Microsoft

Virtual Event Playbook
Accessible ◆ Inclusive ◆ Engaging

Increase engagement with virtual events

Whether you are a seasoned producer or new to creating virtual events this playbook will walk you through the best practices for using Microsoft 365 technology to deliver compelling events. This content has been compiled through the contributions of many people across Microsoft who have been involved in delivering our flagship events, webinars and leadership townhalls in recent months. We strive to prioritize accessibility, inclusion and engagement as we create the new standard for the audience experience.

We have organized these resources by role and production phase with key sections for everyone. Appendixes provide supplemental information specific to event types. No matter the size of your organization you may find yourself fulfilling multiple roles. Read key information in the "For Everyone" section and what is specific to your role. Use our Event Organizer Checklist to ensure you are on track.

Every event is a learning opportunity. We are all learning together as we transition historically physical events to a digital setting. Be flexible with yourself and your teams as you make the transition. Embrace change and continuing to experiment with methods as you deliver more events.

You are not alone. Bring your questions to our Virtual Events forum to learn from other people who are on this journey. We are always here to help.

Karuana Gatimu
Principal Manager & Technical Producer
Microsoft Teams Customer Advocacy Group

Microsoft 365

Virtual Event Forum

The Virtual Event forum is a community of people just like you who are navigating the new world of delivering virtual events. Join them and subject matter experts who can answer questions and share successful real-world experience.

https://aka.ms/VirtualEventForum

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Everyone

Overview

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Compelling events are about people

Throughout your process of producing a virtual event it is critical to prioritize the following elements:

❑ The clarity of your message
❑ The attendee experience
❑ Your ongoing engagement strategy

All technology decisions should be made with these key elements in mind. Often the most important thing to invest in is the storytelling skills of your presenters who will land your core messages.

Ensure your content has a follow-up lifecycle for attendees who want to continue learning, review content or ask questions.

Events are no longer a destination – they fuel connection, ongoing learning and engagement.

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Event Design Model

The one thing we can never get back is time. This is the most valuable thing an event attendee shares with you.

The most successful virtual events are a part of a long-term audience acquisition & retention strategy. Below is an example framework of an acquisition strategy.

Ensure attendee satisfaction with valuable and engaging content & on-screen talent. Clear calls to action & post-event engagement will ensure the attendees you acquire would return for further events.

**Awareness** – Potential attendees know about you and your event.

Education – Potential attendees gain knowledge about the purpose of your event.

Intent – Potential attendees form intent to participate in your event.

Conversion – Potential attendees convert via registration.

Engagement – Attendee participation.

Satisfaction – Attendees are satisfied with your event and would recommend it to others.

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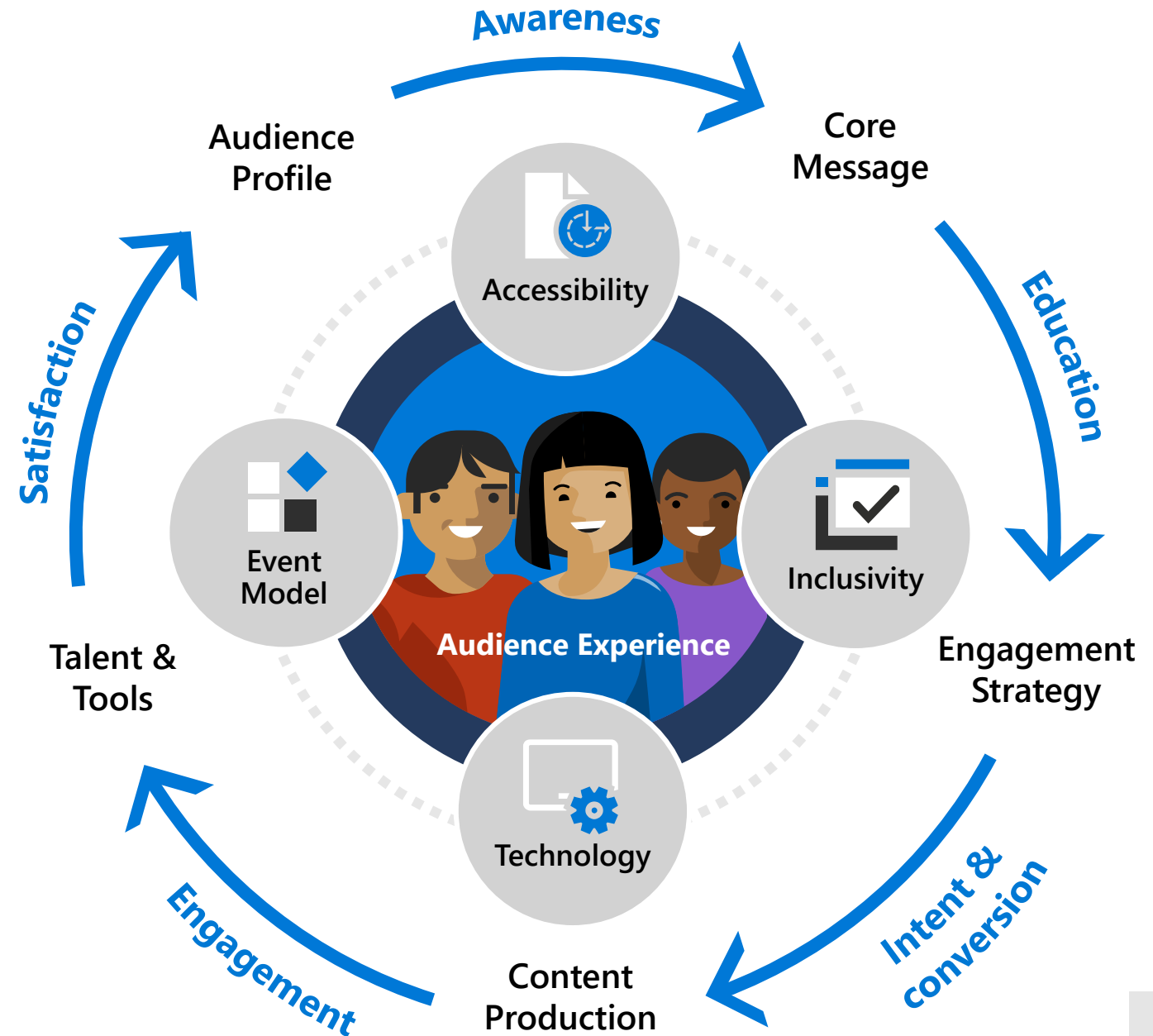
Example: Digital events guiding principles

Event Mission: Online content and interactive experiences that foster learning, connection and inspiration

Approach with empathy and inclusion
Adapt to audience needs/feelings, enabling
all to feel welcome, present and able to connect.

Be a digital content platform
Media and user experience optimized for digital consumption.

Communicate core narratives
Deliver learning content, core messaging, authentic brand experience, priority solutions and engagement opportunities.

Earn audience attention
Help users prioritize content via promotions, schedule reminders and participation rewards.

Access the experts
Reduce friction. Expand connection opportunities. Get information from the source.

Embrace real time feedback & change
Incorporate real time feedback for content and event experiences. Be willing to quickly change to deliver a better event.

Accessible and inclusive events

Your audience is more diverse than you may think. Design an inclusive event by following our guidance and using our tools.


View our guidance for creating accessible events from registration to presentations. These simple but important tips will ensure everyone is included.
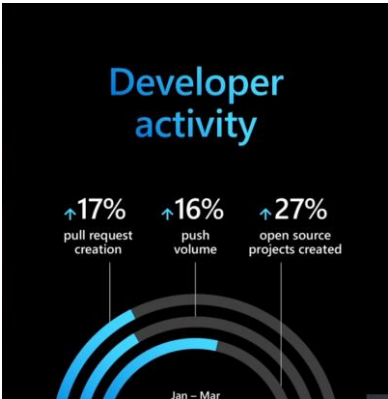

Create inclusive communications that use text and provide an ability for attendees to request accommodations or ask questions. Learn about making accessible e-mails and consider using Sway for event brochures or agendas provided in advance.
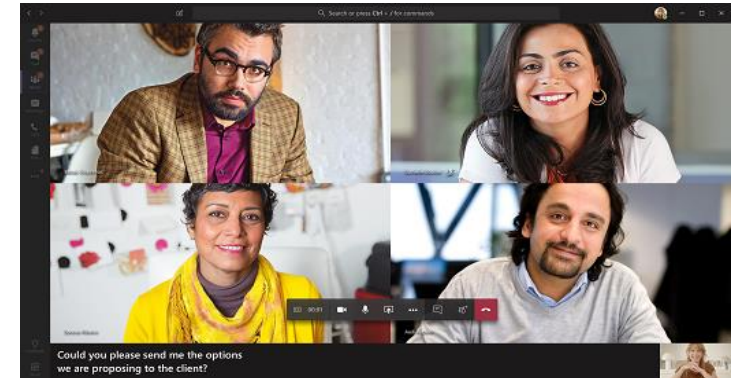
Ensure your audience knows they can turn on live captions in Live Events or PowerPoint Live. For video provided on demand, create caption files (.vtt) for inclusivity on streaming platforms or utilize the built-in capabilities of Microsoft Stream.

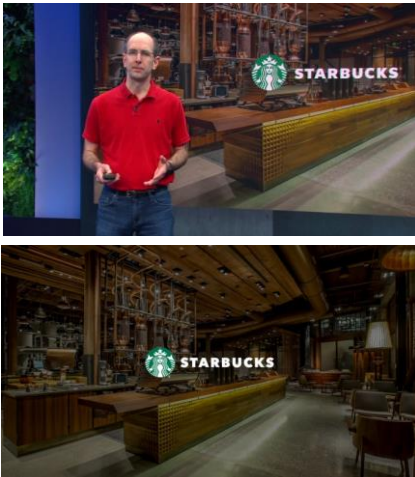# Components of presentation accessibility

Contrast

Developer activity

↑17% pull request creation ↑16% push volume ↑27% open source projects created

Jan – Mar

Shape and color

Subject 1 ●

Subject 2 ▲

Subject 3 ✖

● C1   ▲ C2   ✖ C3

Alt text

STARBUCKS

STARBUCKS

Slide layouts

Microsoft

Presentation title

Subtitle or speaker name

Text layout (without bullet points)

Main topic: Segoe UI, size 28pt
Segoe UI, size 20pt for second level
Segoe UI, size 16pt for third level

Three photos layout

Text placeholder   Text placeholder   Text placeholder

Reading order

Azure

Edge Devices
Azure Stack Azure Sphere Azure Kinect HoloLens Azure Arc

Serverless
Web Databases
Mobile Analytics + ML
Mixed Reality AI
Kubernetes Internet of Things
Events + Integration Media

Tools
Visual Studio
Azure DevOps
GitHub
Power Apps
Power BI

Infrastructure
Compute Networking Storage Security Identity

Reading Order

- ☑ 1 Title 3: Azure databases
- ☐ — Rectangle 50: Decorative
- ☐ — Rectangle 46: Decorative
- ☐ — Rectangle 6: Decorative
- ☐ — Rectangle 48: Decorative
- ☐ — Rectangle 4: Decorative
- ☑ 2 Rectangle 31: Azure Cosmos DB
- ☑ 3 TextBox 69: Non-relational
- ☑ 4 Rectangle 30: Azure Cache for Redis
- ☑ 5 TextBox 68: Cache
- ☑ 6 Rectangle 67: Azure Database for MariaDB
- ☑ 7 Rectangle 66: Azure Database for PostgreS...
- ☑ 8 Rectangle 64: Azure Database for MySQL
- ☑ 9 Rectangle 63: Azure SQL Database
- ☑ 10 TextBox 277: Relational
- ☐ — Graphic 12: Decorative
- ☐ — Graphic 57: Decorative
- ☐ — Graphic 62: Decorative
- ☐ — Graphic 61: Decorative
- ☐ — Graphic 49: Decorative
- ☐ — Graphic 65: Decorative

Accessible color combinations

White R255 G255 B255			Rich Black R0 G0 B0		
AA R255 G147 B73	AA R254 G240 B0	AA R155 G240 B11	AA R48 G229 B208	AA R80 G230 B255	AA R213 G157 B255
AA R216 G59 B1	AA R255 G185 B0	AA R16 G124 B16	AA R0 G133 B117	AA R0 G120 B212	AA R134 G97 B197
AA R107 G41 B41	AA R106 G75 B22	AA R5 G75 B22	AA R39 G75 B71	AA R36 G58 B94	AA R59 G46 B88
R242 G242 B242	R230 G230 B230	R210 G210 B210	R115 G115 B115	R80 G80 B80	R47 G47 B47

Ensure slide content is accessible

Take the following steps to create accessible content that everyone can consume effectively.

Contrast

Use high contrast colors for maximum readability.
The recommended contrast ratio is at least 4.5:1.

| Text | Text | Text |

Color Contrast Analyzer

Download this tool to determine the legibility of text and the contrast of visual elements.

↓ **Download**

Shape and color

Use different shapes with a legend to indicate statuses to accommodate for color blindness.

Example:

Subject 1   ●

Subject 2   ▲

Subject 3   ✖

● C1   ▲ C2   ✖ C3

Alt text

Alt text helps people with screen reader understand the content of slides. You should create alternative text for shapes, pictures, charts, tables, SmartArt graphics, or other objects.

Here's how:
Right click on item.
Select **Edit Alt Text**.
Enter a **Description**.
If an object is meant to add visual styling and doesn't contain meaning (*e.g.* stylistic borders), do not add alt text and instead check **Mark as decorative**.

Slide layouts

Using a built-in slide layout that matches your content ensures a hierarchical reading order of text blocks.

Example:
If a new slide will have a title, choose one of the built-in layouts with a title placeholder rather than starting with a blank layout and adding a text box for the title.

Click to add title

Reading order

Screen readers describe content on the screen in the order it was created. To ensure your content is read back in the order you prefer, arrange your objects in the Selection Pane appropriately. Objects on the bottom of the selection pane are read first.

Here's how:
Click the Home tab.
In the Drawing group, select the Arrange drop-down menu.
Click Selection Pane.

Additional tips

Be sure to run the **Accessibility Checker**! Go to **File**→ click the **Check for Issues** drop down menu→ click **Check Accessibility.**
Videos need to be accessible: If your presentation includes a video, ensure it is captioned and audio described (if appropriate).
Visit the Office Accessibility Center to learn more about accessibility in PowerPoint.

Inclusivity begins in planning

Creating an inclusive event begins with how you plan. Hear feedback from a variety of roles in your organization. Now is the time to address ideas as you reinvent your event for virtual delivery.

Some recommended tasks:

❑ Prepare, publish and enforce an event Code of Conduct (CoC). Use our example to get started.

❑ Include a CoC contact for concerns.

Include ways for people to provide preferences in the registration form, including preferred pronouns, physical and mental requirements and any other necessary identifiers. (When in person - dietary needs and allergies)

Engage various stakeholder groups early to get feedback and suggestions. Remember to include those who have not participated in the past.

Review your speaker list. Is there an opportunity to bring in additional talent to work with seasoned presenters?

Ensure your event team represents diverse perspectives across your organization.

Plan for event/session surveys to get feedback from all involved.

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Your effort matters

Review our guidance about the simple ways you can be more inclusive of people with disabilities. Beyond virtual events, these items apply to the broader context of our work and professional relationships. The seven ways to be more inclusive of people with disabilities are below. Click through to the link to view short videos explaining each one.

1. **Be your usual self**

2. **Make sure your work is accessible**

3. **Disability is a strength**

4. **Follow the principles of inclusive design**

5. **Accept each person as a human first**

6. **Learn the appropriate etiquette**

7. **Follow our lead**

SIMPLE THINGS COUNT

Seven ways to be more inclusive of people with disabilities

SIMPLE THINGS COUNT

EMILY LADAU
DISABILITY RIGHTS ACTIVIST

EMILY LADAU | #1

Be your usual self

Microsoft 365

Continue learning

View additional content at https://aka.ms/VirtualEventPlaybook

Before your Event

Organizer: Transitioning to virtual events

Organizer: Selecting your event experience

Organizer: Scheduling your Live Event

Organizer: Scheduling your Teams meeting

Presenter: Presenter best practices

IT Administrator: Manage service access & configuration

During Your Event

Organizer: Managing your event

Producer: Producing your Live Event

Presenter: Live Event Presenter experience

Presenter: Teams meeting Presenter experience

Moderator: Moderator best practices

Attendee: Attendee experience in Teams meetings & Live Events

Attendee: Guest Attendee join experience in Teams meetings

After Your Event

Moderator: Moderator best practices

Organizer: Post event actions

Appendix & Resources