



# HYBRID DINE-AROUND ACTIVATION

## *Innovative Virtual Engagement: How To Activate Your Hybrid Meeting*

### Overview

This case study will examine how a traditionally in-person customer event, held annually as part of a major industry event, successfully became an engaging activation for virtual attendees within a hybrid event model.

### Background

Part of a major hospitality industry tradeshow, the ninth annual Hilton dine-around customer event is an opportunity to showcase a Hilton property while creating a meaningful experience with customers. Due to COVID-19 health and safety concerns, the industry tradeshow canceled its in-person event experiences.

Though an in-person experience was no longer an option, the event team still wanted to highlight Hilton properties and create thoughtful connection with customers while offering a unique experience reminiscent of previous dine-around iterations.

Ultimately, the team decided on a virtual dine-around activation, where Hilton Executive Chefs from around the world would host virtual “rooms” where they would prepare a dish for online attendees. Attendees were encouraged to purchase ingredients and cook along with the Chef, or simply watch and learn.

### Method

With limited time to execute the virtual dine-around activation, the team needed to move quickly.

The event objective included creating multiple touchpoints that were impactful for customers, showcasing how Hilton properties are utilizing EventReady. The activation engagement objective was to ensure that every virtual attendee left the activation with the same experience. To assist with this, the event team asked each Executive Chef to walk through creating the same recipe: the favorite taco recipe of Chef Mauricio from Hilton Los Cabos Beach & Gulf Resort.

The activation took place in 10 separate virtual rooms, all with different start times to accommodate as many time zones as possible. The planning process included the following:

- Created a show flow for all 10 virtual rooms to ensure a consistent experience for every attendee  
*[see Appendix for example]*
- Assigned Hilton moderators to each room to manage the presentation and chat box
- Hosted technical rehearsals with each Chef to test the audio, video, lighting, placement of camera and internet connection
- Provided Chefs with talking points and sample questions to keep attendees engaged
- Created a PowerPoint deck for the event, including a welcome slide, Chef introduction slide and “**thank you**” slide
- Prepared pre-recorded video content

Attendee communication was handled by the Hilton industry partner, and included attendee invitation, “**Know Before You Go**” details, attendee shopping list for recipe ingredients and post-event communication.

## Results

In total, this hybrid event featured approximately 400 participants between the 10 virtual rooms throughout the day:

- 400+ virtual attendees
- 1-2 in-person attendees per virtual room  
*(the Executive Chef and Director of Sales and Marketing or General Manager)*

Feedback from attendees was constructive and positive:

- *“It was amazing! I love this activity.”*
- *“Attendees seemed to enjoy the content and interaction.”*
- *“Love it! Great feedback from the event! Very cool and innovative.”*
- *“Great idea! Sometimes it was difficult to see the food as the lighting was not ideal and maybe the camera was too far away.”*

When surveyed on their experience during the virtual dine-around, 89% of attendees stated that they would attend a Hilton virtual booth next year at the industry tradeshow, should health and safety concerns related to COVID-19 remain.

## Conclusion

Overall, both the business and engagement objectives were achieved, with an impressive customer turnout and excellent feedback from virtual attendees. Although attendees still commented that nothing beats an in-person event experience, participants in the Hilton hybrid dine-around activation applauded the innovative activity and expressed that they truly felt engaged.

The following were identified as WINS:

- Innovative take on traditional hybrid engagement methods, especially encouraging attendees to cook along with the Chef
- Pre-planning with virtual room moderators and Chefs, including lighting, internet and audio review

The following were identified as LESSONS LEARNED:

- **LOGISTICS & SET UP**
  - » *Keep each session under one hour to keep people engaged*
  - » *Ensure you have at least one person on call to manage potential PowerPoint slides, videos and chat box*
  - » *Zoom is optimal for this type of event when paired with these learnings:*
    - *Dial in 30 minutes early to ensure everything is set up correctly*
    - *Make sure you spotlight the speaker once you log into Zoom (this will allow the speaker to maintain the featured video position, regardless of if other people are on talking)*
  - » *Secure hardwired internet for both the moderator and in-person talent*
  - » *Provide wireless headphones for the Chef/Speaker to ensure quality audio*
  - » *The camera should be at a higher angle for an optimal view of the demonstration*

## ■ EVENT STRATEGY

- » Provide the co-host with clear direction (e.g. a script to make the demonstration more of a conversation)
- » Limit “**dead time**” by bringing on a mixologist/other guest to keep the audience engaged throughout the event, especially when the food is cooking
- » Consider sending a pre-event package (e.g. a unique spice, cocktail set, etc.)
- » Select a recipe with ingredients that are easily obtained by all attendees
- » Prepare talking points for the Chef, including questions to engage the audience

## Resources

### Virtual Show Room Flow

Item	Presenter	Description	Comments	PPT Slide	Timing
<b>Made in Kitchens</b>	Video	To be shown as attendees are waiting to join the live event		N/A	<b>3 min (on a loop)</b>
<b>Welcome</b>	Moderator	Welcome		Welcome slide	
<b>Introduction</b>	Executive Chef	Executive Chef introduction, short overview of the property and introduction to dish about to be prepared	Make sure the Chef wears mask and gloves to be EventReady compliant—OK to remove mask on camera as the food will not be served to any guests	Introduction slide with headshot of Executive Chef	<b>4 min</b>
<b>EventReady</b>	Video	EventReady Video		Video	<b>1.5 min</b>
<b>Cooking</b>	Executive Chef	Show how to prepare adobo to marinate chicken in	For the purpose of this event, the chicken will marinate for 15 min	No slide	<b>10 min</b>
<b>Cooking</b>	Executive Chef	Show how to prepare salsa	While chicken is marinating Chef to engage with audience through questions provided	No slide	<b>10 min</b>
<b>Cooking</b>	Executive Chef	Cook chicken. Introduce video of Chef Mauricio		No slide	<b>5 min</b>
<b>Los Cabos</b>	Video	Chef Mauricio preparing tacos		Video	<b>6 min</b>
<b>Cooking</b>	Executive Chef	Welcome everyone back Finish chicken			<b>3 min</b>
<b>Cooking</b>	Executive Chef	Finalizing meal and opening up for questions			<b>5 min</b>