

# Hosting a Webinar

## Webinar Tips

Short for web based seminars, webinars are online methods of communication which are transmitted over the internet and aimed to reach large audiences. A key feature of a webinar is its interactive elements – the ability to give, receive and discuss information. This Whitepaper will provide tips on hosting your next webinar as well as detailed checklist which will be sure to assist you before, during and after the webinar.

### Tip #1 - Start with the end in mind

Online methods of communication are becoming increasingly popular within the workplace. Large corporate teams, small businesses and not for profit organisations are turning to online solutions in order to save time and cut down costs. Generally webinars are used to conduct training, generate leads, build loyalty or drive business. When conducting your webinar, ensure you are aware of the purpose – why are you conducting the webinar, who are you targeting and what do you want to get out of it. For example, if you are hosting a lead generation webinar, how and when will you follow up these leads and what resources will you use?

### Tip #2 - Timing is of the essence...

Organising when to hold your webinar may sound like a simple task, but many still get it wrong. Don't fall into the trap of assuming people will drop everything for your webinar. Keep in mind the following:

- *Time of year:* Are school holidays approaching or public holidays?
- *Time of week:* People are usually busier on a Monday or Friday catching up on work
- *Time of day:* Think about your day, would you want to join a webinar early in the morning or later in the day? People may be looking for something to do during their lunch break, why not hold your webinar between 11am – 2pm? Remember to also consider international time zones.

### Tip #3 - Choose your speaker carefully

Think back to the last webinar you attended. What made it great, what made it not so great? Chances are the speaker would have had a lot to do with whether you were actively listening or checking your emails. According to MarketingProfs, 70% of successful webinars can be attributed to dynamic and recognisable speakers. If you are unable to attract a subject matter expert try using a colleague that is engaging with a clear voice and upbeat tone.

### Tip #4 - To VoIP or not to VoIP

VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) is a delivery of sound which is transmitted over the internet. While the costs of communicating with a VoIP system can be significantly cheaper, the network is inherently less reliable compared to a telephone. When using VoIP attendees may experience issues such as latency and jitter due to the quality of their internet connection.

For webinars, it is usually a good idea to use a hybrid solution. That is, giving attendees the option to listen to the webinar via their computer or telephone.

*Consider using VOIP if:*

- You anticipate that the audience will ask questions via the text chat feature
- There are no phones at all audience locations

*Consider an audio conference if:*

- Your audience is small and you wish to engage them in a free flow dialogue
- Your audience is in an environment where sound can't be heard through the computers

### **Tip #5 - Content and Format**

Webinars are typically less interactive than a web conference. Keep your content simple, relevant to the topic and PowerPoint slides to a minimum. In order to encourage participation, it may be a good idea to hold more than one question and answer session. Consider intervals such as during the webinar, half way through and at the end.

Creating an agenda and sticking to it is also a must. Your attendees should know what you are going to cover, how long the webinar will take and what it will involve. One hour is usually long enough to cover all necessary information; this includes question and answer sessions and conclusions. The format of your Webinar could look something like this.

- *Introduction:* Facilitator to announce presenter and topic
- *Presenter Introduction:* Who are they, what do they do, why are they presenting
- *Topics 1 & 2:* Maximum 25 minutes
- *Question & Answer Session Topic 3:* Maximum 10 minutes
- *Conclusion:* Summarise Topics
- *Question and Answer Session Exit Survey:* Redback can assist you with this

### **Tip #6 - Communicating to your audience**

So, now you know what you want to say and how you want to say it, who are you going to say it to? Once you have the right target audience in mind it is important that you market your webinar using the right channels. Here are some ideas:

*Email Marketing:*

This form of marketing is quite common and there is one reason for it – it works! When done properly, email marketing can be quite powerful in capturing your audience's attention. It is also a relatively inexpensive and easy way to expand your contact database for future webinars.

**Do:** Send a thank you email once the webinar is over. If you have recorded your webinar include the link in the email.

**Don't:** Bombard your audience with email alerts. One reminder a week/day before the webinar and four hours before is more than adequate.

*Company Website:*

Advertising your webinar on your website is the perfect way to attract existing and prospective customers. Once customers click on the webinar link they could be directed to a registration page, summary of the webinar and brief biography on the speaker.

**Do:** Advertise on your events or promotions page – this is the first place people will look.

**Don't:** Include too many fields within your registration form. The easier it is to complete, the more data you will capture.

### **Tip #7 - Practice, Practice, Practice**

Choosing a quality facilitator is crucial to any webinar. The Facilitators role is to introduce the presenter, conduct question and answer sessions and wrap up the webinar; they are the

professionals and you must get to know them.

Whether your webinar contains two or 200 attendees it is advised that you run at least one trial. Certain things to test include whether your computer has the necessary software requirements and ensuring there is no conflicting event within your office that may interfere with your internet bandwidth.

**Tip #8 - Exit Strategy**

Once your webinar is over it is still fresh in your attendees mind. When closing the webinar have your attendees land on a survey page. Ask them for their thoughts and what they might like to see in future webinars. For lead generation, include fields such as name, organisation, email address and contact number so you can follow up with them. Your Redback Support Team can assist you with creating these surveys.

**Tip #9 - Making the most of it**

Your webinar is over and it was a success, now what? Collate the captured information and use it! Follow up with sales leads, send thank you emails and add new contacts to your database. If you are considering conducting regular webinars, arrange a schedule three months in advance and communicate this to your attendees.