BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

ON VIRTUAL EXHIBITIONS

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Virtual exhibitions are online events that allow businesses and organizations to showcase their products, services, or ideas to a global audience. These exhibitions offer a range of benefits, including the ability to reach a larger audience, reduce costs, and provide a more interactive experience for visitors.

The purpose of this guide is to provide best practices for planning and executing successful virtual exhibitions. By following the tips and advice provided in this guide, readers can learn how to define their goals, choose the right platform, design a user-friendly interface, provide engaging content, offer networking opportunities, promote their exhibition, and provide post-event resources.

Whether you are planning a virtual exhibition for the first time or looking to improve your existing strategy, this guide can help you achieve your goals and create a memorable and impactful experience for your visitors.

The arts domain encompasses a wide range of creative disciplines, from visual arts and design to music, theater, and dance. For students and instructors in this field, creating and showcasing artwork is a crucial part of the learning process.

With the rise of digital technology, virtual exhibitions have become an increasingly popular way for students and instructors in the arts domain to showcase their work and reach a wider audience. Whether you are a student looking to build your portfolio or an instructor planning a virtual showcase for your class, this best practice guide offers practical tips and insights to help you create a seamless and engaging virtual experience.

From defining goals and objectives to selecting the right platform, designing user-friendly interfaces, and providing engaging content, this guide covers all the essential aspects of planning a successful virtual exhibition. By following these best practices, students and instructors can showcase their work in new and exciting ways, connect with a wider audience, and gain valuable feedback and exposure.

2. Define goals and objectives

Defining clear goals and objectives for virtual exhibitions is crucial for a successful outcome. It helps to ensure that all efforts are focused on achieving the desired outcome, and that the exhibition is aligned with the overall business strategy. Here are some reasons why defining goals and objectives is important for virtual exhibitions:

- **Provides focus and direction:** Defining goals and objectives helps to provide focus and direction for the virtual exhibition. It ensures that all efforts are directed towards achieving the desired outcome, and that resources are used effectively.

  Defining clear goals and objectives is a critical first step when planning a virtual exhibition. Goals and objectives help to provide focus and direction, ensuring that all efforts are directed towards achieving the desired outcome. By setting specific and measurable goals, you can track progress and ensure that resources are used effectively.

When defining goals and objectives for a virtual exhibition, it is important to consider the target audience, the purpose of the exhibition, and the desired outcomes. For example, if the goal is to showcase the work of emerging artists and connect with potential buyers, the objectives may include increasing online engagement, generating leads, and driving sales.

By setting specific goals and objectives, you can also determine the key performance indicators (KPIs) that will be used to measure success. KPIs may include website traffic, social media engagement, sales revenue, or customer satisfaction. Tracking KPIs allows you to assess the success of the exhibition and make data-driven decisions for future events.

In addition to providing focus and direction, setting goals and objectives also helps to communicate the purpose and vision of the exhibition to stakeholders, participants, and the target audience. This clarity of purpose and vision can increase engagement, generate interest, and ultimately drive success.

Overall, defining clear goals and objectives is essential for planning a successful virtual exhibition. It ensures that resources are used effectively, provides focus and direction, and communicates the purpose and vision of the exhibition to stakeholders and participants.

- **Enables measurement of success:** Setting clear goals and objectives allows for the measurement of success. This enables businesses to track progress and identify areas for improvement.

  This helps to ensure that resources are being used effectively and that the exhibition is achieving the desired outcomes.

  For virtual exhibitions, some of the key metrics that can be used to measure success may include website traffic, social media engagement, sales revenue, customer satisfaction, and attendee feedback. By regularly tracking and analyzing these metrics, businesses can gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of their virtual exhibition and make data-driven decisions for future events.

  Measuring success also allows businesses to identify any gaps or areas for improvement in their virtual exhibition strategy. For example, if website traffic is low, it may indicate that the marketing strategy needs to be revised to reach a wider audience. Alternatively, if attendee feedback suggests that the virtual platform was difficult to navigate, it may indicate that the user interface needs to be redesigned.

  By regularly measuring and analyzing performance metrics, businesses can continually improve their virtual exhibition strategy and ensure that it is delivering value to both the business and its target audience. This can ultimately lead to increased engagement, sales, and customer loyalty.

- Aligns with business strategy: Defining goals and objectives ensures that the virtual exhibition is aligned with the overall business strategy. It helps to ensure that the exhibition is consistent with the company's mission and values.

Defining clear goals and objectives for a virtual exhibition is essential to ensure that the exhibition aligns with the overall business strategy. This helps to ensure that the exhibition is consistent with the company's mission, values, and overall goals.

When setting goals and objectives for a virtual exhibition, it is important to consider the broader business strategy. For example, if the business is focused on expanding its customer base, the virtual exhibition may be designed to attract new customers and generate leads. Alternatively, if the business is focused on building its brand and reputation, the virtual exhibition may be designed to showcase the company's expertise and thought leadership.

Aligning the virtual exhibition with the broader business strategy ensures that the event is contributing to the overall goals of the business. It also helps to ensure that the exhibition is consistent with the company's mission and values, and that it is delivering value to both the business and its target audience.

In addition, aligning the virtual exhibition with the broader business strategy can help to increase buy-in from stakeholders and ensure that resources are being used effectively. When stakeholders see that the virtual exhibition is consistent with the company's mission and values, they are more likely to support the event and provide the necessary resources to make it successful.

Overall, aligning the virtual exhibition with the broader business strategy is essential to ensure that the event is contributing to the overall goals of the business and delivering value to both the business and its target audience. Defining clear goals and objectives is a critical first step in this process.

To define goals and objectives for virtual exhibitions, consider the following steps:

- Identify the purpose of the exhibition: What do you want to achieve through the virtual exhibition? Do you want to generate leads, showcase products or services, or educate visitors?

- Determine the target audience: Who is the target audience for the virtual exhibition? What are their needs and interests?

- Set specific and measurable goals: Set specific and measurable goals that are aligned with the purpose of the exhibition. For example, if the goal is to generate leads, set a target for the number of leads to be generated.

- Define objectives: Define objectives that support the achievement of the goals. For example, if the goal is to generate leads, an objective could be to provide a lead magnet or offer a free trial.

- Develop a plan: Develop a plan for achieving the goals and objectives. This should include a timeline, budget, and resources required.

- By defining clear goals and objectives for virtual exhibitions, businesses can ensure that their efforts are focused, aligned with their strategy, and measurable. This can help to achieve a successful outcome and a positive return on investment.

3. Choose the right platform

There are several virtual exhibition platforms available in the market, each with its own set of features and capabilities. Here are some of the popular virtual exhibition platforms:

- Eventbrite: Eventbrite is a popular platform for hosting virtual events and exhibitions. It offers a range of features, including live streaming, on-demand video, and interactive sessions.

- 6Connex: 6Connex is a platform that offers a customizable virtual exhibition experience, including 3D environments, live chat, and gamification.

- vFairs: vFairs is a platform that offers a range of features, including customizable booths, interactive sessions, and live chat.

- Hopin: Hopin is a platform that offers a range of features, including live streaming, breakout rooms, and networking opportunities.

- Remo: Remo is a platform that offers a range of features, including customizable spaces, live chat, and virtual whiteboards.

When selecting the right virtual exhibition platform for your needs, consider the following factors:

- Your goals and objectives: Consider what you want to achieve through the virtual exhibition and ensure that the platform offers the features and capabilities to support those goals.

- Your target audience: Consider the needs and preferences of your target audience and ensure that the platform offers an experience that is engaging and user-friendly for them.

- Your budget: Consider your budget and ensure that the platform is cost-effective and provides a positive return on investment.

- Customizability: Consider the level of customizability offered by the platform, and ensure that it allows you to create a unique and engaging experience for your visitors.

- Technical requirements: Consider the technical requirements of the platform, such as internet speed and compatibility with your devices and software.

By considering these factors, you can select the right virtual exhibition platform for your needs and ensure that your exhibition is engaging, effective, and aligned with your goals and objectives.

4. Design a user-friendly interface

Designing a user-friendly interface for virtual exhibitions is crucial for creating an engaging and memorable experience for your visitors. Here are some tips for designing a user-friendly interface for virtual exhibitions:

- Use 3D models: Incorporating 3D models of your products or services can enhance the user experience and provide a more immersive and interactive experience for your visitors.

- Provide interactive elements: Incorporate interactive elements such as quizzes, surveys, or polls to encourage engagement and participation from your visitors.

- Create engaging visuals: Use high-quality images, videos, and animations to create a visually appealing and engaging experience for your visitors. This can include incorporating your branding and messaging throughout the exhibition.

- Use intuitive navigation: Ensure that your navigation is easy to use and intuitive. This can include incorporating a map or a directory to help visitors find their way around the exhibition.

- Provide clear instructions: Provide clear instructions and guidance on how to navigate the exhibition, access resources, and engage with the content.

- Incorporate social elements: Consider incorporating social elements such as live chat, networking opportunities, or a social media wall to encourage engagement and interaction between visitors.

- Optimize for mobile devices: Ensure that your virtual exhibition is optimized for mobile devices, as many visitors may access the exhibition from their mobile devices.

By incorporating these tips, you can create a user-friendly interface for your virtual exhibition that is engaging, interactive, and effective in achieving your goals and objectives.

5. Providing engaging content

Providing engaging and informative content is crucial for the success of virtual exhibitions. Here are some tips for providing content that captures visitors' attention:

- Use videos: Incorporate high-quality videos that showcase your products, services, or demonstrations to provide a more engaging and immersive experience for your visitors. Short videos are more effective than long ones and should not exceed 3-4 minutes.

- Host webinars: Hosting webinars on topics related to your industry or products is a great way to provide informative content to your visitors. You can use platforms like Zoom or GoToWebinar to host your webinars.

- Host live sessions: Hosting live sessions with industry experts or product specialists is another way to provide informative content and encourage engagement and participation from your visitors. You can use platforms like Facebook Live, YouTube Live or LinkedIn Live to host your live sessions.

- Offer downloadable resources: Offer downloadable resources such as brochures, whitepapers, or eBooks to provide valuable information to your visitors that they can access at their convenience.

- Use interactive tools: Incorporate interactive tools such as calculators, quizzes, or games to provide a more engaging and interactive experience for your visitors.

- Provide real-time support: Provide real-time support through live chat or support tickets to answer visitors' questions and provide guidance on the exhibition and your products or services.

- Use testimonials: Incorporate testimonials or case studies from satisfied customers to provide social proof and credibility to your brand and products.

By incorporating these tips, you can provide engaging and informative content that captures visitors' attention, encourages participation, and helps achieve your goals and objectives for the virtual exhibition.

6. Offering networking opportunities:

Networking is an essential part of any exhibition, whether it's in-person or virtual. Networking provides an opportunity for exhibitors and visitors to connect, build relationships, and potentially form partnerships or collaborations. Here are some tips on how to facilitate networking opportunities in virtual exhibitions:

- Use live chat: Incorporate live chat features that allow visitors to communicate with exhibitors and other visitors in real-time. Live chat is a quick and efficient way to answer questions and provide support.

- Host Q&A sessions: Host Q&A sessions with industry experts or product specialists to provide visitors with an opportunity to ask questions and receive insights on topics related to your industry or products.

- Facilitate breakout rooms: Use breakout rooms to facilitate smaller group discussions or networking sessions. Visitors can join breakout rooms based on their interests or industry to connect with like-minded individuals.

- Use social media: Use social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, or Facebook to promote your virtual exhibition and connect with visitors before, during, and after the exhibition.

- Host virtual networking events: Host virtual networking events such as happy hours, roundtable discussions, or meet-and-greets to encourage visitors to connect and engage with each other.

- Provide virtual business card exchange: Provide a virtual business card exchange feature that allows visitors to exchange contact information with exhibitors and other visitors.

- Offer matchmaking services: Offer matchmaking services that connect visitors with

exhibitors or other visitors based on their interests, needs, or goals.

By incorporating these networking tips, you can facilitate networking opportunities and encourage engagement and participation from your visitors, exhibitors, and other stakeholders. This can lead to valuable connections, collaborations, and partnerships that can benefit your business in the long run.

7. Promoting the exhibition:

Promoting your virtual exhibition through social media, email marketing, and other digital channels is crucial to attract visitors and ensure the success of your event. Here are some tips on how to promote your virtual exhibition:

- Create a strong brand message: Develop a strong brand message that clearly communicates the purpose, value, and benefits of your virtual exhibition. This will help you differentiate yourself from other exhibitions and attract the right audience.

- Use social media: Use social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to promote your exhibition. Post engaging content, share updates, and use relevant hashtags to increase your reach and engagement.

- Use email marketing: Use email marketing to promote your exhibition to your email list. Send regular updates, teasers, and reminders leading up to the event, and offer early-bird discounts and other incentives to encourage registrations.

- Use digital advertising: Use digital advertising platforms such as Google Ads, Facebook Ads, or LinkedIn Ads to promote your exhibition to a wider audience. Use targeted keywords, demographics, or interests to reach the right audience.

- Partner with industry influencers: Partner with industry influencers or thought leaders to promote your exhibition to their followers and subscribers. This can increase your reach and credibility and attract a wider audience.

- Offer early-bird discounts and other incentives: Offer early-bird discounts, special offers, or exclusive access to incentivize visitors to register early and attend your exhibition.

- Provide engaging content: Provide engaging and informative content on your website, social media, or email marketing that captures visitors' attention and encourages them to register and attend your exhibition.

8. Provide post-event resources

By incorporating these promotion tips, you can attract the right audience, increase registrations, and ensure the success of your virtual exhibition. Remember to track and analyze your results to identify what works best and adjust accordingly.

- Providing post-event resources is a critical step in ensuring the success of your virtual exhibition. Here are some tips on how to provide post-event resources:

- **Record and share event sessions:** Record all sessions from the virtual exhibition and make them available on-demand after the event. This allows attendees to revisit sessions they found valuable and provides an opportunity for those who missed sessions to catch up.

- **Provide exhibitor and sponsor contact information:** Make sure to provide exhibitor and sponsor contact information so attendees can follow up with them after the event. This allows attendees to ask additional questions, request demos, or discuss potential partnerships.

- **Share attendee lists:** Share attendee lists with exhibitors and sponsors after the event. This allows exhibitors and sponsors to follow up with attendees who visited their virtual booth or attended their sessions.

- **Send follow-up surveys:** Send a post-event survey to attendees to gather feedback on the virtual exhibition. Use this feedback to improve future events and make sure attendees feel heard.

- **Provide additional resources:** Provide additional resources related to the virtual exhibition's topic or industry. This could include whitepapers, ebooks, case studies, or other materials that add value to attendees.

- **Host a debrief meeting:** Host a debrief meeting with your team to discuss the successes and challenges of the virtual exhibition. Use this meeting to identify areas for improvement and develop a plan for future events.

By providing post-event resources, you can continue to engage attendees after the virtual exhibition, gather feedback, and build relationships with exhibitors and sponsors. This can lead to valuable connections and partnerships that benefit your business in the long run.

9. Conclusion

Key takeaways from this guide on virtual exhibitions include:

- Defining clear goals and objectives is crucial for planning a successful virtual exhibition.

- Careful selection of the right virtual exhibition platform is critical to ensure a seamless and engaging user experience.

- Designing a user-friendly interface with engaging visuals and interactive elements is important to keep attendees engaged.

- Providing a variety of content, such as videos, webinars, and live sessions, can help to capture attendees' attention and provide value.

- Facilitating networking opportunities through features like live chat, Q&A sessions, and breakout rooms can help attendees build valuable connections.

- Promoting the virtual exhibition through social media and email marketing is key

to attracting attendees.

- Providing post-event resources, such as session recordings, presentation slides, exhibitor and sponsor contact information, attendee lists, and surveys, can help to deepen relationships and potentially lead to future business opportunities.

Virtual exhibitions are a valuable tool for businesses and organizations looking to reach a wider audience and engage with customers and stakeholders in a cost-effective and environmentally sustainable way. By following the best practices outlined in this guide, businesses can plan and execute successful virtual exhibitions that deliver value to attendees and achieve their objectives.