



Your Hybrid Conference: Selecting a Platform



With a huge number and variety of digital event platforms now available, it can be difficult to know where to begin in planning your event. The following considerations and checklist may help you to select the platform and features which best suit your meeting.

Considerations

- Is the platform required for multiple events, or a single event?
- What are your event objectives?
- What type of output are you looking for? e.g. Live stream / On Demand content only / Webinar / Virtual Exhibition / Virtual Conference
- How many people will attend – maximum?
- Do you require parallel sessions? If so, how many people should be accommodated in each?
- What is the timeline for your event, including adequate planning time?
- What do delegates expect and want from your event?
- Are there exhibitors, sponsors and partners? What do they expect?

Comparing platforms

The following questions may help you create a checklist to compare the features of different platforms – it's useful to create a spreadsheet comparing each platform and how they meet / don't meet your own criteria.

Every event is different, so make sure to include the questions which apply to your event requirements.

Once you have shortlisted a few platforms, you should request a demo for each one to understand the features better and make sure to follow up with the provider to get the answers to your questions.

If you need further support, please ask us for information on Professional Conference Organisers (PCOs), who can be appointed to help you run your event.

Checklist for comparing platforms

General features	
Can delegates register via the platform / does the platform integrate with your chosen registration system?	
Does the platform integrate with other software you need? If so, is this native integration or does this require development? (may need time and investment)	
How many parallel sessions can be accommodated?	
Does the platform offer any options for multiple languages?	
What accessibility features does the platform have?	
Does the platform work well across different browsers, device types (mobile)?	
Pricing structure	
Is the pricing structure clear? (based on delegate numbers, number of events, event duration?)	
If the pricing is based on delegate numbers, is there an option to amend if registrations are higher / lower than expected?	
What is included in the platform as standard and what are add-ons?	
Is the platform negotiable on price, depending on the features required / used?	
User experience and engagement	
Is the platform user-friendly and easy to navigate?	
Is there a virtual lobby / landing page?	
Can delegates build their own agenda?	
Is there an area of the platform for documents / downloads / resources?	
What networking tools are available within the platform?	
What is the nature of the networking - can you meet in small groups and one to one?	
If using external networking tool, can this be integrated?	
Is there a function for Q&A?	
Is there a function for chat?	
Is there a function for polling?	
Are there gamification options?	
Exhibition, branding and sponsorship	
Is there a digital exhibition hall?	
What tools are available to exhibitors?	
Does a virtual booth feature options for live chat, messaging, and video chat between exhibitors and attendees?	
What materials can exhibitors show? Video, PDFs, downloads?	
Are there features within the platform to drive attendees to the virtual exhibition hall?	
Is there a poster area?	
What opportunities are there for branding within the platform for exhibitors, sponsors and partners? Where can their logos and content be displayed?	

Support level and accountability

Is there a Service Level Agreement so responsibilities are clear between platform provider and organiser?

What support is available before, during and after the event? 24/7 support? Via email / phone / chat?

Is there a name contact available to you from the platform provider?

What training and tutorials are available?

Are there options for rehearsals for the team and speakers?

Can the team / speakers access the platform in the advance of the event to familiarise themselves?

Security and privacy

Is the platform compliant with all legislation / regulation you need to consider e.g. GDPR? If so, can confirmation of compliance be given in writing?

What insurance does the platform provider have?

What details can be given of back up plans and disaster recovery plans in the event of equipment or internet failures?

Data

Does the platform allow for lead collection?

Does the platform capture the analytics you require for your event? (attendance and viewing numbers, viewing time, click-throughs)