Breakout Group Notes
Components Facing COVID-19: CACE Roundtable on Running Events Virtually
May 19, 2020

Breakout 3: Complex Conferences With Concurrent Sessions

Common platforms
- Zoom meeting, Zoom Webinar
- GoToMeeting, GoToWebinar

Vendors used
Get details of what they’re providing: usually just day-of-event orchestration, which leaves component responsible for prep work.
- Whova (event management platform)
- Eventfinity (event management platform)
- MapDynamics (virtual floor plan)
- Virbella (virtual meeting rooms)

Recommendations
- Must have a dedicated producer. Can be a vendor, staff person or volunteer to run platform logistics (manage IT, troubleshoot problems, coordinate panelists, etc.)
  - Run a test with all panelists ahead of time.
- Need a manager of Q&A/Chat at each session. Handles questions while session airs (whether it is live or pre-recorded). Follows up with presenters to get unfinished questions answered after the session.
- To engage attendees
  - Happy hours – Offer post event/networking (sponsor opportunity)
  - Breakouts – Prepare focused questions for moderators (Zoom breakouts hold 50 people)
  - Do not neglect production value.
- Pacing
  - Avoid 8 hours of video in a day. Instead, spread over 2-3 days in the same week.
  - Avoid spreading conferences over multiple weeks, which breaks continuity.
- Sponsorship benefits (see next page for a sample structure)
  - Pricing/charging is good for attendees
  - Pre-record commercials to include

Breakout 5: Simpler Conferences With Sequential Sessions

What platforms are being used?
- Zoom
- GoToWebinar

Should sessions be one day or spread over multiple days?
- Zoom fatigue is the main concern. To alleviate this, spreading it out over multiple days seems like the best solution.

What are other ways to present these sessions?
• Use Zoom add-ons such as breakout rooms. Try a month to month subscription to hold down costs.
• Pre-recorded sessions reduce stress. Use platforms like YouTube and Facebook Watch. AIA Eastern Tennessee has a great example of this.
• Hire an AV company to raise production values.

Are you charging for your events?
• Fees are still being charged but reduced.
• For sponsors, it is important that you have an audience and an accurate count of attendees.
• Charging helps ensure attendance, while free events can have high registration but many no-shows.

Virtual Events – How do you earn non dues revenue?
• AIAOC now charges the presenter for the CES program $250, since they are used to paying for lunches. Free for members; non-members pay to attend.

Best way to track CES for programs/events?
• AIAOC tells the presenter to state upfront their last slide will have their email info and attendees need to email them with their member number to receive credit.

Tell us about your ‘out of the box’ creative virtual events?
• AIAOC has a weekly Happy Half Hour led by our president. The week is themed. Last week was ‘show and tell’. You also say what you are drinking, why, and how to make it. Members, Allies, and sponsors love this event!

**Breakout 6: Awards Events**

Program length:
• AIA West Virginia and AIA East Tennessee ran 40 minutes. AIA Orange County aims for 30 minutes.
• Can split off some elements into separate events:
  o AIA Austin has a separate Jury Conversations Event: https://www.aiaaustin.org/jc-2020
  o Happy Hours pre- and post-event, i.e. with sponsors, participants
  o After party
• Eliminate anything covered in other communications (i.e., submission guidelines)
• Tightly edit project descriptions and jury comments.

Format:
• Live-streamed with recorded sections offers the best variety, engagement, and time management.
• Outside production costs (videography, film editing) are expensive.

Making it interesting/attract a wider audience beyond winners:
• Brevity!
• Keep it upbeat via music, good emcee, presentation style, graphics, humor, etc.
  o AIA West Virginia's recorded winners’ comments added a lot of humor!
• AIA Austin to use social media before event:
- Post all submitted projects,
- Announce winning projects one at a time on days leading up to event
- Interactive elements during live stream can diversify audience:
  - AIA Connecticut capturing winner comments on live webcam
  - People's/Member Choice voting
  - AIA East Tennessee gave prizes for best/worst dressed, best home cocktail, best firm engagement (attendees, event hashtag posts)

Fundraising/sponsorship:
- AIA Orange County will offer:
  - 15 second sponsor commercials, and
  - "Production sponsors" for nominal fee ($25-40/each) listed at the end.

**Breakout 8: Sponsorship and Virtual Exhibit Halls**

What value can you offer sponsors at a virtual event?
- AIA Orange County doing 15-30 second sponsor commercials at virtual awards gala
- AIA Iowa, between keynotes, showed sponsors, read out loud, and thanked them again.
- AIA San Francisco developing a virtual series. Cool add-on product placement at higher sponsor levels (mailed to presenters or online); branded giveaway.
- AIA Mississippi offers a website page for LUs. Branded swag bag shipped to attendees.
- AIA Iowa offered a Slack channel for sponsors with an attached give away. Attendees answer a question to receive the swag.
- AIA Orange County website has a "products" page where Allied members and sponsors can showcase their products via scheduled webinars or YouTube videos. These are not LUs, but they are mutually beneficial since it allows members to get product questions answered without meeting face-to-face.

How do you set up a virtual expo or exhibit hall?
- Offer incentives, such as door prizes. Visit all booths to be eligible for grand prize drawing.
- Prizes include gift cards for local restaurants to support local businesses.
- Generic flooring, 15 min each, Q/A, sponsor pays to present

How do you shift sponsors to your new virtual model if they already paid for a booth or other sponsorship at your F2F conference?
- AIA Iowa’s plans:
  - In the process of deciding whether to go virtual and whether to charge vendors for booths now.
  - Mac Dynamics can build virtual booths with profile and videos, which could be highlighted throughout the multi-day conference.
  - Considering giveaways.
  - Using Whova app.
  - Discouraging any messaging that sounds like an infomercial.

What’s your strategy for keeping them invested if they would rather have a refund?
- Coordinated sponsor packages unique to a virtual program

What are some perks you can offer sponsors?
- Include a Powerpoint to be shown during the presentation at the beginning and end.
• Offer speaking opportunities for them.

**Breakout 9: Sponsorship**

AIA Oregon is focusing on strengthening sponsor relationships by incorporating Allied partners as much as possible in activities.

AIA Kansas City Design Week opportunities

South Atlantic Region:
  • All four states looking at giving value to sponsors for September conference.
  • Shift to virtual means looking at year-round exposure, not just three days.
  • Planning two free webinars a year branded with conference theme

AIA Northern Virginia’s virtual awards event is offering to tape 20-second “questions for sponsors” tp be interspersed in the pre-recorded event. These are not ads but rather a statement by the sponsor tied to design excellence.

AIA Virginia’s conference in November has already sold booths. Must reinvent.
  • Virtual happy hour with sponsors to drive home message that relationships matter.
  • Broker a small conversation group with members and vendors to have conversations
  • Send a gift card for lunch.

**Breakout 11: Speaker Management**

Test runs are a MUST. GoToWebinar allows practice runs. Or, create a separate webinar for you, your moderator, and your presenters, and run a test there.

A moderator is a must to run behind-the-scenes for smaller events.

At large events, you need more expertise:
  • Producer to handle technology and A/V
  • Moderator to handle chat and Q&A

AIA Orlando has posted several recorded events on their web site.

Pre-event:
  • Ask participants (perhaps with a simple survey) about priority topics to cover
  • Discuss audience preferences with speakers

Post event:
  • Edit recordings
  • Add component and sponsor logos

Hybrid events where speakers are pre-recorded but available for Q&A are easier because it lets speakers have “do-overs” if they fumble in sections.
Provide speakers with a tip sheet of dos and don’ts (such as: elevate webcam to eye level; capture your entire face). See GoToWebinar’s “Big Book of Webinars” with tips.

There is interest by components on getting their strongest content on AIAU. (To get details, talk to the Institute’s Education team.)

**Breakout 12: Business Meetings & Voting**

Most still planning in-person annual meetings since they are scheduled for later in the year.

Most components hold in-person elections at annual meeting except:
- AIA Arizona elects their President-Elect electronically.
- AIA Spokane holds online elections if no quorum was established at annual meeting.

Component bylaws often don’t allow for virtual meetings. Most have no policy for online voting. Components should revise their bylaws to allow for electronic/online voting.

AIA Model Component Bylaws have two provisions that may be useful when updating bylaws in this area. Check with your Secretary of State to ensure these provisions may be used in your state:
- **Section 5.25 - Mail Ballot:**
  - Any vote that may be taken at a meeting of this Chapter may be taken by direct mail ballot of the members of this Chapter, provided that the matters voted on have been introduced and discussed at a regular or special meeting of this Chapter.
  - [Editor’s Note: State law may not permit action by mail ballot or may require authorization in the articles of incorporation.]
- **Section 6.414 - Meeting Requirements:**
  - Any one or more members of the Board may participate in a meeting of the Board by conference telephone or similar equipment that allows all persons participating in the meeting to hear one another at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at such a meeting. The Board may take action without meeting if all members of the Board consent in writing to the adoption of a resolution authorizing the action.
  - [Editor’s Note: The provisions in this section should be included only if they are consistent with your state law.]

**Breakout 13: Virtual Tours**

AIA Hampton Roads is arranging a hard hat tour comprised of mixed media:
- Pre-recorded site footage
- Renderings and drawings
- Drone video
- Narration by 2 lead architects

AIA Austin’s CRAN tour has a polished production quality.
Drawbacks to virtual tours include the high cost of money and time to create a quality tour video. Ways to cover costs:

- Use member talent and capabilities to produce
- Partner with a local VR or 3D Rendering company for in-kind sponsorship
- Engage with local college students to add to their fall curriculum