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How to live stream: A checklist with tips and tricks to prep your business



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What are your first thoughts when you hear the words **live streaming**?

If you think, "Oh, live streaming is for video game addicts. I can't use it for my business." Then you'd be losing out on the market with a projected **worth of \$180 Billion in 2027**.

What if you're thinking, "I'd love to get started with live streaming, but where do I start?"

Then you're in the right place.

In this guide, you'll learn what it takes to run a successful live stream for your business.

First, we'll touch on a live streaming checklist to help you get started. Then we'll dive into live streaming tips and tricks to help you before, during, and after any live event.

Before we go into all of that, let's see what live streaming is and why it is crucial to have a live streaming business plan.

What is live streaming and how does it work?

Live streaming is not the same as subscription video on demand (SVOD).

With subscription video on demand, the video file is sent from a remote storage location over the internet. You can think of Netflix, Hulu, and all your other favorite streaming platforms in this category.

So what's the difference between SVOD and live streaming?

With live streaming, the video is broadcasted in real-time over the internet from one source to hundreds or thousands of viewers. They watch the video at the same moment you create it — no filters or edits.

But do people watch live streams? Oh, yes. They do.

One report found that **47% of viewers** worldwide are streaming more live videos than a year ago. For example, in the sports sector, viewers live streamed **560 million minutes** of the 2019 Super Bowl.

However, live streaming is not limited to sports as brands worldwide spent over \$90 billion on video content in 2018, according to **Forrester**, with spendings expected to rise to over \$100

billion in 2023.

Should you spend on live streaming too? Yes. But first, you need a plan.

The value of a live streaming business plan

Live streaming has become an integral channel for brands to create authentic connections with their customers.



When crafting your live streaming business plan, you need to consider costs and the return on your investment.

You also need to think about the goals of your live stream. Is it to build awareness? Build your email list? Sell a product or service?

Below are four benefits businesses can receive from live streaming.

Building a wider audience

Live video content thrives on social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram.

These platforms push live content to a large number of users.

Just like a football game broadcasted live would draw in a broader audience of viewers, so too would live streaming create more awareness for your business event.

Nikon Inc., for instance, used live streams to reach 4X more people for a conference.

"With a fairly modest increase in budget, you can reach a considerably higher audience," says Mark Soares, Senior Marketing Manager at Nikon Inc.

Grow your community

Video content **generates more engagement** than other forms of content on any platform. No wonder it's a great way to build a community around your business.

Live videos allow viewers to interact with you and make comments in real-time. It also allows these viewers to interact with other viewers watching the live event. The real-time interaction helps to grow a stronger community and relationship between your brand and your audience.

"Technology has pushed us into an automated world, which is great when you're looking for a TV show to watch, and Netflix can offer something based on your preferences," says Andrew Edell, Director of Experiential Marketing at Convene. "But at the end of the day, we're human. We need personal interaction, recognition, and connection. That's where events and experiential marketing come in."

Tell your brand story

What does your brand stand for?

No doubt, you know the answer, but does your audience know?

Live streams allow you to consistently hammer your brand values and let your audience know what you stand for.



"Vimeo's platform gives us the ability to produce professional, branded company events that are engaging our associates and supplier partners in more meaningful ways. Our first town hall on Vimeo was a pivotal moment that allowed us to reach more associates than we ever could through live, in-person events. There is strong demand for video and live broadcasts across every department at Rite Aid, and Vimeo will allow us to help meet this demand in a re-imagined workplace that relies more on virtual communications."

Peter Strella, Director, Communications & Creative Media Services, Rite Aid

Repurpose content

You can repurpose content instead of creating from scratch, especially when you make live videos or any other form of video content, for that matter.

Repurposing content means changing the format of previously created pieces of content to meet different distribution channels' needs.

One typical example of repurposing is pulling quotes from blog posts and turning them into tweets. You could do the same with live-streamed videos. Repurposing a live stream could help create:

- Video snippets for Instagram
- Quotes for Instagram and Twitter
- A blog post
- An infographic
- Gated content to build your subscribers

Live streaming checklist to prepare your business

Just as a carpenter needs a hammer, nails, and other tools to work — businesses need the right tools and gear to start live streaming.

Without the right live stream equipment, it would be frustrating to run a successful live event.

In this section, you'll learn all the right tools you need, whether you're a beginner [streaming at home](#) or a video pro.

1. Get your laptop, PC, or smartphone



Depending on your streaming destination, you'd need to use either a laptop, PC, or mobile phone to run your live stream.

For example, if you want to stream on social, you might want to consider [live streaming from your phone](#). Using a smartphone to run a live stream provides a fun and laid back atmosphere.

While using a smartphone allows you to move around, you don't want to keep jumping from one location to another. A steady camera is important so try to invest in a tripod or [make an easy DIY tripod](#).

You should note that while it may be easier to run a live stream from your mobile device, you might be losing out on some quality and stability that using a laptop, PC, or external camera would provide.

When using a laptop, make sure that it has all the technical requirements to successfully handle a live stream. For starters, you'll want a builtin webcam and minimum specs that include 8GB RAM and an Intel i7 CPU.

Why? These minimum requirements prevent the laptop from lagging when you run some heavy software on the computer.

If you want to make your live stream as seamless and professional as it can be, then you'd need to use a PC. PCs have higher specifications that allow you to run any kind of streaming software. They also come with many ports that enable you to connect multiple devices like a capture card or external camera all at once.

As expected, you'd be giving up your mobility when you choose to use a PC.

2. Set up your camera

While your smartphone or PC might have built-in cameras or webcam, it's not a bad idea to have an external camera — especially when you intend to stream to a broad audience.

For example, [businesses](#), [faith-based institutions](#), and [universities](#) all benefit from dedicated resources to live streaming.

A camera is great if you stream regularly and have a tech-savvy team who can invest in A/V equipment.

Cameras provide a more polished look than a built-in webcam or smartphone at this level of production. A camera budget of up to \$2,000 will help achieve a new level of professionalism with a live stream. Vimeo's live production team suggests the Canon XA15 or XF100 for this price range.



For a deep dive on camera recommendations, check out our [best streaming equipment for every budget](#).

3. Choose your audio

Now that you've set your camera, you'd need to pay extra attention to your audio quality. Nobody wants to watch an event with a terrible or poor recording.

To make sure your audio is great, we recommend external microphones like handhelds or lavalier mics over built-in mics.

You should also consider using an audio mixer plugged into your camera to tailor your viewers' listening experience.

When Vimeo live streams webinars with multiple guests, for instance, a mixer has been the best way to create a consistent listening experience to accommodate panelists' varying voice levels.

If you don't have that kind of budget Suze Kaufman, Vimeo's Content Marketing Manager, relies on Shure's iPhone Microphone. "It's way easier than having to mic up your interviewee, and allows you to create quality-sounding content on the fly," she says.

4. Connect to the internet

It's best practice to use a dedicated, reliable internet connection.

A good benchmark is to have twice as much upload speed available as your streaming bitrate. To establish a reliable connection, the Vimeo team suggests streaming directly via Ethernet to a dedicated network, which means that no other computers or devices can access that network.

This connection type is less likely to experience bandwidth fluctuation than shared networks or wireless connections.

The Vimeo team recommends a dedicated, hard-wired ethernet, 10Mbps+ upload speed, and open ports 1935, 80, and 443 allow for maximum inbound and outbound traffic.

5. Choose your encoder/switcher

Encoding is what separates a live stream from a video recording.

An encoder is a piece of hardware or software used to convert a live feed or pre-recorded video to be viewable over the internet via computers and mobile devices.

Examples of encoders include [Livestream Studio software](#) or the [Broadcaster Pro](#).

"When you have more than one camera, you need a live production switcher," says Tom Gott, Vimeo's live production lead. "A live production switcher allows you to mix between multiple camera angles during the live broadcast."

Live production switchers can vary based on the number of camera inputs. The Studio HD550, for example, has five camera inputs. Check and make sure the type of switcher you use supports your in-house needs (hardware switcher vs. software-based switcher).

Unsure about streaming equipment? Take a peek at Vimeo's [live streaming equipment setup](#).

6. Launch your live streaming software

Choosing the right software will make your live stream look more professional. You'd be able to mix audios, add custom logos and graphics, and also make your videos have a higher resolution.

While many of these live streaming software requires a paid plan, you would find some free ones that do the work well. Examples include OBS Studio and Wirecast.

7. Clean up your shooting location

Pick a location that would help you meet the goals for your live stream.

Ideally, your location should have enough light and have a low amount of noise.

Also, clean up the shooting location to remove any distractions. Remember that your viewers would see everything behind you, so make your background as simple as possible. Alternatively, you could use a green screen to customize your location even better.

8. Choose your streaming destination

Where do you want your live stream to appear?

You have many options, but the answer always depends on the audience you're trying to attract.

For example, if millennials or Gen Zs make up the most of your audience, you'd have little success using LinkedIn as your streaming destination. The same goes for using Instagram Lives to attract a B2B audience.

You need to go where your audience resides online.



With that in mind, let's look at some of the most common streaming destinations available today and how you can use them to grow your business.

Facebook Live

The popularity of Facebook Live can't be overstated, as the stats speak for themselves.

After launching Facebook Live, the company racked up **3.5 Billion broadcasts within two years**, with almost 2B viewers — nearly every user on Facebook. And these live videos generate **6X more interactions** than regular videos.



Instagram Live

Going live on Instagram is so simple that you don't need much to learn to live stream on the app.

Live sessions on Instagram **last for 4 hours** at a stretch. And your audience can like, comment, and even go live with you. New updates coming to Instagram suggest that your audience can now **raise funds during live sessions**.

Twitter Live

Watching videos ranks 3rd in why people use Twitter – only beaten to the 1st and 2nd position by news reading and viewing photos, respectively.

What Twitter lacks in audience size, it makes up in interaction and engagement.

Like Instagram, you can't go live without the mobile app.

YouTube Live

Google aside, YouTube is the biggest website on the planet.

Every day, **users watch over a billion hours of video on YouTube**.

Live streaming on YouTube helps you reach a wide audience as well as generate revenue. With YouTube, you can easily repurpose your video content and make it available for your audience for as long as you want.

Twitch

This guide would be incomplete if we didn't include one of the world's largest live streaming destinations – Twitch.

You can think of Twitch like YouTube. But instead of cooking shows and celebrity news, you'd find gamer focused streams.

The platform currently pulls in over 15 million users every day. Twitch content has started to shift from gaming to topics like product reviews and shopping tips in recent years.

TikTok Live

In recent times, the app has continued to grow in popularity despite efforts to ban it in the United States.



The platform is excellent for brands looking to attract a demographic similar to that of Instagram because almost 50% of the app's users are under age 34.

You'll need more than 1K followers to go live on TikTok.

LinkedIn Live

LinkedIn is useful if your audience is made up mostly of professionals and B2B personas. The live feature on LinkedIn is relatively new, and you'd need to submit an application to get started.

Vimeo

Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter all offer free, native live streaming solutions.

Suppose you're looking to kill two birds with one stone (or feed two birds with one scone). In that case, third party offerings like Vimeo Premium include simulcasting to multiple destinations for an affordable monthly rate, as well as added privacy, embedding, and customization options.

You could take it a step further by using Vimeo Enterprise if you want to monetize your videos, enjoy in-depth analytics, and have more bandwidth.

9. Run a live stream test

Don't forget to run a final test or check before going live.

Assume that everything that could go wrong will go wrong, and set systems in place to reduce the impact of any technical hiccups.

Test your cameras, audio, and visual quality, encoder software, and internet with a friend or team to know what needs to be improved.

Keep devices that use battery charged, and always have a backup for everything.

Recap: Live streaming checklist

1. Get your laptop or PC.
2. Set up your camera.
3. Choose your audio.
4. Connect to the internet.

5. Choose your encoder/switcher.
6. Launch your video streaming software.
7. Clean up your shooting location.
8. Choose your streaming destination.
9. Run a final test.

16 live streaming tips and tricks



You've got all your streaming items ready, and it's about time to go live.

In this section, we'll be showing you how you can level up your live stream. Our team here at Vimeo has been using these tips and tricks to make successful live streams for ourselves and our clients.

We'll be breaking the tips into three parts – what to do before your live stream, what to do while live streaming, and what to do when the live stream has ended.

Let's begin.

Before your live streaming event

1. Decide on live stream channel

Where do you want your live stream to appear? You could choose to use some of the options listed earlier in this guide. These options include social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, or Twitch. You might also choose to embed your video on a specific website.

2. Choose live stream format

What's the look for your live stream?

Are you going to be conducting an interview? Will you be having a panel discussion? Or a talk show with your audience?

You need to define this well before you go live to make all the necessary arrangements like inviting and prepping guests.

3. Prepare a script

A script serves as a guard rail to prevent you from going off-track when you go live.

You have to rigidly follow the script, especially when your audience drives the discussion in a particular direction. The script is there to help you focus and keep the general idea behind the live event intact.

4. Share teasers on social media

There's a reason why we get more excited about a movie after watching its trailer. The same goes for your live stream event. Create and share teasers that would pique the interest of your audience.

Like any good teaser, you'll want to do this way before the live event. You also do not want to give out all of the details of the event on the teaser.

Share the teaser on social media. You can use a countdown, memes, or even offer incentives to attract a wider audience.



5. Create a lead capturing page

Don't listen to rumors. Email is not dead.

Your live stream event can be a great channel to build your email list. You can do this by creating a landing page where people interested in the live event can sign up and receive further updates from you.

6. Test everything again

We're going to say it again and again. Test all your equipment before you go live. It may be easy to overlook this tip, but a simple error could cause your stream's quality to plummet.

So test everything again.

During your live streaming event

7. Look into the camera

Just because you're behind a screen doesn't mean you have to forgo real-life conversation etiquette. You still need to maintain eye contact and gesticulate as if the person you're talking to is right in front of you.

Looking straight into the camera instead of yourself on the screen would help you appear more confident and sincere to your audience.

8. Engage your audience with tools like comments, live Q&A, and polls

No other channel aside from face-to-face communication allows you to interact with your audience the same way live streams do.

Your audience can ask questions that you can answer in real-time. So acknowledge user comments and give answers to their questions when appropriate.

You could also create polls that help you gather your audience's opinion about a specific topic.

9. Use appropriate titles and headers

Just like a book title tells you what to expect from a book, so too does your live stream title tell your audience what to expect from your live stream event. If you make it too vague, you might not be able to gather enough interest.

With the right optimization, you can create live stream titles that rank on Google or YouTube search results.



10. Stream across platforms

You could stream and connect more than two platforms if you like.

Yes, with Vimeo, you could set up your [live stream](#) to broadcast simultaneously on different streaming channels – which thereby allows you to reach a wider audience all at once.

After your live stream event

11. Thank viewers for watching your stream

Isn't it lovely to hear "thank you" after we've done something for somebody? Your live stream viewers feel the same too. So thank them after your live stream has ended. You might not know it, but your show of appreciation would motivate them to watch your next live event.

12. Share user generated content (UGC)

Your audience would likely share their favorite part of your live event on social media. So gather these posts and share them on your feed and channel.

Sharing user-generated content after a stream can help foster your community.

13. Follow-up to unanswered questions

Given the time limit on your live event (or for any other reason), you might not answer all the questions from your viewers.

Don't leave them hanging.

You could promise to send them a pdf that contains all the questions and answers during the live session. Or respond to these questions on social media.

14. Tease viewers on what to expect on the next live stream

Unless your live event is a one-off thing (which we don't recommend), you need to let your viewers know the format for your next live event.

Knowing what to expect would help build trust with your audience. And keep you consistent.

15. Create an on-demand recording of your live stream

Did a part of your audience miss your live event? No worries, you can make an on-demand recording available to them.

On-demand recordings are also a great way to build your email list.



16. Analyze your data

If you use a streaming channel like [Vimeo Enterprise](#), you'd be able to enjoy juicy analytics that helps you answer questions like:

- How many viewers did the live event have?
- From where did they come?
- What are their age groups? Profession?
- For how long did they watch the live video?
- Where did they stop if they didn't watch till the end?

You should also analyze how the event went to note areas that need improvement.

Wrap up

Live streaming is a fun and effective way to interact with your audience. It also helps you reach a wider audience and create deeper connections with them without breaking the bank.

To make live streaming work, you'll need a business plan, a few tools, and the tips and tricks that'd help you learn to live stream – all of which we have provided in this guide. Ready? [Learn to go live with Vimeo](#).

