

# Hybrid Events Toolkit

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**01**

# **Introduction**

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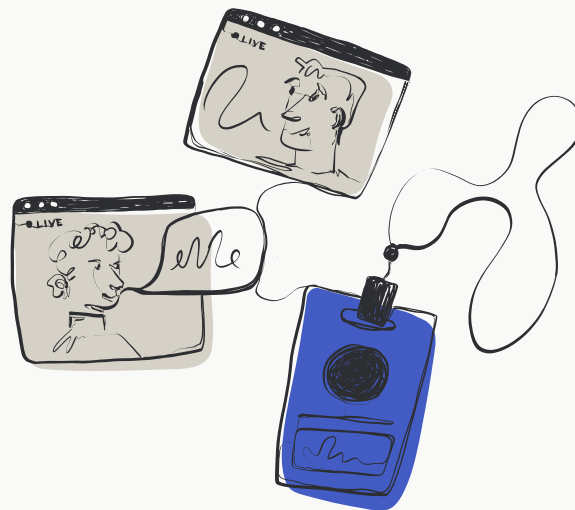
# Introduction to Hybrid Events

Fundraising events are at the heart of donor relationships. Events are an opportunity to engage communities and the touchpoint that sparks long-term loyalty among your donor base.

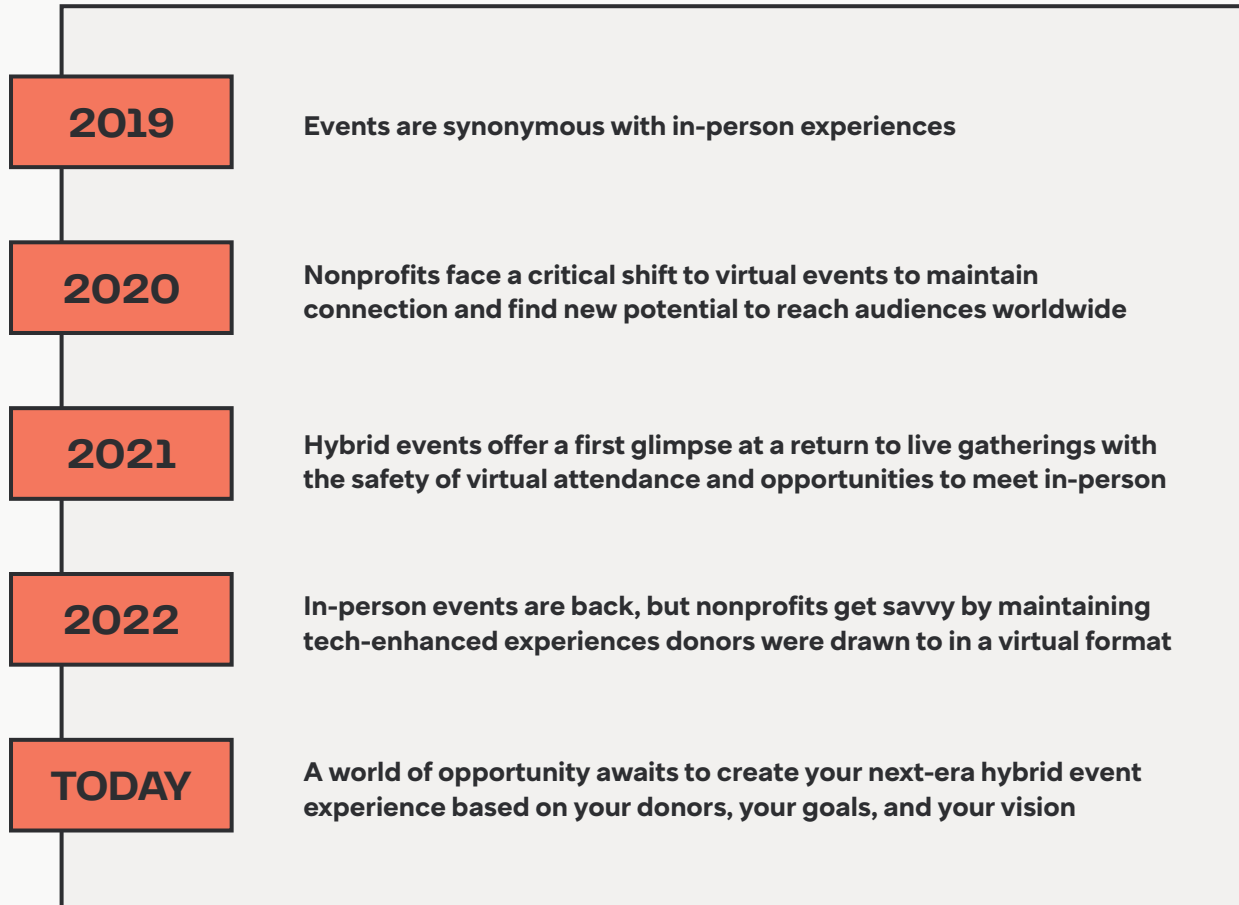
Events that offer a memorable experience can certainly result in donations in the moment. However, their true power comes from their far-reaching impact on attendees who return to show their generosity through all other fundraising campaigns you host throughout the year.

The discussion around fundraising events is ongoing as the importance of meaningful and authentic in-person interactions rises right alongside expectations for attractive remote engagement opportunities that offer flexibility and break down location restrictions.

Consider this your go-to guide to find the balance between the factors that hook attendees and keep them coming back with a reimagined hybrid fundraising event.



## The Road to Unleashing the Opportunity of Hybrid Events



### Donors Respond to Hybrid Event Opportunities

The hybrid event model is your way to provide any attendees you're trying to reach the best of both worlds. Instead of marketing your event as strictly in-person or virtual, you give your audience the option to choose based on what matters most. It's a simple way to make your attendees feel comfortable and excited to engage from wherever they want, however, they want.

**The hybrid model gives you an effective approach to offer a unique and memorable event experience by delivering:**

- **Stronger connections** with donors who have more flexibility to attend
- **Broad participation** on a global scale with lower overhead costs
- **A wealth of data** to track attendee interactions and online donations
- **Personal touches** that showcase personality and authenticity
- **Global communities united** around your cause and stories
- **Richer participant experiences** with more touchpoints for attendees
- **Natural content creation** with recordings for social media and promotions

## **Having a Choice Matters to Today's Event Attendees**

In a [survey of event attendees](#), we learned why the option to choose between a virtual and in-person option gets donors excited.

1. They like having a choice on how they prefer to attend
2. Virtual components can make them feel more comfortable
3. They can attend events they wouldn't have otherwise
4. There is more flexibility around the location from which they attend
5. Virtual components extend the value of the in-person experience

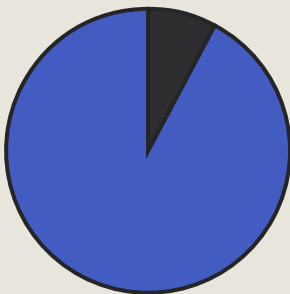
## Experiences That Revolve Around Flexibility Lead to Donations

Experience is everything when it comes to events, especially when donors have likely attended quite a few over the last few years and are clear on what they loved and what they did not. While you're planning how your event will stand out, the hybrid option's flexibility to choose how to attend can be a first step to bringing in more overall donation volume to hit your goals.



**35%**

**of fundraising event attendees choose an option with both virtual and in-person attendance choices**



**over 92%**

**donate in addition to registration costs after a good virtual or in-person event experience**

[The Fundraising Event Experience Report](#)



**02**

# **Plan Your Successful Hybrid Event**



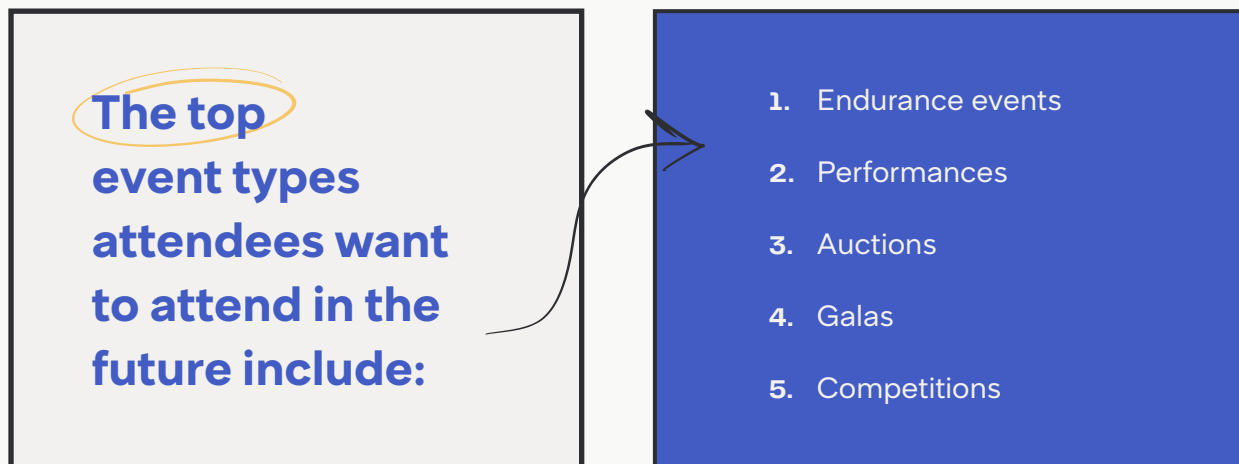
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# Plan Your Successful Hybrid Event

How do you make a lasting impression on your hybrid event attendees while considering both in-person and virtual interactions? We'll walk you through the steps to planning an experience they won't forget.

## Step 1: Choose Your Event Type

Think about what your target audience of attendees enjoys most, what's worked in the past, your venue options, and the timing of your hybrid event. From there, you can choose an event type as the foundation you can build in the next steps.



Now it's time to get creative about turning these classic event ideas into a hybrid experience your attendees can enjoy from anywhere they choose to participate.

**Do any of these hybrid event modifications get your ideas flowing?**


- Take a page from on-demand fitness classes and stream a live endurance event while inviting virtual participants to join in with activity tracking apps
- Host a heartfelt online auction for virtual attendees, followed by an intimate in-person celebration to celebrate the top donors and sponsors
- Open your live competition to international supporters by encouraging participants to engage in peer-to-peer fundraising leading up to the event
- Bring your annual gala right to your attendees' homes with a meal and drink delivery service to enjoy alongside a livestreamed in-person performance



**TRY IT IN CLASSY LIVE**



Build an online auction into your agenda, letting your attendees know when the bidding starts and ends and where to go. With mobile bidding, attendees can bid in-person or virtually and can easily pay with self-checkout.

## Engagement in Action: [Shriners Hospitals for Children](#)

 <p>This once-in-a-century anniversary event went hybrid to engage 700 guests online and in person.</p> <p><b>The result? \$1.5M raised with a \$1M goal, with \$500k raised from auction items alone.</b></p>	<p><b>Their formula for hybrid engagement on Classy Live:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Livestreamed concert</li><li>→ Curated content for virtual attendees</li><li>→ Seamless in-person mobile check-in</li><li>→ Live and silent auctions</li><li>→ Recorded interviews with patient families</li></ul>
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## Explore Opportunities to Activate Supporters With Your Event

In some instances, your event may fall within a timeframe that can tie the “why” to a timely need. We saw organizations successfully host events during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to call on supporters when they needed them most. Your event may allow you to tap into the desire donors hold to take action for a cause they feel makes the most impact if you position it as a call for critical support.

	<p><b>Over a quarter</b> of passive donors say they donate as a form of self-expression and activism they can easily take part in</p>
	<p><b>60% of donors</b> gave to new causes in response to a timely appeal from an organization, cause, or individual, such as a relevant event in the news</p>

## Step 2: Customize Ticketing and Registrations

There's a careful balance to strike when you're building a registration experience that appeals to in-person and virtual attendees. It's the first impression of your event and also the first opportunity you have to showcase the flexibility of your attendance options.

### Create Your Hybrid Event Registration Experience

#### First Impression

- Make sure you can access your registration page from all devices and browsers
- Greet anyone who lands on your registration page with clarity about what makes your event appealing to both live and online guests
- Highlight the elements that make the virtual event an experience worth attending
- Introduce promotional codes at key milestones to drive registrations

#### Details

- Display a variety of ticket types (e.g. early bird, general admissions, VIP) to support promotions that get you to your attendance goals
- Clarify details about both in-person and virtual tables and seating

#### Payment

- Add options donors trust and already have logins for like PayPal or Venmo
- Create the convenience of fast mobile checkout

## Engagement

- Include information about fundraising commitments for registrants
- Show attendees how easy it is to set up an individual fundraising page
- Give supporters who can't attend the ability to donate directly to your cause
- Make it easy to share the event on social channels

## Tracking

- Track all live and online registrations to target communications leading up to the event with the most relevant details and updates
- Determine your top sources for driving people to your registration page to prioritize promotional spend and effort



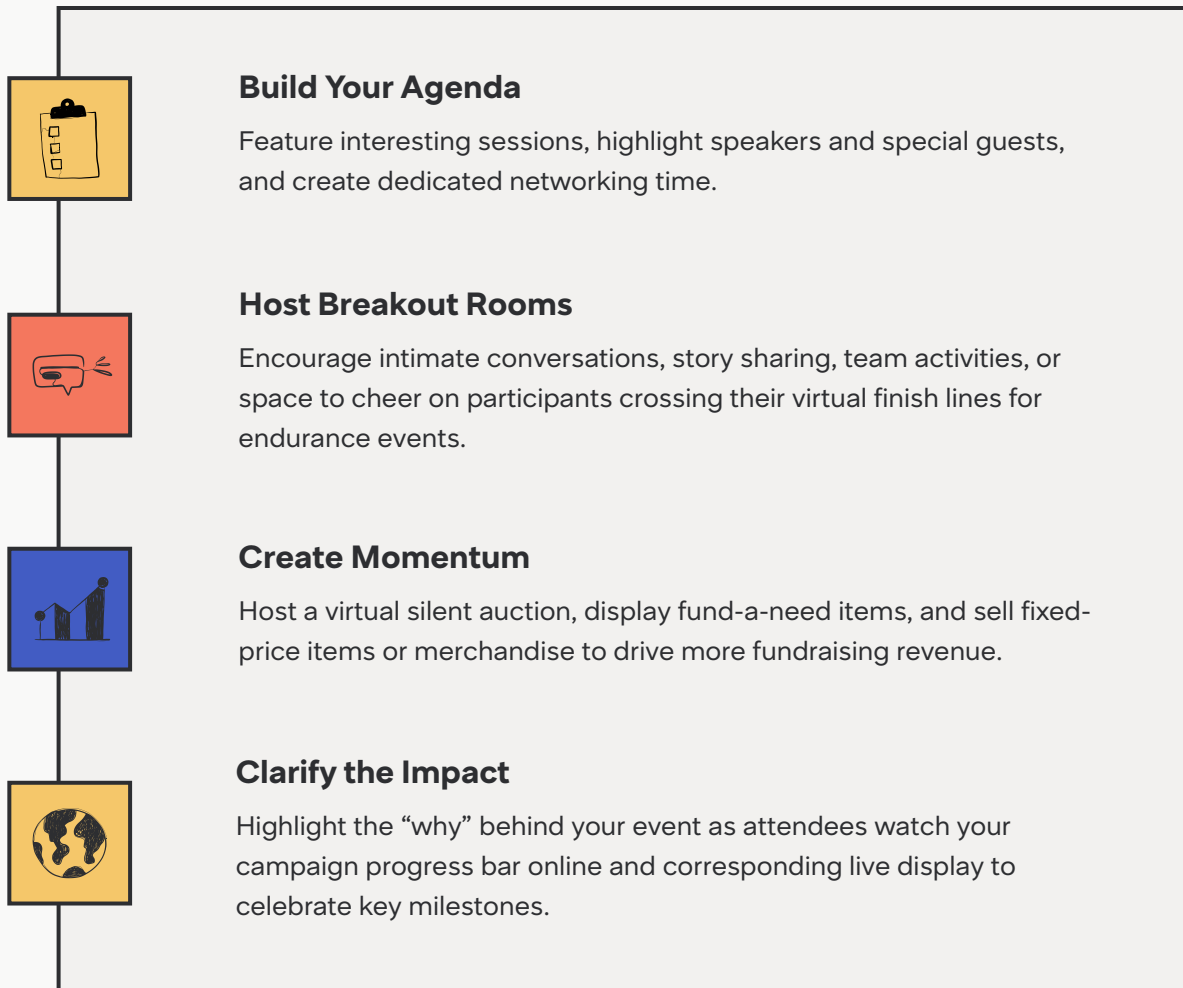
### TRY IT IN CLASSY LIVE

Streamline your registration process, capture custom questions, create multiple ticket types, and encourage guests to fundraise on your behalf prior to the event.

## Step 3: Design Your Hybrid Venue Experience

Your hybrid event may have different attendee experiences, but you can unite virtual and in-person aspects by hosting the event through an online venue to access everything you have to offer before, during, and after the event.

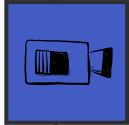
**Deliver an unforgettable experience with a venue built for everyone. Here are a few ways to use an online venue to enhance your hybrid event:**





### **Recognize Sponsors**

Display your partners on your event page and let attendees engage with them through virtual booths featuring digital Q&A.



### **Livestream Moments**

Broadcast the live portions of your event or featured performances and sessions to everyone in real-time.



### **Offer Attendee Profiles**

Prompt all attendees to create a profile when they enter your virtual venue and pair them with individuals with similar interests for a more connective hybrid experience.



### **Manage Tables**

Visually represent your seating assignments to easily assign table numbers, highlight sponsors or table captains, and drag-and-drop attendees to virtual and live tables.



### **Share Event Content**

Upload event resources and content like your annual report, a letter from someone you've helped, or instructions to participate that your attendees can access at any time.



#### **TRY IT IN CLASSY LIVE**

Stream your live programming, encourage engagement with other attendees, and facilitate fundraising within your virtual venue experience for guests who can't make it physically.

## Step 4: Promote Your Hybrid Event

Hybrid events that expand your reach to more attendees require a reimagined promotion approach. Think about how you can differentiate your approach for local attendees and your worldwide online audience based on the goals you set out for your event.

You've already done the work to create an accessible event, now it's about showing people how they can play a role in a cause they're passionate about and how both attendance options come together to create an incredible impact for your cause.

### Attract Local Attendees

Draw in-person attendees to your hybrid event with the appeal of participating live while also getting to know online guests from all over the country or even the world.

	<p><b>Social Media</b></p> <p>Create targeted social media ads to reach people in your area with compelling visuals and video content to highlight your in-person event experience</p>
	<p><b>Email</b></p> <p>Segment your email lists to send a specific set of emails to local donors and personally invite them to your in-person event with their friends, family, and coworkers.</p>
	<p><b>In-Person Touchpoints</b></p> <p>Collaborate with local businesses or sponsors to hang physical promotional materials and QR codes to your registration page where foot traffic is highest.</p>



## Welcome Online Guests

Show virtual attendees that this isn't another isolating zoom event. Your hybrid event is a thoughtful experience created with them in mind at every step.

### Social Media

Consider specific hashtags and niche posts across all social channels to attract users who are already passionate about your cause, and give them a clear way to register from each platform.

### Email

Segment your email lists to those who don't live locally, with a personal message about how you created an opportunity for them to still attend your event and have an incredible experience getting to know your organization.

### In-Person Touchpoints

Work with your loyal donors to help spread the word about your event and its hybrid format online with their networks to recruit attendees or support for peer-to-peer fundraising elements.



#### PROMOTION PRO-TIP

**33%** of mobile traffic to events with a peer-to-peer element comes from social media. Facebook is the social platform most likely to attract campaign page visitors online, while LinkedIn is the channel most likely to convert them.

## **Step 4: Manage the Day of Your Event**

### **Share an Event-Specific Mobile App**

Modern online event platforms give you the ability to use mobile phones in a whole new way with your attendees both online and in person. Set up an app for your event to make the day of easy and convenient to organize for you and your supporters.

#### **Grant your registrants access to an app ahead of time to help them:**

- Participate in auctions and bid on items conveniently
- Purchase any merchandise or fixed-price items you're promoting
- Grab a constant view of what you're broadcasting live from their pocket
- Access event content such as resources, assets, and sponsor materials
- Communicate with other attendees and staff through a live chat

## Introduce Simple Event Check-in

While technology is huge for virtual attendees, certain aspects can focus on enhancing your in-person experience. Give event admins the mobile accessibility to quickly check attendees in at the door via first name, last name, email, or by scanning their QR code into your mobile app. If you get walk-up guests who haven't yet registered, you can easily register them at the door.



### TRY IT IN CLASSY LIVE

Send QR codes out before your event to quickly check in your attendees via mobile or desktop check-in with a seamless sync of all information and custom questions available at your fingertips. Admins can add a credit card to keep on file for each attendee to make donations during the event.

## Continue to Highlight the Hybrid Nature of Your Event

Encourage live and online attendees to interact and share in the excitement of your event with regular reminders of everything you've put in place to enhance their experience. Consider sharing ideas like high-fiving a virtual participant during each mile of a race or swapping stories with another online supporter attending your charity gala from home.

The more natural moments of interaction your attendees have with one another, the more connected they will feel to your cause and the community that makes your mission possible.



### TRY IT IN CLASSY LIVE

With our event management software, use text and email messaging to send event reminders and updates before, during, and after your event. With live leaderboards, polls, chat, donation notifications, speed networking, and more, you can connect with your online supporters at any time, from anywhere.

## Engagement in Action: Runway for Recovery



This annual runway show went hybrid to bring together international attendees in real time. **The result? Surpassing fundraising goals by \$25,000.**

### **Their formula for hybrid engagement on Classy Live:**

- Interviews and stories from models
- Live chat
- A live fundraising thermometer
- Silent auction bids
- Livestreamed 1-hr runway show

## Step 6: Enhance Attendee Engagement

Attendee engagement isn't just a nice-to-have, but a crucial part of the relationship you're building with each and every guest whether online or in person. Think of the experience you're offering through your hybrid event as the catalyst for passive supporters to become loyal donors you can rely on to continue showing up.



**Over 91%**

**of fundraising event attendees are likely to take further action with a nonprofit after a positive fundraising experience.**

### Keep Everyone in the Loop With Text and Email Communications

You can easily send event reminders and updates to attendees via text message or email with built-in communication tools. Here are some examples of how you can use prescheduled messages or in-the-moment updates to keep your attendees excited from start to finish:

- Create an email series in the weeks leading up to your event to build momentum
- Share a text link to download your app to show off the mobile experience
- Send a celebration text every time a donation over a certain amount is made
- Share donation match opportunities mid-event through texts
- Announce challenge or endurance event finishers as they complete their competition with live texts and chat
- Send a recap of the event through email with more opportunities to give

## Build More Opportunity for Donations

### Use text-to-donate

Gather instant donations at specific moments within the day's agenda. Text-to-donate helps you create a keyword specific to your event and promote it through printed materials at your event. Attendees can text your keyword to the phone number provided to donate directly to your need or cause easily and watch as donations appear in your fundraising total.

### Present hybrid auctions and mobile bidding

Upload all of your auction items (silent and live) to your online event platform to engage attendees in person and online. With the help of mobile paddle raises and modern online auction features, your guests can bid on items through a mobile app or the online venue you set up.

Attendees can spend more time enjoying the event when your online event platform is built to optimize their live and mobile bidding experience. If you're hosting a live auction, you can easily add the winner's information, trigger an email to check out, and quickly gather the winner's payment information. You can even send automatic outbid notifications and close bidding for all attendees when everything's been sold.



#### TRY IT IN CLASSY LIVE

Give your attendees an easy way to set a maximum bid on auction items, then let the system auto-bid on their behalf until they reach their max bid. Admins can also set a price that must be met before an item can be won officially to encourage bidding.

## Sell fixed-priced items

Now you can allow both in-person attendees and those who couldn't make it in person to purchase event swag or branded merchandise that help them feel like they're part of the action. Add fixed-price items to your online event venue to sell online, or via your event mobile app.



### TRY IT IN CLASSY LIVE

Boost fundraising activity during your event by displaying live leaderboards, campaign progress, donation activity, and support donations directly within your hybrid event.

## Engagement in Action: [African Community Education](#)



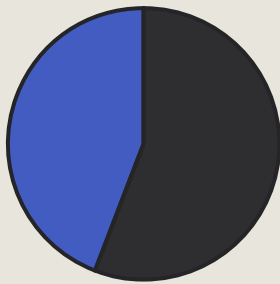
This hybrid gala turned a 15-year-long tradition into a modern experience to reach the masses. **The result? About 200% gala growth year-over-year.**

### **Their formula for hybrid engagement on Classy Live:**

- Direct donation opportunities
- Special merchandise sales
- Authentic African goods raffle
- Simple self-checkout process

## Step 7: Keep the Momentum Going Post-Event

Your event's conclusion is really just the beginning of the potential you can see from each and every attendee as they grow alongside your organization.



**44%**

**of satisfied event attendees look for more ways to support the organization that hosted the event**

[The Fundraising Event Experience Report](#)



My trust and excitement levels are a function of the results I see from a charitable cause. When I see good being done by one of the organizations I contribute to, **I am much more inclined to give more** in the future.

- Surveyed US donor

[Why America Gives](#)



## Showcase How Donations Made an Impact

Keep promoting not only how successful your hybrid event was, but what the accumulation of pre-event registrations, fundraising, and the mid-event donations or auction bids led to. For example, did the donation totals enable a school to be built, families to be fed, or trees to be planted? Get creative about sharing these results.

## Make It Easy to Stay in Touch

Just like the multi-touch nature of your hybrid event, create multiple touchpoints with supporters to hear about what's new throughout the year. Whether it's a new event, a timely response to a crisis, or a campaign announcement, you can create more moments of engagement by expanding beyond a recap email. Send text updates, post on social channels, and create a TikTok or Youtube video series to livestream the event attendees' impact and encourage continued support.



### QUICK TIP

Don't forget about your website, with 60% of all donors citing a nonprofit's website as the top place they'll go to do research before making a donation.

[Why America Gives](#)



**03**

**Build  
Relationships  
With an  
Expanded  
Fundraising  
Strategy**

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# Build Relationships With an Expanded Fundraising Strategy

After you crush your hybrid event, your supporters will have the passion, admiration, and connection to your cause. Why not give them multiple ways to get involved and continue the flexibility they loved about your event?



## Set Up Your Donation Website

Raise more with a mobile-optimized design, modern branding, and flexible options on your [online donation page](#) that quickly move donors through your donation process.



## Encourage Peer-to-Peer Fundraising

Continue to expand your reach internationally with [branded fundraising campaigns](#) that allow your dedicated supporters to donate for their birthdays, weddings, or important occasions to your cause, and even host their own fundraising events.



## Crowdfunding Campaigns

Set up [evergreen crowdfunding microsites](#) that stand out to fundraisers. Let supporters choose how to get involved with your largest giving days, capital campaigns, current event responses, and more.



## Welcome Attendees to a Recurring Donation Program

Build a [reliable revenue stream](#) and appeal to more donors for ongoing support through a recurring donation program. Offer multiple recurring frequencies to allow donors to give at their preferred cadence.



**04**

# **Get Started With the Right Platform**

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## Get Started With the Right Platform

[Classy Live](#) helps you take action on every aspect of an excellent fundraising event experience. Every feature and function in our hybrid event platform is created based on learning what nonprofits need to host a successful event that allows virtual and in-person participants to engage with causes no matter where they are located.

From major fundraising events to intimate VIP donor experiences, Classy Live can power your virtual, hybrid, and in-person event experiences and increase supporter engagement.

- Engage attendees across the globe and boost fundraising revenue
- Raise more with auctions and mobile bidding
- Boost attendee engagement with email and text messaging
- Manage your event with ease
- Drive more direct donations
- Streamline your event logistics

[Get Started on Your Hybrid Event](#)

## About Classy

Classy, an affiliate of GoFundMe, is a Public Benefit Corporation and giving platform that enables nonprofits to connect supporters with the causes they care about. Classy's platform provides powerful and intuitive fundraising tools to convert and retain donors. Since 2011, Classy has helped nonprofits mobilize and empower the world for good by helping them raise over \$5 billion. Classy also hosts the Collaborative conference and the Classy Awards to spotlight the innovative work nonprofits are implementing around the globe. For more information, visit [www.classy.org](http://www.classy.org).