



# TAYLOR MADE EXPERIENCE

## Pivoting an Annual Fundraising Event to Virtual Platform

Due to COVID-19, nonprofits' ability to offer essential services has been greatly diminished, at least for the short term. But organizations are more committed than ever to doubling down on efforts and reinvigorating the ethos of their missions during this unprecedented time. To help address the immediate and increasing needs of nonprofit organizations there are many ways to offer creative and engaging solutions to donors today. So you can't gather in-person, bring the event to them!

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### 10 TIPS AND TRICKS

1. **Engage an external AV/production team** to establish a sophisticated and robust platform! Consider them what would have been an on-site AV/production team. They can:
  - a. Assist with the design and development of event platform views and content.
  - b. Manage the virtual stage, facilitating the flow of the program, along with all technical needs.
  - c. Troubleshoot any challenges in real-time.
2. **Pre-record content**
  - a. Use video testimonials from staff, volunteers, and clients to highlight the organization's work.
  - b. Pre-recordings mitigate live blunders and exercise quality control.
3. **Get a well-known emcee to "host" the event!** This will attract guests to the event, keep them engaged, manage the tempo of the program and guide guests through the experience.
4. **Offer a VIP Reception** to top sponsors:
  - a. Offer exclusive access to a 30-minute virtual party with a theme before the "main event."
  - b. Come up with a signature cocktail and invite a mixologist (or celebrity) to show attendees how to make the concoction and enjoy a toast together!
5. **Include a variety of content:**
  - a. live entertainment, special VIP/celebrity guests, honorees, mission-related videos.
6. **Showcase sponsor** logos via platform (lower thirds) displays and have verbal acknowledgments from program participants.
  - a. Include sponsor logos on email and social media posts regarding the upcoming event.
  - b. Give top sponsors a 30-second segment about why they support your cause.



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7. **Integrate with an existing fundraising platform** such as [OneCause](#) to support a live appeal, online auction, utilize text-to-pledge, and/or execute a traditional tele-thon!
  - a. Use existing staff or board members to answer phone calls and personally thank donors!
  - b. Quantify the request - \$500 means XYZ for your organization.
  - c. Set a goal up front in the program and tease a big surprise (special guest or other exciting content) once the milestone has been reached or revealed at the end of the event.
8. **Request in-kind donations** of food and beverage from existing partners/prior sponsors:
  - a. Create care packages for attendees to pick up in advance then enjoy at home during the live broadcast.
  - b. Mail sponsors/ticket purchasers a box filled with your organization's branded amenities, napkins, cocktail recipes, mission-related content (annual reports), pledge cards, event programs, mini desserts.
  - c. Create giveaways/gift bags to be sent as a Thank You to all attendees post event.
9. **Record the event and share the link** on social media to reach a broader audience.
  - a. Set an expiration date to view, creating a sense of urgency around accessing the content for those who were unable to attend/view the live event.
10. **Track the Reach!** Monitor and quantify the number of attendees and use these metrics to show value to your sponsors. (Track live and post event views!)