



CASE STUDY - VIRTUAL EVENT MARKETING

# How Virtual Event Swag Boosted Brand Awareness for the Computer Science Teachers Association



**2,000**

Number of kits sent

**16,000**

Individual Items Produced

**98%**

Number of Happy Teachers

## The mission to humanize a virtual event

The Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA) is a teacher-lead association dedicated to creating a network of support for computer science educators across the US and Canada. Their annual conference is a huge part of what they do. When COVID-19 forced their event to go virtual, their challenge became to create an engaging conference and a humanized experience for their members. Virtual event swag helped them accomplish this.

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## Why engagement was so important

Teaching computer science in the K-12 world is complicated. Teachers provide the essential blueprint that connects our youth with the ever-changing technology of computers. It's vital for teachers specializing in a dynamic field like computer science to continue professional development and continuing education. Computers are continuing to advance and become a critical part of every industry. As computer use grows, so does the need for education at earlier ages. Technological skills are imperative for our youth's future, and both national and global economies and industries.

That's why CSTA's professional development is essential for its members. CSTA members also gain access to in-person events and speaker driven learning opportunities. One of the most significant benefits of these events is connecting with their members on a personal level, providing them with an engaging learning environment, and leaving them with a lasting impression.

The mission for their 2020 conference remained the same, but the virtual format made this more challenging. Virtual event swag helped bridge the gap between virtual and human.

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## Discovering what needed to change

After doing some initial research about shifting their annual event to a virtual platform, CSTA recognized the importance of working with a partner to host an event of this caliber. In the past, setting up an event venue and ordering some swag items would've been their plan of attack. This year posed a much bigger challenge that resulted in changing their entire approach.

Luckily, we've helped with hundreds of in-person events in the past. However, we quickly learned a virtual event is entirely different. We needed to be agile and educate ourselves about the evolving landscape of digital events to best advise and guide CSTA.

CSTA's new virtual conference was an opportunity for us to help craft a virtual event swag strategy that would help generate more clicks to their website and interactions on their social media pages.

## **Main Issues**

- They needed to shift their in-person event strategy to be virtual
- They felt increased pressure to host an event that would live up to member expectations
- The event needed to be “humanized” to connect with their attendees
- There was a need to make teachers feel appreciated at home, amidst a pandemic that took teachers out of the classroom
- They needed a partner that could help execute the virtual event swag fulfillment

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## **Here's what we did:**

### **Designed a Virtual Event Swag Strategy**

Our Brand Activation Team met with CSTA to understand their personas, goals, and aspirations for the event, resulting in a comprehensive presentation with recommendations tailored to their needs. This presentation included various elements, such as:

- Promotional products designed to humanize the event
- A custom-designed swag box
- Award ideas
- Kitting and fulfillment options
- Drop-ship and mailing timeline

## Designed a Virtual Event Engagement Strategy

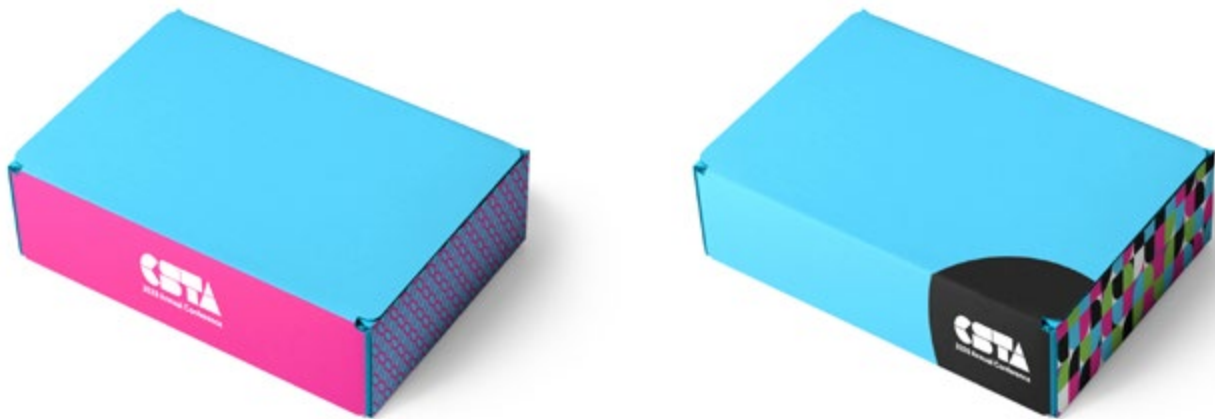
We came up with specific recommendations for an overarching social media campaign connected to their virtual event and their virtual event swag. What's more fun than opening a swag box when you're stuck at home?

We worked with CSTA to craft a plan to engage their attendees. The end result was received with enthusiasm that took over CSTA's social media feed: an eye-popping box design, thoughtfully designed postcard, and various useful swag items inside tailored to their personas.



## Designed a Virtual Event Swag Box

Our design team came up with specific recommendations and provided two unique options for CSTA to choose from. The box design, collateral, and items inside their virtual event kit all tied back to the CSTA brand guidelines.



## Execution and Fulfillment

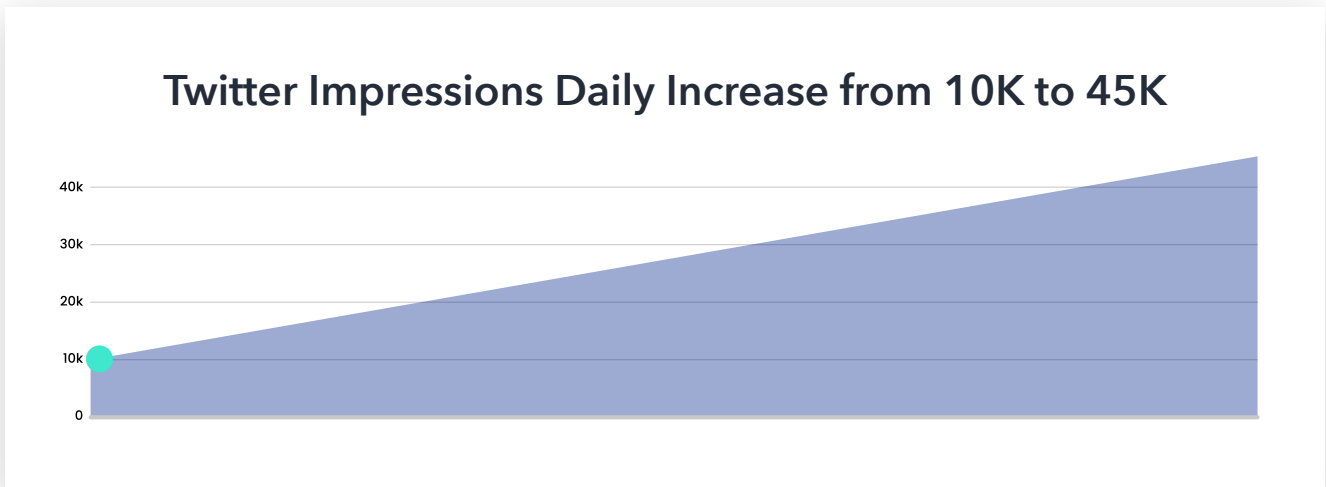
To reach CSTA's member audience on a personal and human level, we had the crazy idea of sending personalized boxes to every attendee's home. Shipments of 2,000 virtual event swag boxes seemed like an impossible task when we first came up with the idea and started working with CSTA.

Fortunately, we have relationships with various fulfillment partners and were able to help with sourcing, producing, and kitting all the items needed for their virtual event. The execution and fulfillment were handled entirely by DMG.

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## The Results

It's safe to say that the results speak for themselves. CSTA had an overwhelming amount of positive feedback about their virtual event. From the custom virtual event swag boxes to the perfectly executed event, attendees felt connected in a time where everyone feels distant.



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*"As soon as we decided to send out swag boxes to our attendees, I immediately reached out to Melinda for help. Melinda came back with dozens of ideas to help our teachers feel appreciated and get them excited for our conference. She helped us work to find options that were nice, but within our budget that would make an impact on attendees. Melinda was a true partner throughout the entire process, collaborating with me on design, product selection, shipping, fulfillment, and even tracking every single box we shipped to ensure they had all been delivered. We are a small team of 10 and our conference was double the size of what we were expecting in person, so I literally could not have done this with her help. When the boxes finally shipped, the results were even better than I could have imagined. Attendees LOVED the boxes and had so much fun unboxing them. Weeks later, they are still talking about them! Delivering them the Friday before the conference began was perfect as it increased enthusiasm and build up for the conference. This partnership made a huge impact on our teachers and helped us exceed an overall organizational goal -- helping teachers feel celebrated and appreciated. I am already brainstorming what we can do next year with DMG!"*



**Michelle Lippoli**, Event Manager - CSTA

## Ready to plan a virtual event?

Connect with a specialist now to help bring you across the finish line.



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