

Tips For Successful Virtual Events

Organizing and hosting virtual consumer events, can be an excellent opportunity to mingle with existing clients and meet new and potential ones. These events also give you the chance to deliver information on new products, itineraries, and destinations, as well as specials or promotions you may be offering.

With the proper presentation and focus, these events can grow your business exponentially.



PRE-EVENT PLANNING

Select your date

- Ideally, allow ample time for proper setup and preparation
- For best attendance, choose a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evening or daytime Saturday or Sunday, Sep-Nov/Jan-May
- Avoid conflicts with holidays, sports events, and major civic functions
- Always be sure to include local media editors and travel writers, and prepare a press release
- Block group space so you can focus your event toward a specific sailing

Plan Your Guest List

- Decide whether you want a large guest list or a small, intimate one
- Start with your existing database. Possibilities include:
 - » Our basic demographic: ages 50-60, household income \$150k+, have cruised in the past 3 years
 - » Experienced clients ready to move up
 - » Non-cruisers who are interested in a boutique hotel or country club experience or who are interested in a small ship experience or the destinations we visit
 - » Corporate accounts
 - » Multi-gen Family Reunions
 - » Celebrating a landmark anniversary, birthday, retirement, or even empty nest
- If you need to look outside your database, look to affinity (common interest) groups, clubs, or organizations with memberships. For example:
 - » Professional: medical, chambers of commerce
 - » Generic: university and college alumni associations, sailing clubs, upscale retirees, church groups, health groups, dance clubs
 - » Upscale florists and garden clubs
 - » Culinary schools
 - » The arts, including ballet and opera
 - » Financial planners or investment clubs
 - » Spas
 - » Active, outdoor, or hiking organizations
 - » Birdwatching group
 - » Naturalist groups
 - » Photography groups
 - » Travel groups
 - » Environmental organizations
 - » Book clubs
 - » Zoos
 - » Charitable giving

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Plan Your Guest List (*continued*)

- Why not consider a cross promotion with other businesses who attract the same type of client, hold the event at their place of business, and invite clients from both? Possibilities include:
 - » Premium wines & spirits
 - » Restaurants & gourmet food establishments
 - » Luxury car dealers
 - » Sports equipment retailers
 - » Timesaving appliance retailers
 - » Home theater equipment specialists
 - » SCUBA diving shops
 - » Golf clubs and golf pros
 - » Upscale garden center
- Or how about working the honeymoon/romance angle? Try:
 - » Lingerie stores
 - » Tuxedo stores
 - » Photographers
 - » Jewelry stores
 - » Financial planners
 - » Gown or fashion boutiques

Choose your Platform Technology Requirements

Paul Gauguin Cruises has the technology to support your online event. However, if you are intending to invest in your own technology platform, there are several considerations when making your decision:

- Whatever you choose must contain features that achieve the goal of your event
 - » Does it offer virtual networking and individual attendee engagement opportunities?
 - » Does it provide real-time and post-event data analytics?
 - » Does it allow for customized and personal branding options?
- It must have few barriers as possible to enter your event:
 - » Does it have an on-demand support team for the organizer and a chat support feature for the attendee?
 - » Does it have integrations with other tools you might use?
 - » Can you play a video?
 - » If you charge for an event, can you collect fees?
 - » Does the price tag fit within your budget?
 - » Does it have a user-friendly aesthetic and design?

Technology Tips

At the start of the event, once you introduce yourself and your guests, make sure you orient your users to the technology and have a backup plan in case something goes wrong:

- Pay attention to the user experience
- Practice, practice, practice using the technology before engaging your clients

Invitations

- Send invites in advance
- Announce the event on social media platform(s)
- RSVPs are a must!
- Send reminders 1 day prior to the event

Suggested verbiage

The 330-guest m/s *Paul Gauguin* sails in one of the world's top bucket list places—Tahiti, French Polynesia, Fiji, and the South Pacific. It is the perfect backdrop for transformative experiences, for disconnecting and...reconnecting. Join (insert name) Director of Sales with Paul Gauguin Cruises for an informative presentation and discover more about small-ship cruising and the dramatic beauty of this destination.

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What are you required to do?

- Introduce yourself and tell participants why they should book with you and your travel agency. Here is where a great elevator speech comes in handy. A great elevator speech defines who you are, provides a powerful first impression, defines what you do better than anyone else and offers a compelling reason to book with you and your travel agency
- Close the event with a thank you to guests and special offers
- Add everyone to your database
- Follow up with a thank you note to all attendees post-webinar and ask for feedback
- Follow up on any leads or outstanding questions after the event
- Periodically mail or email Paul Gauguin Cruises offers to attendees

When using Paul Gauguin Cruises platform, I will

- Forward RSVP details periodically
- Present the cruise product information for 30-40 minutes and answer questions
- Record the presentation and send you all the analytics and the recording of the presentation
- Include a limited time offer for bookings

In my opinion, following these steps will bring you success. Please contact me if I can assist you with any of your promotional efforts.