How To Organize A Virtual Rally or Event

How to Agitate for Change When You Can’t Leave Your House

In June 2020, in the midst of a global pandemic and a fight against racial injustice, #GivingTuesdaySpark leader, 13 year old Khloe Thompson wanted to offer young people a space to learn, feel less alone, and take action safely. She planned a virtual rally for kids, bringing in activists and educators to talk about racism and mental health.

“I wanted to create a brave space where kids my age could learn, feel less alone, and get empowered to take action.” - Khloe Thompson, age 13

This toolkit provides some tips and guidance on how you might organize a virtual rally or livestream event to raise awareness and fire up your supporters even amidst physical distancing.

Tap Speakers Who Can Get Your Group Fired Up

Roles:
- An MC or facilitator
- Someone to passionately educate folks on the issue
- Someone to talk about the solution
- Someone to bring it home
- Think about inviting legislators or policymakers if appropriate
- Someone to run technology and run that chat

Choose Your Tech

Are You Planning to Have Your Audience Participate?
If you’re planning on having attendees turn on their cameras and participate during the rally, you’ll need to use a virtual meeting platform. Any one of them can handle the job. Examples you might use are Zoom, ClickMeeting, Go2Webinar. We chose a meeting vs a webinar because we wanted attendees to be able to turn their videos on at a certain point in the program so they could show their posters and do a call back chant together. The downside was that attendees could (and sometimes did accidentally) turn their own videos on.
Safety Precautions When Using Virtual Meeting Software
If you're expecting young people as attendees, these safety ideas are particularly important
- Set up your meeting or webinar with registration. This way your attendees get a custom personal link to use to join the call instead of having a public link flying around on social media.
- Never use your personal ID. Use the auto-generated one
- Use the Waiting Room feature.
- Mute audio and disable video by default for attendees when you first set up the meeting (although since attendees are able to turn their video on, you'll want to ask attendees to keep their videos off until later.
- Turn off screen sharing for everyone but the host
- Lock the meeting after around 15min. This will disallow anyone else from joining the meeting, including potential Zoom Bombers.
- Decide whether you'll enable the chat function.
- Know that as host, you have the ability to bounce unruly guests out of the meeting.

Livestreaming Only?
If you're not planning on having your audience participate, you've got a few more options available to you: check out platforms like Restream or Switcher Studio. Either of these will allow you to have guest speakers, panelists, and an MC. They also include advanced functionality like lower thirds and calls to action.

Fundraising During Your Virtual Rally?
Wanting to raise funds for an organization during your rally? Check out Facebook's new donate button for livestreams or consider Tiltify.

Inclusivity and Accessibility
Make sure your rally is accessible to everyone by including live captioning and/or live ASL interpretation. If you can't provide this functionality, consider including captions on the recording of your livestream afterward. Otter.ai is a good tool for this.

Building a Page or Microsite for your Virtual Rally
If you're building a page or microsite for your rally, consider including:
- A countdown to the livestream (which would get replaced with the actual livestream when it's time to go live)
- A toolkit for others to help spread the message about your cause or issue
- A call to action like:
  - signing a petition
  - registering or pledging to vote
  - Posting an image or video on their social channels holding a sign (remember to ask them to use your campaign hashtag)
  - fundraising for a cause
- A mechanism to capture email addresses, especially if you’re not using a virtual meeting platform and a registration process.
- Ask people to submit 30-second video testimonials about why your cause matters to them.
- Add “See Who’s in the Crowd” functionality and ask them to upload a photo and quote about why they’re joining the rally. (Example below via June2020.org)

![See Who is in the Crowd](image)

**Galvanizing Moment**
Every good rally needs a moment of solidarity, a galvanizing moment. In person rallies often have marching, singing, chanting. What can you replicate in an online space?
- Have people march virtually
- Have everyone turn their videos on to do a chant
- End with a mini concert from local artists

**Post-Event**
Setup your thank you email with a strong call to action and time it so that it appears in attendees inbox as soon as the rally ends.

What to include:
- Link to the livestream so they can share with their friends
- Relevant articles
- Action item: Click to tweet, a petition to sign, call script to urge lawmakers to take action, or an automatic email template.
  - For Khloé’s Kids Rally, she asked youth attendees to commit to learning something, doing something, or post something that weekend. Her email gave one example of each but she encouraged her attendees to be creative. Make sure you tell them what hashtag to use so you can engage with their content later.