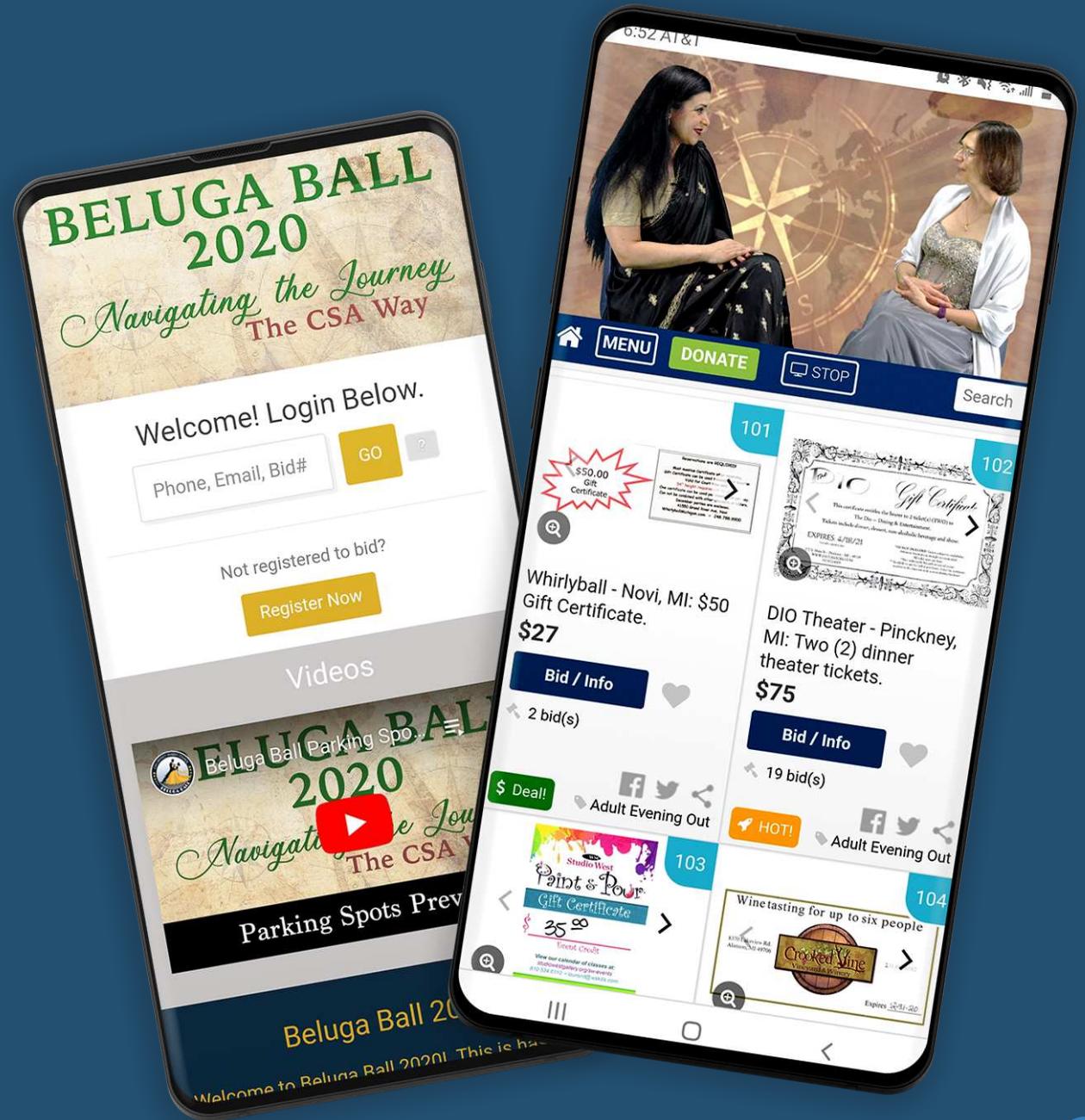


# KEEP IT SIMPLE.

A Painless Virtual Event Format That Works

Matthew Burnell  
FOUNDER, CLICKBID



Charyl Stockwell Academy June 2020 Virtual Gala



# It looks like virtual fundraising events are here for a while.

In fact, **the past nine months have shown that virtual events can be an extremely effective part of the fundraising portfolio.** At ClickBid, I have seen many charities transition to a 100% online fundraiser with incredible success. I've also helped build features to make fundraising more successful online through streaming video, remote live auctions and real-time updates.

To me, the key to success is to make virtual events crazy simple. I have been speaking with charities who have held their own virtual events and learned what has worked for them and what produced the highest returns. **The result is an outline you can follow to produce your own virtual event without sleepless nights, overextended resources and crossed fingers.**

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It's true! Reality TV shows have directors and scriptwriters so they can "create" a juicy story. Taking a page from this strategy, the easiest way to have a great event is to assemble your content beforehand and play it back as a single video.

I have seen organizations attempt to use Zoom and have guests appear live. They attempt to make a live event truly live. However, imagine yourself viewing this from the eyes of a donor. A pre-edited single video would provide the same experience. Think of not having to coordinate a Zoom meeting, click a million buttons, juggle schedules, technology concerns, and the uncertainty of live events. You've eliminated all that by simply planning ahead. Let's dive into the format that I recommend after seeing dozens of events during this unprecedented year of fundraising.

# Psst!

# Reality TV is Not Reality

# The Show



Let's say you are planning your virtual "live" event to start at 7pm on Saturday. Here is how I would recommend you produce your video. It's important to note for this example that I am describing a single pre-edited video that plays starting at 6:50pm. Here we go!

## 6:50-7:00 PM

Start the broadcast ten minutes early with a viewable countdown to give your audience a chance to get ready for the show to start. At the same time, send a mass message via text to your audience, reminding them to log in and get ready for the 7pm kickoff.



## 7:00-7:05 PM

Your pre-recorded video plays starting with a welcome message from your host. This can be a local news personality or an outspoken advocate of your charity (think charisma). Usually just a minute or two including a welcome, thanks for attending, a call out to the chat feature, auction closing time and a phone number available to participants who have questions. You should definitely have your staff manage the chat and answer phone calls during the program.



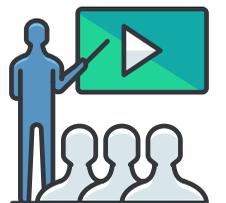
## 7:06-7:10 PM

Your video moves on to an edited segment that includes your host introducing the director of the foundation (or representative). This is where the director can address the audience with the "news" of the organization, discuss the successes of the last year and address the ongoing needs.



## 7:11-7:15 PM

Transition to a short segment that outlines the bidding process, closing time, payment options and pickup instructions. At the end of the explanation, tell your audience that anyone who places a bid in the next 5 minutes will have a chance to win a giveaway.



## 7:16-7:20 PM

Show a countdown with the bidding web address and giveaway “Bid now to enter our giveaway!”. In addition, you can show sponsor logos again, play a few sponsor testimonials or display facts about your organization.

## 7:21-7:30 PM

Bring back your host to move the program into several testimonials from staff and recipients of your charity. This is the “story” of your event video. You’re explaining to your audience why your charity is important, relevant and active during these crazy times. It’s important to know what the “ask” is and edit this segment around it. For instance, if you help local hospitals with stocking PPE supplies, tell a story about how a gift of \$500 provides N95 masks and face shields for 100 care providers.



Virtual Event Host & Scrolling Social Media Tags

## 7:31-7:35 PM

Your second interactive portion of the event. Tell your audience that anyone who makes a donation during this period will be entered to win a raffle item. Send a mass message with the same information. During the rest of the five minute window, play a countdown and once again loop your sponsor logos, add organization facts, etc.

## 7:36-7:40 PM

Conclusion of your presentation. Your host can come back to thank everyone for attending and remind them of how important their participation is. Tell guests when the auction will close, how they can donate and what to expect in the future. End on a few credits that thank your crew who helped bring the program together. Play music and close with a fade to black. At this point you can end the broadcast.



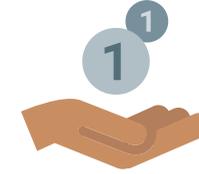
Animated Countdown to Event Start

# Live Auction and/or Fund-a-Need?

Add a live auction and a fund-a-need to your virtual presentation.



Live Streaming Auctioneer at Hybrid (In-person & Virtual) Event



Sometimes you may want to have a live auction with an auctioneer followed by a fund-a-need. In this case you will need to set up a small space where you can have your auctioneer call the live auction and fund-a-need. This small space can be as simple as a well lit office, a web camera and a microphone. It can also be something you hire out to an AV company to set up with background, three point lighting and studio microphones.

In either case, you will want an assistant for the auctioneer to manage the technical opening and closing of the auction items. The auctioneer can then have their "confidence device" that shows (in real-time) the bids coming into the system from around the web.

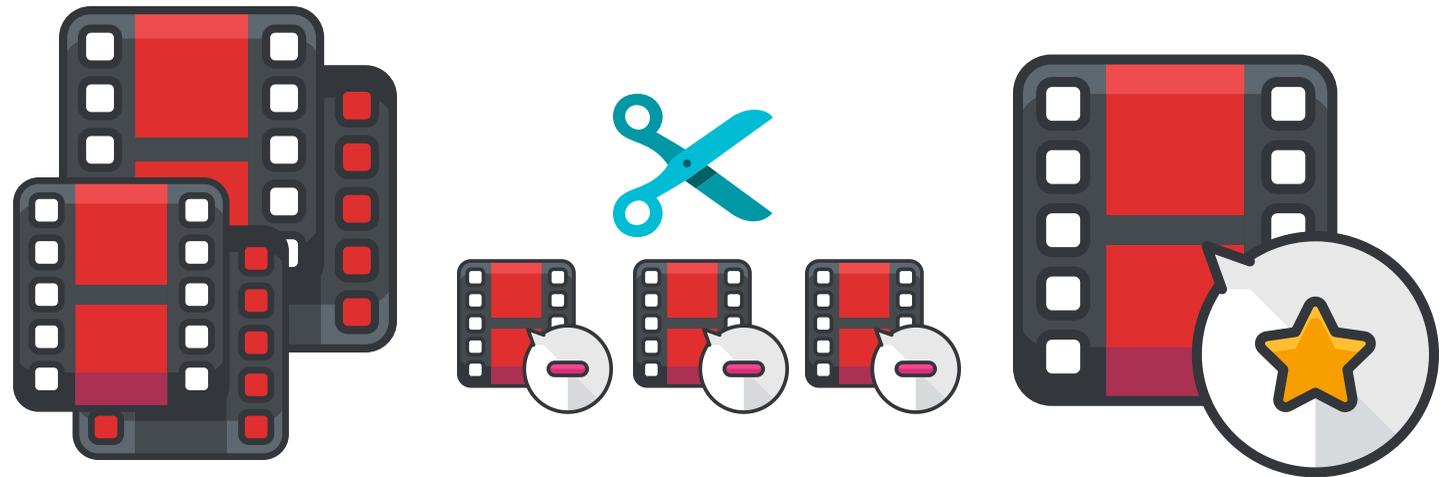
## PRO TIP!

Almost all of the events I have seen this year have placed the live auction toward the end of the program. **If you intend to do a live auction it is important to tell your audience early that you will have the auction later in the program and use mass messaging to alert your bidders that the live auction will begin shortly (usually sent 5-10 minutes before it starts).** If anyone dropped off the site, they should be reminded to jump back in.

# Short and Sweet!

**Remember that you are broadcasting this to an online audience.** They are easily distracted and will lose interest quickly. Consider the types of short videos they normally watch online such as an Instagram feed or funny YouTube video. Keep it punchy and keep it flowing.

Edit your video so that it continues to move quickly. *If there is a lull in the video or one of your interviews drags on, you can almost guarantee that viewers will drop off.* This is especially bad if you need them on for the live auction and fund-a-need. I usually recommend showing a draft of your video to a few donors or board members and see if they lose interest at any point. It's tempting to let your passion for your organization run away with you, but try to think of an elevator pitch (your story in the time it takes to ride an elevator with a stranger) rather than commencement address.



# Above and Beyond

This template is a sure fire success at making a great event and one that is less stressful for you. Of course, you can always plus things up! Here are a few ideas that I've seen this year that were very clever.

✓ **Highlight a mixed drink in the week before the event.**

Monday through Friday, share a drink and the recipe to your donors so they can plan to make it during the event. You can even jump on for a scheduled impromptu broadcast where you demonstrate. It creates a motivation for your donors to engage at a deeper level.



✓ **Offer to deliver food to homes nearby for a donation.**

Early on in the pandemic an organization used a ticket page to sell meals that were delivered right before the broadcast. They sold out!



✓ **If there is a musician in your organization, have them perform an acoustic set.** Pre-record it and play it back as if it was live. This could be background while you ask for donations or bids.



✓ **Competitions.** Set up a "Battle of the Bands" or talent show where performers pre-record their acts and you play them back. During the performance, have your audience cast \$1 "votes" on their favorites. Announce the winner live following the performances.

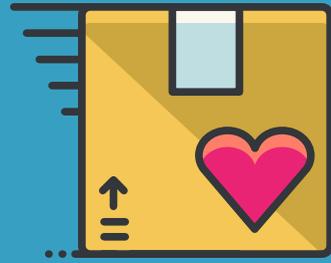


✓ **Virtual wine and/or cheese tasting.** Pre-sell or give instructions to buy wines or cheeses. Then, have an expert give a lesson on proper appreciation and tasting. Partner with a local store to raise even more money.



✓ **Cooking class.** In the same spirit as wine tasting, ask a local chef to prepare a meal or signature dessert that your attendees can make. Post the ingredients on your event landing page and have your viewers post pictures on Instagram with a hashtag for your event.





# Let Us Help!

Sooo, having read all this you may still be wondering how you are supposed to pull all the resources together. At ClickBid we are here to help you get through these unique and challenging times.

**We have created a limited time service to provide full support for your virtual event.**

Our team will craft a finished video and present it to your donors on the event day. In addition, we will coordinate and present a live auction and/or fund-a-need (auctioneer fees not included).

**What will you do on the day of the event?** Watch the program and chat with your donors via ClickBid's Mass Messaging service. To get details and pricing for our complete virtual auction package, [please contact our team to learn more.](#)



## About The Author

Matthew Burnell is the founder and CEO of ClickBid Mobile Bidding. Matt has spent his career, spanning more than two decades, blending technology with fundraising around the world. Most recently, he has helped start a ride sharing nonprofit for individuals with special needs called GoLou. He has a degree in Computer Science and Film Studies from Grand Valley State University. Matt lives on the West Michigan lakeshore with his wife, son and sleepy dog Blu.