

# 7 tips for planning a successful online year-end event

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Have your plans for a year-end event run away from you? It's not too late to start.



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With remote work becoming the new normal, your team needs to connect and new employees need to feel included in the company culture. It's also an opportunity for everyone to let their hair down after another challenging year. An online year-end function can do this, and more.

Here are our seven tips for planning an engaging online year-end event, from our experience at Flow Communications...

## Consider employee availability and the online platform

What date and time work best to make sure that all of your staff are able to attend the online event? Book that time now.

Ensure you use an online platform that is licensed to hold the number of staff who will be at the event, that it's capable of providing video and audio sharing, and has a chat function and possibly breakout rooms for team games. We've found Zoom and Google Meet to be excellent and reliable options for hosting both small and large online year-end events for clients.

## Decide on a theme

This step is crucial, as all of your design elements will tie into it. It will inform how the invites and the online presentation look, and it will give context to the gifts or props you're sending to staff. Staff will also know how to dress according to the theme.

It also tells your staff that you've taken the time and effort to make this online event different from – and more special than – any other online events you may have hosted.

## Treat your employees

Just because the event is online doesn't mean you can't treat your employees. Treats can be physical, such as the delivery

of gifts for each staff member; or the treat can be setting aside some of your budget to hire an excellent MC, DJ or entertainer – or it can be a combination of these.

## **Employee recognition**

Use the online year-end event to recognise the hard work of your team. How can you do this? A week before the event, get staff to fill in a quick survey to nominate their fellow colleagues for different awards.

Announce the winners at your event and send them a digital certificate. You can also send them flowers or an online gift voucher as recognition. If you have the time, a trophy delivered after the event is a nice touch.

## **Keep your online event short**

If your company already works remotely, spending more hours than needed online could bring on 'meeting fatigue'. If you decide to host an online event for your team, keep it fun and engaging, and remember that shorter is better in this instance; try to avoid long, drawn-out formalities. This also shows your team that you're thinking about them, and they can go rest and enjoy the goodies you sent them.

## **Make your event engaging**

This could mean hiring an MC who aligns with your company. Will a comedian be a good fit, or rather an award-winning journalist, CEO or human rights activist? Or it could mean asking an employee who has excellent presentation skills to MC the event.

Ensure the guest speaker and entertainment align with your company's brand, culture and event theme. Start the event with an ice-breaker game to lighten the mood – run a quiz or have a poll or play games like scavenger hunts. To play a scavenger hunt, select random items that your staff may have lying around their house or workspace. Call out the item, and the first person to present it on-screen wins. It's a great icebreaker to get people moving and stretching their legs.

Encourage staff to have their video on, unmute to laugh/clap/make comments, and use the platform's chat for a more engaging experience. Also, have spot prizes during the event! It'll keep your team guessing.

## **Capture the moment and remember to have fun!**

Take screenshots of your employees having fun. You can use these images in future internal communications or upload them to the intranet. A virtual photo booth can also be a good way to capture fun photos and Gifs.

Once you've got all the planning out of the way, remember to also have fun – you're an employee of the company, too, and it's important to enjoy this time with your team.

Planning a year-end function can be daunting, and sometimes you need an extra set of hands and ideas, to help you create a strategy and align it with all elements of the virtual event. Good luck!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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