



How to Create Great Webinars

Craft Compelling Content

A guide to developing content for effective webinar presentations

White Paper

When planning any presentation, content is king. It's even more crucial for web-based communications than in live training. During live training, you are able to ask questions, spend more time on content that is appealing to the audience and opt to gloss over sections that are losing your group's attention. During a webinar, however, you will not be able to see when you've lost your audience's attention, nor will you have the opportunity to adjust your presentation to recapture their attention once the session starts. Remote audiences have short attention spans and the ability to multi-task, which means that it's much more difficult to hold their attention during a webinar.

Many speakers and trainers who are new to webinars believe that they can use the same presentation they used during live events for a webinar. However, because of the physical disconnect, and the need for content and delivery transformation, this is not the case. To truly captivate your remote audience, you must change the way you organize your content and adjust your delivery style.

Know Your Audience

The more familiar you are with your audience, the better you will be able to develop content that holds their attention and delivers enough value to justify the time and financial investment they are making to be part of your webinar. Consider these issues when creating your content:

- What is your audience's goal for the session?
- Why are they attending this webinar?
- What problems can you solve for the audience?
- What is the audience's knowledge level as it relates to this topic?

Once you have identified your audience's goals and your webinar's learning objectives, you are ready to develop the content for your session.

How Much Content Is Enough?

Because virtual audiences are easily distracted, it is best to keep attendee-funded webinars short – no more than 60 minutes total, which translates into 45 minutes of content and 15 minutes for questions. Anything over 45 minutes and your audience might start to lose focus, even if the webinar is highly interactive. If you find that you need more than 45 minutes of teaching time, create a second webinar rather than trying to deliver a longer training. Following are guidelines for content development:

- 60-minute webinar: Prepare 45 minutes of content and leave 15 minutes for questions.
- 45-minute webinar: Prepare 30 minutes of content and leave 15 minutes for questions.
- 30-minute webinar: Prepare 20 minutes of content and leave 10 minutes for questions.

Content Development Format:

To help organize your content, use the Webinar that Wow™ PIE (Persuade, Inform, Educate) Format. This format is designed for situations in which you need to persuade, inform or educate attendees. This model works well when one or two people are presenting and the attendees are listening with limited involvement. The format includes an introduction, body and conclusion.

Here is an overview of how your content should be organized:

Introduction

Start with a two- to three-minute introduction to keep attendees focused and engaged, then quickly move to the body of the presentation. Follow these steps:

1. State your name and the title of the webinar.
2. State attendees' goal(s) for participating in the webinar as concise, concrete value statements. What will attendees get out of this webinar? What will they gain by participating? Answer the question, "What's in it for them?" Make sure you reference the benefits from your webinar description that motivated them to enroll.
3. Summarize attendees' current situation – In two to five points, state the attendees' current situation or environment. These would highlight their problems, challenges or hurdles as it relates to your topic.
4. State your agenda topics and the length of the webinar. Two to five agenda topics is ideal for a webinar that lasts less than an hour.
5. State your expectations for attendees' focus and participation.

Body

The body of the content begins when you start presenting the agenda topics that were outlined during Step 4 of the introduction. The number of slides per agenda topic will vary depending on the amount of information you have to discuss. Make sure each agenda topic slide follows the format below. Present each agenda topic by:

1. Restating the agenda topic.
2. Expanding on the agenda topic by providing four to six points of concise, supporting data. This can be done with bullet points, graphs, charts, pictures, video and demonstrations.
3. Tying each agenda topic back to attendees' goal(s).

Conclusion

The conclusion of your webinar is to remind attendees what you covered during your webinar and why that information is beneficial for them. To conclude your presentation:

1. Restate agenda topics from your introduction.
2. Restate goal statements from your introduction.
3. End with your recommended action steps for attendees. Be specific.

How to Determine the Right Amount of Content

Participants in attendee-funded webinars allot a specific amount of time to participate in the training. Respect their time by starting and ending your presentation on time. In most cases, it will take longer than you think to communicate your information. To help ensure that you have included the right amount of content, list on a piece of paper how much time it will take you to deliver each slide. Keep in mind that engaging your attendees takes a lot of time. (For example: slide one – 90 seconds, slide two – 30 seconds, slide three – 2 minutes). Practice the content out loud and time yourself to determine the most accurate calculation.

Once you have determined the timing on each slide, add up the times. How close are you to your allotted time? This will help you determine if you need to eliminate or edit content. Remember that it is better to end early than to run late and have your attendees sign off before you finish your content.

With proper design, your webinar will deliver valuable content and keep attendees interested and engaged in your session. Participants will achieve their learning objectives and be able to realize measurable results from their participation. The end result? They will be satisfied that their time and money was well spent on attending your webinar ... and they'll be more likely to return for future events.