

Transcript

00:00:00 Dewayne

The shift show captains Log episode 2.

00:00:04 Dewayne

In this episode, Dewayne and Joe will discuss how to leverage Microsoft Teams is what they like to call a virtual venue.

00:00:13 Dewayne

Learn how you may already have access to a platform that can be leveraged to host large multi day conferences and symposiums.

00:00:21 Dewayne

They'll touch on tips and tricks that they learned throughout their building process, as well as some best practices. So buckle up, you get ready to hit maximum warp with the shift show.

00:00:46 Dewayne

Hey buddy, you ready for another episode?

00:00:49 Joe

I'm ready for another episode. Happy Holidays.

00:00:52 Dewayne

Well thanks man you too.

00:00:55 Dewayne

Well, this topic for this podcast is something that we've been doing a lot of lately. You talk about running rampant. This is something that kind of came to us within our organization. Somebody said, hey, could you do this and then it opens some sort of weird floodgate so it just.

00:01:16 Dewayne

Does this seem to slow down?

00:01:18 Joe

Like to say no good deed goes unpunished, I think with our first one.

00:01:23 Dewayne

Yeah, so we're going to talk about leveraging Microsoft Teams to host your next big event, and we don't mean like a meeting. And we don't mean like a live event. We mean like a five day conference. We mean those things that we used to be able to do.

00:01:43 Dewayne

Before this whole pandemic happened, you know the the large conferences you know in our world.

00:01:50 Dewayne

There's lots of pockets of associations and clubs and chapters of things and different types of people that work in the same field, and they have a you know, corn conference or whatever it might be, and they're used to doing it every year, and now they're coming to it and saying, hey, what do we?

00:02:12 Dewayne

What do we do?

00:02:13 Dewayne

You know how? How keep these girls?

00:02:16 Dewayne

In some of them had gone for a long time, you know that's one of the things that's been kind of cool about. This is seeing the history behind some of these. We had one. How long was it going? It was.

00:02:28 Joe

We've had tiers hundred 102 of 'em over 100 years nonstop, no breaks.

00:02:36 Joe

Through through a previous pandemic.

00:02:39 Joe

They were able to still keep going.

00:02:42 Dewayne

So this yeah, we weren't around for that one, no?

00:02:46 Dewayne

Spanish flu for my time.

00:02:48 Joe

Been important to keep those going for them. Little pressure on on on those events, but a lot of important research that was happening.

00:02:59 Joe

And usually what in the education field, a lot of sharing of research data or work that a grad student has been working on and.

00:03:09 Joe

They want to kind of present that information in these associations and these conferences. Some of them are faculty based.

00:03:18 Joe

And we had one that was kind of around teaching enhancements and that had been going on for over 20 years.

00:03:26 Joe

So yeah, definitely a lot of history to keep. Keep moving along and come up with solutions for them.

00:03:33 Dewayne

Yeah alright, well we've got a few points to talk about and you know, we've been talking about this recently a couple of times and so we've got. I think we've got this down. It's a system that works for us. There's lots of products out there that can do virtual meetings, right? But we don't.

00:03:54 Dewayne

We're not going to talk about just a virtual meeting. We're going to talk about an entire.

00:03:59 Dewayne

Event you know, and we.

00:04:01 Dewayne

I don't know if we invented this word or not, but we refer to teams as our virtual venue and when we explain what we mean by that to our stakeholders and to the attendees that are coming to the event.

00:04:15 Dewayne

So we tell them teams is like a virtual hotel. It has, you know it's a building. You have to have a registration to come into the building so that security boundary is already been established you once you're in the building you have access to the resources that are held inside of it.

00:04:34 Dewayne

And you can wander around through various rooms, poke your head in the door, and listen to a session, and then walk to another one. So that's kind of how we describe the way that we're leveraging teams, and so we had to rename a few things, you know, channels and rooms and stuff like that, but I think that that really helps.

00:04:55 Dewayne

People.

00:04:56 Dewayne

Get it, you know.

00:04:58 Joe

Gives a good perspective to them visually.

00:05:03 Joe

With respect to those, those kind of terminology, it's like to joke that it's the same kind of thing that happens if you go to a real conference and you kind of show up the day before, get yourself set and the day of the conference. You come downstairs, come down the elevator, go grab your coffee, go get some.

00:05:23 Joe

Pancakes and bacon and you go into the Conference Center.

00:05:27 Joe

And that's what we've been building with. This virtual venue is an environment that they can keep kind of going back to each day during the. During the event, they get used to going back to that and these rooms instead of channels.

00:05:42 Joe

Help them understand where where to go. Each day reduces the IT burden for them having to. Maybe sometimes this is the first time they've used teams in some of the cases it helps reduce that burden of learning that new technology.

00:06:00 Dewayne

Well, one of the things that we have.

00:06:03 Dewayne

Started to explain to our folks is when you create a standalone meeting on whatever product it is that you're using.

00:06:12 Dewayne

And you have this meeting and people join it and then they hang up and then the next day there's another meeting and they all join it and then they hang up. Or maybe there's multiple meetings in one day maybe, maybe. You know, we've seen a web page with a table on it with 40 different links.

00:06:30 Dewayne

And each one of those links is part of. It's a different speaker and there might be day one. And there might be 10 links.

00:06:37 Dewayne

And.

00:06:39 Dewayne

Each one of those links requires the person to register for security purposes 'cause we don't want any kind of bombing going on to be able to join that meeting. 'cause you're publishing. Meeting links publicly on the Internet, so.

00:06:51 Dewayne

You know it creates all these independent meetings and we call these transient meeting silos, which sounds super fancy. We made it up, but basically it's like this. This point in time that's not permanent.

00:07:06 Dewayne

That has it's a silo of information. There is stuff. There was content that was generated there, whether it be chat files were uploaded. You know whatever that some. Some of these products. If you don't export the chat before everybody hangs up from the meeting, the chats gone. The chats are deleted and in our industry that's.

00:07:26 Dewayne

Not good because we have Freedom of Information requests and retention requirements and stuff.

00:07:32 Joe

And in these meetings a lot of what we've seen is the chat is where the the presenters can get feedback, answer questions, you know there's a lot of valuable information there, or they'll they'll push out extra information to maybe a longer YouTube video that they recorded partially in their event or in their presentation.

00:07:53 Joe

So that that chat sharing of those links and stuff like that is something you'd want to maintain and capture.

00:08:01 Dewayne

If you could, it's valuable data, yeah, there's there's value in it. People want to come back and look at it and see it, and so you know, that's kind of.

00:08:11 Dewayne

One of the main reasons why we really enjoy teams as a as a virtual venue because it can capture all that information inside of a single team. And so this really creates a more clear structure. You know, one of the things that came out when teams was first launching one of the selling points I guess or.

00:08:32 Dewayne

Points for it. Was it reduced application fatigue?

00:08:36 Dewayne

It meant I don't have to be in five or six different business apps to do my job, and I feel like that exact same thing applies here. I don't have to go to a web page and find a meeting link or check my email to find a meeting link or open this application to join this type of session or join.

00:08:56 Dewayne

This other one is a bigger session, so I use this other application. We can keep 100% of the experience captured and contained inside of this one app.

00:09:07 Joe

That's again as we were talking about.

00:09:11 Joe

Barrier to entry for people too. Is this some of this is brand new kind of experience to them? So one place to go?

00:09:20 Joe

Get their beginning of the day and when we got day long events, we're able to kind of allow them to stay in that app for that entire day. While those all those sessions are going on.

00:09:34 Joe

Tracks are going on and things like that and communicate with the other participants, just like you might at a conference.

00:09:41 Joe

Which is is hard to do if you just have a video conferencing app that's disconnected.

00:09:46 Joe

From the rest of the people that are attending your event.

00:09:50 Dewayne

One of the one of the beautiful things about explaining this as a collaboration collaboration platform that does video conferencing is we can leverage all the power of SharePoint and its file storing.

00:10:06 Dewayne

And pages and lists and all those types of things in all the content that we create.

00:10:12 Dewayne

Either is created organically just by the attendees joining the conference, or whether it be content that we've collected, like presentations from speakers, we take their PowerPoint presentation and we load it into the rooms you know, so we've created let's.

00:10:32 Dewayne

Say we've got five different tracks, so we've got five different channels.

00:10:36 Dewayne

We take all the presentations associated with each one of those and. We load them into that Channel ahead of time when we joke because often the hardest thing is actually wrangling all the cats in getting the presentations from from them ahead of time so that we can take a look at him and load him. But we put him in a read only folder and you know, it's it's funny 'cause people are so used to saying, can I get a copy of these slides?

00:11:00 Dewayne

It's already there. It's already accessible to them. They can download their own copy or look at the one there at live and it puts everything.

00:11:09 Dewayne

All in one place.

00:11:12 Joe

And we continue that after the set after the events has started to and we'll bring in recordings into those sessions. Sometimes they'll be handout material that we can provide beyond just, you know, a PowerPoint. So again taken taken advantage of that kind of richer interface availability there in teams.

00:11:34 Joe

Gives giving people other ideas about.

00:11:37 Joe

What it is that they can do during you know during actual event?

00:11:43 Joe

Gives them more options on sharing their their research, sharing the information that they want to present to people.

00:11:50 Dewayne

It is difficult, because, um, you know, there's.

00:11:56 Dewayne

There's a lot of new ways to use this that people aren't used to yet, and so even us we had to think outside the box with a lot of things like one thing that we learned that was frustrating was linking to different resources inside of teams.

00:12:14 Dewayne

We realized quickly that if you use something like, say, a OneNote or a PDF file and you try to hyperlink to another teams channel, it will actually kick you out into your web browser and then your web browser will say, hey, this is a teams link. Would you like to open it in teams and then it brings you back into teams and it creates this really jarring experience.

00:12:34 Dewayne

And so I forget exactly how we came to this. If there was an accident, or you figured it out or what happened. But we realized, like, hey, we've got SharePoint.

00:12:43 Dewayne

We can create SharePoint pages in SharePoint lists and hyperlink to items natively and it keeps that experience inside the app.

00:12:53 Joe

Yeah, that was that was an import. Yeah, it was a gotcha. I don't know how many times he tried to hack around that trying to change the HTTPS protocol to teams protocol to try to keep it in in the app.

00:13:06 Joe

But even if the OneNote you know, using the OneNote in the teams in the team still would kick you out to the browser and back in. So thankfully SharePoint Embedded in, you know it's it's, you have the SharePoint Pages app that you can bring in a page fully understands the fact that it's Lincoln.

00:13:28 Joe

Basically linking back to itself in somewhere in the team. It is not kicking people back out into a web browser and that really makes a clean a nice clean interface for.

00:13:39 Joe

You know an agenda for a recession.

00:13:44 Joe

Link right to the right to the meeting. It can link right to a channel where it's going to occur in and really take advantage of some nice.

00:13:52 Joe

My SharePoint lists really turn into nice agenda.

00:13:56 Joe

Options for that.

00:13:59 Dewayne

Let's talk about the tabs for a second because you know we could bring in. You mentioned the SharePoint pages tab. There's other things that you can tab in, but some of the interesting things that we we had to do were things like an agenda.

00:14:16 Dewayne

And so again, we decided to stick with.

00:14:19 Dewayne

What is native? What's built into the platform instead of reaching out and trying to bring in external stuff that might have a weird experience, we knew it would work. We knew it wouldn't throw up any kind of login prompt like a website tab might, so we were able to use the built in SharePoint Pages tab to show a list.

00:14:40 Dewayne

You know just a traditional SharePoint list. Nothing super fancy, but we were able to create a giant list that showed every single session for that entire event.

00:14:50 Dewayne

And then we categorized them all to match whatever whatever track that that speaking that speaker was associated with, and then inside of each track specific room, we had a filtered view of that list. So each room had its own unique agenda. And I thought that worked out really well. That really gave people a quick, easy way they weren't looking for.

00:15:15 Dewayne

You know, like at A at a real conference, where is my program, you know, I gotta find my program programs there. It's all digital. It's already just one click away.

00:15:23 Joe

Yeah, and being able to link it into every. You know we could link it in the general channel, link it into all the session channels so wherever they might be they could easily get and find that that agenda.

00:15:34 Joe

Typically you might be searching. You're touching your backpack or trying to find something on your phone. That's all right in front of them.

00:15:42 Joe

We took advantage of some tabs.

00:15:45 Joe

For we had some some YouTube videos that needed to be brought in.

00:15:52 Joe

We found a way to to get those to even autoplay. You could bring those right in and get them to Autoplay.

00:15:58 Joe

What was the trick on that? Just we had to add the autoplay equals one at the end.

00:16:02 Dewayne

Well, you have to use the when you go to YouTube and you want to share a video, there's an option to share it in with an embed tag on it.

00:16:12 Dewayne

And so first you need to do that and then on the end of it you'll add a question mark and then do autoplay equal 1. And when you take that whole URL and build it out and then bring it in as a website tab, not the YouTube tab. Bring is a website tab. As soon as the person clicks that video.

00:16:32 Dewayne

It will autoplay the video, so we had some training like some orientation videos that we did that with. We even had one interesting thing that we had to do was we had to live stream a teams meeting to YouTube.

00:16:46 Dewayne

Because there were some VIPs that needed to be in the meeting to vote on something, but they wanted the video to be publicly accessible, but those other folks couldn't be in an interactive session. So what we ended up doing was we used OBS to live stream.

00:17:07 Dewayne

Is just a typical teams meeting up to You Tube.

00:17:11 Dewayne

And we took that URL and brought it into the general channel as the you know, whatever session and use that same trick we did the embed code with autoplay equals one and we told everybody hey, it's time for the special session. Head over to the general channel. Here's the link and you can copy a link to a tab, put it in a post.

00:17:31 Dewayne

And when they clicked it, it never even took him out of teams, so it went all the way back. You know, I go back to this several times. I'm sure we want to keep the experience 100% in teams and that was we were able to do that and it works perfect.

00:17:47 Joe

That really turned out slick. I don't think people really understood what was what was really happening, but that's that's the way it should be. If if we can build it that way, that's the best best way.

00:17:57 Dewayne

Yeah, I don't know that they realized what was happening at all. They just they just knew, you know, we do the same thing with live events. So if we have a keynote session

00:18:07 Dewayne

We don't advertise the link, we don't blast it out in an email. We put it in a teams post in the general channel, so we use the general channel.

00:18:16 Dewayne

You know we were talking about that hotel analogy. We use the general channel as if it were a lobby. You know when you walk into a venue, you walk into the hotel. The first thing you see is the lobby and there's information there. You know, register over here. Get your badge over here. Here's a map. Here's an index of all the sessions, and so that's what the general channel.

00:18:36 Dewayne

Becomes for us in our team when we're using it as this virtual venue, and so we would drop announcements in there. And one of those things that we would do is drop a link to keynote sessions that were actually live events 'cause.

00:18:50 Dewayne

You know whether it be due to capacity, you know you're exceeding 300, three, 150 participants, or because you need a more one way experience. You might want to use a live event, and so we would just hyperlink it in a teams post and it would just load EM right into the meeting. They had no idea they were being.

00:19:11 Dewayne

Taken to some other digital place worked out great.

00:19:15 Joe

Getting all that content into into the team builds build a lot of resources, a lot of information.

00:19:24 Joe

A lot of knowledge. It becomes great big.

00:19:30 Joe

Knowledge source of everything that's happened in that event.

00:19:34 Joe

And because it's a team and.

00:19:38 Joe

It's not, again, single meetings that we were talking about these little silos that.

00:19:45 Joe

That event structure that content can remain available if you wish.

00:19:51 Joe

To the participants and the attendees even after the event is over.

00:19:57 Joe

And we've seen some of our events continued engagement with the attendees coming back into that.

00:20:05 Joe

Structure of that.

00:20:07 Joe

Team and an going through the recordings we brought in or going and getting that PowerPoint that they wanted or going and looking at the chats that they were in and continue to provide some feedback. I think we had some stats on the last one.

00:20:23 Joe

Dwayne, we we talk about.

00:20:26 Dewayne

Yeah, the built in teams analytics was super enlightening in this use case, 'cause we had people ask us, they said hey, how long can I access these recordings?

00:20:39 Dewayne

And you know, we thought about it and we're like, well, I don't see why you should ever lose access because you're a member of this team. So if you decide to leave this team, you'll lose access, but.

00:20:49 Dewayne

As far as we're concerned, you can be here forever and we started to look at the analytics that you get in teams, so if you go to a specific team, click the three dots next to the team and manage the team, or go into manage team settings, you can see analytics and so we did that and you get a chart.

00:21:10 Dewayne

And so we saw this big spike. Which of activity, which is obviously the time that the conference was actually occurring. But then two weeks later, you'd see these little humps.

00:21:20 Dewayne

And hover over it and you'd see like wow there were 100 active people that day, or 200 active people that day. You know two weeks after the conference had ended and those are users that are active in that team, not just actively using teams in your org, but they were actually doing something in that team that was really cool. That is a.

00:21:41 Dewayne

That's a new new thing to think about, you know was talking about how we have these new capabilities now that we're not used to even an in person conference, that's not something that you can do. And this brings a whole new experience to our attendees.

00:21:56 Joe

Yeah, you you could. You could work on some ways to try to.

00:22:00 Joe

Try to continue and facilitate that in some other ways, but you've got to come up with some way to try to put all your recordings, and then you've got to build out a web page and somehow and then link up all your power points and do all that after some events. If you are using some other platforms or teams, again, you're building that along the way as you go.

00:22:21 Joe

As you have each event each day, you're continuing to build that, and by the end you've got a full complete package that people clearly are coming back to and find useful to continue accessing.

00:22:35 Dewayne

One of our one of our largest customers. So we we had a large conference. I think we should touch on that a little bit, but the president of that Association said that we were affectively building the airplane while it was going down the runway. So that's what it felt like.

00:22:53 Dewayne

That's definitely what it felt like.

00:22:55 Joe

Yeah, that one had mostly external people to our to our tenant organization, and that's that's really, I think.

00:23:05 Joe

An important metric, they're talking about the numbers of coming back in and visiting. They really are actually having to go and switch tenants and then come back over and there, you know, that's that's the kind of statistics we're seeing happen.

00:23:18 Dewayne

Yeah, that would that particular event had a lot of unique challenges. It really pushed us to learn a lot more. We even learned after the fact like oh, we would have done that differently this next time. And so I want to touch on two or three of those things that are specific to.

00:23:38 Dewayne

Guests because guests are.

00:23:41 Dewayne

Are not the same. We had a meeting with a couple of Microsoft folks and they had a great saying it was just it was because guest. Why doesn't that work? Because guest this isn't what I thought would happen because guest. So it definitely had a lot of challenges. So the first challenge was getting them in.

00:24:03 Dewayne

You know we had 1300 or so external guests.

00:24:08 Dewayne

That was different. You know teams doesn't give you any really decent way to do that. Even even teams native PowerShell module doesn't give you any great way to automate that. So we had to get pretty creative. Do you want to walk us through a few of those lessons learned?

00:24:27 Joe

Yeah, sure. So our our knowledge of who we were adding. Was there a bunch of other educational institutes were able to have a decent idea, at least in this case that majority of them had.

00:24:42 Joe

In Office 365 account at least we had a number of emeritus that were added and some people that who are not.

00:24:52 Joe

Office 365 likely enabled.

00:24:54 Joe

But that helped a little bit with some knowledge that they might know about logging into those systems, but probably the majority of the folks weren't teams users.

00:25:06 Joe

That that we kind of found out. Going along with this process.

00:25:11 Joe

But some of the biggest issues of inviting a large number of guests is the teams interface. There isn't a way just to kind of in one place. Dump a bunch of.

00:25:24 Joe

Email addresses and then go in and edit their username so it looks proper. If you do that in teams and you just drop in a guest email address and click click add.

00:25:34 Joe

Their username is not going to be their first name and last name unless unless there's some Federation going on and some key pieces there, but there's not. There's not a guarantee you're going to get a nice experience for that participant just going to show up as their username.

00:25:49 Joe

So we wanted to.

00:25:51 Joe

To do something better than that, we can use the PowerShell modules for Azure Active Directory and produce basically guest invites.

00:26:01 Joe

So that was something that we had to learn quickly and figure out how to do. The biggest, the biggest problem with that is it it generates an email to the to the user.

00:26:10 Joe

They get a notification they're being invited to and disorganization.

00:26:15 Joe

But gosh, the email that comes out of that terrible is bad. It's really bad. A lot of so many bad messages on it. Like basically it says. Basically says it feels like don't trust this email. I mean it really is says like you should probably consider this to be a phishing attempt.

00:26:36 Joe

Or something like that.

00:26:37 Dewayne

And we even notice that that email was getting filtered like.

00:26:42 Joe

Microsoft Banner reports.

00:26:45 Dewayne

Yeah, Microsoft was the sender of the email going to a institution using Office 365 and you know whatever and it was being routed to their spam folder. 'cause because guest because guest.

00:27:02 Joe

And another another issue that I think we're, I think we're finding is being fixed is a lot of people will give us like a vanity email of some sort that's not directly related to their.

00:27:14 Joe

Login account I think we I think we're starting to see some changes around Azure ID and adding those kind of users where it's picking up on additional aliases for somebody's mailbox. So I think going forward that's going to get a little bit better. But while we were doing this that that was also causing some issues we were getting.

00:27:34 Joe

Registration emails for people that we knew that that wasn't going to work very easily. For them it would have a better and easier experience. We had a different different email from them.

00:27:45 Joe

That you know took a little bit of.

00:27:47 Joe

Of Detective work to get, get some of that straight.

00:27:51 Joe

But we've got got a process going. PowerShell script going. We could, we could see who was getting who are accepting their invites. You get a list of people who were still in pending and continue to send out some reminders and push that invite back out again and some harder cases you can go into into the portal.

00:28:14 Joe

And get an invite link for each of those people and send it individually from your own personal email address, your own institutions, email address, or get that to them in some other way and those those. Those will basically always work, and that's something that you know Duane was saying we we learn along the way here.

00:28:36 Joe

I think the next airplane we build should be a little sleeker. I think we have some different different ideas around doing that. Next time we should be able to grab just that invite URL and not send out an email to those folks. That's automated from Microsoft and instead send that invite.

00:28:56 Joe

Address that URL out to them.

00:28:58 Joe

In an email that we craft that should hopefully get through spam, better give them a little better aspect of what this actually is and what you know. Why is this coming to them, and so there's many warnings. Yeah, exactly, and some of that we tried to help and I think from again from some of our metrics. Part of our process is always creating.

00:29:19 Joe

A user experience in attendee experience video and describing that up front between you've been producing those. Those of I think if you look at the last conference that was it was looked at a large number of times, we could tell that that was very affective, helping to get that information out. So a couple of those couple of those things that we've had to go through show us.

00:29:42 Joe

Some different ways to do this on our next one coming up.

00:29:47 Dewayne

Yeah, we definitely learned some guest lessons, so one more guest lesson I'd like to point out real quick is if you have a guest in your organization and they're in a team with you an you schedule a channel meeting. There is a 100% chance that they will receive a calendar invite for that Channel meeting.

00:30:07 Dewayne

And that's because that user doesn't have any other way to know that there's a meeting happening. So in this last conference that we had that was large that primarily contained guests, it was around 12 or 1300 guest accounts. We realized, wow, we do not want to schedule a channel meeting, and it generated calendar invite too.

00:30:28 Dewayne

1300 people

00:30:29 Dewayne

So one of the lessons that we.

00:30:31 Joe

Learned on top of that is on top of that. It's not just one meeting, it was going to be 40 meetings.

00:30:37 Dewayne

Oh yes, yeah there may be 15 rooms and 3 three meetings per room. Yeah, it would have been a total nightmare. People people would have hated us. So one of the things that we learned.

00:30:49 Dewayne

Was.

00:30:51 Dewayne

Number one use a service account to schedule the channel meeting. That way the same account is the organizer and therefore owns all those meetings and then your staff that are conducting this event can use that account to access attendance reports, modify recordings. Those types of things. End meetings since only the organizer can end a meeting.

00:31:12 Dewayne

But the other thing is we scheduled all the meetings before we added anybody to the team and that saved us.

00:31:20 Dewayne

Probably from them coming after us with like pitchforks and torches because it would have been bad if we woulda generated that many calendar invites. So that was a big one, especially when it comes to guess. We recommend doing that period scheduler meetings in the team that's hosting this event. Schedule the meetings first, then add the people.

00:31:39 Dewayne

So notifications are weird. The channel meetings very inconsistent. Very annoying, but yeah.

00:31:45 Joe

Even even with even with members of your tenant, there is some some ways to.

00:31:51 Joe

Supposedly toggle who gets those we've seen. Maybe it was early on, but we've seen some issues where even where we think it's toggle in a certain way they were getting those. Those group calendar invites going out to them.

00:32:05 Dewayne

So you mentioned the video touch on that real quick too. We are big believers in setting the expectation before they actually attempt to do whatever it is that we want them to do. We do this a lot of times with.

00:32:20 Dewayne

Various other aspects of our job with videos and stuff, but in this case it was really important so we would produce a video and do a screen capture or whatever and walk through the entire process. Here's what the invitation will look like. Here's how you accept the invitation. Once you've accepted the invitation, here's how you switch organizations in your teams.

00:32:42 Dewayne

App, you know, once you are in, here's what the team will look like. So we would craft a demo team and this is actually one of our tips and tricks. Is build a demo team.

00:32:55 Dewayne

And build your entire. You know, a mockup of your entire event in this demo team because number one it gives you a place to share with stakeholders and work through those processes of how things are going to look. What emojis are we going to pick for the channels and what are they going to be named. It gives you a place to collect presentations and work with them and optimize them.

00:33:16 Dewayne

But it also gives you a place to actually record what the actual event will look like without having to go into the real venue in type A message or start a meeting or something.

00:33:26 Dewayne

But those videos I think saved us a lot of support tickets. You know 'cause we had I said 1300 or so guests in that one team. We had about 1200 views of the attendee video, so I feel like I can't quantify it. But I can feel it. I know that it saved us some tickets.

00:33:48 Joe

Yeah, a little bit. A little bit of production work on that definitely was worth the effort so.

00:33:53 Joe

You'll do also some training videos on the presenters.

00:33:58 Joe

Um, you know, kind of to help them out a little bit. Those are little shorter videos, very succinct to the method that we recommend and that we've been using for presenters sharing their content. It helps train the facilitators to these events have been huge. It's it's a. It's a team effort.

00:34:18 Joe

There's more than Twain and I do. In this we have several people that have helped us very important.

00:34:24 Joe

To have that group of facilitators that can come in and help you run, run, you know eight sessions at a time. You need some people to help you moderate and facilitate those.

00:34:36 Dewayne

Yeah, we we had a great you know facilitator army. It was fantastic for that large large conference an they really do. Make sure that things run well and one of the things that I like about that is it allows us. We can have face to face virtually face to face training.

00:34:56 Dewayne

With these facilitators and teach them everything they need to know to make this meeting function an moderate, you know moderated mute people, promote people from attendee to presenter so they can do their presentation, demote them handling you know when people raise their hand and.

00:35:13 Dewayne

In things you know, starting recording and those types of things, so it also meant that we didn't have to train every single person who is going to be presenting.

00:35:24 Dewayne

We only had to train the people who are going to be facilitating, and since we're using teams to collect the presentations ahead of time, that meant that our facilitators were able to use the really unique ability that teams has of PowerPoint sharing to preload a presentation on behalf.

00:35:45 Dewayne

Of the speaker.

00:35:47 Dewayne

So.

00:35:48 Dewayne

Our you know our training videos for the speakers were like 3 minutes long because we said all you need to do is unmute your mic.

00:35:57 Dewayne

Turn your camera on an click. Take control of the PowerPoint presentation and they go through your presentation and so it really meant that they could just concentrate on speaking and not have to concentrate on learning technology that might be new to them in our facilitators were able to really take the brunt of the load for those types of situations.

00:36:18 Joe

It is basically you know they get up on this virtual stage, and here's a virtual clicker and in a way they go.

00:36:25 Joe

Um?

00:36:26 Joe

The.

00:36:28 Joe

Ability to do that is it was important for a number of our sessions where we'd have rapidfire kind of short five minute, 10 minute presentations, and they would go for two 2 1/2 hours, or you rapidly bring it in short, short presentations with a one like a one minute or two minute break in between.

00:36:50 Joe

Um?

00:36:51 Joe

Again, you're nobody's nobody is fumbling with trying to share their screen or share their desktop or share their second screen.

00:36:58 Joe

All of that was very smooth and very quick to move between presenters.

00:37:04 Dewayne

So once you have your facilitators trained, you know they're comfortable with PowerPoint. There your stakeholders have taken a look at your demo team, and we've all agreed, OK, this is what it's going to look like. These are the names of the rooms or channels and emojis and this is the setup that we'd like you move into. Now it's time to build your.

00:37:25 Dewayne

Your production team and so one of the things that you did that was really cool.

00:37:31 Dewayne

Is yes, there's teams templates and you can copy a team and all that stuff, but we are nerds and so you did some cool work in PowerShell where basically we can give this stakeholder a spreadsheet and say, fill this spreadsheet in and it could be. Here's the icon emoji you want to use in column A and here's what the name of the channel needs to be in column or.

00:37:54 Dewayne

You know column B and here's the description and here's how many poster rooms I want in you. Basically just feed it a PowerShell or feed the PowerShell Script Excel file and it knocks out a team.

00:38:05 Joe

Yeah, and that and using using the PowerShell for us for most case was important. 'cause some of these.

00:38:12 Joe

Some of these events had 50, you know channels we were using for these specific types of we call poster sessions, so we're building out a bunch of channels.

00:38:25 Joe

And well, we could have a team template that we maybe used the product or the demo team from.

00:38:32 Joe

We like to have the initial creation of the channels without the emoji.

00:38:40 Joe

And then we go back and add it after the fact it it keeps the URLs clean of those emojis they show up there in there. It it works, but there's there's some times where it it might look weird if you're putting it in a link somewhere. Or maybe you need to put it in an email.

00:38:59 Joe

There's cases where maybe it will.

00:39:02 Joe

Break on the line in a certain way, or do something like that. We just. We've avoid that, so we initially build out all the channels. Without the emoji we come back and and add them. So we script that out. But we do make it easy to do that. So if you've got a bunch of poster sessions, bunch of rooms and.

00:39:22 Joe

You need to make were able to do that with this. Just filling out an Excel Excel spreadsheet.

00:39:28 Dewayne

So we've learned some things from we've done four of these conferences this way. An I'm looking at a slide so we have a presentation where we've covered this and we're going to put that in the show notes, along with all that really cool code that Joe just talked about. We have on GitHub, so we'll drop a link.

00:39:48 Dewayne

For you in the shownotes, so you can have a copy of that, but this slide here you know there's some bullet points that we covered.

00:39:56 Dewayne

Where four conferences we had an 84% increase in attendance over that previous year that would have been in person. In one case, our largest conference doubled in attendance, which I think is really cool. There's this really amazing story of equity here.

00:40:16 Dewayne

Where previous years maybe they couldn't get travel authorization from wherever they worked. You know they couldn't afford.

00:40:24 Dewayne

The hotel or whatever. Now they're just one click away from being on the same level, playing field as the rest of their peers from all across the world, which is super super cool. We had 247 hours of active meetings, you know.

00:40:41 Dewayne

Being able to divide these meetings into rooms and people jumping from room to room to room that that meeting experience was top notch and people loved that we had 396 embedded PowerPoint presentations.

00:40:54 Dewayne

You know, so if anybody ever says that the embedded PowerPoint presentation feature isn't that great, we have almost 400 of those networks. Fantastic, there were glitches here and there. Somebody had to leave the meeting and come back in to re sync up, but you know it's technology. There was a lot going on, I don't.

00:41:13 Dewayne

I'm not gonna fault it that much.

00:41:15 Joe

I think we should. We think we should talk a little bit about at some point down the road about how good PowerPoint is with those kind of events. 'cause something we learned along the way was a PowerPoint presentation shared in teams like that can be interactive hyperlinks.

00:41:32 Joe

In that PowerPoint are active.

00:41:36 Dewayne

And or even yeah, you have a survey in your slides. Just click the link. Yeah, yeah yeah, whole new way. That's why I'm saying new a new way. All this new technology, this new, these new angles of engagement that we have. It really makes people have to think. And you know, wow, I didn't know I could do that, you know. And.

00:41:55 Dewayne

Now they can, and so it's it's just all these possibilities, you know.

00:41:59 Dewayne

The lot of people say the art of the possible, but I don't even know what you call this like. This is something different, so the art of engagement. It's it's really cool.

00:42:10 Dewayne

One of the biggest things that is on this slide is 3.5 million dollars. What's that about, Joe?

00:42:18 Joe

The effort to bring these folks into these conferences from their travel.

00:42:28 Joe

Their hotel rooms, their meal stipends, the actual renting of the hotel spaces is a significant cost beyond just the rooms that are responsible for all the attendees.

00:42:44 Joe

And like you were saying, this makes it much more equitable. We were able to have very easy, very easy attendance 'cause it's virtual from one of our last conferences from some agents. From Guam, you know when you when you said all around the world, that's actually true. In one of these cases.

00:43:02 Joe

So that is the the the money that didn't have to go out this year.

00:43:09 Joe

Um?

00:43:10 Joe

Out to you know, spend the money to get to these conferences, which is probably pretty important for a number of the education institutions that we're able to still attend.

00:43:24 Joe

It was probably going to be a potentially a pretty big budget crunch. People were cutting back, saving money. The pandemic has forced kind of a hold on a number of things and just even if they had somehow managed to have some of these conferences, they might have been even much.

00:43:44 Joe

Lower attended.

00:43:46 Joe

Um, this this like you said, 84% increase in that that money savings is is important. This year was really, really important for people to be able to do that and still attend the conferences.

00:44:03 Dewayne

Yep, in looking forward, we've already been asked.

00:44:07 Dewayne

To keep continuing to provide these bits and pieces and one thing real quick, I wanted to touch on is we're we're in education. You know, that's what we do. We work in education teams, is free for education, so at 3.5 million dollars that would have been spent for these four conferences. The only component that we use that cost.

00:44:28 Dewayne

Any money at all was a teams live event which only one you know only the organizer needs to have a license for that.

00:44:37 Dewayne

So I just want to point that out real quick that that's such an amazing contrast in cost. It's just it doesn't even sound real. It sounds made up, but it's not. Trust me.

00:44:48 Joe

Comparative costs to being able to reach 10,000 people in other platforms is extremely costly, and.

00:44:57 Joe

Some universities, I think from our attendees didn't really realize the power of teams. The power of live events and didn't realize that they had access to this.

00:45:12 Joe

We've had continued Contacts from other universities and other people putting on events.

00:45:20 Joe

Look into trying to get a little bit of help from us on on how to do these in the future for them, so it's been good to kind of be able to continue that. That view and vision of you know an event that we can do in teams.

00:45:34 Dewayne

Alright, Joe, so we're we're nearing the end here and we'd like to end our episodes with.

00:45:40 Dewayne

A win, and I think that we discussed.

00:45:44 Dewayne

That we kind of had a shared win. You know, the two of us. We did a thing like good week.

00:45:50 Dewayne

It was a good week. It was a very busy week, but we had a good week for sure and we were invited to speak at event called Teams Day Online and we were asked to speak about this very topic. So this was fresh on our minds. You know we've been doing this quite a few times in the recent months.

00:46:10 Dewayne

And you know it was neat to be asked to come speak at something.

00:46:15 Dewayne

You know, that's that was cool. You know we were they requested. Hey, can you come talk about this topic and that felt really good and we learned a lot. We did some cool stuff with the mock Microsoft or teams tenant. You know we went in and got a tenant and made a bunch of stuff and made a bunch of fake accounts and did a bunch of crazy things and.

00:46:36 Dewayne

I think each of us were probably running like five or six instances of teams logged in with different users and it was super confusing.

00:46:45 Joe

Yeah, using edge profiles and different computers 'cause we wanted to build that demo out with a bit of content. Have it feel like that event.

00:46:56 Joe

You know we were in the middle of an event that was taking place to just give a better, better experience for people to kind of see what was happening in there. It was pretty cool with the process coming up with actually faking an actual meeting and a little bit of BS trickery.

00:47:14 Joe

A little bit of recorded video and virtual cameras.

00:47:18 Joe

And actually able to look like we could jump in a call that actually had other people already on it who weren't actually at home at the time. I think so.

00:47:29 Dewayne

Yeah, yeah, we each had our wives sit down and just talk to us while the webcam was running. And then we took that video.

00:47:37 Dewayne

Used oh BS to pipe it into teams client as its webcam and so during our demo by Teams Day Online. Yeah we put it on loop and during our demo we're demonstrating all the different meetings that were running these channels and we jumped into one and there were people in there talking.

00:47:55 Dewayne

You know, oh?

00:47:56 Dewayne

These people are having a nice conversation.

00:47:57 Dewayne

And it was it was fake.

00:47:59 Dewayne

So that was a lot of fun.

00:48:02 Dewayne

That was a good win. I think that's that's definitely our win for the for the month so.

00:48:08 Joe

Yeah, you gotta do a little extra work this week too. That kept you busy. Another presentation you got to do.

00:48:15 Dewayne

Yeah, there was a group of meeting planners, the.

00:48:21 Dewayne

State government meeting planners group in Florida, Central Florida asked if I would come talk about holding events in teams. So like I said, this has been fresh on our mind 'cause we've been doing a lot of it like that week.

00:48:32 Joe

But it's like Shark Week for us.

00:48:34 Dewayne

Yeah, so that was cool to be again to for somebody to ask you. Hey, will you come talk about this? You know it's it's really an honor so I felt really good about it and hopefully delivered his session that they all found useful. Kind of like this podcast. I hope that everybody found this episode useful and I would like to say check out the show notes because we're going to put.

00:48:56 Dewayne

You know our? We've recorded our presentations that we've done on YouTube so well, those will be in the show, notes the GitHub with everything will be there. The scripts that Joe created and all kinds of extra bits and pieces that we couldn't cover just on audio in a podcast. So definitely check out the show notes and get access to some of those resources. But we.

00:49:16 Dewayne

Really thank you for taking the time to listen to us blab about teams and all the nerdy things that we do an we look forward to hearing next month's episode so we will catch you in 2021.

00:49:31 Joe

Thank you for joining us and we hope you like today's show.

00:49:35 Joe

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00:49:48

Transporter room stand by to beam up landing party.