



Best Practices for Impactful Digital Events

Veeva

Marketers, speaker bureau operations, and commercial business professionals have had to re-imagine best practices for engaging with HCPs in virtual settings.

Veeva's customers are finding new ways to connect with HCPs through events. In this ebook, we share what's working and what's not for virtual events based on learnings from top life sciences organizations.

24% more virtual events

The virtual events market is expected to grow by 24% from 2021 to 2028.¹ It's time to embrace virtual events as part of your omnichannel strategy.



37% fewer attendees

Virtual events are usually smaller and more focused. Virtual events can lead to virtual meeting fatigue, so it's critical to be strategic and intentional with each event.



Redefining the Event Journey

Planning

WHAT'S DIFFERENT TODAY:

Virtual events must be highly targeted to attract the right attendees and create more engagement.



↑ 5x

In 2021, rep-sent emails increased by 5x and had a 35% average open rate. Virtual rep to HCP meetings increased by 6x with an average 19 minute call duration.



↑ 6x



Consider hosting events more frequently with fewer targeted HCPs so you can deliver a personalized experience and increase engagement.

You can only compete for HCPs' mindshare if you personalize and focus on delivering relevant content.

Spend more time to research and segment your customers. Map out your target HCP's content journey across the different channels and touchpoints. Think through which HCPs need what information, when, and how. Remember, events are just one part of your relationship with HCPs, so only invite people to your event if it really makes sense.

A pharma rep shared her winning strategy to get the right mix of participants. She leverages her existing network of HCPs, asking them to introduce one or two colleagues that would also benefit from the event. Her events are intentionally small, and by keeping the invites highly personalized, she draws an audience that is interactive and engaged.

Content & Event Strategy

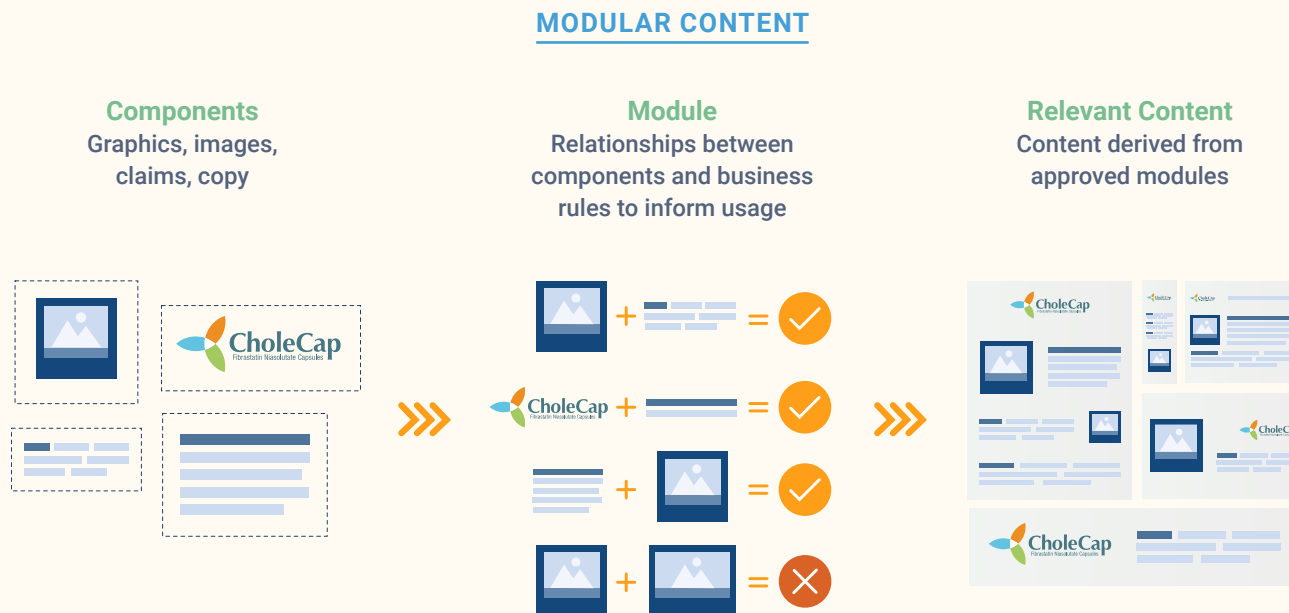
WHAT'S DIFFERENT TODAY:

HCPs want to consume content in their preferred delivery method.

Life sciences organizations are creating more content than ever. In fact, 86% of marketing, IT, and commercial operations professionals say they are producing more content now than six months ago.

HCPs' preferences for consuming information are changing. Life sciences companies need to keep up.

If you don't have a scalable content strategy today, prioritize it. Find ways to reuse and repurpose content across different channels, including events.



Speaker/Attendee Selection

WHAT'S DIFFERENT TODAY:

HCPs miss the peer-to-peer connection they experience at in-person events. Take that gap as an opportunity to differentiate your virtual events.



Solicit speakers with a network of HCPs and an established following. This will help with the invitation process to draw the right people to the event.

HCPs have expressed fatigue over the surge of virtual invites due to COVID-19. To differentiate your event, host breakout sessions to promote peer-to-peer discussions. Consider delivering content through other non-traditional formats such as gamification or workshop-style events. **Exploring new ways to provide information can combat virtual meeting fatigue.**

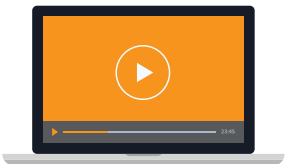
As you build a roster of speakers, ensure the speakers are fully vetted and trained to support engaging virtual and hybrid events. Consider the speakers' ability to moderate breakout sessions, as well as technology savvy to handle online challenges.

Event Format

WHAT'S DIFFERENT TODAY:

HCPs want to participate in events beyond webinars!

Reconsider the format of your virtual events, especially webinars. To offer variety beyond a traditional virtual webinar, consider breaking up the content into multiple short, five-minute videos. Other format examples include:



On-demand content

- Offer easy access to short, pre-recorded presentations.
- Host ongoing live Q&A sessions, with multiple dates/time options, where HCPs can register and actively participate at their convenience.



Virtual presentation followed by breakout sessions

- Virtual events provide the ability to break out into smaller groups quickly and allow for more in-depth discussions, increasing overall engagement. Assign a group leader in advance to encourage meaningful conversations.
- Allow enough time for the breakout groups to reconvene and share highlights.



Hybrid events (multiple variations combining virtual and in-person events)

- Hybrid events need an infrastructure that can support multiple remote participants—including HCPs gathered in an office setting, groups of remote sites, or individual HCPs participating independently from their homes.
- Hosting hybrid events will require more resources as you need to accommodate both in-person and virtual needs.
- HCPs will expect a choice for participating in an event (i.e. from home, office, or remote site).

“
The breakout session was the best part of the event!”



This is your opportunity to get creative; pick one or two types and become masters of those events.

Event Format

WHAT'S DIFFERENT TODAY:

Expect to put in more hours in prep work to execute virtual events.
Whatever time you save in travel, you'll spend in preparation.

Compared to an in-person event, you actually need to invest more time to prepare for a virtual event. Every initiative and action requires more thought and advance work. Examples include:



Prearrange networking opportunities, as you can't rely on people connecting organically.



For large-scale virtual events, pre-record, edit, and upload all session onto the event platform and test it.



Set up a preparation meeting the day of the event so that speakers and moderators are familiar with the platform, housekeeping rules, breakout sessions, and Q&A format.



Personalize everything from invitations to post-event follow up phone calls. It's important to make your attendees feel valued.



Go the extra mile to be thoughtful with every little detail. Always plan for the worst-case scenario, so you can preempt and resolve any situation quickly.

The only thing people should remember about the event is the content and engaging conversations. The entire experience, from invitation to follow-up post-event, should be seamless.

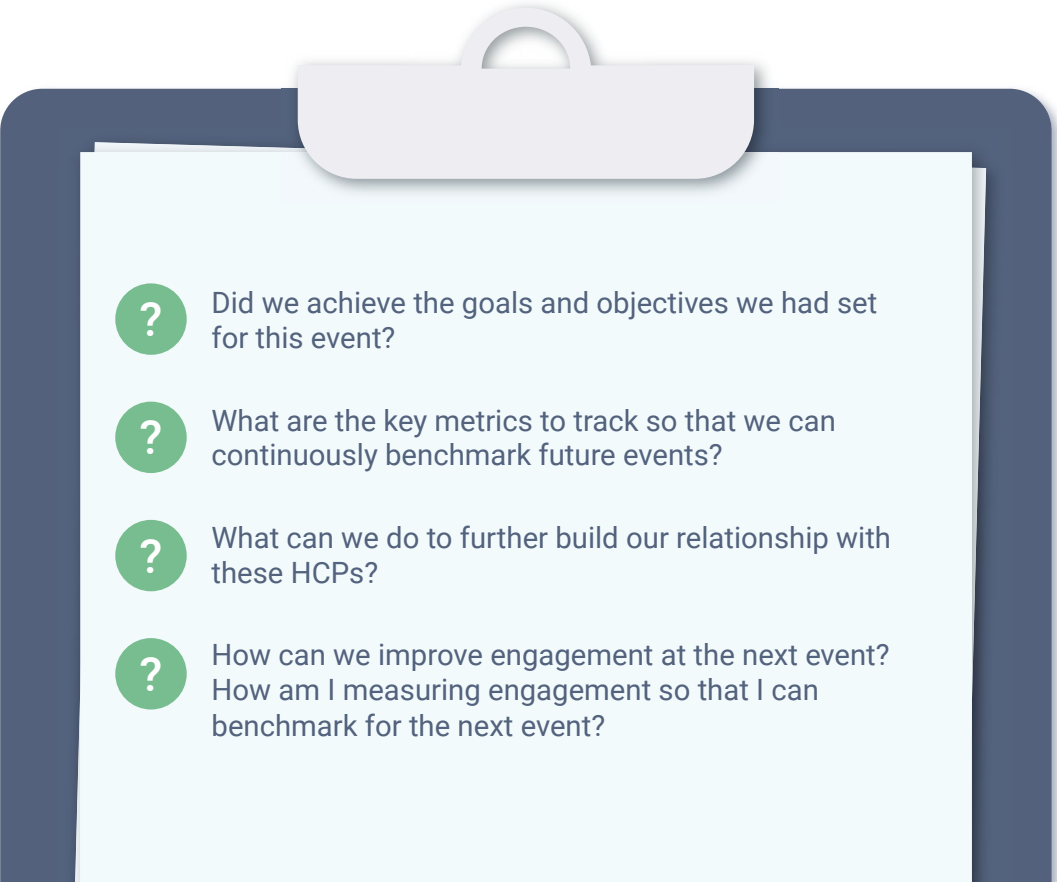
Closeout & Reporting

WHAT'S DIFFERENT TODAY:

The number of steaks served is no longer the metric!

When the event is over, follow up with speakers and participants to close out the event. Don't forget, paying speakers in a timely fashion is important. A bad experience can harm future event opportunities.

Conduct attendee surveys immediately after the event to get feedback on the content and execution of the event. Do a post-assessment with key stakeholders and ask the following questions:

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- ❓ Did we achieve the goals and objectives we had set for this event?
 - ❓ What are the key metrics to track so that we can continuously benchmark future events?
 - ❓ What can we do to further build our relationship with these HCPs?
 - ❓ How can we improve engagement at the next event?
How am I measuring engagement so that I can benchmark for the next event?



Consider having field reps do personalized follow ups with attendees to ensure they retain key takeaways and provide additional content to supplement learnings from the event.

Conclusion

Given the vast quantity of virtual events, we need to rethink the format of these events. Find ways to address changing preferences for how, when, and why HCPs want to consume information. It's time to think about engagement holistically across channels to offer a seamless experience.

To differentiate your events, look at current gaps where HCP needs are not being met. What can you do to make it better? Use the ideas from this ebook to adjust your event strategy.



Learn how Sobi transformed their event strategy from in-person to hybrid.

