The 5 Best Ways To Deliver Your Content

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In a recent blog post, marketing guru Seth Godin talked about "the hierarchy of presentations." Godin says, "A presentation is a precious opportunity. It's a powerful arrangement... one speaker, an **Introduction**

In a recent blog post, marketing guru Seth Godin talked about "the hierarchy of presentations." Godin says, "A presentation is a precious opportunity. It's a powerful arrangement... one speaker, an attentive audience, all in their seats, all paying attention (at least at first). Don't waste it."

He goes on to say that the purpose of a presentation is "to change minds," and then he outlines types of presentations, acknowledging that the very best "is no presentation at all." He then says the next best thing after that is one-on-one without any slides or microphones.

In a perfect world, we'd recommend Godin's approach every time. After all, nothing replaces the intimacy of a friendly conversation or the human touch. But in our global 24/7 world, it's becoming harder and harder to get "face time" with prospects, current clients, or even all of your employees. Still, it's imperative that you deliver content to these groups. But exactly how you *do* the delivery--i.e. which method of content delivery you choose--is still very much in your control. And that's a good thing.

In this white paper, we're going to discuss the different mediums for content delivery, including **audio conferences**, **web conferences**, **webinars**, **video conferences**, and **on-demand playback**. We'll provide the pros and cons for each, as well as examples of industries for which the particular modality might be best suited. It's our hope that this information will serve as a guideline for determining which modalities are right for your business.

Content Delivery Option #1: Audio Conferencing

Everyone in business has access to a phone. And considering these days that more and more people have cell phones, Blackberries, iPhones, etc., people can be part of a call from almost anywhere at any time: the corner coffee shop, the airport, even the beach.

Pros:
- Convenience--everyone in business has access to a phone.
- Perfect for "technically challenged" audiences.
- Works well when you need to get information out quickly since there's practically no set up (much easier than communicating login info, URLs, etc).
- Variety of access methods, such as Operator-Assisted (OA) and PIN.
- Post call reports are available showing dial-in times, duration, etc.
- Ability to record calls and make accessible for those who couldn't be on the call.
- Can be part of a "hybrid" solution with webinars (see #3 below).

Cons:
- Lose out on nonverbal gestures and "seeing" people's reactions, posture, and other revealing nonverbal behavior.
- Difficult if working with/looking at documents while on the call.
- Audio makes for a more challenging learning environment since most people are visual learners.

Industries: All

Content Delivery Option #2: Web Conferencing

According to the website Internet World Stats, 74.4 percent of the population in North America uses the Internet. From 2000 to 2008, the

number of users in North America grew by over 130 percent! No doubt, any business that considers itself a serious business has Internet access. In essence, a web conference takes advantage of the web (for visuals) and phone (for audio). Web conferencing is all about collaboration and discussion--it's very much a group effort.

Pros:

- More than 84 percent of all people are visual learners, so having the added visuals from the web will have a greater impact on attendees.
- Two-way communication is maintained through the phone or VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol).
- A web conference can work for two people or many people.
- Web conferencing is an interactive medium, which means attendees will be more engaged.
- Simple and easy to use.
- The best web conferencing services don't require software downloads, but they do provide useful features, such as live desktop share and the ability for several users to control slides.
- Post call reports are available showing log in times, duration, etc.

Cons:

- Less effective when set up "on the fly."
- Added effort on part of business to create dynamic visuals.

Industries: Web conferencing works well for many industries, but especially those B2B businesses that need to physically "show" their clients or prospects deliverables, such as website mock-ups, logo designs, floor plans for an event, brochure design, any sort of proofs, etc. Web conferences also work well when you need to get the whole "team" together--be it sales, managers, employees, etc. It's the perfect solution for internal use where employees may be spread out across several branches…or for those businesses that are completely virtual.

Content Delivery Option #3: Webinars

Similar to its web conferencing cousin, webinars are essentially seminars on the web. While web conferences are more about collaboration, webinars advocate the "one-to-many" model where a presenter (or presenters) conducts the webinar for an audience that could include hundreds of attendees.

The types of people who sign up for traditional seminars include prospects, current customers, employees, or people who want to further their education on a particular topic. Now move this concept to the web, and--voila!--you have webinars. When companies are looking to generate revenue from their content delivery, webinars are often the best way to go.

Pros:

- More than 84 percent of all people are visual learners.
- Webinars are a one-to-many system, where visuals and audio come "streaming" through the computer.
- Can easily create a "hybrid" with audio conferences, meaning attendees can choose webinar option or audio-only option; both groups would hear the same presentation.

- Webinars are an interactive medium, and the more interactive the medium, the better the satisfaction and the higher the increase in repeat customer rates, which can often translate to more revenue for your company.
- Recorded video clips can be easily added.
- Simple and easy to use, with no downloads required.
- The best webinar services provide useful features, such as instant polls, live chat (perfect for Q&A), live desktop share, and the ability for several users to control slides. Live chat and Q&A allows you to screen questions and only answer the ones you want. Still, you can capture *all* the questions, which provides you an additional marketing opportunity: you can communicate with the audience by sending an email with the answers to all of the questions after the event ends.
- Post call reports are available showing log in times, duration, etc.

Cons:

- You'll need more prep time than you would need for an audio conference or even a web conference; slides and other materials need to be dynamic and polished.
- Rehearsal time is critical.
- A polished presenter or speaker is a must.

Industries: Webinars work well for businesses or organizations that have educational or training components for customers, prospects, and/or employees. Many customers use a "hybrid" of an audio conference and a webinar where access to the event can happen through web or phone. This creates the largest potential audience since you don't eliminate the people who want to access only by phone or computer--the hybrid solution caters to everyone.

Content Delivery Option #4: Video Conferencing

What's the difference between a video conference and web conference? The visual aspect for the web conference usually comes from slides or the web itself. In a video conference, you see the person's face and body (often in real time), in addition to hearing the person's voice.

Pros:

- Brings a "human" quality to virtual meetings.
- Most people prefer seeing the face that goes with the voice, and some communication studies suggest that more is communicated through nonverbal behavior than through spoken words.
- With video conferencing, you have two options: you can have "talking head" video clips with the use of web cams or you can play pre-recorded videos.
- Video conferencing can enhance your webinars, making them even more interactive. The more interactive the medium, the better the satisfaction and the higher the increase in repeat customer rates, which can often translate to more revenue for your company.

Cons:

- Everyone on video needs to be "on"--this can create more pressure for those presenting.
- Rehearsal is highly recommended.
- Need a webcam/video cam, which is not standard on computers (at least not yet).
- Takes a lot of bandwidth, and you have no control over the viewers' computer processing speed and Internet connection. If either one of those is poor, the viewer will get a choppy video.

Industries: Video conferencing can work well when face-to-face is necessary, but physically impossible. Think out-of-state law depositions, investor relation meetings, continuing education that occurs strictly online…the possibilities are really endless.

Content Delivery Option #5: On-Demand Playback

Don't let your conference end after one event--let it live on through a variety of on-demand playback options, such as podcasts and archived webinars.

Pros:
- Convenient--let's your attendees decide when they want to listen and/or watch.
- Available 24/7 via phone (for audio-only conferences), downloadable podcast, or archived webinar.
- All that's needed is an Internet connection or phone line (for audio-only conferences).
- Provides an additional revenue source--you can charge attendees for access.
- Reports are available on sales, playbacks, streams etc.

Cons:
- Not in real-time, so you can't engage with the attendees or answer immediate questions.

Industries: Perfect for any industries that do webinars, video conferences, etc. and want to make the content available long after the live event is over.

Content Delivery Success: Next Steps

For most businesses, a hybrid or combined approach to content delivery makes sense. Audio conferencing might work well for certain situations, but you might need video conferencing capabilities a few times a year for other situations. It's important to work with a vendor who takes the time understand your organization's unique needs.

At BeaconLive, we do this. We learn about your business so that we can suggest the best content delivery methods for your needs. And we don't walk away after you make your decision--we're with you through every step of your live event…and beyond. When you work with BeaconLive, it's a true partnership where customer service is our number one priority.

About BeaconLive
BeaconLive is a single-source provider of online content delivery. With almost 20 years experience, "high-touch" customer service, and over 10,000 live events produced, BeaconLive is the leader in delivering content with the highest quality. For more information on how you or your organization can experience the power of BeaconLive for your next live event, visit us on the web: www.beaconlive.com.

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