RingCentral Events

The Ultimate Guide to Engaging Virtual Company Events

How the world's leading companies host innovative virtual events that keep employees engaged from start to finish.
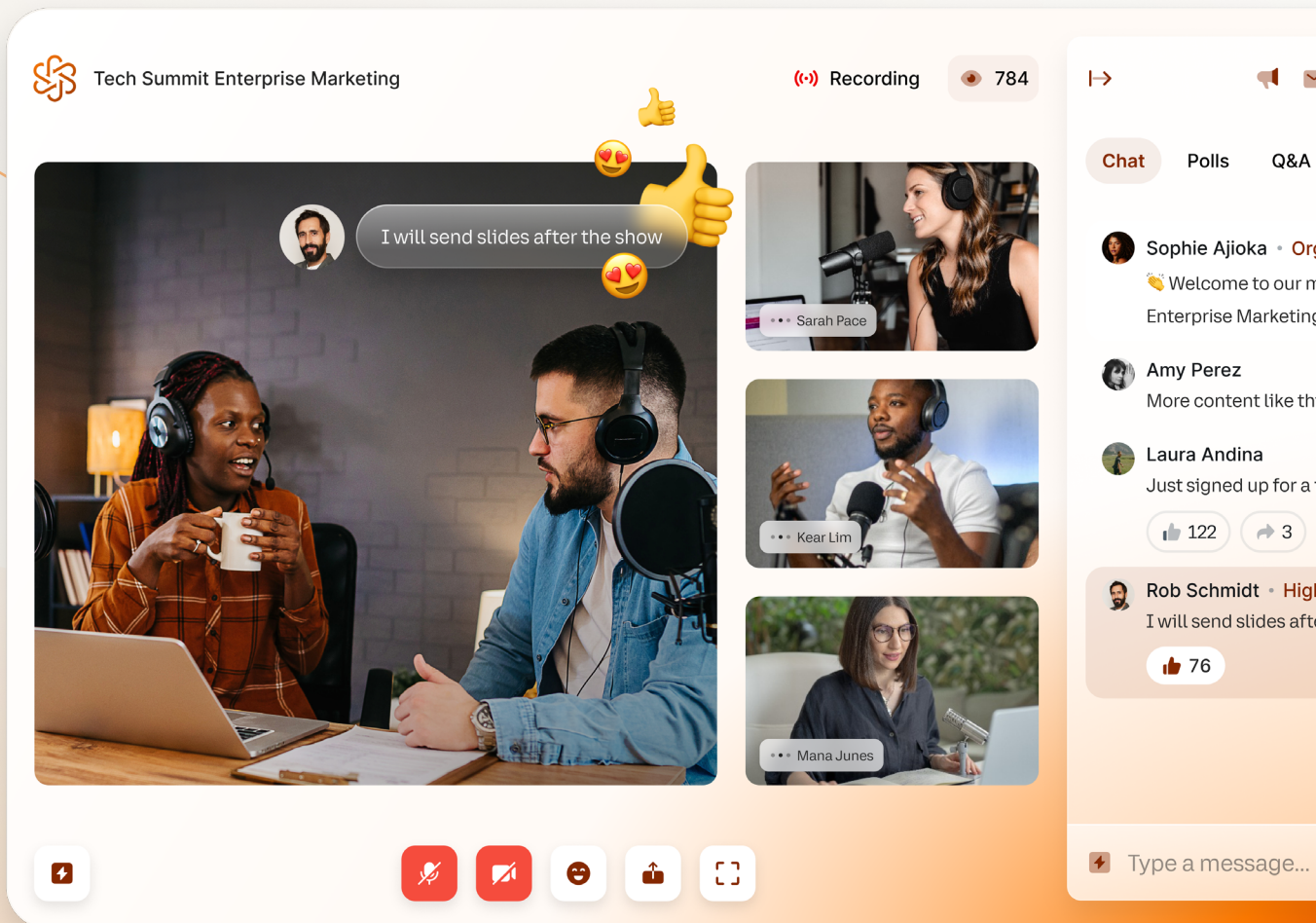
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These companies use and trust Hopin for internal events:
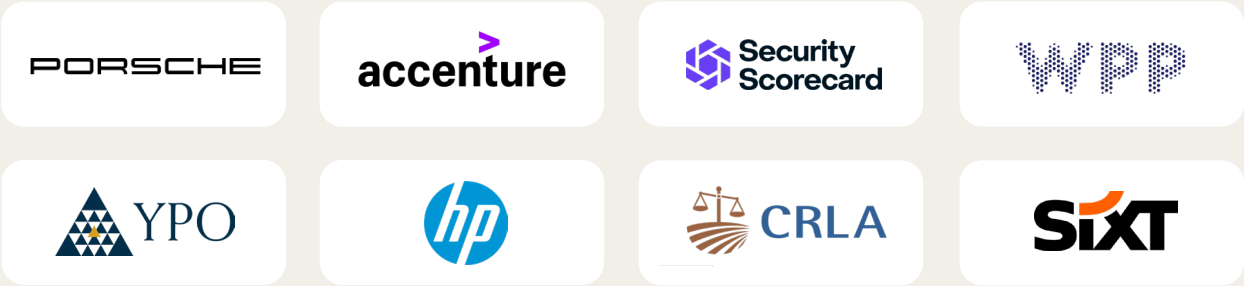
Introduction

Remote work is taking over. And Upwork, the world's largest freelancing website, says it's here to stay. By 2028, they predict 73% of all company departments will have remote workers.

It's not surprising why. Many employees prefer remote work for the flexibility it provides. Recent research by Owl Labs found that the most likely factor causing candidates to not accept a new job offer was if a company required specific days in the office and didn't allow for flexible working hours.

Companies benefit from remote work as well. It allows employees to avoid the distractions of the office. In fact, 77% of remote workers report higher productivity levels when working from home.

Source →

Remote work also saves companies on building expenses and avoids common office problems, like overbooked meeting rooms.

On top of all this, working remotely can make company events easier. Instead of finding an event location that fits your entire workforce, you can host a virtual event for the entire company.

And in this Ultimate Guide to Company Events, you'll learn how to successfully run virtual company events that not only engage remote employees, but wow them and your leadership team.

April Merrell · 12:33
I can't wait for our kickoff today!

Why companies should invest resources in polished company events

Your company may be tempted to keep company events low budget and spend minimal time planning or organizing them. After all, many organizations would rather invest time and money in customer acquisition and business growth.

But this can be a costly mistake. Great internal events can positively impact your culture and company and actually save your organization money and time. Here are four ways that great company events make an impact:

1. Virtual events increase employee retention.

Considering that employers spend as much as 33% of a worker's annual salary during the replacement process (according to Employee Benefit News), it's worth investing time in employee retention.

The rapid adoption of remote and hybrid work models gave rise to concerns about proximity bias. Recent research by Owl Labs found that 63% of employees feel concerned their managers view those in the office as harder working and more trustworthy than their remote counterparts, and 60% are concerned that working remotely will mean they have less of a say at work and miss out on opportunities. Virtual events play a crucial role in the inclusion and engagement of off-site employees and reduce the flight risk of employees who feel overlooked due to their work arrangements.

Two, virtual events build community among your employees. In fact, 54% of employees say a strong sense of community kept them at a company longer.

2. Virtual events increase employee engagement.

A whopping 85% of employees are not engaged at work. This disengagement results in seven trillion dollars in lost productivity, says research from Gallup.

One of the biggest culprits for disengagement: lackluster company meetings. 91% of employees have daydreamed during a meeting. 73% have worked on other things during meetings. And, shockingly, 39% have even fallen asleep during company meetings, says research by Atlassian.

To combat disengagement like this, companies should put more time and effort into creating polished, effective company meetings and events. Instead of boring employees, these events should engage and excite them.

Donatella Santoro · 12:33
This is amazing! So glad to be here!
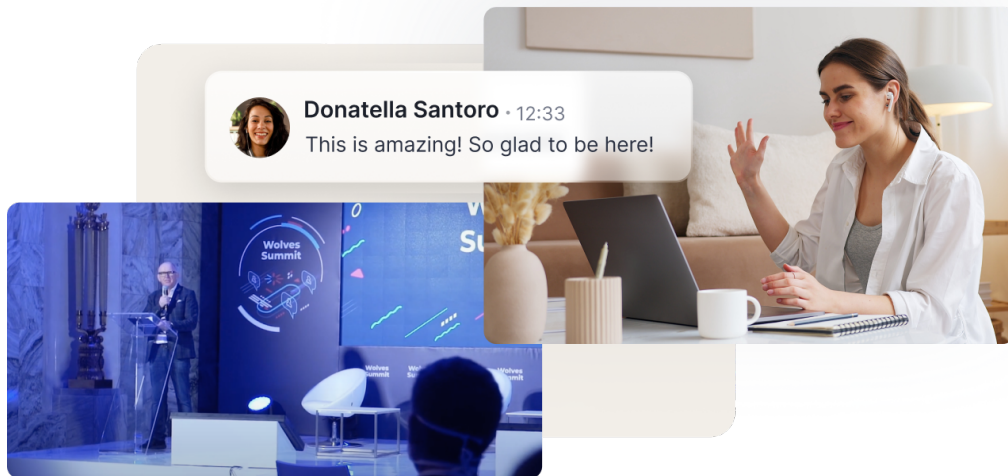
3. Virtual events develop employee skills.

70% of employees report that they don't have mastery of the skills needed to do their jobs, reports Gartner.

Virtual events give your company the opportunity to educate employees at scale, and they allow employees to interact with other learners and ask instructors questions. This is a much better learning environment than simply reading books or watching videos.

Virtual events are also a great option for safety, culture, and policy trainings that can help your organization avoid costly and damaging employee mistakes.

4. Virtual events encourage collaboration and idea generation.

When offices move to remote work, employees may interact and talk together less regularly. After all, there's no longer a way for employees to just stop by someone's office or desk or for them to meet up over lunch.

Virtual events can give remote workers a place to interact together as they would in an office space. By regularly holding virtual company events that allow for interaction, you can encourage employees to continue brainstorming and collaborating together.

Real-life examples of innovative virtual company events

How California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) and Saint Rock Media hosted a two-week internal conference on Hopin

About: California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. is a 501 non-profit legal and political advocacy group that promotes the interests of migrant laborers and the rural poor. The organization provides legal assistance in the areas of employment and labor, housing and eviction, health, public benefits and educational access. Saint Rock Media is an event agency that creates inspiring events for organizations around the world.

An inside look at the CRLA 2020 Resilience even

With the production help of event agency Saint Rock Media, California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) hosted a conference on Hopin. The conference focused on training employees with educational training sessions on fair housing, civil rights and education with a particular focus on language justice.

Their goal was to create a space that promotes the right to have all voices heard equally. Over 100 speakers taught these sessions.

But educational sessions were only one part of this two-week internal event. The CRLA also hosted an awards ceremony for employees called Resilience. It celebrated team members for their individual and collective contributions.

One standout part of the event was a family game night hosted in multiple Hopin Session rooms. Within a Hopin Session room, up to 20 people can get on camera and talk at once, which created the perfect environment for a game night.
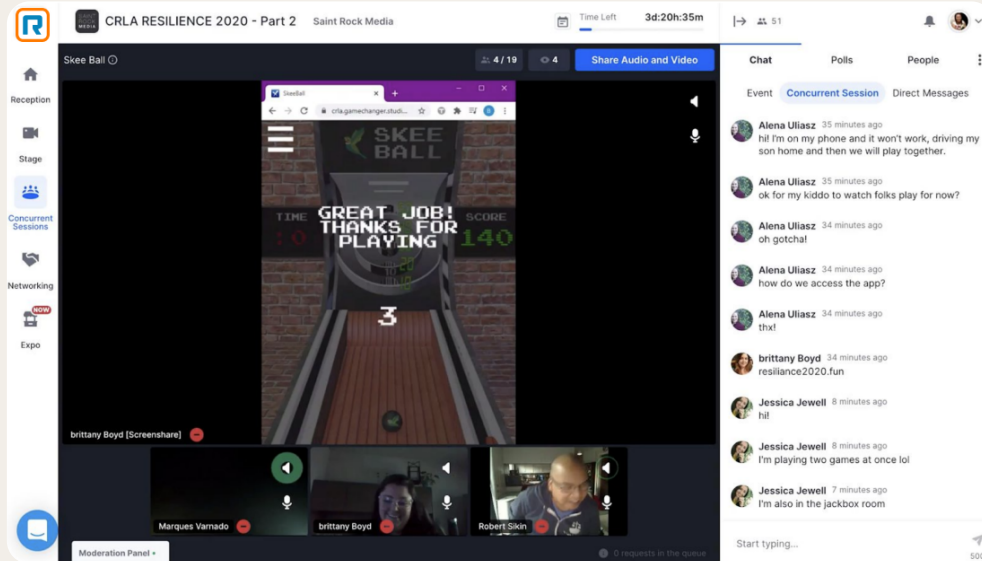
Saint Rock Media customized the branding of each game during the game night so that it fit the look and feel of the CRLA event.
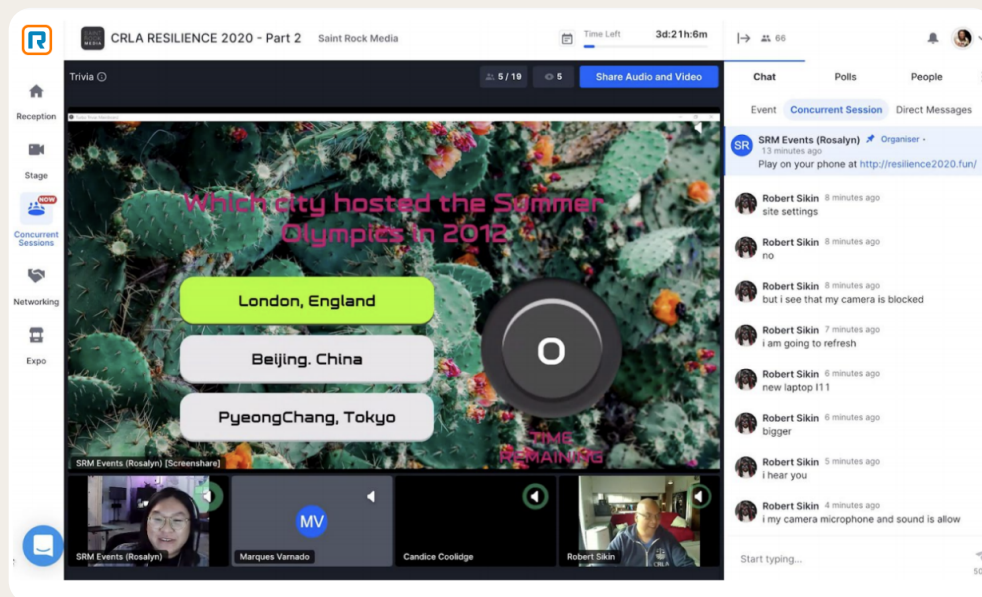
Games included skee ball, trivia, and Jackbox Party games. After each round, the CRLA displayed a scoreboard to show winners.
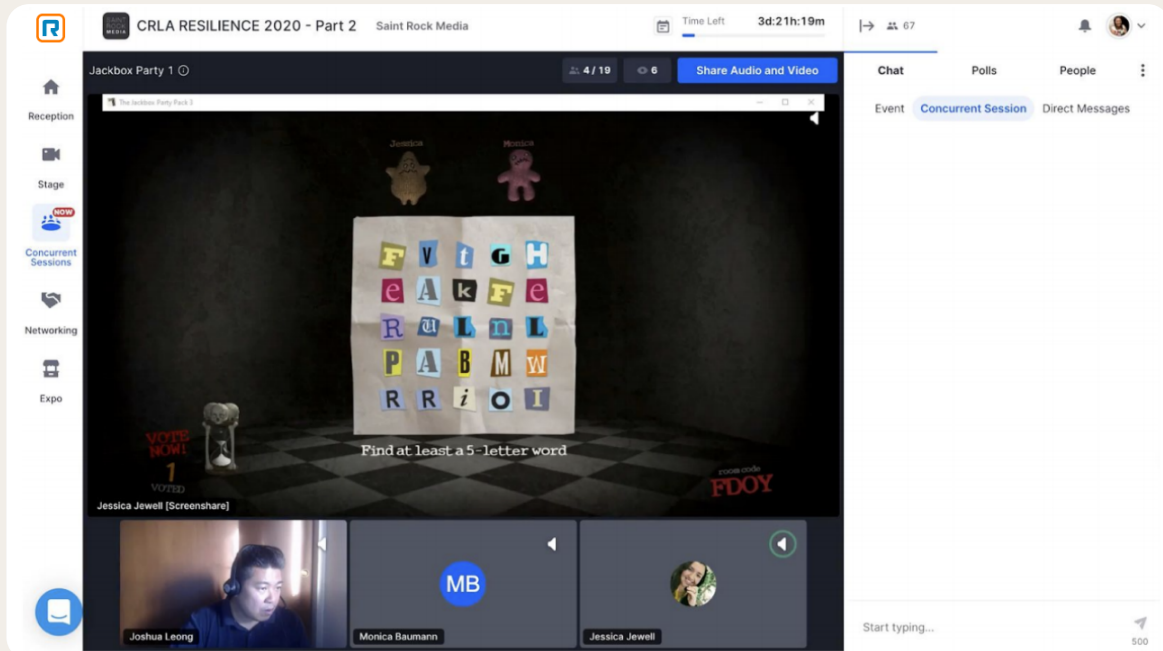

While the primary language of the event was English, the CRLA has Spanish-speaking employees. And since the event focused on language justice, the CRLA wanted to ensure Spanish-speaking attendees would feel comfortable participating in the activities and sessions. Because of this, Saint Rock Media and the CRLA provided Remote Simultaneous Interpretation (RSI) features during the event.

The event organizer pinned a chat message to the top of the Hopin chat window inviting people to call a specific number to hear simultaneous interpreting of live presentations into Spanish.
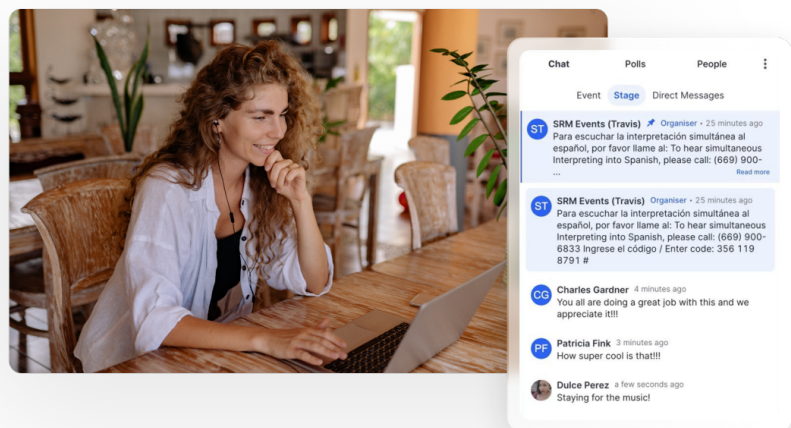
They also made sure to include subtitles in both Spanish and English
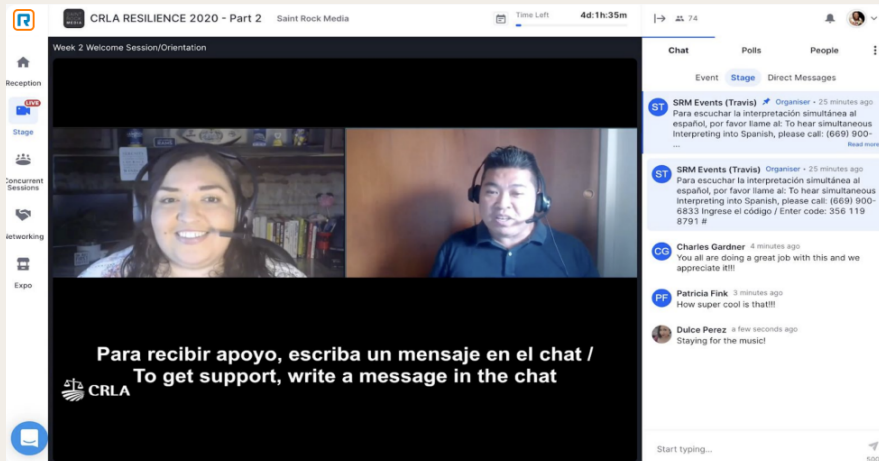
"In a COVID-19 world, many virtual event platforms have popped up and yet, we choose to work with Hopin because they are an incredible partner. The partner plan with Hopin has enabled our small agency to drive meaningful growth as a business in the past 5 months.Hopin has created a platform that has given us the freedom and flexibility to be creative."

— Kalah Haley, Co-Founder of Saint Rock Media

15 types of virtual events to engage employees year round

Not sure what events you can run virtually? Here are 15 ideas:

1. Internal conferences

An internal, virtual conference is a great option for providing extended training and networking opportunities for employees at large companies. If there's a topic your entire organization needs more training and education on, you should consider hosting an internal conference and inviting outside and internal speakers to teach employees about the topic.

2. AllHands meetings

Many companies use a single virtual meeting room for their AllHands meetings. Instead, consider creating a virtual event with multiple virtual rooms for employees.

Your company can host the majority of the AllHands meeting with the entire organization and then allow small groups to break into separate rooms for discussion.

3. Professional development classes

A virtual event is a great option for professional development classes. To increase interaction, you can allow employees to discuss concepts in chat or even join the live video stream to ask questions.

4. Lunch and learns

Your organization can offer monthly lunch and learn virtual events where employees eat lunch while learning about a particular topic. These lunch and learns can be offered to your entire organization or specific teams.

5. Diversity and inclusion events

A great diversity and inclusion strategy isn't complete without events for diversity and inclusion. You can host diversity and inclusion training events, but you can also allow employees to host their own diversity and inclusion events based on their own needs.

6. Award ceremonies

Virtual award ceremonies are a great way to encourage, inspire and appreciate your employees. Your company could host a yearly or monthly award ceremony for outstanding employees who excelled in different categories.

7. Leadership offsites

Many leadership teams hold their offsites at expensive hotels or venues. Instead, you can save money, eliminate travel time and make it easier for distributed teams to meet by hosting your offsite virtually.

8. Bring your child to work day

Bring your child to work day can still happen virtually. It's a great opportunity for employees' kids to learn more about their guardian's workplace — whether the workplace is distributed, partially remote or fully remote.

To make the virtual event interesting for kids, you can create multiple sessions with a mixture of education, games and conversation.

Additionally, you can also host themed days for employees' children where they get to learn certain skills — like a coding day.

9. Team-building events and games

Whether you'd like to reinforce teamwork skills or simply build deeper relationships among team members, a virtual team building or virtual game event can help.

You could entertain team members with a virtual magic show, a virtual escape room or a virtual comedy show. With enough creativity, any in-person experience can become a virtual one.
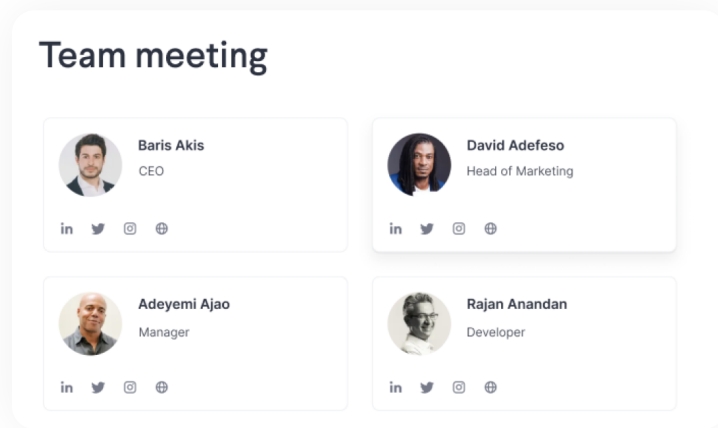
You can also play virtual games like Jackbox Games or old favorites like charades and trivia.

10. Team meetings

Host your stand up meetings, team meetings or project meetings virtually to increase communication among your team.

11. Company parties

Instead of renting out an expensive restaurant or venue, host your company parties virtually — like holiday parties, company anniversary parties, product launch parties and company milestone parties.

Team meeting

Baris Akis CEO		**David Adefeso** Head of Marketing	
in y ◎ ⊕		in y ◎ ⊕	
Adeyemi Ajao Manager		**Rajan Anandan** Developer	
in y ◎ ⊕		in y ◎ ⊕	

12. Networking events

Giving your employees the opportunity to network with new employees, other teams, leadership or even your board of directors is a great way to break down barriers across teams and create relationships between employees in completely different roles.

13. Team kickoff meetings

Host yearly (or quarterly) virtual events for teams — like sales and marketing — to kickoff the upcoming year or quarter. You can lay out strategy, celebrate past milestones and talk about goals and challenges.

14. Regional happy hours

You may have regional teams — like regional sales teams — even if you're fully remote. While these teams may sometimes want to meet in person, they can also meet virtually to discuss challenges and opportunities in their particular region and bond over shared community and location.

15. Group demos

When your company launches a new product, feature or internal technology tool, you can host a virtual group demo where an internal expert presents and teaches employees how to use the new product, feature or internal tool.
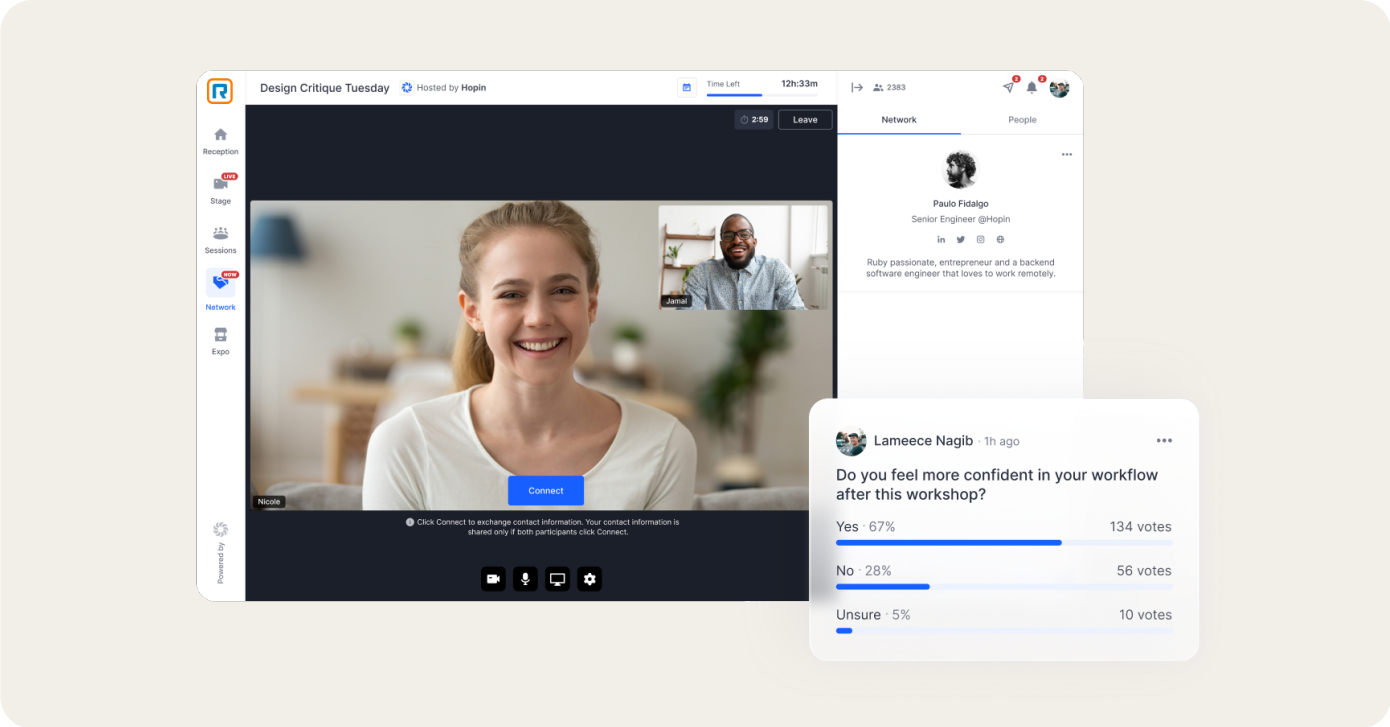
10 ways to level up your virtual company meetings

After attending virtual meetings and events day in and day out, your employees might be tired of anything virtual. But with these 13 strategies, you can bring new life to your virtual events and better engage your company.

1. Survey your employees to gather feedback.

To find out how your organization can improve their virtual events, ask your employees for their thoughts and ideas. This way, you can get multiple perspectives from different people across your organization. It's also a great way to be inclusive of everyone and involve employees in the process.

Once you've gathered employee feedback, decide what ideas you'll implement and create a strategy for doing so.

2. Create multiple rooms or areas for your event.

One virtual room is great if one or two presenters are sharing information with a large audience or if a small group wants to have a conversation.
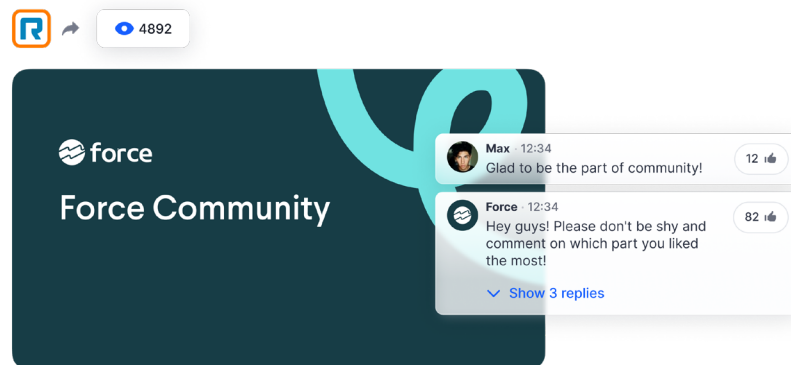
But with one virtual room, there's not a way to break out into smaller groups or to separate people based on a topic. That's why you should consider creating multiple virtual rooms for your next event. You can have a primary room or stage for presentations, break out rooms for conversations, and even places for networking or casual conversation.

3. Schedule time for networking.

Set aside time for networking at the beginning and end of your event or as a break midway through the event. Scheduling networking can give team members something to look forward to, especially fully remote workers who may not have the opportunity to socialize throughout their working day. It can also build relationships among employees.

4. Encourage attendees to post in the event chat.

To increase participation and engagement, ask attendees to post in your event chat and engage in conversation. To make it easier for attendees to chat, give them topics to discuss or questions to answer in the chat.

You could also create a list of event guidelines and include guidelines around how to use chat.
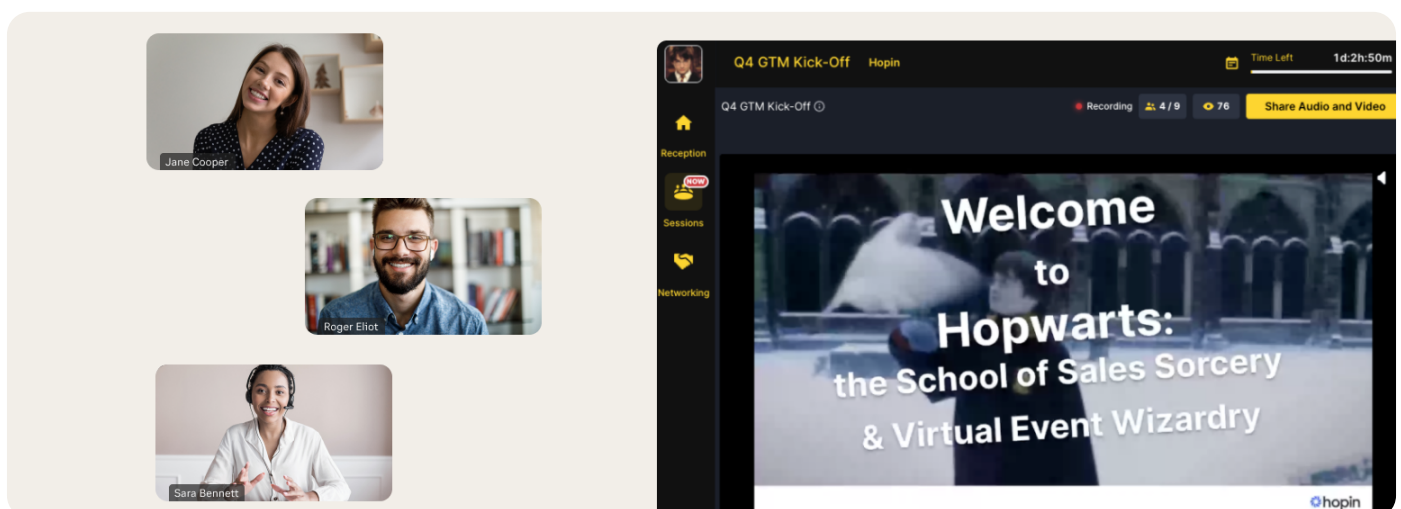

5. Use polls.

Polls can be a fun way to add interactivity to your event. They can also help you survey employees quickly during an event. Within a virtual event poll, you could ask:

- How employees are feeling about work
- How they would rate the value of the meeting
- Humorous questions or ice breaker questions
- Their progress toward company goals
- The topics they're most interested in covering during the meeting
- What they think of a new process or business tool

6. Create themes for events

Events themes can bring new life to your meetings and add humor and fun to what might otherwise be an ordinary event.

For example, the Hopin team used a Harry Potter theme for one of their recent team events. Presenters dressed as witches and wizards and slides included Harry Potter imagery.

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7. Invite external speakers

Inspire and motivate your team by having an outside speaker and subject matter expert talk at your next company event.

Or, ask a customer to speak at your event and talk about how your product or service made a difference in their life or business or ask them to share how they feel and think about your product or service.

8. Play music during event transitions.

Music can change the entire feel of a event. You can even ask employees to create the event music playlist themselves. Just create a collaborative Spotify playlist, and before the event, invite team members to add songs to it.

9. Create collaborative notes.

Collaborative notes are notes created by all of the people attending your company event. By working together on notes, employees can get more complete, detailed notes and also collaborate on ideas. On top of that, if anyone misses a key point, they can review the collaborative notes to determine what they missed.

For example, SmashingConf hosted a conference on Hopin and created collaborative notes for attendees inside a shared Google Doc. While this was a public facing event, you can do the same for internal events.

10. Host Q&A panels.

A Q&A panel is a great way to be transparent with employees, share information easily and educate teams.

For example, you could invite your leadership team to a panel to answer questions about company strategy or direction. Or, you could ask employees who worked together on a successful project to join a panel and answer questions about how they ran the project and found success.
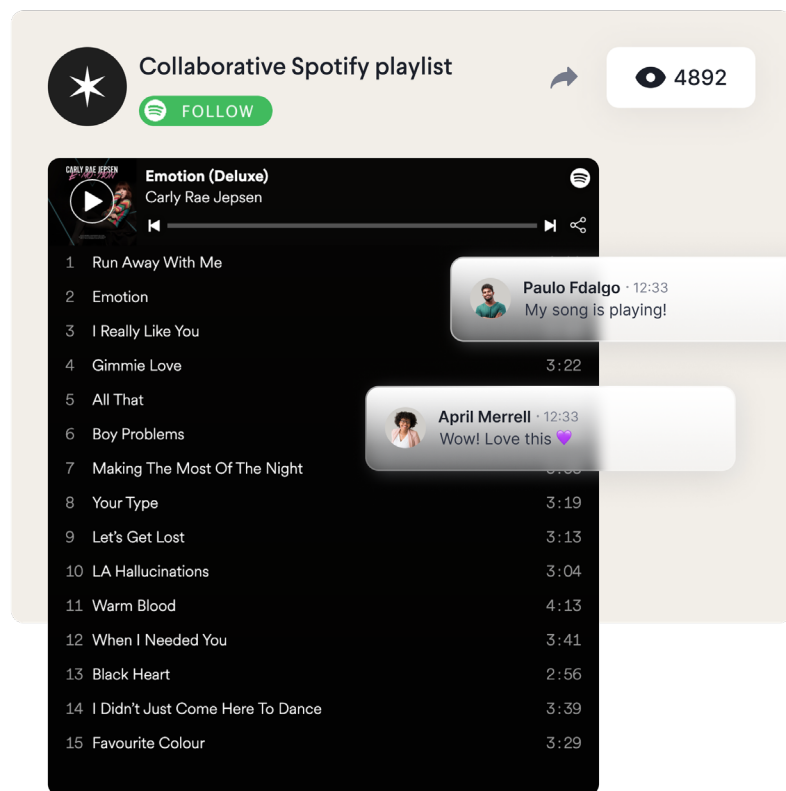
Conclusion

Virtual company events eliminate the barriers and costs of in-person company events. And hosting polished internal events is a great way to build community and increase engagement among employees.

At RingCentral, we're working to end virtual meeting fatigue forever by creating a virtual events platform that revolutionizes the way we meet virtually. With RingCentral, you can make your virtual events feel like in-person events — without the expense of an in-person event.

For more information, please contact a sales representative. Visit ringcentral.com