How to Throw a Virtual Party: Event Coordination Tips

Virtual Edition! With all of the innovations that are happening due to COVID-19, I decided to update our "Secrets to Throwing a Great Party" blog. Enjoy!

Here are five secrets that help me stay organized, feel prepared, and efficiently coordinate and market virtual professional outreach events, such as online giving days, webinars, Facebook Live Q&A events, and virtual conferences.

1. Make deadlines and stick to them.

When you're at the beginning of planning, it's extremely important to create a timeline and set goals and deadlines for all of the moving pieces. When will you begin your social media promotional plan? What channels will be included in your digital editorial calendar? When do you email the Save the Dates? If you're seeking speakers, how long will presenters have to enter proposals? When do you send the meeting agenda or objectives? Consider all of your deliverables and give each one a spot on the timeline. And of course, STICK TO THEM!

2. Create a strong image and message for your party.

Remind folks about the event as many times as you can. Present the information on as many mediums as possible (graphics, videos, emails, personal messages). Tell everyone about the event that you think may be interested. You're spending a lot of time making sure that the conference is going to be a success; make sure that as many people as possible share that experience with you. But most importantly, make sure the message stays consistent. Don't confuse people about what the event will offer – be succinct in your descriptions across platforms and mediums. If you ask partners in your network (as you should) to help you promote, please ensure they utilize your pre-approved messaging.

3. Be familiar with the conference space - in this case, a digital platform!

Take time to master the software and platforms that are making it possible to host a virtual event. Hold test runs with your team and perfect execution. Don't forget to test donation forms to ensure, if this is a fundraising event, that funds are able to be realized. If you're hosting a webinar or interactive event, understand the permissions you'd like participants to have.

4. Don't do it alone.

Having a planning committee is extremely valuable, especially in the last weeks leading up to the event. Identify each person's roles and responsibilities from the beginning of the planning process so tasks don't fall through the cracks. Check in with your committee often and have open lines of communication.

5. Don't sweat the small stuff the day of the event.

Not everything is going to turn out exactly as expected the day(s) of the conference, and that's okay. Most of the errors you may notice won't be noticeable to the attendees. Instead of looking for potential errors, notice all of the things that are going right. You've worked really hard to pull this party off, so enjoy it!