

# TIPS FOR PLANNING EVENTS & ENGAGING EMPLOYEES VIRTUALLY

## UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN 2020

We realize that as you begin to plan for your 2020 United Way campaign, circumstances have changed and there is an increased need for planning more virtual activities. We've gathered some ideas to help you as you brainstorm with your team to keep this year's campaign as engaging and inspiring as ever.

### WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE:

- [Virtual Event Software](#)
- [Virtual Event Planning](#)
- [Virtual Campaign Kickoff](#)
- [Virtual Campaign Special Events](#)
- [Last Minute Tips & Tricks](#)

## Virtual Event Software

Luckily, there are many different options for software to use to run a successful virtual event! We've done the work for you and picked our favorites, but the tools you use every day for remote working will likely work well, too.

### Zoom Meetings

Hosts will need to create a Zoom account. **Note:** There is a paid option that allows for longer meetings and more attendees.

- Free accounts allow up to 100 attendees; paid add-on options allow for up to 500 attendees
- Free accounts have a time limit of 40 minutes; paid has no limit
- Attendees do not need to have the software downloaded
- Attendees can “register” to attend through the software and hosts can track registrations and attendance
- Attendees can see each other
- Allows for real-time interactions among host and attendees
- Host can manage muting attendees
- Screen share capabilities

[How-to instructions](#)

### Microsoft Teams

Your organization will need a Microsoft Teams account. You can host events in a variety of ways:

#### **For smaller events and more interaction: Teams Meetings**

- Recommended for events of 20 or less
- Attendees do not have to have software downloaded
- Attendees can see each other
- Allows for real-time interactions among host and attendees
- Organizer has the option to mute all attendees when program starts
- Screen share capabilities

[How-to instructions](#)

#### **For larger events with limited interaction: Teams Live Event**

- Host up to 10,000 attendees
- Attendees do not see each other
- Does not allow for real-time interactions among host and attendees
- Q&A chat box available for attendees to ask questions after presentation
- Organizer/Moderator and multiple presenter options
- Screen share capabilities

[How-to instructions](#)

### Eventbrite Registration

Eventbrite is an easy event registration management platform.

- Create a page with description, date, time, and graphics
- Ability to collect information about your attendees
- Can be set to private to allow those with a link access

## How-to instructions

- Email capabilities. **Pro tip:** There is a pre-written email set to remind attendees of the event 48 hours in advance; this email can be edited to fit the language of your organization or removed entirely. For virtual events, there are 30-minute and 10-minute reminder emails.

## VIRTUAL EVENT PLANNING

Here's your ultimate checklist to use when planning virtual events this year. Things may look a little different, but that doesn't mean you can't engage with your employees in new and exciting ways!

1. Decide the event details:
  - A large meeting or a series of smaller meetings?
  - Who is speaking?
  - Duration?
  - Visuals?
  - Interactive elements? (Ex. poll the audience, host a game)
  - Incentives?
2. Include a company representative, an agency speaker, a United Way representative or an employee willing to share a personal testimonial about United Way. **Studies show that people are more likely to give when they hear, or see, how their friends give.**
3. Determine what software to use.
  - What is the goal of the event?
  - Do you want interaction between the host and the attendee?
  - What software features do you need?
4. Create a way to track attendees. **Note:** Depending on the software you choose, you can see who has signed up and who you need to follow up with. See our Virtual Event Software section above for more information.
5. Invite attendees. **Pro tip:** Have fun with it! Add a picture (or a meme) and get them interested.
6. If allowed, you can still put up signs and posters around the office encouraging your coworkers to join the virtual event.
7. Practice using the software. Use the software to practice starting the event, going through the program with speakers so they know how it will transition to them or how they can share their screen, practice hosting a Q&A for attendees, etc.
8. Send a reminder with details about how to log in.

## VIRTUAL CAMPAIGN KICKOFF

You can still hold an engaging and inspiring (virtual) kickoff to motivate your employees to support your 2020 United Way campaign.

- Ask the CEO or another top executive to speak at the kickoff and show employees the leadership team supports campaign.
- Acknowledge that this year is different and how great the need is. **Pro tip:** [Check out our COVID-19 Response](#) for stats on how YOUR support is helping the Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley region stay strong.
- Have a representative of United Way or a United Way agency speak about the impact of your company's support. **Did you know?** By understanding who United Way helps, the agencies we

support, and the causes we align with, your employees will be able to better connect with the campaign.

- If possible, make part of the kickoff interactive. Ideas could include running a poll, showing a video, using a virtual whiteboard or hosting a Q&A section.
- Record the event and share a link with employees who were unable to attend.

## VIRTUAL CAMPAIGN KICKOFF IDEAS

### Events & Activities

- Host a United Way **Watch Party** at a **Virtual Lunch & Learn or Town Hall** meeting. Highlight the United Way video, United Way speakers/speaker series, and more.
- Combine your kickoff event with some **special event activities**, like online bingo or attendance raffles.
- **Engage United Way agency partners** in kickoff with virtual interaction, like storytime or a tour.  
**Pro tip:** Find a nonprofit that matches your company's culture.
- Challenge employees to **express themselves artistically**. Decorate doors, create sidewalk chalk, whatever it is – have them share what they created and “pay to vote” (donate).
- Have a **costume competition** and “pay to vote” (donate).
- Host virtual nonprofit **speakers' series**. Customize a series of nonprofit speakers to fit the needs of the company's campaign plan.

### Incentives

#### Individual participation

- Anyone who attends a virtual rally is entered to win a prize.
- Anyone who donates is entered into a drawing (vacation time, Aquarium/Science Museum passes, gift cards to local restaurants offering carry out, etc.).
- Send food or other items to participants to enjoy during the virtual kickoff session.
- Encourage people who have never donated before.
- Solicit in-kind donations from neighboring businesses, vendors, employees, etc.

#### Organizational participation

- If the company achieves a certain percent of participation or overall company goal is reached – everyone wins! An extra day of vacation time, free pizza lunch, a jeans day, etc. **Pro tip:** Several million-dollar companies found that the most successful incentives were days off and networking opportunities
- Special prizes for the department with the highest participation rate.

#### Timely participation

- Anyone who contributes by a certain time is eligible. **Pro tip:** Show a visual thermometer
- to showcase how much is raised.
- Anyone who submits their online pledge during the rally is entered to win a prize.
- Anyone who submits their online pledge during the first week is eligible for a prize.

#### Increase your gift

- Anyone who increases by a certain amount or percentage is eligible (Ex. Anyone who increases their pledge by 3% receives (Three)– Sign-off at 3 p.m. passes).

#### Gift level

- Anyone who gives \$250 or more is entered into a special drawing.
- Leadership donors (\$1,000 or more) are invited to a special virtual reception.

#### More examples of virtual incentives and giveaways:

##### No cost or low-cost incentives:

- Vacation time
- 'Sign off at 3 p.m.' coupons
- Drive-in movie gift cards
- Virtual 'coffee talk' with the CEO (gift card or porch drop off)
- Car wash gift card/Car detailing
- Door Dash/Grub Hub/Uber Eats gift certificates
- Membership to a book club
- Virtual singing telegram from the CEO (contest winner)

##### Mid-cost to high-cost incentives:

- Virtual cooking lesson
- Virtual dinner with the CEO (porch drop off)
- Webcam giveaway
- One-year membership to Instacart
- Amazon Prime Membership/gift card
- Membership to a wine club
- Vacation getaways
- Zoo New England/Museum of Science/New England Aquarium memberships
- Virtual meet and greet with a professional sports figure from Boston

## VIRTUAL CAMPAIGN SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events could be considered the “life of the party” to your company’s United Way campaign. Here are some ideas for you to think about when brainstorming with your team. **P.S. All of these activities and games can be done virtually!**

#### Activities:

- Online auctions and raffles.
- “Spirit” days. Selecting days with specific themes to dress up can make the campaign interesting and fun. Have employees post pictures of themselves in their costumes on your company intranet or your social channels and compete for “likes.”
- Walks/runs.
- Talent shows, dance parties and entertainment events. Have employees purchase a ticket to receive the link. **Bonus:** If you do a talent show, have employees “vote” for the winning act with \$1 for every vote.
- Virtual classes (cooking, photography, painting, etc.).

- Online speaker series with United Way partner nonprofits or someone helped by United Way.
- Jeans day/at-home attire passes to wear to work (for companies that are back in office).
- Book exchange.
- Peer-to-peer fundraising challenge.
- Virtual Concerts/Meet and Greets with the Band after the concert.
- Virtual agency tour.
- Virtual volunteering. **Did you know** United Way's Corporate Volunteer Center has DIY volunteer opportunities that you can do from your home? Visit [UnitedWayMassBay.org](https://UnitedWayMassBay.org) to find a virtual opportunity that fits your company's culture!

#### Games:

- Bingo, Scattergories, Jeopardy, and Trivia. **Bonus:** Have one of the rounds include questions about United Way!
- Sports and video games tournament
- 'At-home' penny jar war. Collect loose change in jars – winner that collects the most change gets to nominate the leader of choice to provide a virtual singing telegram/virtual TikTok
- Scavenger hunts
- Pumpkin carving contest
- Drawing challenges

## LAST-MINUTE TIPS & TRICKS

### Share your success.

Remember to share photos, information and details of your events on social media and tag United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley!

- Facebook @unitedwaymassbay
- LinkedIn @UnitedWayofMassachusettsBayandMerrimackValley
- Twitter @unitedwaymabay
- Instagram @unitedwaymabay