



Columbia
COLLEGE CHICAGO

2020-2021

TOOLKIT FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS

PRODUCED BY STUDENT ACTIVITIES

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STEP 1

WHY DO WE GATHER?

Why do we gather?

We gather to solve problems we can't solve on our own. We gather to celebrate, to mourn, and to mark transitions. We gather to make decisions. We gather because we need one another. We gather to show strength. We gather to honor and acknowledge. We gather to build companies and schools and neighborhoods. We gather to welcome, and we gather to say goodbye.

But here is the great paradox of gathering: There are so many good reasons for coming together that often we don't know precisely why we are doing so. You are not alone if you skip the first step in convening people meaningfully: committing to a bold, sharp purpose.

Priya Parker, [The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters](#)

Now, more than ever, we need to find creative ways to connect with each other and create community across campus. No school is more equipped to do this than Columbia College Chicago! With the talent, ingenuity, and creativity found at this school, there is no doubt that Columbia students will pave the way for gathering in unconventional ways.

Consider this year an opportunity to experiment, innovate, and creatively problem solve in ways you never imagined when enrolling at Columbia. Regardless of your discipline, you can gain skills and lessons you can take with you as you enter your careers and lives beyond Columbia. There is no playbook for gathering virtually and it is up to us to write it!

This toolkit will provide a starting point in thinking through your virtual event. It poses questions to consider and offers resources both on and off campus to support your ideas.

STEP 2

DEFINE YOUR PURPOSE

“The goal is not to replicate the activity, but to recreate the emotions people feel when they go out.”

Bas Grasmayer, Music Marketing Strategist

Whether we are gathering physically, virtually or both, it is important to establish why we are bringing people together. What do you want to achieve with your event? What do you want your guests to experience and feel when attending your event? It is your job as the event planner to ensure guests, teammates, and collaborators know what to expect from your gathering.

Use these prompts with your team to help define your gathering’s purpose:

- What do we want to achieve with our event?
- What do we want guests to gain from experiencing this event?
- How does it tie to the mission of our organization?
- Who is our targeted audience?
- How will the campus community benefit from the event?
- Do we want to collaborate with other student organizations, college departments, or outside partners?
- How can partners enhance this event and what will our individual roles be as collaborators?
- Who are potential event participants, such as vendors, sponsors, or talent?
- How will we engage our volunteers or board members when planning, promoting, and hosting our event?

STEP 3

VIRTUAL EVENT PLANNING RESOURCES

VIRTUAL EVENTS IN 2020: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

This is a fantastic breakdown of how to approach your virtual event. This resource addresses the following topics:

- What is a Virtual Event?
- 4 Main Types of Virtual Events
- Why Host a Virtual Event?
- In-person or Virtual - The Fundamentals Matter
- But In-person Events and Virtual Events Aren't Exactly the Same
- Virtual Event Elements
- Event Technology and Virtual Events Platforms to Host a Virtual Event
- The Basics: How to Host a Virtual Event
- Preparing Attendees for Virtual Events
- Attendee Engagement at Virtual Events
- Networking and Connecting During Virtual Events
- Data from Virtual Events
- Proving Virtual Event Success
- How to Turn Your Live Event into a Virtual Event at the Last Minute
- Virtual Events as Part of Your Meeting and Event Program

VIRTUAL MUSIC EVENTS DIRECTORY

This directory was developed by Cherie Hu, a journalist and researcher who covers intersection of music, technology, and business. In this living document you will find resources to help you think about your approach to virtual event planning. This includes:

- **An introductory foreword** discussing how the music-industry mindset around livestreaming is slowly shifting from dismissing the format as a “niche” or “nice-to-have,” to embracing the format as an imperative for ensuring global accessibility and reach amidst extreme conditions such as the COVID-19 outbreak.
- **A list of tools** that artists and speakers can use to host virtual shows, panels and meetups, especially in the wake of major festivals like SXSW, Ultra, Miami Music Week and Coachella getting postponed or cancelled.
- **A list of public livestreaming and virtual-event calendars**, many of which are open to submissions.

ADDITIONAL PLANNING RESOURCES

- Zoom: Best Practices for Hosting a Digital Event
- Working during COVID-19: How to be good at video meetings
- Gallus Events: Engaging an online event audience Additional Resources

STEP 4

PLATFORMS FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS

There are so many options for hosting your virtual event. Below are a few to consider! When choosing a platform, think about how you want to interact with your audience. Here are some questions to consider when selecting a platform:

- What is the best platform to fulfill your event's purpose?
- How does the platform allow people to connect with each other?
- Do you want face-to-face videos? A chat function?
- How do you set the expectations for audience interaction during your event?
- Are there costs associated with the platform?
- Do you want a recording of your event?
- Is it accessible for hearing and visually impaired individuals?
- Do guests have to create an account for this platform in advance and have you communicated this in your marketing?
- How will you capture your attendance or keep track of other interactions with your event?

Video Conferencing and Chat Sites

Crowdcast
Eventbrite Virtual Events
Gather
Twitch
YouNow
Zoom

Social Media

Facebook Live
Google Hangouts
Instagram IGTV
LinkedIn Live
YouTube Live

Streaming Sites for Videos/Film/TV

Kast
MyCircle TV
Netflix Party
Twoseven
Vimeo Livestream

Inspiration Sites

An Artist a Day

Manifest Urban Arts Festival (*see how your pers hosted events during our very own festival!*)

Social Distancing Festival

Together Apart Podcast: *Part guide, part reminder of the resiliency of the human spirit to still creatively meaningfully gather, even while we have to be apart. Hosted by Priya Parker, a conflict facilitator whose expertise is in how we gather.*

STEP 5

CREATE A BUDGET

Creating a budget is one of the first steps when planning an event. Before you make any purchases or sign any contracts, make sure you have enough funding to pay for everything you want to do...and enough left for future needs! Even though you are going virtual with your event, you might still have expenses.

POTENTIAL EXPENSES MIGHT INCLUDE:

Virtual event platform fees, performer fees, guest speaker fees, advertising costs, hospitality, thank you gifts, independent contractors (ASL interpreters, videographers, tech fees)

POTENTIAL REVENUE MIGHT INCLUDE:

Allotted budget, donations, fundraisers, sponsorships.

SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorships are a great way to enhance your event and help you stay within your budget. It is also a great way for businesses to gain exposure for their brand on to our students. Work with your advisor and team to determine the best way to approach and negotiate with a potential sponsor.

If you obtain a sponsorship, it is important for us to communicate this with the Development Office. They keep a database that tracks financial and in-kind donations. This database could be really helpful in obtaining your donation. Perhaps you want to ask a specific business for two dozen cupcakes for your event. The Development Office will be able to tell you if the college has an existing relationship with them and other helpful info that could assist in getting those cupcakes!

If you obtain a sponsorship, work with Student Organizations & Leadership to record your gift. The Development Office will send your sponsor a thank you letter on behalf of the college acknowledging their generosity!

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR AGREEMENT

This Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into this ____ day of _____ 20____, between Columbia College Chicago ("College"), an Illinois not-for-profit organization, with offices at 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, and Independent Contractor identified below.

IN CONSIDERATION of the mutual promises set forth herein, and for other good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, College hereby engages Independent Contractor to provide Service(s) upon the following terms:

1.0 Independent Contractor Information

1.1 Independent Contractor's Name: _____

1.2 Address: _____

1.3 Social Security No. or Employer ID: _____

1.4 Phone Number: _____

2.0 Service Information

2.1 Description of Service _____

2.2 Date(s) of Service: _____

2.3 Time(s) of Service: _____

2.4 Approximate duration of Service: _____

2.5 Place of Service: _____

2.6 If applicable, the following provisions are also included in this agreement:

It is agreed that the set-up for the service(s) will begin at _____ (time).

It is agreed that a sound check will take place promptly at _____ (time).

3.0 Service Fee: College agrees to pay Independent Contractor \$ _____

(_____ DOLLARS) for Service as identified in paragraph 2.0 upon completion of service(s).

4.0 Meals, Transportation, Lodging: Included in service fee.

5.0 Dressing Room: College shall provide a dressing room to Independent Contractor, upon request.

6.0 Promotion of Service: College will provide on-campus promotion of service. Independent Contractor may also promote service at its own expense.

7.0 Merchandising: College shall provide an appropriate location and table for the sale of Independent Contractor's merchandise. One hundred percent (100%) of receipts shall go to Independent Contractor.

8.0 Recordation of Service: College agrees not to authorize the broadcasting, recording, or reproduction by any means of Independent Contractor's service(s) without the Independent Contractor's consent. It is understood and agreed that this is a live service and that the only recordings that will be made of Independent Contractor's service(s) will be used solely for archival and educational purposes.

9.0 It is understood and agreed that Columbia College Chicago regulations forbid the use of alcoholic beverages and/or other illegal substances while on College property. Violation of this regulation by the Independent Contractor or any of its associates may result in forfeiture of payment.

STEP 6

CREATE A MARKETING PLAN

A marketing plan is a written blueprint that outlines your project's overall marketing efforts. The sections below are common components of a marketing plan that will help you think through how to promote your event.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

This is an overview of your current situation and is a starting point as you develop your plan. You can create a bullet-point SWOT analysis. As you plan your event, consider what are your: Strengths and Weaknesses (internal) and Opportunities and Threats (external). Here is an example SWOT analysis:

OPPORTUNITIES (EXTERNAL)

- Campus partnerships
- New audience
- Enhance sponsor involvement

STRENGTHS (INTERNAL)

- Experienced team
- High motivation level
- Strong social media following
- Strong brand name

THREATS (EXTERNAL)

- High competition
- Bad weather
- Date/time conflicts
- Budget cuts

WEAKNESSES (INTERNAL)

- Complicated processes
- Weak brand name
- Volunteer recruitment

TARGET AUDIENCE

Who is interested in your event? Create a bulleted description of characteristics of your targeted audience. Is there a specific major that might interested in your event? Do they live on or off campus? Are they freshmen who interested in joining new groups?

GOALS

Make realistic and measurable goals for your event. Do you want to increase the number of freshmen in attendance at your event? Do you want to improve the number of people or groups you are collaborating with? Do you want to recruit a certain number of new volunteers? Do you want to raise a certain amount of donations at your event?

GOALS, STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

This is the plan that addresses the goals you just set. Tactics might include print, ads, social media, guerilla marketing, class visits. Be sure to create a schedule of implementation! For example:

Goal - Our goal is to improve attendance among freshmen by 10%.

Strategy - Freshmen will receive a benefit (free merch/prizes/etc) at our event.

Tactic – We will work with RAs to distribute handbills within the dorms.

Tactic – We'll hold a lobby day in The Court to talk one-on-one with students.

Tactic – We'll have a flash mob with RHA in front of dorms.

CONSIDER USING CAMPUS RESOURCES WITHIN YOUR MARKETING PLAN

CAMPUS EVENT CALENDAR

Post your event to the campus event calendar at <http://events.colum.edu>. This will allow students to see it on the Columbia Events app.

STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS

StuCom offers graphic design services for print material, event photographers/ videographers and email/social media promotion. Distribute your posters and handbills throughout campus. Make requests 4 weeks in advance. Find the online forms here to make a request:

colum.edu/stucom

CREATING PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS WITH STUCOM

Create clarity about what your event has to offer! Make sure your promotional materials include the following in your initial request:

Who: Who is sponsoring the event?

What: What is the event?

Where: Where is the event?

When: When is the event?

Why: Why is this event important?

How: How can others get more information?

POSTING

There are designated areas where you can post information about your events. Your organization is responsible for removing promotional materials after the event takes place. If you would like to post in the Residence Halls, contact Residence Life at residencelife@colum.edu.

LOBBIES

Designated lobbies can be reserved for fundraising, recruiting, promoting, etc. can be reserved through the Campus Space Scheduler (see Step Four).

FREQUENCY TV

Think about potential partnerships with our campus tv station for short features. Contact Janet LaMonica for inquiries at jlamonica@colum.edu.

THE CHRONICLE

Consider placing advertising in The Chronicle for events. Visit for more info:

www.columbiachronicle.com/more/advertise. Pitch a story about your event – allow 2 weeks!

Contact chronicle@colum.edu or call 312-369-8999.

WCRX 88.1FM CAMPUS RADIO STATION

Submit your Public Service Announcements to WCRX FM. WCRX serves the interests of the community. Send your event information at least 3 weeks in advance to: WCRX Radio Public Service Department at wcrxdj@colum.edu

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr, Instagram and blogs are all great ways to show and tell people who your organization is and the great things you are doing.

EMAIL

Put your contacts to use! Set up an automatic reply on your general organization e-mail address so that you can connect with members and prospects, and let them know you care about their participation. Send out reminder emails 2 weeks out, 1 week out, 1 day out, and day of event.

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

Does your target audience tie in well with an academic department? For example, are you featuring a film screening you think film students would want to attend? Or maybe you are hosting a fashion show and think the Fashion Department could promote to their students?

Contact the Assistant to the Chair (in the campus directory) within academic departments to inquire about how to promote your event to their students. Ask if they have newsletters, a location for announcements or if you can do class visits.

WORD OF MOUTH

Think of an elevator pitch. Most elevator rides aren't that long so you want to be able to pitch your event information quickly. Make sure all of your members can describe what you do in a consistent manner.

Student Organizations should visit "Marketing Your Organization" section of the Student Organizations & Leadership Handbook for information on promoting your events.

STEP 8

WRAP UP/EVALUATION



Conclude your event with an evaluation. This will help your team with planning events in the future. There are several ways to evaluate the success of your program. Always refer back to the goals you set within your marketing plan. There might be things you can do during your event - such as keeping attendance or collecting emails at check-in that will assist with your event evaluation.

As a team consider the following questions:

- Should this event be repeated in the future?
- Were the goals of the event met?
- What went well during the event?
- What can be improved upon?
- What ideas/suggestions do you have for future events?

Simple surveys for both the event planning team, as well as your guests can also assist with your evaluation. Consider using iAttend to capture emails at the door so you can email them after the event.

USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Feel free to contact any of the people below to assist with the planning of your event. They are here to help. And of course, your advisor will be your main support when planning your event!

**Conaway Center, Stage TWO, HAUS,
Film Row Cinema**

Constance Stanley
Manager of Events & Performance Spaces
deps@colum.edu

AV Technical Requirements

Ted Cho
Technical Coordinator
tcho@colum.edu

Student Organizations & Leadership, The Loft

Loft Assistants
leadership@colum.edu

Space Reservation Assistance

Space and Scheduling Coordinator
space@colum.edu

Safety and Security

Charrisse Musgrove
Campus Safety and Security Coordinator,
cmusgrove@colum.edu