Online participants of hybrid meetings and events can’t have the exact same experience as in-person participants, but they can and should have a quality experience that does not relegate them to second-class status.

By Christine Clapp, Founder and President of Spoken with Authority
It’s not enough to post a recording of a live event for online participants after the fact or to live stream an in-person event at the last minute.

**Ask:**

- Is there a compelling reason why the meeting should be hybrid and not fully online?
- Is the experience of online participants well planned (and not an afterthought)?
- Will online participants have a synchronous / live experience?
- Will the main speaker(s) be trained to engage both online and in-person participants?
- Will the main speaker(s) practice presenting dynamically in the hybrid environment?
- Will online participants have an online and equal co-facilitator who is focused on their experience, questions, and needs?
- Will facilitators be trained to effectively engage all participants?
- Will all participants have access to translation, captioning, and other services that are essential for inclusion?

Answering “yes” to the following questions will help ensure that your hybrid meeting or event is a success.
Meeting platforms and technology solutions for hybrid-meetings exist and must be researched, invested in, and thoroughly tested.

**Ask about audio:**

- Can all participants clearly hear the main speaker(s)?
- Can all participants clearly hear in-person and online participants when they make comments or ask questions?
- Does the audio set-up avoid any unpleasant audio feedback or echo for either in-person or online participants?
- Will the main speaker(s) have practice time to get comfortable with the audio system?
- Can online participants experience music and videos that in-person participants do?

**Ask about video:**

- Can all participants see the main speaker(s)?
- Is the speaking area marked so the main speaker(s) are consistently in the camera view for online participants?
- Can all participants see in-person and online participants when they make comments or ask questions?
- Can all participants see slides, props, and other visuals?
- Is the camera positioned so the main speaker(s) can easily make eye contact with it?
- Will the main speaker(s) be trained to look directly into the camera to give online participants the experience of eye contact and direct communication?
Online participants should receive similar, but not necessarily the same materials and food as in-person participants. For example, if in-person participants will receive a paper handout, a branded tote bag, and breakfast, online participants might receive a fillable PDF version of the handout as well as a pre-mailed box that includes a branded pair of earbuds with a built-in microphone, a coffee shop gift card, and a few shelf-stable snack items.

**Ask:**

Will both in-person and online participants receive timely and convenient access to content such as handouts, slides, reports, and books? ☐ ☐

If in-person participants receive a useful gift or table prize, will online participants receive one that is of similar value and tailored to their needs? ☐ ☐

If in-person participants are offered drinks and / or food, will a corollary be mailed or otherwise offered to online participants? ☐ ☐
To be on equal footing with in-person participants, online participants need to be engaged in a commensurate way before, during, and after the meeting or event.

Ask:

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<td>Will online participants be allowed entry into and greeted at the meeting or event at the same time as in-person participants?</td>
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<td>If in-person participants can casually converse with speakers or dignitaries in attendance, will online participants have a way to access them too?</td>
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<td>Will online participants be able to engage in networking, brainstorming, group discussions, polls, and other activities that in-person participants do?</td>
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<td>Will online participants have opportunities to pair or group with in-person participants to network, brainstorm, and discuss topics?</td>
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<td>Will both online and in-person participants have timely and convenient access to a session evaluation (when offered)?</td>
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Engage Every Participant at Your Hybrid Meeting or Event

With time and budget savings that come with hybrid events, where some participants are online and some are in person, they will become a common meeting and presentation format. But how do we make sure the online audience of hybrid events isn’t an afterthought? That they don’t get second-class status? It’s not enough to post a recording of a live event or to stream it live for online participants to view passively.

This session will explore how to deliver hybrid presentations and facilitate hybrid meetings that cater to both in-person and computer-mediated participants and provide opportunities for them to interact in meaningful ways. Get ready to speak confidently and seamlessly to online and in-person participants of your next hybrid event.

Develop Your Professional Presence

Whether you’re in a hybrid meeting, on the phone, at a networking event, attending a virtual conference, or anywhere else: your ability to speak with confidence will drive your career forward — just as a lack of confidence will frustratingly hold you back.

This session will give you a set of powerful insights and practical strategies that will rapidly elevate your professional presence. Get ready to develop your technology-mediated and in-person speaking skills in a way that will transform your career — and even change your life!

Say It Right the First Time

How often do you fall short when trying to clearly, convincingly, and confidently get your message across “in the moment” — such as when someone asks you a question in a meeting, during a chance encounter, or in any other situation where you want and need to be at your most articulate?

This session will teach you a set of little known — but profoundly effective — tools and tips to ensure that you always express yourself with clarity and composure; even when the last thing you were expecting was to be under the spotlight. Get ready to go from flat-footed to polished, poised, and pointed — the first time, and every time!
Elevate Your Online Energy

“Zoom fatigue” describes the prevalent and intense tiredness, stress, and burnout associated with heavy use of Zoom and other platforms for virtual communication during the COVID-19 pandemic while professionals work and socialize almost entirely remotely.

In this session, you will discover specific habits you can adopt today to combat Zoom fatigue; improve your mindset; and help you stay engaged and energized when you work from home.

Craft Memorable and Engaging Presentations

Let’s face it: for many people, the only thing worse than being asked to give a presentation is being invited to sit through one. But it doesn’t have to be that way!

This session will give you firsthand experience with our foolproof Sandwich Structure Method for outlining presentations with an observable and compelling narrative arc as well as audience-engagement techniques, which you’ll use to deliver game-changing presentations — even if you don’t have ample time to prepare, or if you’re striving to get through to a tough audience.

Upgrade from "How are you?: Get better at small talk

Feel rusty after more than a year of limited opportunities for small talk due to the pandemic? Or maybe being memorable and engaging at networking events, in conversations, over coffee or lunch, and during chance encounters has never been a strength.

This session with teach you the anatomy of small talk so you can more successfully initiate, maintain, and end casual conversions. Additionally, it will offer suggestions for questions you can ask that are more inclusive and that demonstrate empathy when conversational partners open up to you. Get ready to feel more comfortable, to convey more confidence, to make stronger connections, and to cultivate your professional network every time you engage in small talk.