Virtual Communications Tips
University Events | University Advancement
As of June 2, 2020

Communications Schedule

- In general, work with a much shorter timeline than you would for an in-person event
- Suggest sending the initial invitation two weeks prior to the event (three weeks max)
- Suggest sending one or two reminder messages (one communication per week leading up to the event)
- If invitees are encouraged to submit questions for a Q&A, a reminder is often sent to registrants to submit questions within three business days of the event
- Send a confirmation message the day before the event with a link to the virtual session, meeting ID and password
- Send an additional confirmation message one hour before the event with a link to the virtual session, meeting ID and password
- If desired, a follow-up communication should be sent within three business days following the event
- Emails generate around 50-60% of registrations

Ideal day/times

- Mornings don't typically perform well. Consider all time zones (right after lunch is better for that reason)
- Friday afternoons are not ideal
- Avoid day-of, all-audience messages
- The first email and the last email typically perform the best. Reminder emails in between get a very low response rate.
- Sunday evenings have proven successful with students

Content

- All communications should contain a clear call to action (register for this, checkout this website, send us questions, etc.). General updates without a call to action or new information don't get as much engagement.
- If taking RSVPs and registrants are removed from reminder lists, the reminder content should stay the same as the original invitation.
- If not taking RSVPs and/or the full audience receives each reminder, consider adding new content to each subsequent reminder to build excitement toward the event.
- Consider ways of bringing elements of an in-person event to your audience members at home to improve the experience (printable branding, breakout rooms for small-group socializing/mingling, etc.).
- Enrichment activities (art, exercise) and CMU innovations have had the highest responses.
- Professional development has also been popular, especially when people are going to get something specific to their industry or their role.
- Audiences respond when the email comes from leadership or if the event is hosted by leadership.
- Consider sending follow-up messaging which includes resources shared during the event, an event recording, etc. to registrants who attended as well as registrants who did not. Some may register, knowing they won't attend, but expecting to receive a recording.