BIA Toolkit: Hosting Virtual Events
Planning
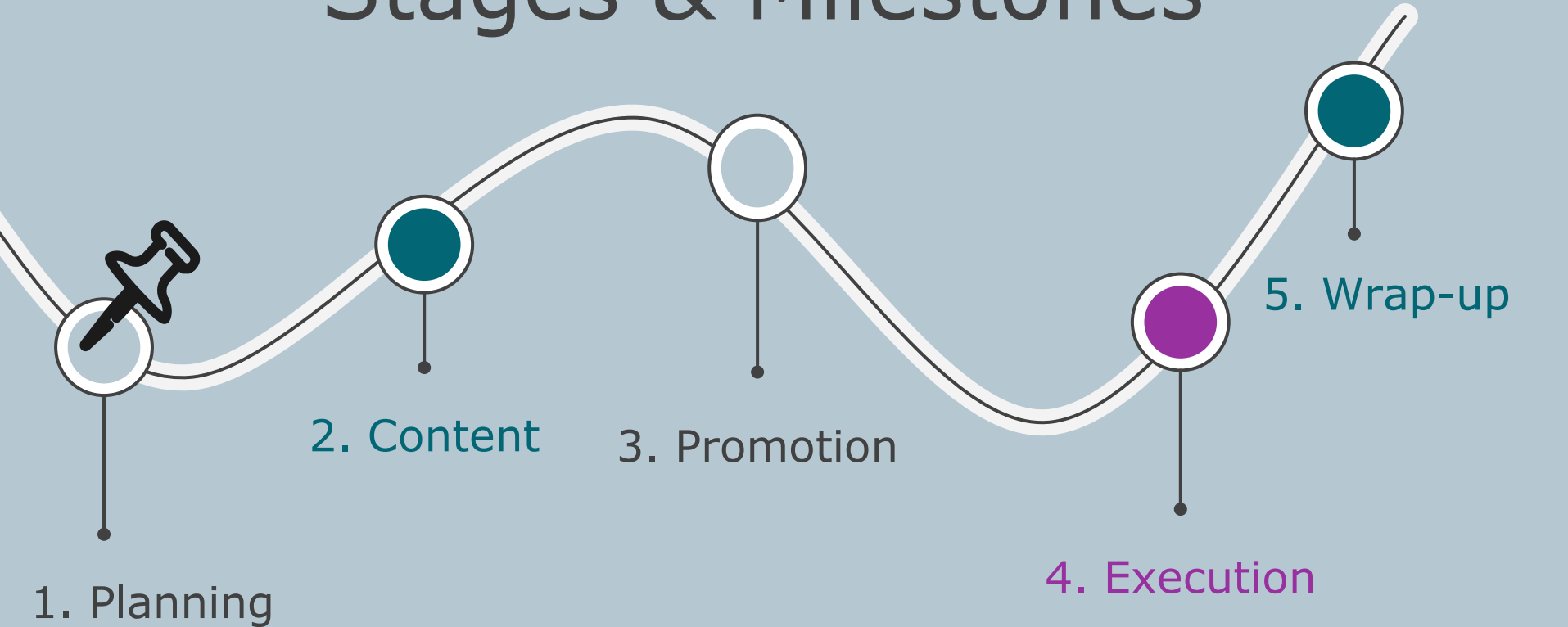
A step-by-step guide

Riverside
BIA

Virtual Events: Stages & Milestones

1. Planning

2. Content

3. Promotion

4. Execution

5. Wrap-up

1. PLANNING

Assemble Your Team

Quick Tip: does your BIA have an existing Marketing Committee? This would be a great place to start!

Who do you need on your Virtual Event Team:
• A BIA staff person to lead and coordinate overall
• A videographer/ editor
• Graphic designer
• A technician
• An event host
• A event moderator/support person

Consider: can you recruit team members from among your local BIA members?

Brainstorming with your Team

Decide on which events to take online – they can be a re-imagination of events you've done in-person before or completely new concepts

Brainstorm with your team to determine:
- Overall event concept and name
- Event goals –why re you doing the event virtually?
- Event elements – what do you want to happen within the event?
- The flow of your event – how are you making it happen?
- Details like the date/time and approx duration
- Whether it is a live stream, pre-recorded, or a mix of both
- How much audience interactivity do you want and what will be done to engage the audience? (e.g. chat moderation, trivia with host, breakout rooms)
- Are story boards/ scripts needed to support any live stream or pre-recorded segments?

Thinking About Virtual Event Content...

Event Type	Pros	Cons	Reference
Fully pre-recorded content	- Easier to administer the event - Low risk by minimizing potential internet connection issues - Easier to plan for and test	- If done well engagement can still be high but may be less than live-streamed content - Video content creation and editing of the full whole event can be more expensive	- Riverside Public Art Tour - Riverside Howl-o-ween - Riverside Antler Breakfast
Combination of pre-recorded and live streamed content	- Can engaging and fun especially if live streaming happens in different locations and there is interaction between hosts/ entertainers	- Can be very tricky to ensure smooth content based on weather and potential technical issues - You are not fully in control; more errors can happen while live streaming	- Riverside Eats Virtually
Fully Live-streamed event	- Most engaging - More authentic content	- The expense of the host can be high - Unpredictable	Note: our project did not test this option

Workback Plan & timeline example

Week 1

Week 4

LIVE VIRTUAL EVENT
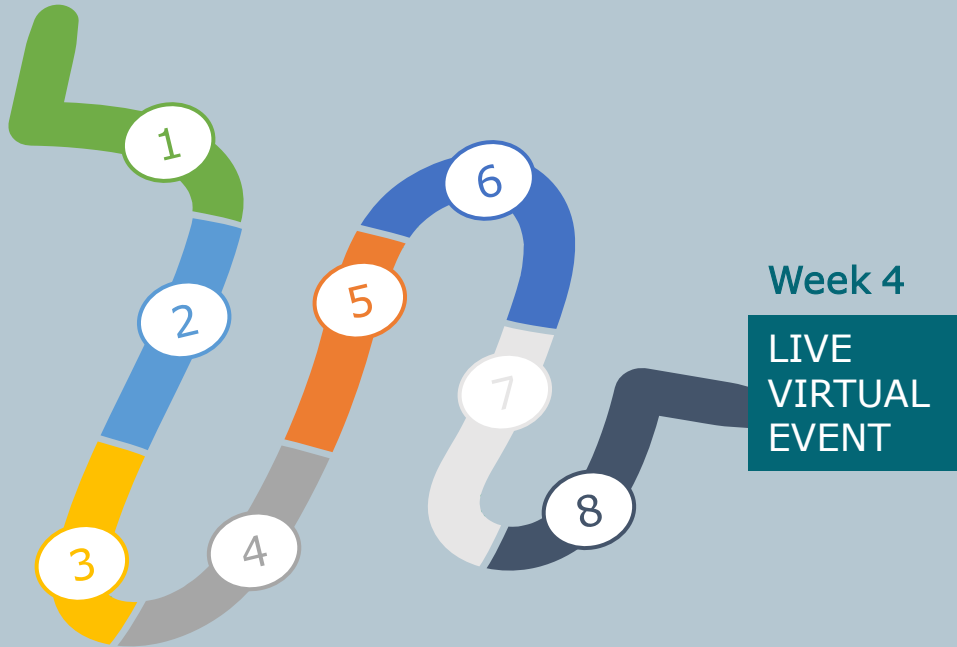
1. Event elements
2. Book a technician and a host
3. Record pre-recorded videos
4. Creative (design) and promotional content
5. Script, Eventbrite, and emails content
6. Go live with promotions
7. Final event rundown and test run
8. Execution and recording event

Decide on Your Virtual Event Hosting Platform

Your team will need to decide on your virtual event platform. We recommend Zoom (https://zoom.us) as a ready-to-use, well- known, professional and low-cost way to run your virtual events.

To use Zoom, you will need to create an account and purchase a basic meeting subscription which allows at least 100 people to join your virtual event. You may use Zoom Webinar but it is not necessary and depends on the level of live interaction you are looking for.

When deciding what Zoom platform you will use ask yourself:
• Do you need breakout rooms for different activities?
• Do you need audience members to interact with one another on screen or is the chat sufficient?

If you answered yes to any of the above, you may choose Zoom webinar, otherwise Zoom meeting should suffice!

Decide on Your Virtual Event Registration Platform

Your team will also need to decide on your <u>virtual event registration/ ticketing solution</u>. Consider the platform's flexibility in terms of creating an attractive splash page, ability to share promotional content, managing registration/ ticket types, and communicating with registrants and attendees.

We recommend <u>Eventbrite (</u><u>www.eventbrite.ca</u><u>) </u>due to its long-time reputation, ready-to-use, professional and low-cost way to run your virtual events. If you are hosting an event with free tickets, there will be no cost to host registration using Eventbrite!

Hire talent

In addition to your team, you may plan to hire talent such as a musician, comedian, celebrity, magician or other entertainers. BIA staff or whichever team member is leading the event coordination, will need to work with each entertainer to ensure their role/segment(s) are brought together into the whole virtual event

If scripts are needed for any segments, you may need to hire a writer

Consider: can any of your event team members or other BIA members be recruited to fill these roles?

Thinking about KPIs

It's important to begin thinking about and tracking your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from the outset. The below table includes different Key Performance Indicators to measure the performance and success of your virtual event:

Stage	KPI	Metrics
Before the event	- Event registrations - Revenue Generated	- Track registrations/ tickets sold - Gross Sales Value; How much money were you able to raise (if applicable)
During the event	- Number of attendees - How long attendees stayed online - Level of engagement - Money raised (e.g. during silent auction or other fundraising elements)	- How many people attended the event - Compare the number of attendees at the beginning and the end of the event - The activity level on the chat channels - If Auction or other fundraising elements during event: how many items you sold and how much money did you raise
After the event	- Number of visits to the on-demand content portal (e.g. YouTube, you website)	- Number of views of the public event recording on YouTube - Direct website and search traffic

Next....