



Driving a world-class virtual event with  
the Cvent Virtual Attendee Hub®

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**335**

virtual attendees

**32**

virtual sponsors

**25**

new business  
leads

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Fred Diamond, Co-Founder and President of the Institute for Excellence in Sales (IES), knows the value of a high-profile event. For the membership organization, his goal is to help sales leaders acquire, retain, motivate, and elevate top tier sales talent. “We have regular programs for sales leaders and teams and we do a number of thought leader programs,” he explains. “Prior to March, we were doing 50 programs a year in-person.” When the global health crisis hit, IES’ live programs came to a temporary halt.

## Navigating Virtual Experiences with the Cvent Virtual Attendee Hub®

In evaluating the best options with the uncertainty of the crisis in mind, Fred decided to move the organization’s programs virtual. The 10th annual Sales Excellence Awards Ceremony was originally scheduled to be held in-person in June, and the IES team planned to host as many as 500 attendees at their biggest awards program yet. A full breakfast, sponsorships, and registrations would drive revenue. When evaluating options, the team first considered postponing for a hybrid event in the fall. However, the evolving situation across the summer meant it became less feasible from a safety standpoint, especially for an event of that size. Instead, they decided to shift to a fully virtual event to be held in early October.

Fred knew a single integrated solution would be needed to manage the many challenges of producing a world-class virtual event. That’s when he discovered the new Cvent Virtual Attendee Hub®. “We were impressed and moved to have it for our event,” says Fred. “You wouldn’t know it was a new product at the time, from the elegance and the way the system operates. It felt so mature.” In addition to utilizing Cvent’s production

services to facilitate the event execution, Fred’s team worked with a production studio in Virginia to film a select number of segments. Recording in advance meant Fred’s team had full control of the final deliverable without risking issues going completely “live” during the awards ceremony. It also gave his team the opportunity to partner with Cvent to facilitate the best digital experience possible. “You can’t just transpose the live event to the virtual space,” he advises. “There’s a whole different mindset in the way people engage online, so your event production needs to reflect that.”

By reworking planned content to better fit the needs of a virtual experience, Fred’s team created a two-hour digital show that would keep attendees glued to their screens. Entertainment, videos, highly-polished visuals, shorter segments, and other deliverables helped his team fit the content to the virtual viewing format. The high-quality production included multiple cameras with different angles for a variety of shots, crisp audio, and the ability to work closely with the producer to execute his vision for run-of-show.



## Ensuring Digital Sponsor ROI

As sponsorships are a significant KPI for the event, he also worked with Cvent and other partners to create innovative sponsorship opportunities. To manage sponsors, Fred's team used Cvent's Exhibitor Management tool to manage three levels of sponsors. He says the tool was easy to use and allowed the exhibitors to self-manage tasks and other items. Sponsors were invited to create a one-minute reel that would be given a high-quality treatment from the production studio, and could even opt to film in-studio. The video would not only be featured throughout the event, but would be available on the post-event site and YouTube; this way, it was a valuable asset sponsors could leverage in their own marketing materials. IES also featured the 32 sponsors across the virtual hub, whether on the event overview page or through the dedicated sponsor section.

## Creating Seamless Experiences in the Virtual Attendee Hub

Working with the right team is crucial to produce a top-tier event. "There's a lot of work that goes into producing a world-class event, and you need the right crew to produce it," says Fred. He adds, "You also need a foolproof platform." Using Cvent's Event Marketing and Management solution to manage registrations for the event gave Fred and his team peace of mind. They knew the data would be directly integrated into the Virtual Attendee Hub. "We trust this event to the event management software, and that's what Cvent is famous for," he says. He also enjoyed the automated Cvent Payment Services feature, wherein all payments were digitally processed. "I didn't get a single email from anyone saying there was an issue with their credit card or anything. It was foolproof," Fred says.

Navigating the livestream for the virtual event meant trusting the Cvent professional services team. "I felt great and very comfortable in trusting the Cvent team to support and guide us through the steps in a tight timeframe," Fred adds. With a tightly-packed program planned down to the minute, Fred was able to include his valued sponsors in the planned agenda as an additional courtesy. "We went live at 9:30 in the morning, and for a full half hour the sponsor advertisements rotated before the show to give them a little more value," he explains. He was also able to alert sponsors to the exact time their content would be featured during the ceremony itself, and kept the content up for an additional 90 days after the event to give sponsors even more exposure.

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*- Fred Diamond, Co-Founder & President*

Attendees were able to access the show during the 30-minute window and an agenda page gave them an overview of the content to come. With one click access, they could easily enter the video stream through the Cvent Video Player feature.

The easily navigable experience allowed attendees to watch live during the ceremony. They could also register to watch on-demand whenever they liked. This was key, says Fred, for those who could not attend a morning event due to work schedules, meetings, or other conflicts. In fact, this aspect of user behavior is something Fred believes the industry still needs to adjust to, whether as event producers or attendees. They were able to adjust their marketing strategy to suit these different user behaviors based on invitee responses. “The invitee management portion of the software was really important for us,” says Fred. “We were checking on-demand reports frequently to see who had or hadn’t registered, which companies they were from, and which sponsors they might be.”

Leveraging the email marketing tool, Fred’s team was able to retarget specific invitees with follow-up offers and additional marketing tactics to drive registrations. Ultimately, his team saw 335 registrations, up from the forecasted 300, and have since tracked 50 additional registrations for the on-demand experience. What Fred finds most interesting is the seamless integration between the Cvent solutions. “I didn’t realize they were separate, yet integrated systems, because it was so seamless and easy to learn as a new user,” he says.



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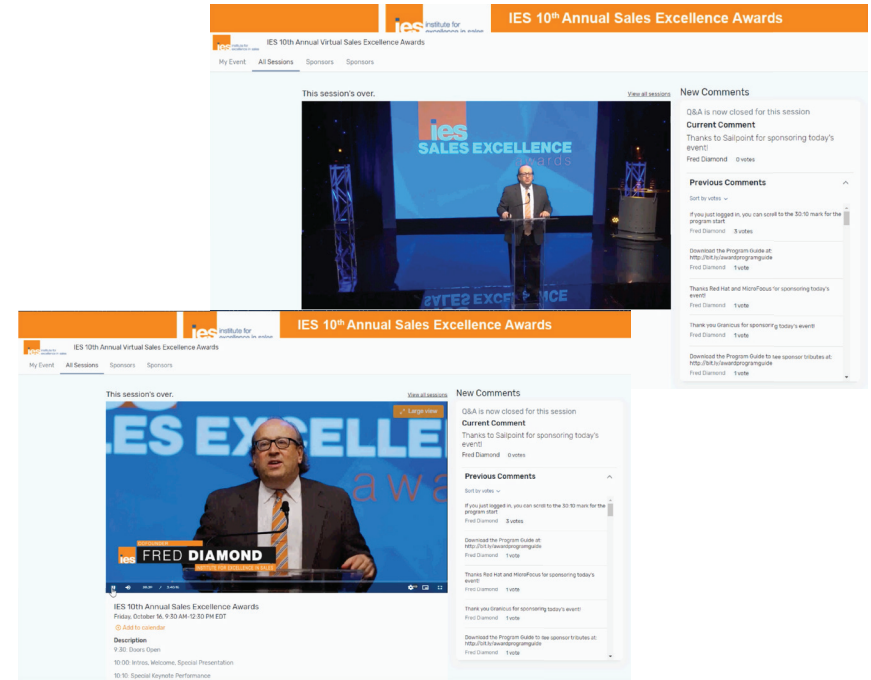
- Fred Diamond, Co-Founder & President

# Fostering Virtual Success for Future Growth

The ultimate measure of success for Fred's team is not the revenue generated from the event. Instead, he says, it's about fostering awareness and relationships, and ensuring the event is known as an industry-leading experience. "Of the 32 sponsors we added to this event, 25 were new to us, which is incredible in terms of potential business relationships," he says. He credits this to the exciting opportunities for sponsorships in the digital space. "There's so many creative things you can do with virtual, and you need to think about the value that virtual is bringing," he explains. The response to the event was overwhelmingly positive, both from sponsors and attendees. "They were all very impressed with the whole process," he adds.

It's also important to consider the viewing experience, says Fred. "Not everyone can attend the live event, but if you make it available, people can consume the content at their convenience later," he insists. The longevity of virtual content signifies an important shift in how event producers need to think about virtual, with the understanding that valuable content can and should be available after the live event. "We're probably going to double the amount of people viewing it after, up to 1,000 people I'm guessing," he says.

Ultimately, the virtual event helped IES not only foster valuable new relationships with sponsors, but further elevated the brand experience across a world-class virtual event. The integrated system automated the attendee dataflow, allowing Fred's team to manage a high-quality virtual production experience to delight and engage attendees and sponsors alike. He says, "The event exceeded our expectations and it was a great decision to go with Cvent. Having this virtual event hosted in the Cvent Virtual Attendee Hub was the smartest thing we ever did."



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