

# Live streaming guide

Social trends suggest that nowadays if it isn't live streamed, it didn't happen. Live streaming has firmly established itself as the most engaging and exciting communication format of our time and has become a valuable tool in corporate and internal communications. The ability to broadcast live to thousands of people used to be limited to TV networks, requiring millions of dollars, an entire production team, and tons of expensive equipment. Now, we can do all of that with devices that fit in our pockets. With a simple smartphone we can live stream anything to audiences over Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and more. We have the technology to share live video with anyone, at any time. But we're also living in a time of unhindered access to unlimited content. For brands to rise above the noise, it helps to be strategic about your plans for live video.

# Why Live Stream?

Live streaming is fast, appealing and has a wide reach. Recordings go straight to the internet with no editing, cuts, sound effects, or special filters. You can film a simple video and publish it as you go. In a year like 2020, when social contact was strictly limited, live streaming offered a unique way for people to connect. Viewers can ask questions and the person recording can answer in real-time. It's a way to instill authentic human connection that is difficult to replicate with recorded video.

If you own a business, live streaming allows you to chat with your audience in an unpolished, off-the-cuff way. For example, CBS started a [live on air segment](#) with 180-degree virtual reality cameras that show a view of the studio behind the camera. Viewers feel like they are getting a sneak peak into a different side of news coverage. And, after you're done streaming your live event, the recorded video can remain on your website or social media page for viewers to watch later.

## Live Streaming to Drive Awareness and Engage Audiences

Consumers are getting accustomed to watching video whenever and wherever they want. This applies to live streaming, too. A survey by the Interactive Advertising Bureau found that [47% of live streaming viewers are watching more live video](#) than a year ago.

Brands and companies of all sizes and across all industries want to reach customers and employees around the world, in real time to share news and information. Businesses that see the value of live video are investing in it, with [28% of marketers spending more on live streaming video](#) than in years past.

Many organizations have already gotten creative about different ways to live stream in addition to traditional events, talks and conferences. These include:

- "Insider footage" videos for loyal fans and audience members
- Direct conversations and Q&A between business personnel and audiences
- Special announcement videos
- Influencer partnerships featuring celebrity guest speakers
- More and more "virtual town hall" meetings are happening in the wake of the pandemic and work-from-home.

After launching Facebook Live, the company [racked up 3.5 billion broadcasts within two years](#), with almost 2 billion viewers. That's basically [every user](#) on Facebook. Facebook Live videos are one of the most popular ways of generating interactions, and they are a priority in its News Feed algorithm. Businesses who are using it get a lot of visibility in an increasingly saturated landscape.

When looking at websites that are primarily video platforms, YouTube has the most monthly active users — [two billion worldwide](#). Periscope, Twitter's live streaming platform, has over [9.3 million live streams](#) monthly. The introduction of Instagram Live, LinkedIn Live, and other live video apps like TikTok and Snapchat serve to enhance the importance of live video in the current social media landscape.

Live streaming has gone from being a bonus to being an essential part of any marketing communication strategy. Brands are expected to provide live video experiences - it helps add to their authenticity in our modern age.

# The Benefits of Live Streaming

Live streaming is the ideal medium for attracting an audience's attention, engaging them with your content and providing an interactive forum to generate a response from your viewers.

## Interaction

One of the greatest advantages of a live stream is that it gives viewers the opportunity to comment in real-time or ask questions to the presenter. Just as a panel might take questions from the audience, a live-streamed event can take questions through a comments section or online Q&A. Viewers love having the ability to interact with speakers and hosts in an immediate and authentic way, and it gives you a chance to provide valuable, relevant information in response to customer questions.

## Engagement

Live streaming holds your audience's attention much longer. Viewers watch, on average, live streaming video 10x longer than on-demand video content. As a direct result of this increased engagement, there is a far greater effect to the dissemination of information. Also, [80% of consumers](#) would prefer to watch a live video than read a blog post from their favorite brands. Businesses, educators and other organizations are using live streaming to connect with audiences in a way that's more engaging than ever.

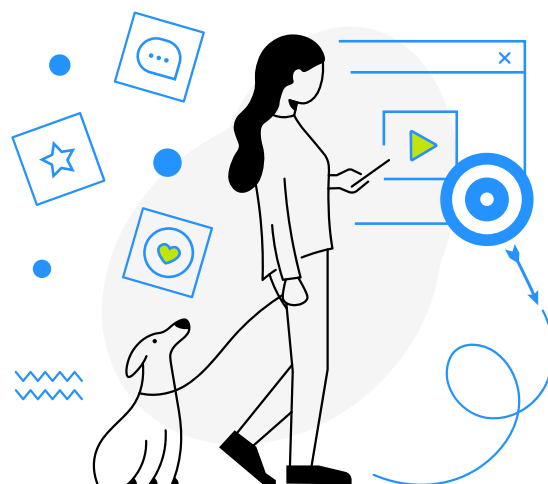
## Reach

It's unlikely that everyone who wants to attend your event will be able to do so, and without a live stream these people would be left either reading a summary, watching a replay after the event or missing out entirely. Thanks to the beauty of live streaming however, speeches, presentations and events can be viewed in real time by

people throughout the country and across the globe. Furthermore, with the mobile nature of today's workforce, you can bet that people won't be stuck to a desk when they're watching live streams of your event. Cisco forecasts [79% of global mobile data traffic](#) will be video by 2022. The beauty of live streaming is that your audience can participate from wherever they are, ensuring that everyone gets the same information at the same time.

## Content Creation

It's also important to remember that, unlike an in-person event, a live stream doesn't have to end once the event is over. That same content can be repurposed and put to use as on-demand video, giving it a useful lifespan beyond the live event. With minimal effort, a 30 minute live stream can be chaptered into multiple short videos to re-purpose for use in email follow-ups, news updates, presentations or social media. You can then monitor video uptake and use the analytics to find out exactly what resonated with your audience to focus your messaging.

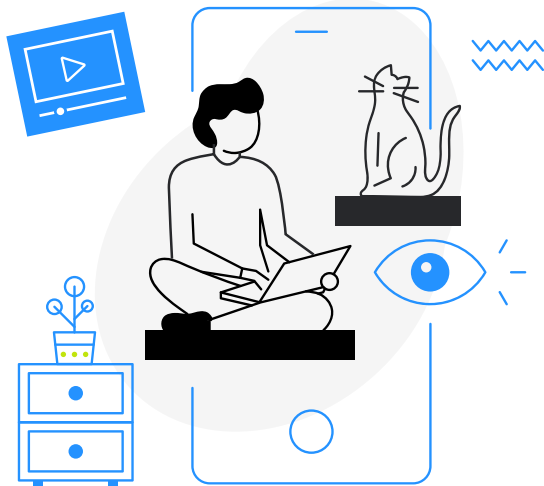


## Attention

Compared to a pre-recorded video that can be watched at any point in time, a live stream creates a point in time that the information needs to be consumed. There's a sense that it's an event that needs their participation, and the FOMO factor ("fear of missing out") means they're more likely to tune in than if they're left to watch at their leisure.

## Cost Savings

A live stream allows you to reach a large audience cost-effectively, as there is essentially no incremental cost for each viewer. When you compare the cost of a live stream that can reach thousands of employees anywhere at the same time against the travel costs of bringing those people physically together in the same place to hear the information, it's clear that live streaming can deliver significant savings to the bottom line.



# Live Streaming Use Cases

Here are some of the most common use cases for live streaming:

## Sales & Marketing

From a conference to a product launch, any speaking event where your staff and expertise are on display is also a chance to increase the reach of your message. In recent years, corporate events and presentations have become more important than ever. Product launches from major tech companies like Apple and AWS are often headline news, streamed live around the world.

While your next event might be a little more low-key than these, there's still an audience out there who would be interested in seeing your brand in action. In this situation, live streaming is a simple strategy that can help your organization tap into a rapidly growing potential audience.

## Live Interviews and Q&As

Live streaming is perfect for live interviews or Q&A sessions. You can easily bring a guest onto your broadcast with split screen sharing or field questions from viewers via chat.

## Podcasts

More and more people are listening to podcasts, so you could find your target audience by creating a podcast. You can live stream yourself recording your podcast as a bonus for fans, or turn your live stream into a podcast by converting it into an audio file.

## Company Town Halls

One of the most established use cases for internal communications is the “all-hands” meeting or town hall. Live streamed town halls achieve a couple of important objectives: they engage employees wherever they may be (not just those from head office) they create a personal connection between an organization’s leaders and their people; and they provide an interactive forum in a way that is manageable at scale, so even an organization of several thousand can offer the chance to everybody to participate.

## Kick-off Events

When launching a new initiative or kick-starting a new sales program, there’s no better way to unite and excite your people and iron out any uncertainty than with a live, interactive launch event. The lead-up to the “big reveal” creates a sense of anticipation, everybody gets the same info at the same time, and you get the opportunity to address any questions on the spot. Making the stream accessible to everyone on any device wherever they are provides inclusiveness, and making it available on-demand means anybody who couldn’t attend live gets the same experience at their convenience.

## Executive Messages

Executive video blogs and web chat sessions have become popular communication tools for forward-thinking business leaders, and interactive live streams combine the best of both worlds – the immediacy and human connection of video plus the two-way engagement of web chat.

## Product Launch

Announce the arrival of a new product with a live launch, where you can do demos, answer questions, and even host guests.

## Behind the Scenes

Fans love feeling like they are getting an insider’s look at things, whether that’s a tour of your company, interviews with your employees, or an exclusive look at your live streaming process.

## Sales and E-Commerce

Promote your products with e-commerce live streaming. Demonstrate how your products work or partner with influencers who can show off your brand too. Stream with Facebook, Instagram and more.

## Improving Marketing Campaigns

Nothing adds more hype to your existing marketing campaign as a live stream. Promote your stream and invite viewers to participate by sending questions or comments, and gain valuable insights into your customers while boosting your brand.

## Live Conference

If you’re hosting a conference, you can get a global audience for your event by live streaming it. Or you can make your conference virtual and have panelists speak from anywhere in the world.

## Employee Training

The amount of attention a viewer will commit to a live stream is far higher than for pre-recorded content. When that translates to learning and development it means more effective training delivery. If you struggle to increase participation rates or employee involvement in training, then live streaming might provide the attraction needed to cut through any distractions for your audience.

# Getting started with live streams

The most common objections to live streaming an event are based on a fear of the unexpected, but so many communications executives already use live video in some form. Things like video conferencing via Skype, Google Hangouts, Zoom and other peer-to-peer video platforms are based on live video, so most of us already use live video streaming on a regular basis. Here are the key things you'll need to think about to make sure your event is a success:

## Support

You only get one chance to get it right when you're talking about a live event, so it pays to have someone on hand to help you manage the stream so you can focus on the presentation. A communications assistant can take care of advancing slides for online viewers and managing incoming Q&A so the presenter can concentrate on presenting.

## Video

This may surprise you, but when it comes to live streaming, video camera quality doesn't need to be super high end. You can use just about any video camera or DSLR that has an HDMI output, a laptop, or even your mobile phone. One camera option that is often overlooked is your existing video conference equipment. These are generally high quality, HD cameras set-up with good microphones that are just perfect for live streaming.

## Audio

Unlike video, the impact of audio quality on the success of a live stream cannot be overestimated. Lapel mics are a low-cost, effective way to make sure your speakers are heard clearly. Don't rely on the built-in mic in your camera, laptop or phone - there will be way too much background noise to be effective. Rode makes really high quality wired and wireless mics that start from around \$100.

## Slides

We tend to rely heavily on PowerPoint slides in presentations to illustrate details and support our verbal messaging. Slides are also really useful in live streams, providing additional context for viewers and giving them a visual reference that can be expanded and referred back to. All you need to do is upload your slide deck to your live stream platform and advance the slides in time with the presentation.

## Interaction

Giving a remote audience the chance to interact in real-time with the presenter is incredibly powerful, and drives a strong sense of involvement for people who would otherwise be silenced by distance. Interactive Q&A gives online viewers and people in the room the chance to ask questions, and upvote questions that have already been asked by others. Moderation allows these questions to be screened, and a presenter view shows only approved questions to the presenter on a tablet so they can keep the flow going from the front of the room or camera.



# In-Depth: What you need to start live streaming

Getting started with live streaming is easy! Here is a more in-depth look at what you need to get started.

## Video and Audio Source(s)

You can use a camera, smartphone, computer, or other device that supplies a stream of video data. A video source could be a DSLR camera, a Camcorder, a Computer screen, a webcam, or a smartphone camera. For live streaming, you don't even need a storage card in your camera because the stream will be immediately fed to the online platform.

Likewise, you'll need a source to provide audio data. Audio sources might come from a lapel mic, a handheld mic, a USB mic, or from a separate audio file. A simple stream will just be one source that provides audio and video.

## Capturing Audio and Video

To start streaming online, you have to capture both your audio and video sources. HDMI and SDI cables carry embedded audio along with video. If you are using a computer with a software encoder, then you'll need an intermediary device called a capture card, such as AV.ioHD. This connects to the camera on one end and to the computer via USB on the other. If you're using a USB camera or microphone, you can capture the sources just by connecting them to a computer.

## Video Encoder

A video encoder translates the video signal into a format ready for the Internet. It's a piece of software that compresses and converts the incoming audio-video signal into a digital, web-friendly format. Some video sources are already equipped for live streaming while others, like video cameras, are not.

There are essentially three types of encoders: a smartphone, a computer with streaming software, and a dedicated hardware encoder. Smartphones offer the most convenience and are the go-to choice for filming simple videos. However, depending on your needs, you may want to consider one of the other options. Let's take a look at the other types of encoders available.

The video and audio signal need to get from your camera into your live streaming application - without an encoder you won't be able to make this happen. If you're not using a smartphone, you can do this with either a hardware or software encoder.

- **Software Encoders:** Software encoders are installed applications that use your computer to transmit the video signal from the source to your computer via a capture card. There are plenty of options for both free and paid streaming software to use. But, if you're using a software encoder, it's always best to work with a computer that is powerful enough and has enough memory to guarantee a good live streaming experience.
- **Hardware Encoders:** A hardware encoder is a device that connects to audio and video sources directly, with no capture card. The encoder needs to be connected to the network via Wi-Fi, cellular, or Ethernet, in order to live stream. You can find small and portable hardware encoders for simple live streaming or complex and powerful ones that have more functionality.

## Streaming Platform

The streaming platform is the online destination, usually a site, platform, or app, where others watch your live video. These are often called Content Delivery Networks, or CDNs. You've probably watched live stream video on platforms like Facebook Live, Youtube, Twitch, Instagram Live, etc.

In addition to free platforms, there are also paid streaming platforms. These offer more control over how your live stream is presented and what audiences it reaches, and they usually offer a way to monetize it.

No matter what kind of streaming destination you use, you will have to create an account in order to live stream. You can choose a CDN based on your needs, the size of your audience, and the type of content you will be streaming. Most CDNs ask you to fill out a live stream description, choose a category, and add tags so that users can find it.

## Internet Connection

One of the most important aspects of live streaming is the need for a stable internet connection. You can definitely live stream using Wi-Fi or cellular service, but these types of signals tend to vary in stability. A dedicated Ethernet line is the most reliable form of connection. Either way, make sure to do a speed test to ensure you have an optimal upload bandwidth to account for the bit rate of your video.

Live streaming requires a connection with sufficient upload speed - ideally 1MB per second and greater. TestMy.net offers an upload speed check that generally gives accurate results - which are often much lower than advertised peak internet speeds. The quality that you plan to stream your video content determines whether or not your upload speed is sufficient. But the general rule of thumb is not to exceed half of your upload speed. For example, if your upload speed is 2MB per second, you don't want your bit rate to exceed 1 MB per second. This is a setting you can adjust inside your encoder.

## Accessories

Accessories can boost the quality of your stream. You can get good video lighting without spending too much money, but green screens might be a little advanced if you're new to streaming.





## How to Set Up Your Live Stream

Once you make sure you have all the basic elements necessary for live streaming, you can start with a trial run. The basic workflow is as follows.

### 1. Connect Audio and Video Sources to Encoder

Make sure that all the devices that you are using (smartphone, computer, mic, etc.) are powered up. If you're filming a stationary person, such as an info session or talk, it's a good idea to place your device on a tripod or stand for added stability.

### 2. Configure Your Encoder

Configure your most important streaming settings, including resolution, frame rate, and bitrate. If you're using software, you can often configure these settings within the app. Different streaming platforms have different options for setup and you can usually find tutorials for each of them online. But here are some of the general configurations:

- **Bitrate:** many streaming solutions automatically encode the bitrate, resolution, and aspect ratio that you set up in your video preferences. You can change these according to the speed of your internet connection. But you also want to keep your viewers' download speed in mind as well. Usually, it's best to offer something around 900kbps or lower.
- **Resolution:** 1080p is better for events with low movement while 720p is better if you will have a lot of movement in your video. Also note that 1080p requires a higher bitrate than 720p.
- **Frame Rate:** At a minimum, you should try to stream video content at least at 30fps. As with video resolution, frame rates affect bandwidth requirements. Video content with a higher frame rate has more data to transmit compared to a video with a lower frame rate.

### 3. Configure Streaming Platform Settings

Log into the streaming platform, or CDN, of your choice and set up a new live streaming event. Fill out any necessary forms and questions for that platform, such as event description, privacy settings, hashtags, etc.

### 4. Tie Your Encoder to Your Streaming Platform

Your streaming platform needs to know where it is sourcing video data from, and vice-versa. For this, you need to copy and paste the URL from the platform into the encoder. The platform will also provide a stream name, or stream key, which you need to paste into the encoder. This is a secret password that ensures no one else can stream to your account. Usually, the stream key and URL are found in the platforms settings section. Once you have copy and pasted this information, save it.

### 5. Click "Start Streaming"

When you're ready to start live streaming, press the "start streaming" button located in the encoder UI. Make sure your platform preview window shows that it is receiving signal from the encoder. When you're done filming your live video, remember that you need to stop the stream both in the platform and in the encoder.

### 6. Seeking Support

If this sounds too complicated, Viostream offers a white-gloved 'go live' concierge support service to help take you through the entire process with ease.

# Tips for Excellent Live Streaming Videos

In addition to the basic equipment and setup, there are some simple rules to keep in mind when you're live streaming. These tips can help you film like a pro.

## Monitor the Quality of Your Live Stream

Most viewers will stop watching your stream if they have a bad viewing experience, and the bulk of them will leave within the first few minutes. Viewers will watch for at most 90 seconds if your connection is poor quality. Learn how to keep an eye on the various factors that influence how well your video is streaming, such as bitrate, FPS, dropped frames, video codec, and more. Some basic knowledge about these key terms can ensure that you provide a high-quality viewing experience. Viostream offers live stream monitoring as part of our concierge service so you can feel confident that every one of your live videos is of expert quality.

## Don't Forget to Test Audio Quality

You wouldn't expect participants to hang around on a conference call if they could barely hear the speakers. The same goes for a live stream video. No matter how good the video is, people need to hear crystal clear audio in order to have a satisfactory experience. Make sure speakers talk directly into the mics and do a test beforehand to make sure they aren't picking up any background noise.

## Don't Fail to Plan Ahead

The difference between a successful live stream and a failed attempt often boils down to planning. Once you go live, there's no room for course correction. For starters, make sure you are choosing topics that will interest your audience. Ask yourself what they will get out of your broadcast. Make sure you have all the materials you will

need on-hand, from props to images to graphics and more. Make sure you know the flow of material so you can transition from topic to topic. Also, consider the timing of your event and make sure it doesn't conflict with holidays or other industry events.

## Promote the Event Sufficiently

You want to make sure you do sufficient research into finding out how to let your audience know about your event. Making one or two quick social announcements simply isn't enough. Where does your potential audience hang out? Facebook? Instagram? YouTube? This will inform both where you advertise the event and where you actually host the event.

Create posts tailored to the style of each channel. For instance, LinkedIn posts tend to perform best with a few sentences of text describing the video or event. While on Twitter, you have to limit your description to 140 characters or less. When posting, make sure you highlight the benefits viewers can hope to get from each event. And make it clear when and where the event is taking place.

Promote the event regularly for a few weeks leading up to it and make it easy for people to sign up for it. If you have an opt-in email list, send an email 3-7 days prior to the event to remind viewers that it's happening.

## Test Your Equipment

Mistakes will happen from time to time in live streaming - you can't always avoid them. But you can reduce the incidence and frequency of any mishaps by adequately testing your equipment.

## Make Sure Your Event Is Interactive

Live streaming should always be as interactive as possible. If you incorporate polls and viewer questions, live video can create a genuine sense of connection between the host and audience. Answering questions in real time helps make the audience feel like they are really there, enjoying the event in person. Chat and messaging are also helpful tools for creating a closer connection.

The host, or parties involved, should have the ability to respond to feedback, comments, and questions from the audience. Using presentation software that creates graphics, diagrams, charts, and other visuals will help hold your audience's interest and encourage participation.

going live. Relax your posture and look and speak directly into the camera. Make sure you have enough of a script so that you don't lose your confidence and stumble when you run out of things to say. Test videos of yourself can give you a chance to analyze your behavior and give your best performance.

## Take Advantage of Post Streaming Data

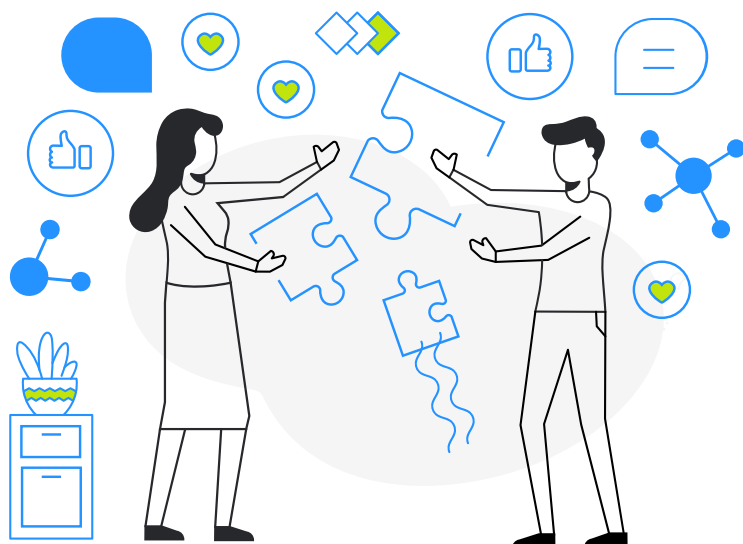
You can glean a lot of excellent insights from data surrounding your event. The data and analytics you capture will tell you how effective your content is and what you need to modify. All of the main streaming platforms will offer analytics such as unique visitors, returning visitors, amount of time per visitor, location of participants, bandwidth used, etc. You can also use other analytics sites to track where traffic is coming from and determine the effectiveness of different advertising methods.

## Use Professional Images and Graphics

High-quality graphics on your live stream help make you look more professional. Just make sure to choose graphics that will appeal to your audience.

## Practice, Practice, Practice

Talking into a camera without a real audience in front of you is not easy if you've never done it before. If you tend to get camera shy, make sure to do a few practice runs before



# Summary

Live streaming is the next best thing to an in-person event, and many people actually prefer it to face-to-face events these days. It is more affordable and it enables you to reach a far wider audience than you could have before. In the wake of the global pandemic, it has also become a critical aspect of the future of work.

There's no doubt that the immediacy, inclusiveness and interactivity of live streaming makes it a powerful way to reach and engage your audience. When you factor in the cost saving potential of a live event and the fact that you end up with content that can be re-purposed for an extended shelf life, the business benefits are clear.

Live streaming may seem complex, but with effective preparation and the right technical solution, any risk of malfunction will be minimized so you, your presenter and viewers can be confident of a successful live event.

If you're looking for a professional live streaming partner, contact Viostream before your next live event to take advantage of their superior technology and a specialized concierge team that has helped deliver 1,000's of seamless live streams. With Viostream, you can rest assured your next live stream will be a success.

---

## Contact us

### San Francisco

📍 548 Market St. PMB 90039,  
San Francisco, CA 94104-5401

### Sydney

📍 377 Kent Street, Suite #1030  
Sydney, NSW 2000

### Global Contact Information

📞 US Phone: +1 628-203-0244  
AUS Phone: +61 2 7908 1286

✉ [info@viostream.com](mailto:info@viostream.com)

