

A top-down view of a wooden desk. In the top left, a small green plant is visible. A laptop is open, showing a web browser with a 'u | Edit | Help' menu. A yellow sticky note on the laptop lid says 'Research' with sub-points '- Marketing' and '- Customer'. A blue sticky note on the desk says 'Tel. 10/11. 3' and '* send E-mail'. A hand holds a tablet displaying a dashboard with a donut chart and the text '0.49%'. A white mouse sits on a blue mousepad. A cup of black coffee is in the bottom left, next to a ruler and some papers.

The Marketer's Guidebook to Hosting a Webinar

SmartBug.

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Introduction

Webinars are extremely powerful for drawing in and keeping in touch with prospects. They showcase your brand's expertise in your industry and give your company a human voice, literally.

I remember the first time I was involved in putting together a webinar. My boss was running around like a chicken with its head cut off, stressing about every little detail. (I tried to remain calm.)

It can be a stressful affair. For many companies, a webinar represents the only time they present to a large audience of leads, customers, industry experts, and, sometimes, press. And usually, it's live, so if you screw up, it's public. Technical difficulties are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what can go wrong.

Although putting together a webinar may never be “as easy as pie,” even getting started on the right path can be daunting if it's your first try.



However, webinars are one of the greatest tools in a marketer's box for all stages of inbound marketing:

- **Attract** – A particular topic will pull in audience members who may have never heard of your company before (you just have to promote it using channels where new people will hear about it).
- **Convert** – By registering, new visitors will become leads.
- **Close** – Other types of webinars, such as product demonstrations or case studies, can be utilized to help move leads down the funnel to the goal of becoming a customer.
- **Delight** – Product training, behind-the-scenes at your company, sneak peeks, and so on can enthrall customers and make them evangelists.

Depending on its content, a webinar can appeal to people in all stages of the buyer's journey:

Awareness

Educational webinars will often explore the problem or pains associated with a topic.

Consideration

Case study webinars or product comparisons guide prospects as they sift between the various options available to them.

Decision

Product demonstrations help leads determine if your product is the right one for them.

Finally, although blogs and e-books are two of the cornerstones of inbound marketing, different people prefer different ways of consuming content—and webinars are one of the mediums you can offer to individuals in your target audience who are more drawn to audio/visual formats than text.

With that short introduction, I hope I've convinced you that your company should include webinars in its marketing mix. This guidebook will walk you through how to get started, what tasks to consider, and some common pitfalls to avoid. And at the end of this resource is a bonus checklist so that you can stay on track when planning and executing your webinar.



Goal

You've decided to host a webinar. Great! But where do you even start?

That's actually easy: You start where you would with any new marketing initiative—by determining your goal. That goal could be to:

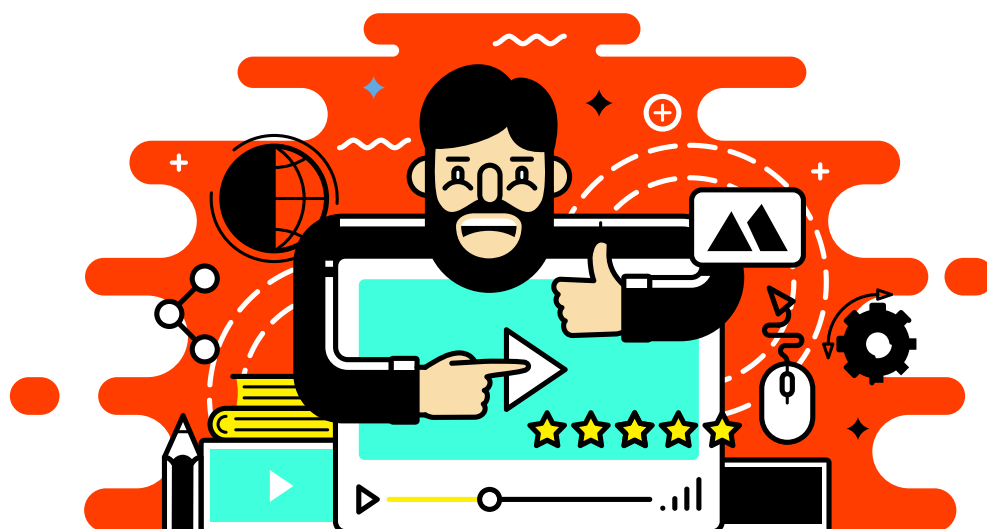
- Attract new prospects by hosting an educational webinar on a topic related to your industry
- Turn leads into opportunities by giving a webinar showcasing your product
- Move leads along the funnel by having a case study webinar
- Increase customer retention by providing a training webinar



Once you've determined the overarching goal of your webinar, take it one step further and make it SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound). A SMART webinar goal may look like:

- Attract **100** new prospects by hosting an educational webinar on a topic related to your industry by **August 31**
- Turn **10** leads into opportunities by giving a webinar showcasing your product **by the end of the quarter**
- Move **two** leads along the funnel by having a case study webinar **by May 1**
- Increase customer retention **from 80 percent to 85 percent by the end of the year** by providing training webinars **monthly**

Once you know why you are having a webinar, figuring out what's next will be much easier.



Types of Webinars

In a greatly simplified world, there are three main types of webinars: educational, product, and a blend of the two.

An educational webinar should be about giving away knowledge on a particular topic to the audience. You may mention your company and product exactly twice during these types of webinars: once in the introduction when you say, "Welcome to [company name] webinar" and once at the end in regard to the call to action. (Internal speakers may also reference case studies, things they have learned in their current jobs, and context where appropriate.) But an educational webinar is not the place to pitch your product or company. Doing so will only turn off your viewers (whom you will lose) and make them unlikely to ever come back.

A product webinar, on the other hand, is all about your product. These types of webinars are great for leads who are further down the buying cycle and are interested in learning more about your product and its features.

Customer case studies usually end up being a blend between educational (the problem a customer was facing, why that was a problem, and so on) and talking about or showcasing your product. This type of blended webinar is fine as long as the event is promoted as such.

Regardless of which type of webinar you choose, make sure that your promotional materials accurately reflect what content will be covered. Don't make a product demonstration sound like an educational webinar if it's not.

Your goal will determine which type of webinar you want to conduct. For example, if you are trying to attract and convert leads, an educational webinar is definitely the way to go. If you are aiming to create opportunities for your sales team, a product webinar will make more sense.



Topic

Determining the topic of your webinar may be the most difficult part. The topic may come from your goal naturally (like a product demo), but in the case of an educational webinar, you may be staring at a blank page.

Here are some ideas to get you started on how to determine your webinar topic:

- Brainstorm with your team.
- What is your industry currently buzzing about? What is hot right now?
- Repurpose a blog post or e-book.
- What keywords is your website trending for that could use a boost?
- Ask customers what general topic would entice them to attend a webinar.

- What are your competitors talking about?
- Scour your social media feeds for trends.
- Ask your sales team if any industry news has been popping up in conversations.



Hold your ground: Note that others in the company may push you toward doing a product webinar as your first (or only type of) presentation. Don't be afraid to push back if that doesn't fit with your goal. I can't tell you how many times I've answered the question, "Why are we having an entire webinar that doesn't mention our product?"

Once you have a list of topic ideas, start a webinar editorial calendar (because your first webinar will be so successful that your team will be clamoring for the next one!). Starting with quarterly webinars may be a great target for your team, and aiming for monthly after the process is going smoothly may be the end goal. Remember that, like blogging, consistency is important in establishing your company as one that is putting out thoughtful content regularly. Don't just have one webinar and then say we'll do another one when someone has a good idea—it won't happen.

Speaker and Format

Depending on the topic, you can tap an employee, a customer, a partner, or even an external expert to be the speaker. Whereas having an employee give the webinar can be an excellent credibility booster for the company, it can take a lot of time for the colleague to assemble content, especially if it's a new topic. (My past experience with in-house presenters was that they required 20-40 hours to develop the content and slides for an educational webinar if it was new.) However, on the flip side, some prospects may not register if they see that your company is presenting because they assume it will be a product demonstration instead of educational.



Pulling in an external expert is a fantastic way to attract new prospects, especially if he or she is well-known in the industry and presenting on a good topic. If your ideal speakers have never heard of your company, it might be necessary to offer an honorarium in exchange for their time.

Pro Tip

Try searching on SlideShare for a PowerPoint presentation on the topic you've selected. If you find one, reach out to the author and ask if he or she would be willing to give either the same presentation or an updated version to your audience.

This method can be effective for finding speakers outside of your company, and because the author has already developed the content and put it on SlideShare, your chances of getting a “yes” will definitely go up.

Another option is to have a panel of speakers with presenters such as a partner, a customer, an employee, and/or an expert. This format works especially well for controversial topics—although the coordination is a bit more intense.



Another option is to have a panel of speakers with presenters such as a partner, a customer, an employee, and/or an expert.

The Ask

I'm not a salesperson. Asking someone outside the company to give a webinar was terrifying the first few times. If someone inside your company knows the speaker you would like to approach, have them ask instead because it won't be out of the blue.

If it is a completely cold ask, I would send an email with a goal of trying to schedule a phone call to discuss. If you know an expert has presented on the topic before, make sure to mention that work and how you would like to showcase it.

Once you've received a "yes" from the speaker, make sure to follow up on the process, what you need by when, and general expectations. Putting together a one-page document can be a time saver once you are hosting webinars regularly.



Other Key People



Moderator

Having a moderator enhances the professionalism of your webinar. At the beginning of the webinar, the moderator (typically an internal employee—it can be your internal expert, a marketing person, or the CEO depending on the topic) should tell the audience how to ask questions, how to get the slides, and that a recording will be available after the event, and then introduce the speaker, including a brief biography. At the end, the moderator will pitch the call to action and then verbally ask the audience's questions to the speaker. This type of Q&A is more interesting to listen to and provides a better experience for the audience than having a speaker sorting through the questions and pausing to read each one before answering it.

Recorder

This subject is covered later on in this guidebook, but you'll need at least one employee to be in charge of recording the webinar. It can be the marketer, but whoever you choose can't use their computer while recording the event so that they get a clean version.

Technical Help Chat Person

There are always questions about the sound not working, how to get the slides, and so on. Having a person to answer these questions as they come up is best practice.

In-Event Social Media Guru

If you use a Twitter hashtag conversation and/or other social media during the event, designate a person to participate and encourage discussion.

Audience Member

I highly recommend having at least one employee logged into the webinar as an audience member. This person can then tell you if something goes wrong technology-wise that you wouldn't otherwise know about because you are logged in as an organizer of the event.



Note: Some of these responsibilities can be combined and some cannot. For example, the moderator can also be the technical help chat person, but then not the recorder. The recorder can be the in-event social media guru person if he or she has two computers.

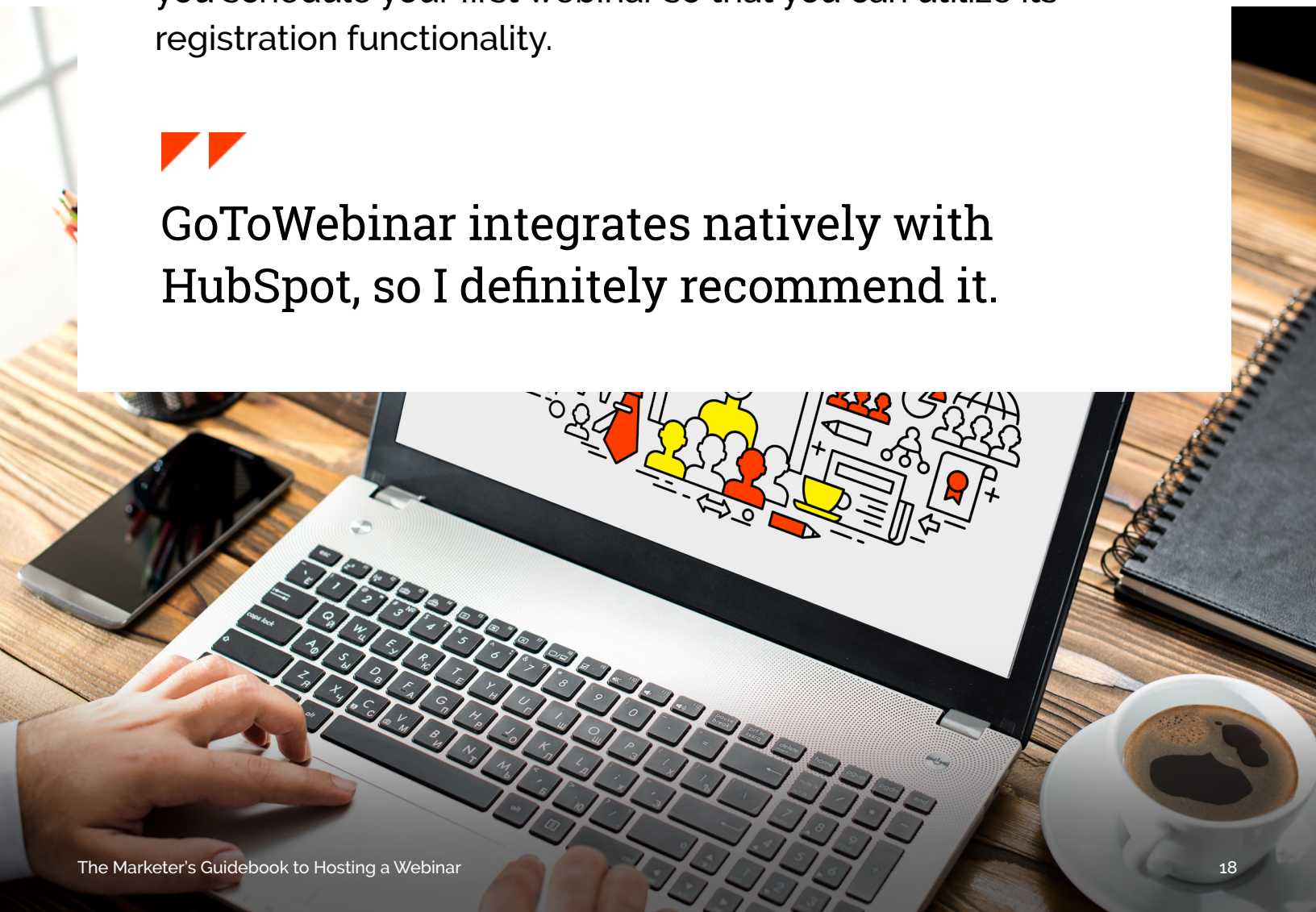
Software

There are many options for software to host a webinar, with the big three being Citrix GoToWebinar, Cisco WebEx, and Adobe Connect. Whereas new solutions don't require the user to download anything to view the webinar, those products haven't been able to deliver the consistent performance of these three juggernauts. (Bonus: GoToWebinar integrates natively with HubSpot, so I definitely recommend it.)

You'll need to select and purchase webinar software before you schedule your first webinar so that you can utilize its registration functionality.



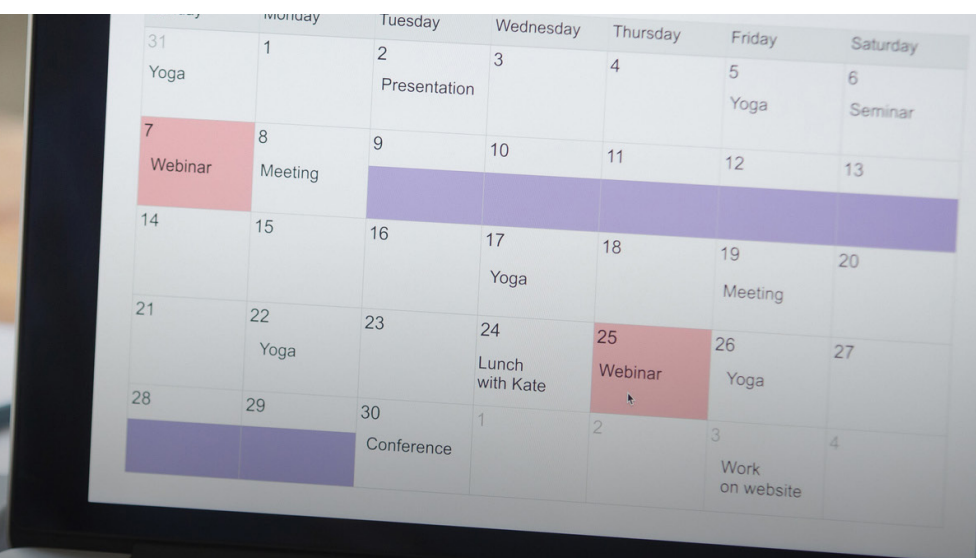
GoToWebinar integrates natively with HubSpot, so I definitely recommend it.



Setting it All in Motion

Once you have a topic and a speaker, you'll want to schedule the webinar at least three weeks out. Here are the details you need prior to beginning promotion:

- Whether your webinar will be live or on-demand
- Whether you will be doing multiple sessions
- Date(s) and time(s)
- A title and abstract (can either be written by marketing, the speaker, or some combination thereof)
- A picture or slide screenshot for promotional materials
- A bio of the speaker and a headshot
- What information someone must provide to register



From those details, you can create:

- A registration page
- Calls to action for your website
- Any images for social media promotion



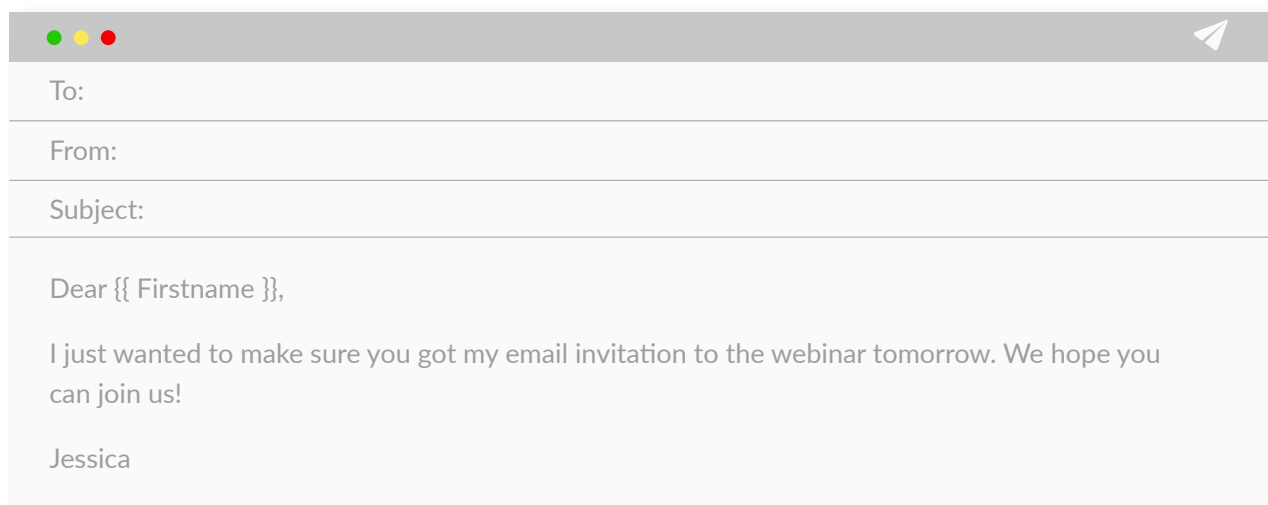
When do you schedule your webinar? For the U.S., Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday are usually the best days for webinars because people are swamped on Mondays and clamoring to get out of the office on Fridays. For time slot, most webinars in the U.S. are scheduled at noon, 1 p.m., 2 p.m., or 3 p.m. Eastern Time because those hours cover most of the time zones across the country.

As with all suggestions in this guidebook, be sure to take your target audience into consideration, as well as test different days and times to determine what performs the best for your company.

Promote

Your next task is to get people signed up for your webinar. I don't think you can ever promote your webinar too much ... unless you are sending daily emails, in which case, we need to talk.

Let's start with the basics. Of course, you are going to email your database about the webinar, but make sure you aren't a one-hit wonder. My past experience shows that three emails were the most effective—the first sent two weeks out, the second sent one week out, and the last one sent the day before. The first email was HTML (including a pretty template with a banner image, the abstract, and speaker bio and picture); the second one was text only with the title, date/time, speaker information, abstract, and link to register; and the third one was a repeat of the second one with a short personal message at the top, such as:



The image shows a screenshot of an email client window. The window has a title bar with three colored buttons (green, yellow, red) and a close button (a small square with a diagonal line). Below the title bar, there are three fields for email headers: "To:", "From:", and "Subject:". The main body of the email contains the following text:

Dear {{ Firstname }},

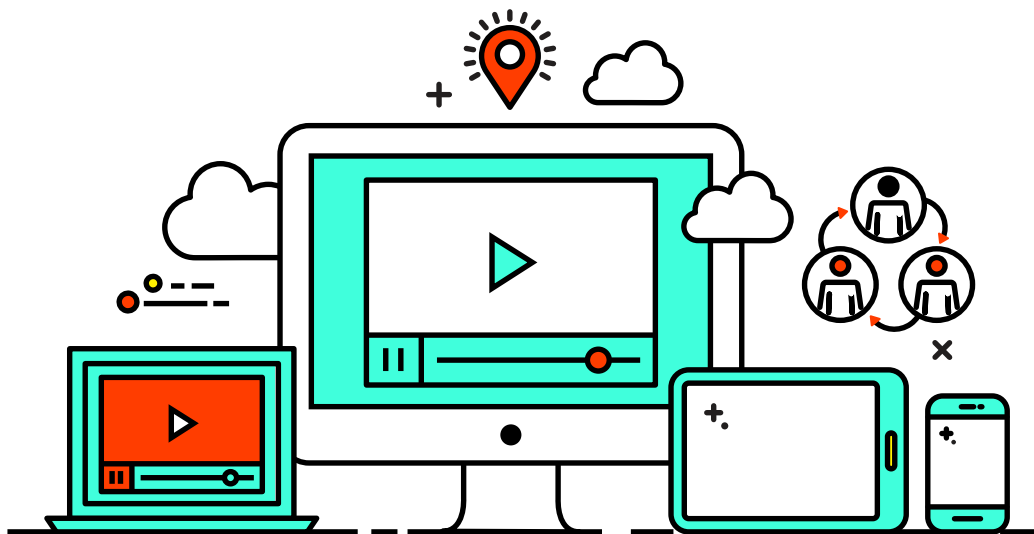
I just wanted to make sure you got my email invitation to the webinar tomorrow. We hope you can join us!

Jessica

For the second two emails, don't forget to filter out people who have already registered!

Social media is an absolute must for promotion. Post at least once on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google+. Post multiple times on Twitter. Don't forget to also post about the event in LinkedIn Groups that will find the content useful.

Be sure to have a prominent invitation to the webinar on your website. Depending on your design, consider putting an announcement in the sidebar in addition to a blurb on the homepage. Remember that people can initially land on any page of your website!



There are several options for announcing the webinar on your blog. A simple post with the abstract may work before the presentation, but try to be creative, too. I enjoyed putting together a five-question Q&A with the speaker to help people see what they would get out of attending the webinar.

Another great avenue is my new favorite acronym: LOPA, short for "Leverage Other People's Audience." An easy win is to have your external speaker send an email and post on social media about doing a webinar with your company. If you have a partner or another noncompetitive group that dovetails nicely with your product or the subject, ask if they would be interested in co-promoting the webinar with you. In exchange, give them the registration/attendee list.

Other tactics for promotion include putting out a press release about the webinar and emailing it to your favorite online industry journalists, or advertising a webinar on Facebook, Twitter, or an industry-specific publication if you have the budget available.

Now on to some more creative ideas!

Have all employees put a link to your webinar (pre- or post-event) in their signature line for a certain timeframe. It's free, and just think of all the people your customer support team, your sales team, and your account managers email in one day! Great exposure.

Also free: Many products have a “news” section or a feed for updates on the splash screen or dashboard. If your product has such a section, add a blurb about the webinar.

And while we are talking about customers, make sure to invite all of them (via phone or email) and also encourage them to bring a friend. A gift for the customer and their friend might be a nice touch.

If you are headed to a tradeshow or workshop, print up a few fliers about the webinar and hand them out. Also give them to your sales team as leave-behinds.

And finally, expand your reach by writing an original article regarding the webinar topic and post it on LinkedIn with a link at the end to register for the webinar. This will take some effort, but the exposure to your LinkedIn network will be worth it. Or instead of posting an original article on LinkedIn, guest post on another blog that has the same target audience as your webinar with a call to action of registering for the event.

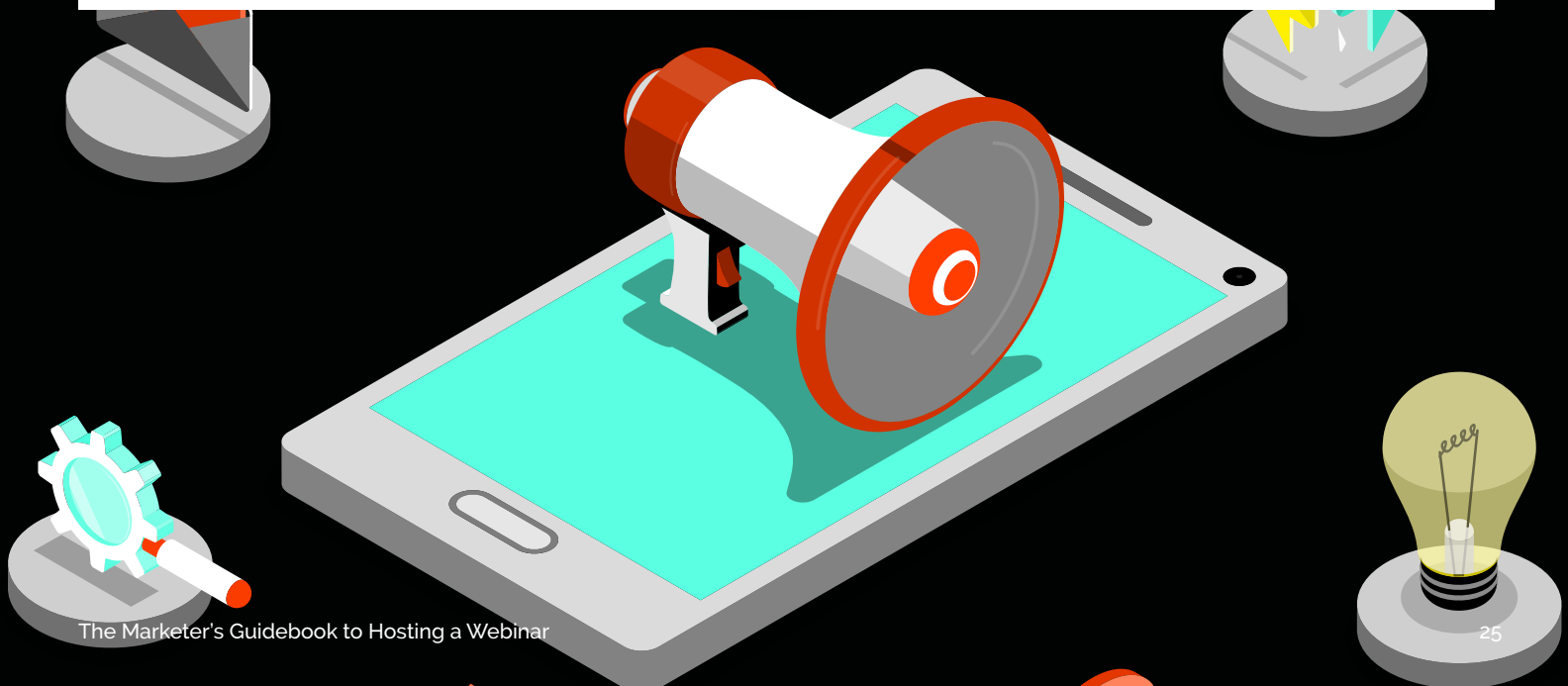


Content

If you are having an external presenter who is experienced at giving webinars, there is no reason to do a formal dry run. Just ask the speaker to send you the slide deck so you can look over the content and make sure it will resonate with your audience. (Do, however, schedule a 30-minute tech check using the webinar software you will be using. This will help iron out any technical difficulties before they occur. I once spent the entire 30-minute tech check trying to get our speaker's sound to work, so this meeting is absolutely vital to having a smooth event on the actual day. It should be done one week out from the webinar.)



Ask the speaker to send you the slide deck so you can look over the content.

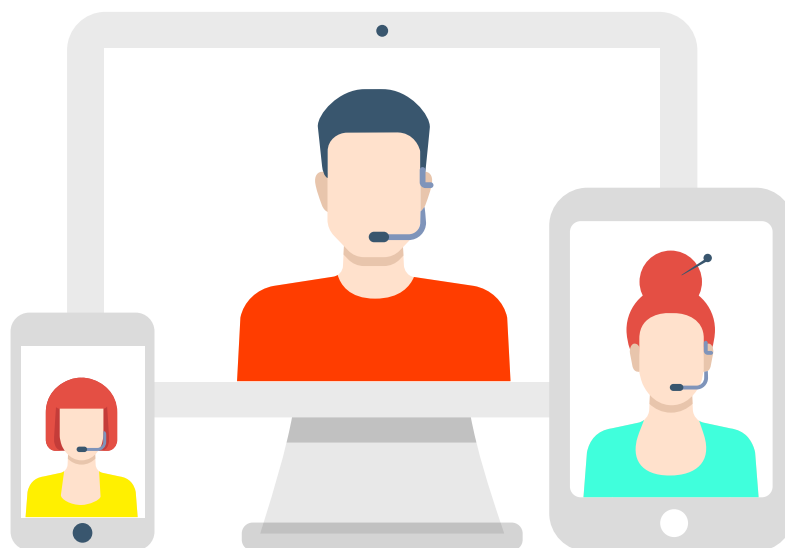


If you are having internal speakers talk about a topic that they haven't presented on previously, you'll need a more in-depth process. Start with a content walkthrough two weeks prior the event in which your internal speaker has a rough outline (or slides) and can talk through the presentation.

One week out, do a dry run: Have the presenter give the webinar as if it's the real thing using your webinar software. I've had times where the first dry run was really shaky and rough.

Don't panic—this is why you have a week. Schedule a second or third dry run until the presentation is as smooth as butter.

The dry run is also a great time to see if your office internet bandwidth can handle the stress of a live webinar. If the audio or image is cutting in and out, you may want to consider plugging directly into the wall (if you were using Wi-Fi) or finding a different internet source.



What to consider during content walkthroughs and dry runs:

- Does this presentation deliver on what you promised the attendees?
- Do you understand what the speaker is talking about? If you were a newbie, would you understand? (Think context.)
- Are there any holes or gaps in the presentation?
- Are there places in the presentation where a visual aid (diagram, pictures, and so on) would help describe the process or the steps the speaker is following?
- Is there a story—that is, does everything in the webinar fit together? If not, how can you help create that story with the speaker?
- Does the webinar fit in the given amount of time?
- Is there an agenda at the beginning and a conclusion at the end?
- What are some backup questions we could have in reserve in case there aren't any on the real webinar?
- What are other ways you could use this content in the future?

One thing to work out with your speakers in advance is whether they want to do a poll of the audience as part of their presentation. Breaking up the webinar by asking attendees a question is a great way to bring their focus back to the content and make the webinar more interactive. These questions can cover the audience's opinion of something, whether they are currently doing x or y, or if their experience matches what studies have shown, just to name a few examples.

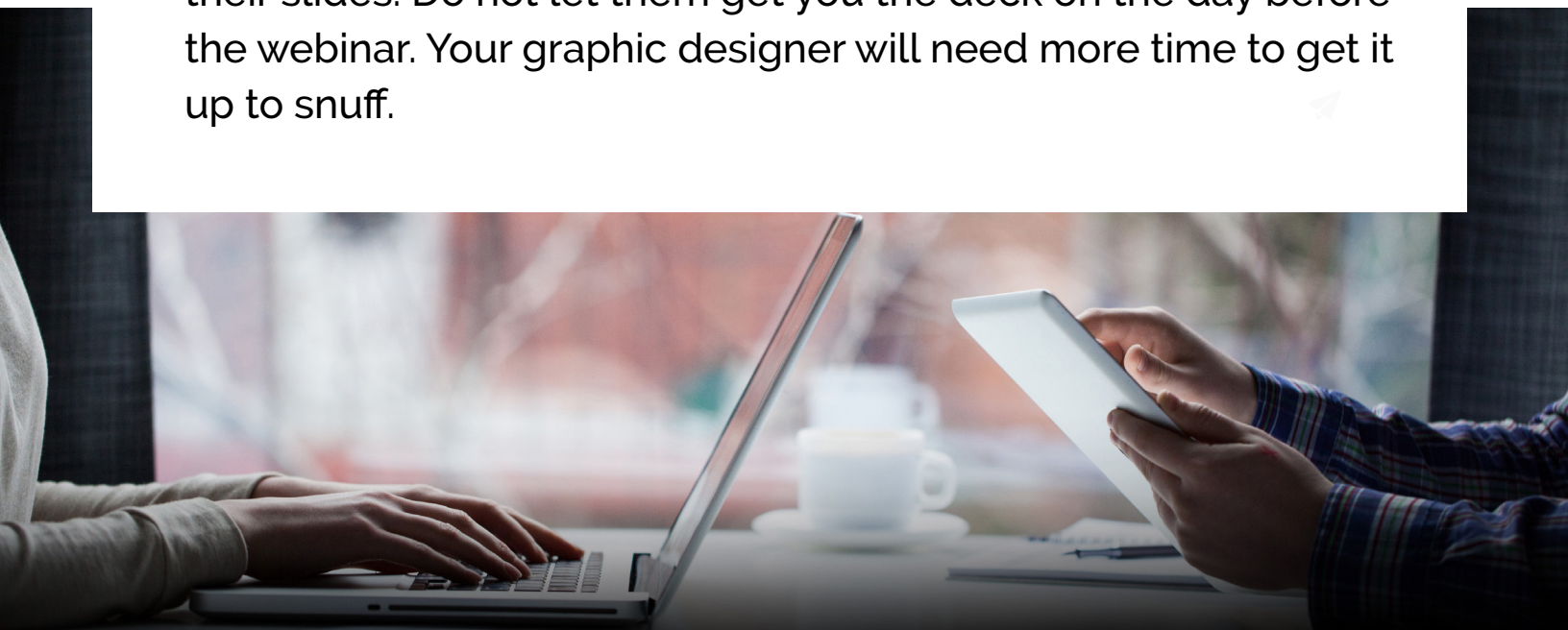


Slides

Slides are a key component of your webinar. Absolutely do not leave them entirely to the speaker to develop or forget about until the day of. The slides are a reflection of your brand and will directly impact the audience's perception of how professional your webinar was.

For an external speaker, ask if you can have your graphic designer polish up slides a bit. (They will need polishing unless the speaker is a marketing guru or graphic designer.) Resist the temptation to put the presentation in your corporate template. If it's an educational webinar, leave the presentation in the original template. For internal speakers, your corporate template is fine, even if it is an educational webinar.

My experience is that internal speakers need a lot of help with their slides. Do not let them get you the deck on the day before the webinar. Your graphic designer will need more time to get it up to snuff.



Make sure you have the following slides:

- 1 Title slide** – Should include the webinar name, date, and the presenter's name and title.
- 2 Agenda slide** – Include 4-6 main points.
- 3 Content slides** – For a 60-minute presentation, you'll want 30-40 slides unless the speaker talks very fast, in which case I have seen someone get through 60 slides in 60 minutes.
- 4 Conclusion slide** – Pull it all together.
- 5 Call-to-action** – What do you want the audience to do next?
- 6 Questions slide** – How the audience can ask questions.

Pro Tip

Save the slides as a PDF, upload them to your website, and send them out prior to the webinar (or via the chat pane)—that way attendees can print them out and take notes during the presentation if they wish.

Things to Figure Out Prior to the Event

- If your speaker wants to have a poll, what would that poll and accompanying options be?
- Are you going to use a Twitter chat hashtag? (And if so, do you have a couple of power customers or employees listening along who can contribute?)
- Do you want a post-event survey, and what questions would this survey would include?
- What are the next steps for attendees after the webinar? Do you want them to download the slides? Is it a phone call with a salesperson? What is the most appropriate way to present this next step—at the end of the webinar? Via email? After they view the recording?



- How does the speaker want to handle questions—answering them throughout the webinar, doing a Q&A at the end, or having audience members submit questions that the speaker will answer via email post-webinar?
- Are there any questions the speaker does not want to address, and what topics are off limits? (Your moderator needs to know these items, as does anyone answering chat questions.) Examples may include product pricing, personal information, and any areas outside the speaker's area of expertise.
- Determine who internally will be doing what in terms of moderator, recorder, tech help chat person, and audience member.



Oversee the Event

The day has finally arrived! And you couldn't be more excited (or scared). Here are some tips to make sure it goes smoothly.

Before the webinar begins, make sure the speaker and moderator do the following:

- Turn office phones and cell phones off or put them on silent.
- Put a sign on their door that they are not to be disturbed.
- Shut down all computer programs except the webinar software and slides (don't forget email and chat).
- Have drinking water nearby in case their throats get dry.
- Use the microphone/headset approved at the tech check or dry run.

Don't forget to check in with your recorder, social media guru, tech help chat person, and internal audience member to make sure they are all ready to go with their areas of responsibility.

Suggestions for the marketer:

- Send your backup questions to the moderator before the webinar, in case there are no questions from the audience. (Make sure the moderator has the list of off-limits topics.)
- Start the broadcast about 15 minutes early so that attendees who arrive early see the title slide, not the lame “waiting room.”
- Begin on time, even if only one person is there.
- Mute all attendees and mute the moderator after they are done introducing the speaker.
- Watch the presentation and make sure nothing goes wrong (things I've had happen: slides not advancing, couldn't hear the speaker, the moderator unmutes and you can hear sirens in the background).



How many people will attend? You can expect half of the people who register to actually attend the live webinar. My experience, as well as other marketers', confirmed this statistic with a range of 40-60 percent depending on the webinar topic and frequency of events.

During the Q&A, make sure to direct each question to a particular panelist or to have a predetermined order of which panelist will answer so there is not an awkward exchange of who's-going-to-answer-this-question.



Don't forget to check in with your recorder, social media guru, tech help chat person, and internal audience member to make sure they are all ready to go with their areas of responsibility.



Recording

Recording your webinar is super important for a variety of reasons, including:

- Webinar registrants expect that a recording will be available after the event. If a meeting comes up or attendees must leave early, they expect to be able to catch the recording later.
- After attending the live event, webinar attendees may want to recommend watching the recording to a colleague.
- Recordings allow the marketer to get a transcription made.

This transcription helps in creating other pieces of content from the information in the webinar.

A transcription should also be uploaded to your website for SEO purposes.

A transcription also allows an option for hearing-impaired audience members to access to the content.

- Recordings are another piece of gated content that can be offered on your website in perpetuity to convert new visitors into leads.
- You can send a recording to potential speakers so they can see what your webinars are like and what previous presenters have covered.
- New customers may find past webinars helpful in educating themselves on a particular topic.

Because of these reasons, best practice is to always have one main recording mechanism, as well as a backup in case the first fails. (I have had my laptop crash in the middle of recording a live webinar. It happens.) Since GoToWebinar introduced the recording feature, you can rely on that functionality as one method.

For the backup, have a non-presenting or participating employee record as an attendee using software such as Camtasia. Make sure this recorder turns off all notifications including email and chat, turns off all screen savers (and power save mode for laptops), turns off the microphone, and doesn't use the computer at all during the webinar. This will result in the cleanest recording possible.

If you are able, test both recording mechanisms during one of your dry runs to check the quality and make sure the technology is working properly.

Once the webinar is over, review both recordings and select the one that is better. (Usually one will have superior sound compared with the other.) If any major faux pas occurred during the webinar (such as software crashing during a product demo or a question that didn't make sense), they can be edited out, as can any dead space at the beginning or end.

Some companies choose to do a second session of the webinar for recording purposes only. This may lead to a more polished presentation because the speaker has already given the content once.

Depending on how the live event goes, this may or may not be necessary. Another option is to replace a certain section of the webinar that didn't go well and not the whole thing. When choosing this method, just be aware that sound differences will make this splice noticeable to the listeners, so choose wisely.



How do you put the recording on your website? One of the methods I used for delivering the recording was to upload the video to YouTube as an unlisted video and then embed it on our website's thank you page (this can also work with Wistia, Vimeo, or any other video hosting site). Another option would be to give visitors the ability to download the video file directly to their computers by uploading the raw MP4 or WAV file. You may decide to do both.

Post-Event Tasks

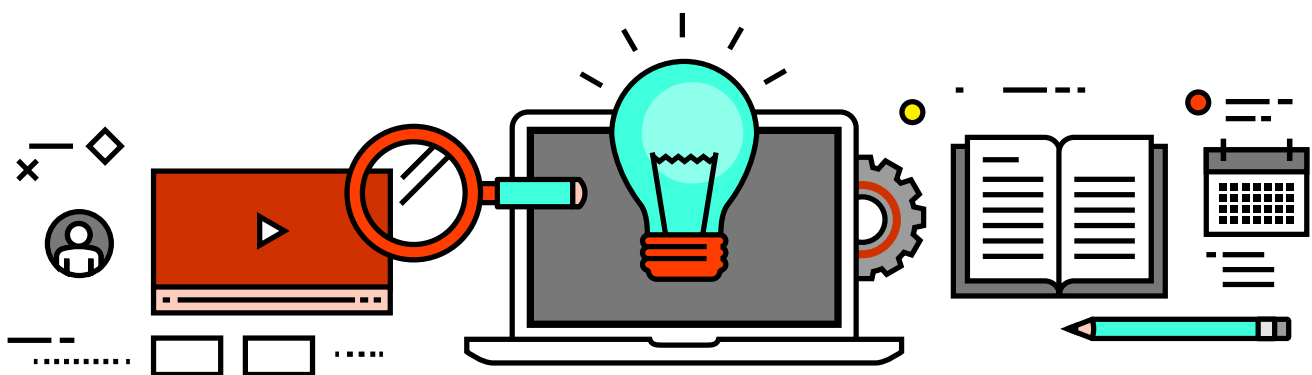


After the webinar is done, I usually heave a huge sigh of relief (especially if there were no technical difficulties). However, you just had a whole bunch of people engage with you for an hour—now is not the time to drop the ball!

Post-event tasks include:

- If the speaker was external, calling immediately after the webinar is over and thank him or her for presenting. (You may want to also send a gift, depending on if you agreed to an honorarium.)
- Sending the registration and attendee spreadsheets to your sales team.
- Sending any unanswered questions to the speaker and asking to respond to you with the answers so that you can get back to the attendees (unless the presenter doesn't mind responding to the attendees directly, but usually, I have found that speakers prefer someone else handle it).
- Editing and uploading the recording of the webinar to whichever hosting service you'll be using.

- Sending the recording to a transcription service and then uploading the finished transcript to your website.
- Updating your webinar registration page for the recording, or archiving the registration page and creating a new landing page for the recording.
- Responding to any people who emailed you asking for access to the recording and/or slides.
- Uploading the slides to SlideShare.
- Going back to any blog posts you wrote about the upcoming webinar and either editing them to include the link to the recording or posting a comment with the link.
- Updating the website announcements with revised wording to view the recording instead of registering for the event. Don't forget to add the recording to your resources page on your website.
- Creating CTAs for use at the end of blog posts on the topic.



Follow-Up



Follow-up after the webinar is just as important as promoting the webinar before the event.

Most post-webinar campaigns will usually include sending an email to all the registrants with a link to the recording and slides. (Send a slightly different email to those who attended and to those who didn't.) For customers, this may be all that is needed.

Prior to the webinar, you should have already determined what you want the next steps to be for leads who attended. If the topic was educational, one option is to direct attendees to download an e-book or visit a blog post that ties the subject matter to your company and product (consideration- or decision-stage content).

For leads who are new to your database, lead nurturing over the next couple of weeks can help solidify your company as a source of educational content with the eventual goal of helping them along the buyer's journey.



Within the inbound marketing model, this journey often starts with a website visit.

Other Post-Event Considerations

Webinars take a lot of time and work. Don't let this effort go to the wayside. Think about how you can use the webinar content in other ways. Perhaps the speaker would be interested in writing a post on the topic they just covered. Or take the transcript and develop your own blog post from it (a one-hour webinar can easily be repurposed into three blog posts). Was there a section of the content that would lend itself to an infographic? How about a podcast with your internal expert breaking down the webinar play-by-play?



Even the Q&A section can be reused.

If a webinar topic is evergreen, continue to publish social media posts with a link to the recording. As you have new followers, they might be interested in the content. Also, include it in your monthly newsletter.

After the craziness of the webinar is over and things have returned to normal, take a minute to record what went particularly well and what could have been improved. These notes will prove invaluable when you start to put together your next webinar.



Webinars take a lot of time and work. Don't let this effort go to the wayside. Think about how you can use the webinar content in other ways.



Conclusion

Webinars can be an incredibly useful tool for attracting visitors to your company, converting those visitors into leads, closing those leads into customers, and delighting those customers into becoming evangelists. I hope that you found this guidebook useful as you consider how to use webinars in your marketing mix.

As always, if you have any feedback on this guidebook or helpful things to include for Version 2, please don't hesitate to contact me at jessica@smartbugmedia.com.

Good luck!



About the Author



Jessica Vionas-Singer is a Senior Inbound Marketing Consultant at SmartBug Media. She fell in love with marketing at her first job at a technology company specializing in credit evaluation software. Prior to joining SmartBug, Jessica was the Director of Marketing at a B2B company that built software for analyzing genetics. Her background includes 15 years of marketing experience in content creation and lead-driving tactics, online presence and blog creation, social media engagement, budgeting and project plans, webinar and trade show event management, public relations, comprehensive promotional campaigns, and analytics. At SmartBug, Jessica leads the strategy and implementation behind inbound and content marketing activities to help a portfolio of clients exceed their sales and marketing goals. Jessica has a BS in Sociology from Montana State University – Bozeman.

About SmartBug



SmartBug Media is one of a handful of HubSpot Diamond partners in the world and is the highest-rated agency in the history of the HubSpot ecosystem. We also boast the highest ROI documented from any HubSpot partner—3,558% and 14,500% ROI on a six-month and three-year campaign, respectively. At Inbound 2015, SmartBug Media was the most recognized agency, having won or been named a finalist in nine awards.

SmartBug Media is one of the first HubSpot partners to implement growth-driven design and was an inaugural member of the HubSpot COS Advisory Board. For more than seven years, SmartBug Media has been helping businesses increase sales leads, close more customers, and enhance the reach of their brands. From building comprehensive online marketing programs to designing new websites, driving leads through social media or sales enablement, we're an extension of your marketing team that delivers.

For a free inbound marketing or web design consultation, or to learn more, visit www.smartbugmedia.com or call [949-236-6448](tel:949-236-6448).

Bonus: Webinar Checklist



Getting Started:

Determine your goal for the webinar.

Determine the type of webinar.

Determine the topic of the webinar.

Determine the speaker(s) and format.

Determine what questions your registration form should have.

Determine the day and time.

Three Weeks Out:

Schedule dry run/technology check for one week prior to the webinar.

Create the title and abstract in conjunction with the speaker.

Get the speaker's biography and picture.

Create the registration page, CTAs, and other promotional images.

Two Weeks Out:

Begin your promotional campaign!

Send promotional email #1 to your database.

Update your website with webinar announcements and CTAs.

Start social media blitz, including posting on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn (and LinkedIn Groups), and Google+.

Post about the webinar on your blog.

Leverage other people's audiences (LOPA).

Engage in other promotional activities such as a press release, inviting customers, product news stream, and so on.

Determine if your speaker wants to have a poll and if so, what options to include.

Determine what questions your post-event survey should include.

Decide if you are going to use a Twitter chat hashtag and/or other social media during the event.

Define the "next steps" for attendees after the webinar, including lead nurturing.

Monitor registrations throughout the week.

Determine who internally will be doing what in terms of moderator, recorder, tech help chat person, recorder, social media guru, and audience member.

One Week Out:

More promotion!

Send email #2.

Tweet (more) about it.

Additional tactics.

Do dry run/technology check. Determine if additional dry runs are needed. Ask content questions.

Check internet bandwidth.

Check recording and backup recording mechanisms.

Get slides from the speaker. Have your graphic designer polish them.

Respond to any email questions from registrants and prospects.

Set up lead nurturing for after the event.

Ascertain any topics or questions the speaker does not cover and make sure the moderator has this list.

Prepare questions in case the audience doesn't have any. Send to the moderator.

Continue to monitor registrations.

Two Days Prior:

Get revised slides back from your graphic designer, send them to the speaker, and upload a PDF of the slides to your website.

One Day Prior:

Final promotion push!

Send email #3.

Tweet about the webinar.

Additional tactics.

Respond to any email questions.

Morning of the Event:

Make sure the speaker and moderator are ready to go and have turned off their phones, email, and chat.

Make sure the recorder has both recording mechanisms ready to go.

Make sure whoever is answering technical questions in the chat pane is ready to go.

Make sure your internal audience member is ready to go.

Make sure your social media guru is ready to go.

Start the broadcast 15 minutes early.

During the Event:

Mute all attendees.

Oversee the event, monitoring for technical errors.

Post Event:

Send the questions that weren't addressed during the webinar to the speaker to answer and then forward the answers to the attendee.

Send the registration and attendee spreadsheets to your sales team.

Edit and upload the recording.

Send the recording to be transcribed.

Upload the slides to SlideShare.

Update the registration page (or create a new page) to access the recording.

Update website with revised CTAs.

Add the recording to the resources section of your website.

Respond to people who wanted to know when the recording was available.

1-2 Days After:

Email follow-up to both attendees and non-attendees.

Kick off lead nurturing where appropriate.

Consider additional ways to use the webinar content including creating a blog post (or several), podcast, or e-book.

Document what went well and what could have been improved.

Ongoing:

Social media promotion regarding the recording.

Have a question? Curious how we can
help grow your business?

Let's Talk

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