

# MEETINGS OF THE FUTURE HAVE BECOME MEETINGS OF THE **NOW**

By now we know that meetings, as we know them, are going to change. At least for the time being, in person meetings are few and far between, and virtual meetings are becoming the norm. Here are some tips and tricks to have the best possible virtual meeting. [Educational Measures](#) put together a guidebook on virtual and hybrid meetings. We'll tackle hybrid meetings in September, but first:

What *IS* a virtual meeting? A virtual meeting or event is when people around the world, regardless of their location, use video, audio, and text to connect at the same time. Virtual meetings allow people to share information and data in real-time without being physically in the same place. Types of virtual events include web meetings, seminars, webinars, webcasts and web conferences.

## **Advantages of a Virtual Meeting**

Cost effective – it costs significantly less for you to plan hybrid meeting because there are no “in person” costs like sleeping rooms, meeting space and food and beverage.

Convenient – since there is no travel time required, virtual meetings allow attendees to join from virtually any location (no pun intended!)

Increased Audience – because there is no travel, you can reach anyone, anywhere with an internet or phone connection.

## **Disadvantages of a Virtual Meeting**

Digital Distraction – in 2020, multi-tasking is second nature. Today's smartphones and computers make this effortless, even more so for your remote audience members. Checking email, social media or replying to instant messages can quickly decrease your meeting's effect if you don't anticipate and plan accordingly.

Measuring Impact – it's harder to measure key performance indicators (KPIs) with virtual meetings. You'll want to closely consider technology that not only engages onsite and remote participants, but also collects uniform data and provides insights on what to do next.

Technology Failures and Poor Participant Experience – we've all been there: the webinar doesn't work properly, you can't hear the presenter or someone's dog is barking in the background. It's the worst. You need to make sure your technology works simply, effectively and is useful for your audience.

How do you choose which technology is right for your meeting? You have to think beyond the typical screen and video sharing tools. What might be good for internal collaboration, sales presentations or face-to-face time in a remote work environment is very different from tools designed specifically to engage virtual and hybrid event audiences.

## **Virtual Meeting Options**

There are several self-service choices like [Zoom](#), [Go-To-Meeting](#), [Webex](#) and [Adobe Connect](#). These virtual meeting apps provide standard video conferencing features such as screen sharing, annotation, in-meeting and group chat and recording. They even provide basic polling and limited analytics. However, they lack many of the content interaction tools that allow for a deeper connection with your audience.

There are other full-service options [Virtual Array](#) and [Cvent](#). These end-to-end, turn-key options can be deployed entirely virtually or as hybrid extension to your in-person meeting and event. Most are available with streaming video or audio-only. The interface can be customized to showcase your event theme, company, or brand.

No matter what option you choose, you're sure to make an impact. Virtual meetings are here to stay – although we can't wait until we can get back to face-to-face meetings.