

Successful Webinars

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Webinars have created quite the buzz in the training world. They seem to be the perfect venue for many presentations, as their accessibility is beyond compare. However, they are more than just convenient methods of presentation. Your webinar's effectiveness is dictated by not only the technology, but by your skills as the presenter. Just because people can't see you, doesn't mean that there aren't presentation guidelines to follow. We'll provide you with a few tips that can help make your webinar a pleasure to attend.

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Choose your provider wisely.

Be clear about your needs, and try out a few providers to see which one makes you most comfortable with the technology. Also, have tech support available while your webinar is taking place. You have the presentation to worry about – the technology should be someone else's responsibility. You should also have a hard copy of your presentation with you, just in case.

Practice your webinar in advance.

Make sure everything is functioning properly and work through any bugs. Have some colleagues sign on remotely and ask you questions or chat, to make sure that everything runs smoothly.

Send a reminder.

A couple of days before the webinar send a reminder e-mail that lets participants know that you look forward to

the presentation. That message would be a good time to find out what their expectations for the session are, whether they have any questions, and it serves to remind them of the webinar and increases participation rates.

Make your content interesting.

The most important part of your webinar is the content and the way it is presented. Use a variety of pictures, demonstrations, animations and simple diagrams to illustrate your points. In a webinar, illustrations can be more effective than text or verbal explanations.

Use variety in voice and image.

When speaking online, your voice is the only presence you have with your audience. Not only will a monotone voice put people to sleep, but staying on one slide for too long causes disinterest. Ideally, your voice will be enthusiastic, varying in melody and pitch, and you will change images every minute or so.

Keep it to a reasonable time.

Webinars that are over an hour can seem quite long to your audience. A 30 minute presentation may not leave enough time for interactivity, so somewhere in the middle is optimal. You want enough time to cover the topic, without being too lengthy.

Encourage participation.

Ask your audience some questions about the topic and have them answer you in the chat or question box. Then, show them the results of your question immediately. Invite questions too. You may either answer the questions as they are presented (depends on group size), or save the Q&A session for the end.

Start and end on time.

For those who 'arrive' a bit early, have some fun content related activities for them to do. Learning games are



effective for this. If you wish, you may begin 2 minutes late, to give new users a chance to get logged in, but start no later than 2 minutes past the scheduled time. Be sure to end on time – no exceptions.

Solicit feedback.

Make sure there is a way to obtain feedback both during and after the presentation. You want to gauge whether your audience finds that you are speaking too quickly, too slowly or not loud enough. After the presentation, provide a short survey to find out what participants liked about the webinar, and what needs improvement.

Webinars are a great way to connect you with many listeners from various places. By remembering that it is your voice, content quality and choice of images that will be memorable in your audience's minds, you should give these extra attention when preparing your webinar. Good luck!

Links:

http://www.charlwood.com/webinar_hosting.htm

<http://ezinearticles.com/?7-Traits-Of-A-Highly-Successful-Webinar&id=1002468>

