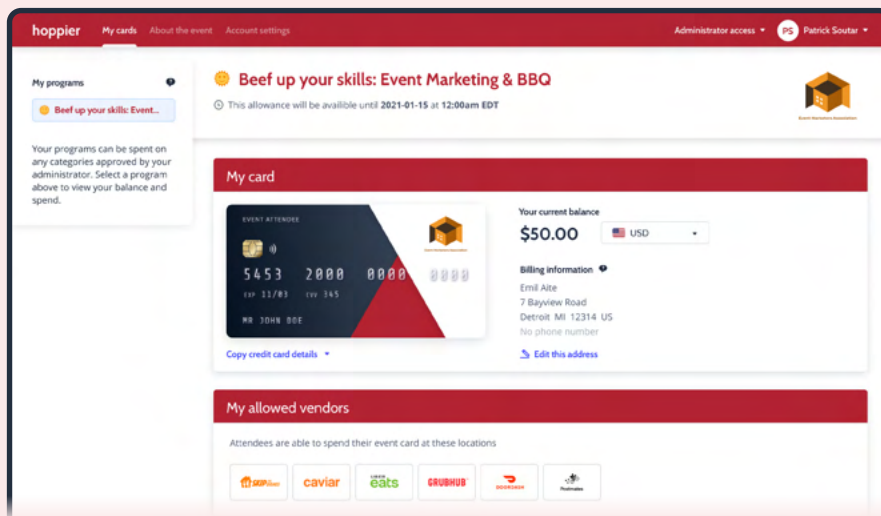
Send swag.

Another way to build excitement before your event: Mail gift boxes or virtual credit cards to attendees. You can send gifts, but you should also include items that will improve your guests' event experience. Help attendees connect with your sales pitch by sending product samples and branded swag.

Provide food and drinks with Hoppier virtual credit cards — add to the anticipation by sending guests their virtual funds early, but not making them available to spend until event day.

Pique guests' interest by including a mystery item, like a pack of legos they'll need for an interactive activity. Don't explain why the item is there — make them show up to find out.

And get your guests through the day with an event survival pack. This could include cans of triple shot espresso for a hackathon or branded yoga mats for a wellness event (you can put your brand's logo on virtually anything!).



The best branded swag to build pre-event anticipation:

- Product samples
- Virtual credit cards
- Wine and wine tumblers for happy hour events
- Coffee and coffee tumblers for daytime events
- Sweatshirts and slippers for remote workers
- Ergonomic home office supplies like laptop risers
- Folios
- Laptop cases
- Headphones
- Travel pillow
- Wireless chargers

0.10

Open your event space **early**.

When guests aren't familiar with your virtual event platform, can't figure out how it works, or aren't aware of half its features, it's a barrier to both attendance and day-of participation.

Advanced virtual event platforms offer many features that should add to your attendees event experience, but guests need to know how to use these features to get the benefits. By opening your virtual space early, you allow guests to explore its features and familiarize themselves with the technology.

Encouraging attendees to log on ahead of event day also gives you the opportunity to troubleshoot basic issues — registrants who can't access the platform will let you know ahead of time so you can remove that literal barrier to entry.

Since you've already developed a robust incentives program (**see tip number six**), offer incentives for this behavior as well. You'll get more people logging in early and decrease demand on your IT staff on the day of the event.



Create a platform education hub.

Once your guests have logged into your virtual space, take them on a tour. Provide video demos of your event features to build excitement and help attendees learn how to use your event tech.

You may not need to create these demos from scratch. Work with your platform provider to learn what resources they have to help guests navigate the space. If your platform doesn't have a centralized hub of help information, create one for guests to explore before and during the event.

Make platform education part of your pre-event marketing content as well. In the week before the event, send out emails with quick tips for using the technology, highlights of exciting features, and videos demonstrating how it works.

You don't need a video production team to create this content. Use a simple platform, like **Loom**, to capture your screen while you talk through the features. Embed these videos into emails and send them off.



0.12

Offer a **pre-event** networking opportunity.

Adding this feature to your pre-event journey has a number of benefits. It satisfies attendees who are primarily looking for networking opportunities, it makes guests more excited to join on the day and solidify their new relationships, and it can make less confident members of your audience feel more comfortable with their fellow attendees (and more willing to speak up on event day).

You can offer a networking opportunity by creating online social communities through **Facebook** groups or shared **Slack** channels. Or, you can host a mini-event before the big day, like a virtual coffee break or happy hour.

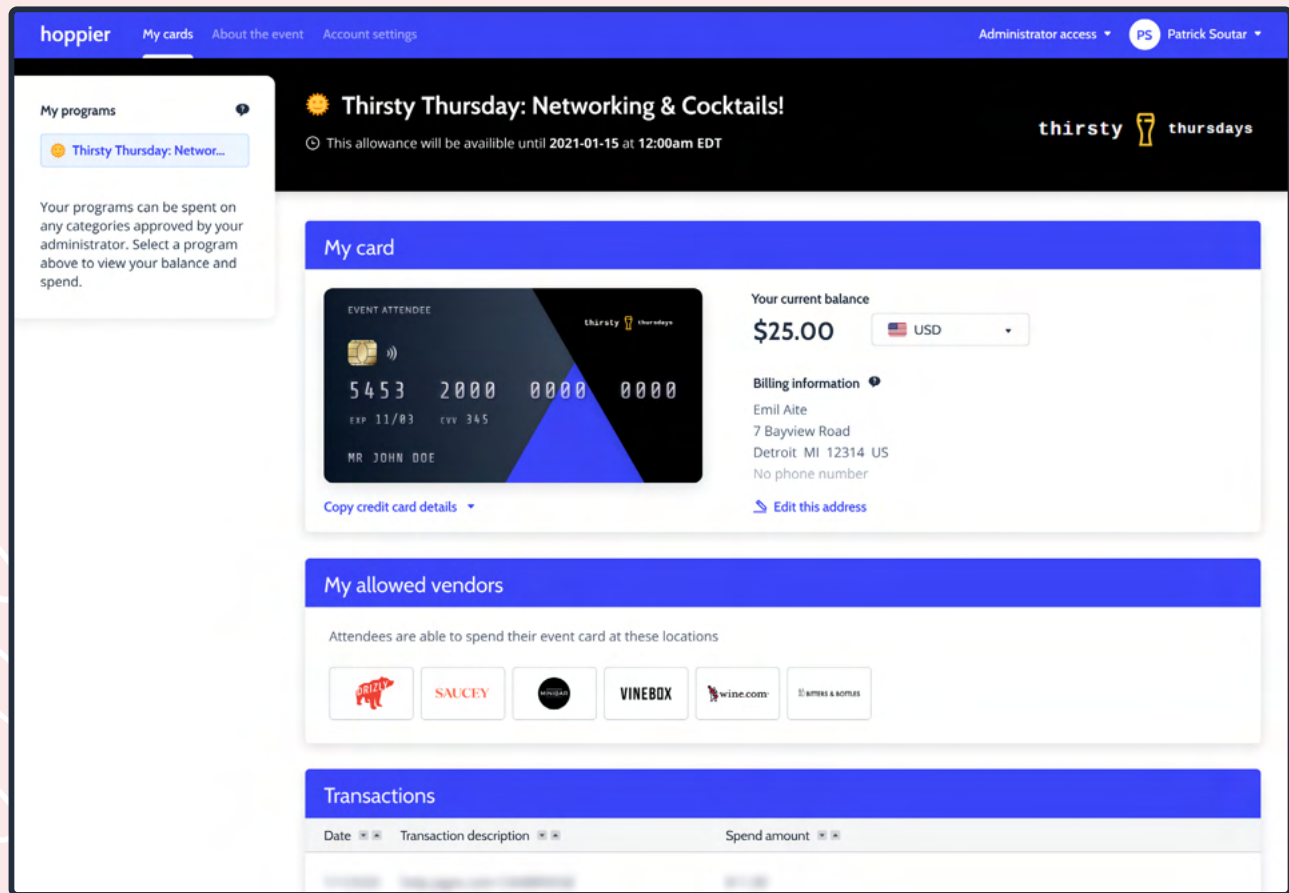
Whether you organize an online networking group or a micro-event, assign a moderator and prepare some icebreakers to get the conversation going. Your icebreakers don't have to be complicated — just pose some easy questions to help people get to know each other. Things like, “**Where’s everyone from?**,” “**What do you like to do on the weekends?**,” or “**Coffee vs. tea: discuss,**” are often enough to get people talking.



0.12

Offer a **pre-event** networking opportunity.

6 pre-event networking ideas:



01. Virtual happy hour:

There's nothing like having a drink in hand to get the conversation flowing. Use Hoppier cards to let guests purchase their favorite beverages. Then, get together in one large group or break out into smaller groups based on whether guests prefer wine or beer, IPAs or Belgian ales, and so on.

Offer a **pre-event** networking opportunity.

6 pre-event networking ideas:

02. Event communities:

Create one large group on Facebook or Slack and invite all your attendees. Then, send out questions, post silly memes, and share photos.

03. Interest-based sub-groups:

Instead of creating one large group, create several smaller ones. You could organize groups based on guests' expertise like content vs. email marketing, based on demographic categories like women in tech, or based on shared interests like mountain biking.

04. Gamer-style networking:

Use a unique event platform, like Mesh or Gather, to host your networking experience. They offer a retro video game environment where guests can approach other characters for conversations.

05. Virtual coffee breaks:

Send participants a Hoppier card so they can order coffee from their favorite spot. Then, prepare some getting-to-know-you questions and host a casual chat. If you have a large group, it will be more difficult for everyone to get a chance to talk, so organize into several smaller groups based on something like how people take their coffee.

06. Speed networking:

If you have a large group, give everyone a chance to chat with a speed networking event. You'll pair individuals up at random, then they'll change partners every couple minutes. In a half hour, guests will have a chance to talk with 15 different people.

Connect your event to a cause that's **important** to your target audience.

According to Brandwatch, 91% of consumers would switch to a brand that supports a good cause. Use your event to establish yourself as that brand, and use your consumers' generosity to encourage them to show up on event day.

Partner with a non-profit whose work closely aligns with your field and values. For example, if your company is a tech startup, you can work with an organization that supplies laptops to schools in underdeveloped nations. If you're launching a product that uses 30% less plastic than previous versions, partner with an environmental organization.

Make a set donation based on the number of people who attend. This will help you encourage more of your audience to sign up, bring others from their network, and show up on event day. A partnership like this also allows you to leverage the non-profit's network to promote your event.

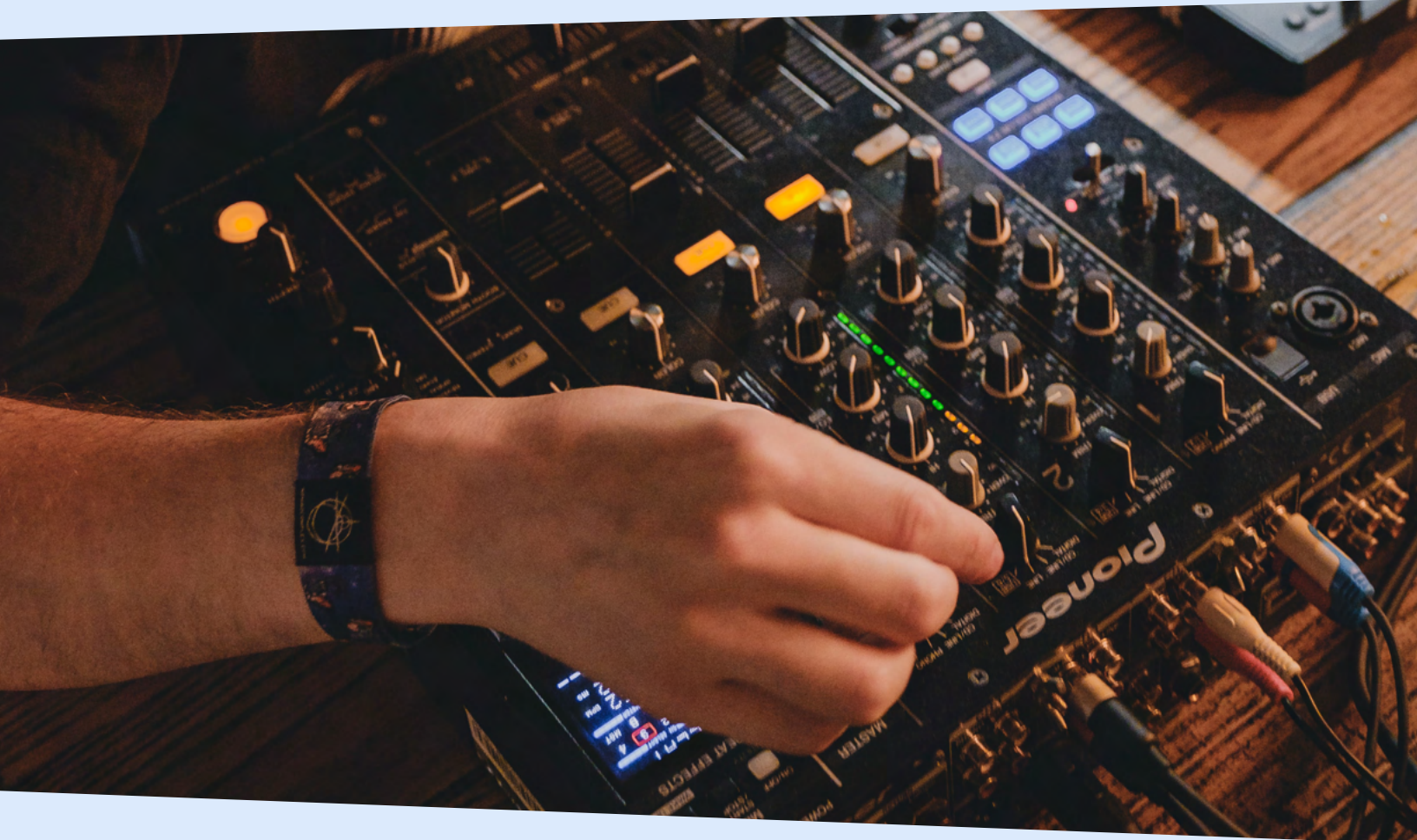
If you want to provide a more personalized giving experience, offer guests a **Hoppier card** with a budget they can donate to the non-profit of their choice.



0.14

Add a **countdown activity** that leads into your opening ceremony.

Similar to an opening act before a band, this feature gets your audience warmed up and ready for your event. Make it a can't miss activity that's all about enjoyment and entertainment. Consider hiring a live performer like a **musician, comedian, acrobat, fortune teller, or illusionist**. If your organization has the reach, you could also arrange a celebrity appearance. A countdown activity will encourage participants to show up early, which means they'll already be logged on when your event content begins.





Drive engagement during the event.

You've gotten people in the door, now you have to keep them interested. During a virtual event, it can be hard to tell if attendees are actually absorbing your content or if they're folding laundry while your event plays in the background. Measure how engaged attendees are by monitoring drop-off rates and participation rates — track the number of participants who ask questions, visit sponsor booths, attend event sessions, and download content.

Get an idea of both how many attendees are participating and how much each attendee is participating. It doesn't help to know that 500 questions were asked if they were all asked by one attendee. But knowing that 500 attendees asked at least one question, and your average attendee visited three sponsor booths will help you better analyze and improve event success.

KPIs for day-of event engagement

01. Drop-off rates:

Keep track of how many of your attendees make it to the end of your event. Also monitor at what point attendees drop off. This will help you analyze what's driving your guests to disengage before the event is over. Is it a type of session? A specific subject area? The length of sessions? Patterns will begin to emerge over time, which will take the guesswork out of event planning for your target audience.

03. Conversation rates:

Each time an attendee approaches you or a team member with questions about your product or your event content, it's an opportunity to convert a guest into a customer. Track these conversations, get attendee contact information, offer breakout rooms where they can talk to a team member one-on-one, and then follow up after the event.

02. Participation rates:

This isn't one metric but a bunch of smaller metrics that give you a big picture of attendee engagement. Track the number of questions asked, polls and surveys answered, booths visited, sessions attended, and content downloaded. This will show you both how engaged guests are and what type of content they're more likely to engage with. Maybe your audience prefers roundtables to Q&As — monitoring their engagement across each session will help you plan better events in the future.

04. Meetings booked & attended:

Once you've set up breakout rooms and established another way guests can talk with your team members, track the number of meetings they book and the attendance rate on those meetings.

0.15

Have a tech team and **test your equipment** before each session.

Technical issues are common in virtual events — **38% of marketers** have run into them while hosting. And while your attendees might stick with you through the occasional mic or screen sharing issue, technical issues can have a negative impact on your event experience, and when it takes too long to resolve them, attendees will drop off.

A dedicated tech team can ensure your audio, visual, and interactive elements function correctly. If you're hosting a small event, you likely only need one member of your IT team on standby. If however, you're hosting a larger event with multiple sessions running simultaneously, create a team of 2 to 5 people so there's always someone available, even if multiple issues arise at once.

Resolve tech issues before they affect your event experience by testing your equipment before each session. Have a longer test session the day before the event. Then on the day of the event, build in five to 10 minute breaks between sessions to allow attendees to stretch, use the restroom, and grab a drink. Meanwhile, your team can use that time to test equipment and troubleshoot.



Include icebreakers.

Icebreakers aren't just for networking sessions. During the first few minutes of an event, get to know your audience by asking simple questions about their day, hobbies, or role. This humanizes your event and sets the tone for audience participation. It also allows you to covertly learn about your customers.

Beyond that, it helps you fill the space between sessions when some guests may be refilling their coffee while others have logged into the next session a few minutes early. Keep your icebreaker conversation going for a few minutes after the sessions' start time to give stragglers a chance to join in without missing essential details.

Where are you from?

What's your favorite thing about your hometown?

What's a fun fact about you?

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Where did you go on your last vacation?

What's your favorite thing you've ever purchased?

What did you order with your Hoppier virtual card?

What's your favorite food?

What's the best surprise you've ever gotten?

What's one skill you think everyone should have?

What's your secret talent?

What's the most useful piece of advice anyone's ever given you?

What three qualities have made you successful?

What's the most helpful habit you've developed?

If you weren't in your current role, what career would you have instead?

0.17

Use polls, Q&As, and surveys.

You can keep attendees from tuning out by regularly checking in. Ask your audience to actively participate by posting polls and surveys for them to answer during presentations.

Use the polls to ask about attendees' experience with the topic you're discussing. This allows you to collect feedback and gain customer insights.

You can also post questions that test how well attendees are absorbing the information. The majority of attendees at virtual events are there to learn — pop quizzes can help them retain more of what they hear.

Include an additional Q&A with the presenter at the end of each session to allow your audience members to ask follow up questions. If you get good questions during your Q&A, you'll know your attendees were engaged throughout the presentation.



Have a **chat feature** and a **moderator**.

In a large session, attendees can't ask their questions directly to presenters — you would end up with multiple people talking at once and a variety of microphone and feedback issues. Encourage your participants to use the event platform's chat feature instead. They can add comments and questions throughout each session.

Assign a moderator to oversee the chat. Your moderator will respond to basic questions about the event, let participants know they're being heard, and collect questions for the presenter. This allows your speaker to focus on their presentation —

without having to split their attention between the chat and the content they're trying to cover.

During the Q&A at the end of the session, the moderator will ask attendees' questions to the presenter so the audience can get its answers.

A moderator helps improve the event experience and can encourage more conversation in your chat in general. After the event, look through the chat conversations — they may give you additional insight into your target audience.



Find the most engaging speakers.

Good content is the most important part of your event. Period.

A big name speaker can create more engagement at every stage of your event planning process. Their draw can lead more people to sign up and show up, and on event day, their dynamic presentation skills will prevent attendee drop off.

Other than your virtual event platform, hiring speakers should be where you invest the majority of your budget. Look for experienced presenters whose past talks kept the audience engaged with provocative questions, visuals, and entertaining delivery.

If possible, attend an event where the speaker is presenting or watch a video of a past presentation before you hire them for your event. Make sure their content is both engaging and at the right level for most of your audience.

If you're having trouble finding a speaker, work with an agency. They can offer experienced presenters who are experts in your field.

Who would be a good speaker for your event?

Academics and professors

Book authors

Company founders

Influencers

Sponsors

Partners

Customers

Team members

Release supplemental material during the event **instead** of before.

If you want your audience to have access to slideshows, worksheets, cheat sheets, or other notes, don't send them out ahead of time. Share these documents during or after the event so guests have to attend to get the content they want.

Even though your supplemental materials won't contain as much information as your actual event day presentations, they often contain enough for someone familiar with your field to extrapolate and interpret your learning materials.

Because learning is the main reason guests sign up for virtual events, they won't need to attend if you've already given them the textbook. Instead, let guests know at the start of your session that you'll share the materials so they don't have to take notes. This will free them up to listen and participate during your event sessions.



0.21

Gamify the session.

Gamification is one of the most powerful tools we have for increasing learning and retention and convincing people to engage in a desired behavior. Research by the Harvard Business review found that employees were more likely to engage with learning materials and complete educational programs when their company used a gamified training platform.

When big-four accounting firm Deloitte added gamification to its training program, employees were 37% more likely to return to the digital platform each week. You can get these same improved engagement metrics when you use gamification strategies at your event.

Create a points system that rewards attendees whenever they complete a desired action, like downloading content, attending a presentation, asking a question, visiting a sponsor booth, or taking a poll. You can make each action worth the same number of points or assign different points values based on how much you want them to take each step.



Gamify the session.

Allow guests to use their points to buy swag or add to their Hoppier balance. You decide on the value of points: Maybe one point is worth \$1, maybe 10 points are worth \$1. If you don't have the budget to reward every guest, keep a leaderboard.

Display attendees' points on a leaderboard to inspire healthy competition. For some personalities, being at the top of the leaderboard is all the encouragement they need. But, you can also offer prizes for the top spot or top three spots to promote even greater participation.

5 steps for a gamified session:

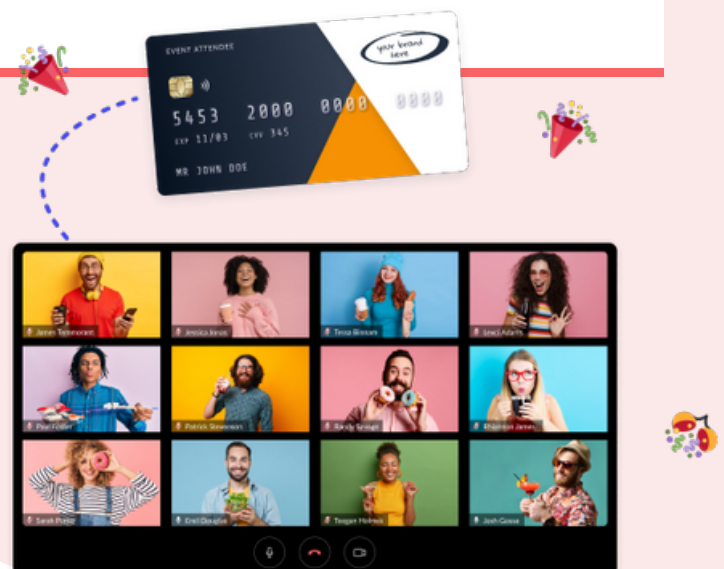
01 Create a points system

04 Create a dollar value for points

02 Assign a point value to the different actions you want attendees to take (like attending a session or filling out a poll)

05 Allow participants to cash in their points for prizes or for additional money on their Hoppier virtual credit card

03 Display a leaderboard with the names of the top 10 attendees in terms of points earned



Break up the event.

The human attention span has its limits. The problem is no one seems to agree on what those limits are. You've probably heard the claim, backed by dubious pseudoscience, that our attention spans are shrinking — one day they're 12 seconds, the next they're eight. But, don't worry. You won't need to keep your event activities down to mere seconds. When you look at the average audiences' attention span, the numbers get a little better.

Some sources claim your audience will stay focused for seven minutes, others say 20 minutes while others still site the average length of a Shakespeare play (around two hours) and the average length of a modern movie (yep, still two hours) as evidence that the human attention span has always been and continues to be about two hours.

But, unless every session in your event schedule is as action-packed as a Michael Bay movie, we recommend keeping sessions around **20 minutes to an hour**. For longer sessions and keynote speeches, include small shifts that refocus your audience. Changing the visuals, adding a surprising sound effect, watching a short video, or opening the floor to questions can all keep your audience's attention. Also change up your content between sessions.

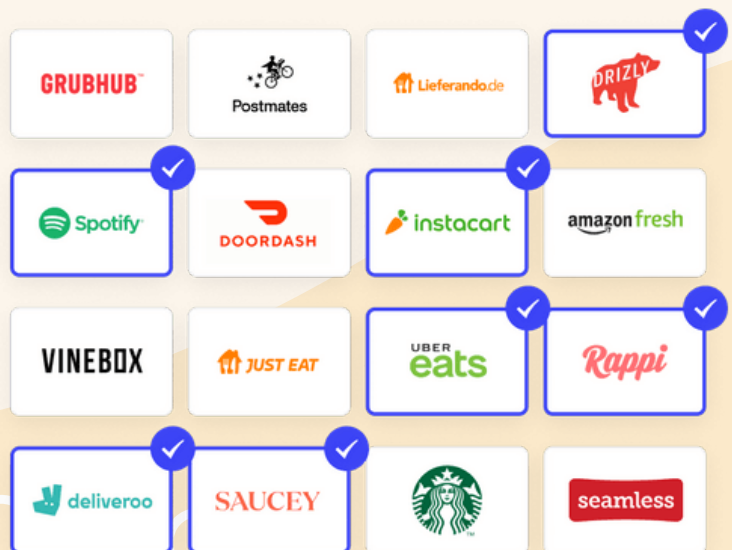


Going from one formal presentation to the next can cause your audience to tune out. Instead, go from a presentation to a roundtable to a hands-on activity. These small changes will keep your audience mentally engaged.

Give your audience a short break after each session to allow them to get up from their desk, stretch, use the bathroom, or grab a snack, a cup of coffee, or lunch — all of which, you can provide with a Hoppier card.

A little movement can also go a long way toward refreshing your audience and getting them ready for the next virtual session.

In our increasingly virtual world, we all spend a lot of time hunched over our desks. You can encourage even more movement by offering guided desk yoga or dance offs. With this approach, you're not just giving attendees time to get up from their desks, you're encouraging active participation.



0.23

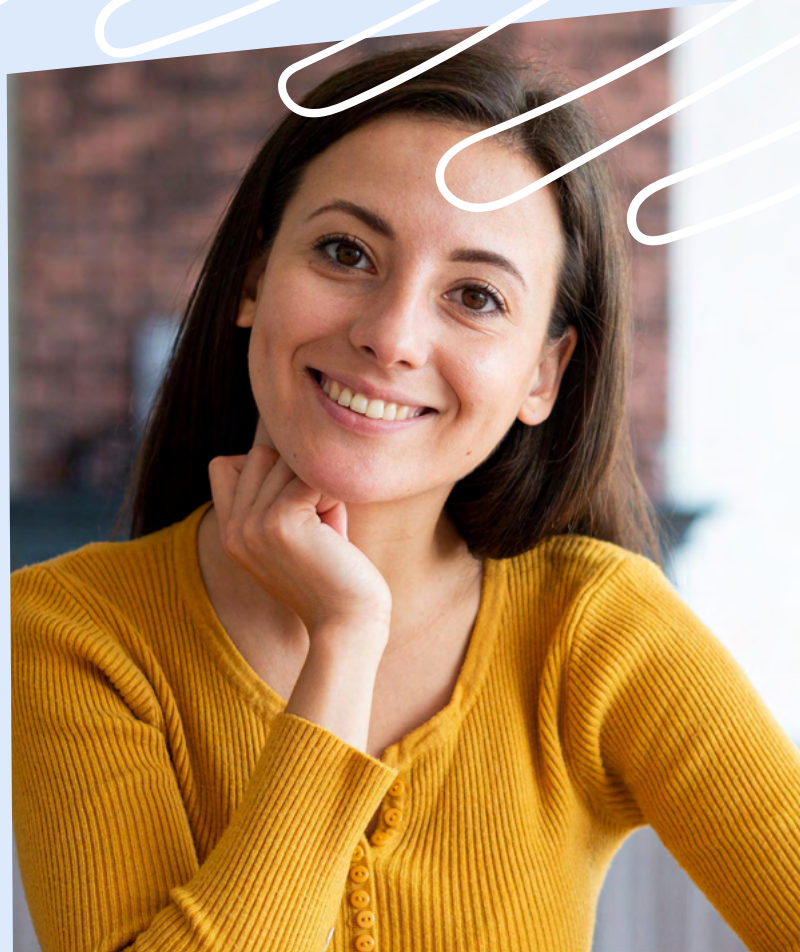
Add breakout rooms and roundtables.

Breakout rooms and roundtables are not only a good way to add variety to your event, these sessions also allow attendees to get more involved with the subject matter. Unlike presentations and keynote speeches, they require active participation. Try scheduling a breakout room or roundtable after your biggest presentations to allow attendees to discuss the topic and solidify their learning.

The goal of these informal sessions is to facilitate small-group discussion. So, err on the side of creating more groups with fewer participants, rather than hosting fewer larger groups. Assign people to breakout rooms at random, or organize them based on themes, like participants' department, career level, hobbies, or Meyers-Briggs type.

Have members of your event staff act as moderators to lead each breakout room or round table. As moderators, they will facilitate the conversation by asking thought provoking questions and encouraging quieter members of the group to speak up.

While you'll primarily be discussing the presentation topic, this is also a chance to get audience input on industry topics or product features.



Include sponsor giveaways.

When you recruit sponsors for your event, you get a partner in marketing your event and keeping your audience engaged. The main reason sponsors sign on is to promote their product to your audience. A giveaway allows them to generate excitement around their product, which adds more value to their sponsorship package.

Sponsors can offer products, samples, or subscriptions, or they can create a package of branded swag to give away. Hoppier cards are a high-value giveaway because they allow your attendees to choose their own gift, which means everyone can find a reward they actually want. You can add a Hoppier card giveaway (branded with your sponsor's logo) to your premium sponsorship package. This can help you generate more revenue for your events, allowing you to recoup the money you spend on your giveaway prize.

Make sure your attendees need to engage with your event in some way to win the giveaway. For entry requirements, you can ask them to visit sponsor booths, attend a specific session, answer a survey, or post about your event or sponsor on social media.



More ways to engage your sponsors:

Audiences aren't the only ones you need to engage for your event to succeed. Keeping your sponsors engaged keeps them coming back for future conferences and trade shows. Here are some carrots you can dangle as part of your sponsorship packages:

Promote your sponsor in social media, email campaigns, or content marketing.

Encourage your followers to like or share your sponsor's content on social media.

Offer free virtual banners and flyers that will appear around your virtual space.

Superimpose their logo behind your keynote speaker.

Send all your event guests a promo offer on the sponsor's products.

Offer discounts on your product or event-related experiences when attendees buy your sponsor's product.

Make it easy for your audience to **create** user-generated content.

If you want to engage your audience beyond your event space, you need to make it easy for them to promote your event on their social media channels.

In-person events provide plenty of photo opportunities as attendees explore the event space, reconnect with long-lost colleagues, and line up for meet-and-greets with keynote speakers and other guests of honor.

But this part of the event experience often goes missing when events go virtual. Bring it back with some easy-to-use tools and challenges. Add a digital photo booth where guests can take

pictures of themselves in front of event-related backgrounds. (Create branded backgrounds with the name of your event, your company logo, or your sponsor logos.) Guests will be able to add stickers, personalize the images, and post them directly to their Instagram, Facebook, or LinkedIn.

You can also run social media contests, encouraging guests to post pictures of their swag, tag your company, and add your event hashtag. Offer giveaways for attendees who post, or give them more participation points to help them skyrocket to the top of your event leaderboard.



0.26

Re-create in-person experiences.

Because of COVID lockdowns, museums, festivals, and travel companies all over the world had to get creative to stay relevant. The result: There are now hundreds of ways for marketers to add show-stopping hybrid experiences to their virtual events.

From touring a Loire Valley winery with a French vintner to swimming with sharks in the Great Barrier Reef, virtual events allow you to bring otherwise inaccessible experiences to your audience. This type of content can draw guests to your event and ensure they stay tuned in — especially if you only make the activity available to guests who've attended a minimum number of sessions.

When you're bringing a hybrid experience to your event, you can get creative with museum tours or concert experiences, but simple ideas like wine tastings or dining experiences can work just as well. Remember to stick to the theme of your event and make sure the session serves a bigger purpose in your event plan — whether it's networking or leading into a big product launch.



Re-create in-person experiences.

5 hybrid experiences to add to your event:

01. Craft cocktail lessons:

Hire a mixologist to show guests how to make the perfect, on-theme cocktail or mocktail. Send out Hoppier cards ahead of time so guests can get the supplies they need to participate.

02. Wine tastings:

Let a sommelier guide you and your attendees through a selection of wine and food pairings. Send your guests the wine as part of a pre-event gift box, or let them buy their own with a Hoppier card.

03. Dinner and drinks:

Send out Hoppier cards so guests can order from the nicest restaurant in town. Then, share a meal as part of a session or networking event. Discussing everyone's meal selection makes a great icebreaker.

04. Virtual museum tours:

Hire museum staff or a local guide to show you around a museum. You'll get history on the best exhibits and can tour niche museums related to your theme — like the American Computer and Robotics Museum for a tech-industry event.

05. Online travel experiences:

Partner with local guides to tour a far-off place, like a Middle Eastern Market (a great lead-in to a session about negotiation skills), or go on an adventure like skydiving or mountain climbing (and segue into a product launch that will help you reach new heights).

0.27

Ask for **feedback** before guests leave the event.

Leave a positive impression on your attendees by letting them know their opinion matters. End the event with a poll, Q&A, or open discussion about guests' key takeaways.

Discussing key takeaways helps solidify event learnings in guests' minds — they'll get a better understanding of how they benefited from your event and will be more likely to attend again in the future. This tactic not only helps you keep attendees engaged until the end, it allows you to measure how engaged they were throughout.

You can use this time to collect insights for your product team, sales team, and event marketing team. Learn more about what attendees want out of future events and what their current pain points are. Then share this information with your team so they can provide more meaningful follow-ups after the event.





Drive engagement after the event.

With any event marketing effort, the true measure of success is what happens after the event is over. If you only had 10 attendees on event day, but all 10 converted into customers, your event was an overwhelming success. But, if you had 200 attendees and only two of them converted into customers, your event wasn't necessarily a failure. Conversions aren't the only way to measure post-event engagement.

One of the goals of your event marketing is to introduce new prospects to your brand. If your virtual event was your first touchpoint with these

prospects, then they're still at the top of the sales funnel. They may not be ready to purchase yet, but that doesn't mean you didn't catch their attention. You need to establish post-event KPIs that measure your target audience's movement down your sales funnel.

Take a multi-pronged approach to measuring post-event engagement. Track on-demand content downloads, scheduled demos or follow-ups with your sales team, new customer acquisition, and increased investment from existing customers to get a complete picture of the impact of your event.

01. Content downloads:

When new prospects interact with additional content after event day, it signifies that they trust your brand as a subject matter expert. These additional touchpoints also give you more opportunities to demonstrate the value of your product.

02. Sales team follow-ups:

Any attendees who schedule a demo or follow-up with your sales team were impressed with your offering. Even if they don't convert after their follow-up, your event successfully brought them in the door.

03. New customer acquisition:

Probably the most obvious of post-event KPIs, keep track of how many of your event attendees purchase your product after the big day. If you sell different levels of product, you can also track how much new customers are spending. Are they primarily buying your entry-level offering, or are they choosing more expensive packages?

04. Increased investment from existing customers:

Not every event you host will focus on new customers. Educating your existing customers can lead to increased buy-in and greater customer lifetime value. Measure the lifetime value of customers who attend your marketing events compared to those who don't.

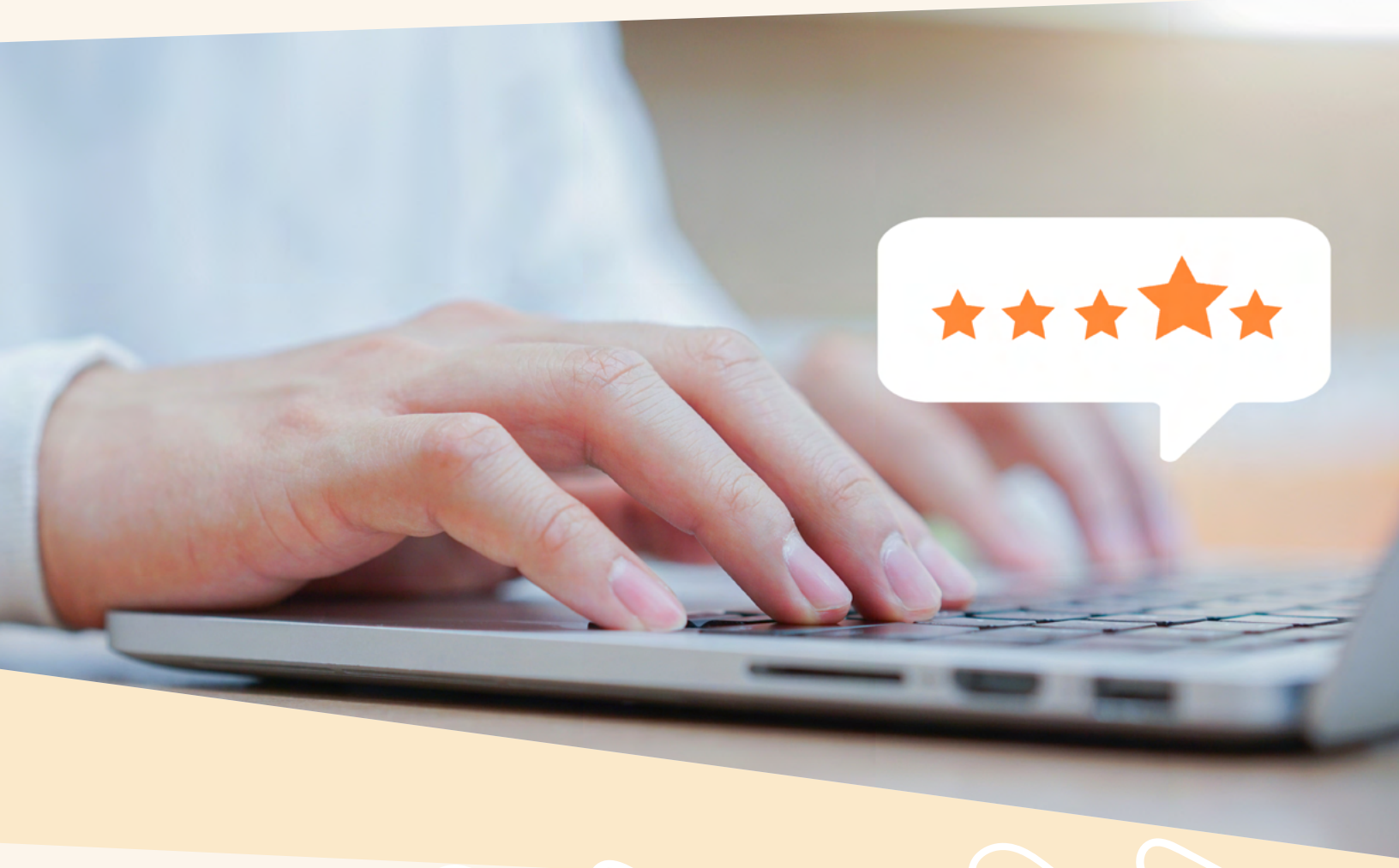
0.28

Ask for **feedback.**

If any of your event attendees didn't fill out your feedback survey at the end of the event, send an email to make a second request. Or, create a completely different survey, and send it to your entire guest list.

If the survey you shared on event day asked about how you could improve the event experience, choose a different theme for your post-event survey. Ask questions about future events your guests want to attend, or use it as an opportunity to learn about your attendees' goals so you can personalize their experience with your sales team.

These surveys are an opportunity to conduct market research and keep your brand top of mind without using aggressive sales tactics.



Collect event data.

All those engagement KPIs you monitored during your pre-event and event-day efforts — now is the time to analyze them. Collect data on your registration numbers, attendance rates, drop-off rates, and participation levels.

Break each data set down so that you're not only considering the macro data, but also the micro data. If your drop-off rate was 20%, you can analyze the success of future events against that number. But, you won't be able to improve your overall drop-off rate unless you break it down further to determine where people are dropping off. Once you know where, you can make educated guesses about why. (Or, send surveys to the people who dropped off to ask why.)

Similarly, look at attendance and participation rates for each session, and consider which activities and tools yielded the highest participation. Maybe 70% of your audience participated in polls while only 15% used your digital photobooth — use this information to decide which tools to invest in for future events.

If you hosted two talks simultaneously but 90% of your audience attended one over the other, use that information to determine which speakers or subject areas are more interesting to your audience.

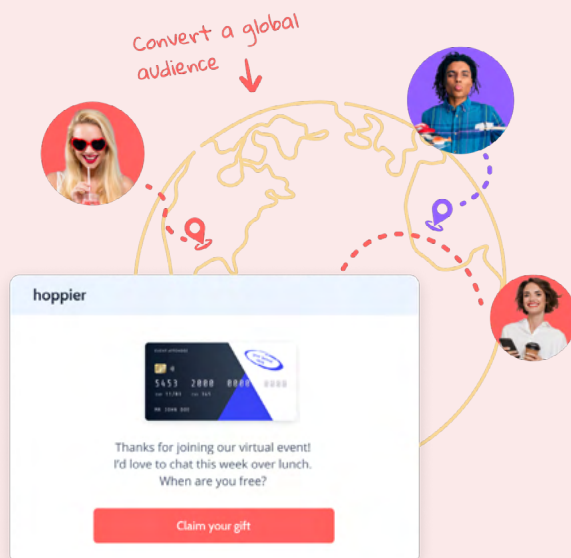
All of this data will help you perfect your next event and increase engagement rates each time you host.



Incentivize guests to take the next step.

In case you can't tell, we're in favor of incentives. Incentives are a great way to increase engagement at every stage of the event lifestyle. After the event, you can offer participants a discount on your product or give a gift to attendees who schedule a demo with your sales team.

With Hoppier virtual credit cards, it's easy to provide gifts like a free lunch at their favorite restaurant or a gift card to their favorite store, even if you don't know what their favorite restaurant or store is. Just give them a pre-loaded card that they can spend where they want.



Put an expiration date on your incentive offer to encourage guests to take action. (With Hoppier, you can also reclaim funds that aren't spent by the expiration date.) A ticking clock is a strong psychological motivator and is part of the reason flash sales are so effective. According to Experian,

74% of marketers that run flash sales see higher transaction-to-click rates.

You should also make it clear that guests are only receiving the offer because they attended your event. This makes attendees feel like they're part of an exclusive group — another psychological motivator. It could also encourage them to sign up for future events so they can access future incentives.

3 incentives to encourage new customer conversions:

Discounted product offers

One-month free trials

A free gift with every purchase

3 incentives to encourage follow-ups with your sales team:

Lunch on your sales team

Entry into a raffle for a large-ticket item, like a year of free products or a \$1,000 Hoppier card

A free gift when guests schedule a demo

0.31

Repurpose your content.

Since your live event already featured great content (see tip 19), use it to its fullest. Work with your marketing team to adapt event topics into blog posts, emails, or gated content for your site. This will help you reach potential customers who didn't attend the event.

Create a library with recordings of your webinars or keynotes. Send the videos to guests who attended, along with any supplemental materials like slideshows, session minutes, or other notes. This is a thoughtful follow-up that creates one more touchpoint with potential customers.

For anyone else who wants to see the content, collect their email address before granting them access. If you want to incentivize people to show up for future events, wait to make the recording available to the general public. Anywhere from 1-3 months should be enough time to show registrants that they can't no-show and instantly reap the benefits of your event content.



Continue to **collaborate** with your sponsors.

When you host an event, you're not only building relationships with your target audience — you're building relationships with other businesses through your sponsorship packages. Keep those relationships strong with ongoing collaborations.

Since you both have similar target audiences, you'll both benefit from leveraging each other's networks.

Make agreements to cross-promote. Share your sponsors' posts on your social media, and ask them to do the same.

You can also run joint social media contests, and offer bundled discounts where potential customers can save when they buy both yours and your sponsors' products.



0.33

Connect your sales team to data and leads from your event.

All those polls and surveys you ran gave you valuable insight into your customers. You will have learned about their needs, wants, goals, and behavior, and that information is invaluable for closing sales.

Educate your sales team on this high-level data (the majority of our audience is struggling with X) so they can present your product as a solution to your target audience's pain points.

You can also break down your data to analyze individual attendee's responses. When your sales team follows up with a potential customer who attended your event, they can personalize their pitch to that individual's goals. This will help your sales team show each attendee how your product fits their individual needs.





Add incentives, increase engagement.

Regardless of where you are in your event lifecycle, you need to give customers a reason to take that next step — whether the next step is registering for your event, showing up on event day, engaging with talks and sessions, or following up with your sales team.

Good content and the opportunity to learn are strong motivators for most virtual event audiences, but with the fierce competition for event attendees, adding a little extra incentive can encourage better audience participation and engagement.

Hoppier is the ideal incentive for all your event needs. With our virtual credit cards, you can offer a balance for guests to spend on the food, drinks, and supplies they need to participate in virtual or hybrid event sessions.

You can also use Hoppier credit card balances to gamify your sessions, adding more funds with every step guests take in the event journey.

And, you can let guests choose their own incentives so you don't have to guess which prizes they actually want — they can spend their funds at

local restaurants and shops, they can use the money to support a charity they love, or they can put it toward their favorite apps and streaming services. The options aren't just endless, they're also extremely flexible and available on six out of seven continents (sorry, Antarctica!).

Hoppier is also a branded solution — add your company logo and colors — and it's budget friendly. With traditional gift cards, it doesn't matter if guests spend the money or not, you'll never see those funds again. With Hoppier cards, you can set an expiration date on the card balance. Any money guests haven't spent by that date will be refunded to you — so you can add it to the budget for your next event.

Make Hoppier one of your engagement tactics and watch those KPIs soar.

[SEE IT IN ACTION](#)



Resources:

["60 Incredible Virtual Event Statistics!" Markletic.](#)



["Market Research Surveys: The Quickstart Guide on How to Conduct Market Research." Survey Monkey.](#)



["How Much Time Are Respondents Willing to Spend on Your Survey?" Survey Monkey.](#)



["27 Mind Blowing Statistics on Giveaways and Contests in 2021." Outgrow.](#)



["Conversion Rate Benchmarks: Find Out How Your Conversion Rate Compares." WordStream.](#)



[Mesh online event platform.](#)



[Gather online event platform.](#)



["The Complete Guide to Cause Marketing." Brandwatch.](#)



["Learning or Playing: The Effect of Gamified Training on Performance." Harvard Business School.](#)



["Gaming Away the Leadership Gap." Deloitte.](#)



["Attention Span During Lectures: 8 Seconds, 10 Minutes, or More?" Advances in Physiology Education.](#)



["Flash Sale Emails Have Doubled the Increase in Transaction Rates Compared With Other Offers." Experian.](#)

