



From The
Fletcher
Group RCOE

Webinar

Best Practices

How To Maximize
Audience Engagement

A step-by-step guide
for planning, execution,
and follow-up





Planning

Know Your Audience

- Who will be attending?
- What challenges or problems are they facing?
- What are their goals?

Grab Attention With a Good Title


Your title is your first interaction with your audience and will play a big role in whether or not they sign up to participate.

Write a Script or Outline

No matter how knowledgeable or passionate you are, holding an audience's attention for an hour is challenging. A detailed outline or, better yet, a script can serve as a helpful roadmap to stay on course.

Make Things Interactive

To keep their attention to the end, encourage audience participation with surveys, challenges, and a Q&A session. (For the latter, use questions submitted in the chat area of your software. And just in case there aren't enough, you might want to prepare your own list of Q&A questions.)





Personnel

Speakers


A single speaker can succeed, but live, ad-hoc discussions and moderated panels are more likely to engage your audience. When possible, invite the participation of established "thought leaders" or subject matter experts whom you know and trust.

If You're a Guest Speaker

If you're a guest speaker on a webinar, don't assume the host will be prepared to introduce you. Have a prepared introduction ready just in case the host isn't prepared to introduce you.

Q&A Assistance

It's not a bad idea to ask at least a couple attendees, in advance of the webinar, to ask questions if no others are speaking up during the Q&A session.





Content

Focus

Decide on a specific idea and illustrate it with highly specific content.

Maintain Interest

- Do all you can to make your presentation interesting.
- Don't be shy about showing your enthusiasm and excitement.
- Avoid banter; get to the point as soon as you can.
- Engage your audience with an opening slide that communicates a relevant and interesting fact or anecdote.
- Outline your audience's "pain points"—the challenges they are facing—and make it clear that you'll solve them by the end of the webinar with actionable advice.

Instructions to Participants

After welcoming the participants, explain how the webinar technology works, specifically how and when to submit a question and participate in surveys. Clarify whether questions should be asked during the webinar or at the end.

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Content

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Be Sure To Explain the Following

- How to use the chat function
- How to submit requests for contact information
- How to un-mute their microphone when it's time to ask a question. (Take a moment to make sure they can find and test their un-mute button. If not, there can be an awkward silence when it's time for them to speak which can cause you to inadvertently cut them off.)

Mention Pertinent Research

Mention any research, such as a survey or White Paper, that has contributed to your content. Take every opportunity to highlight the Fletcher Group's strength as a developer of original research by referencing related research that we have either done or plan to do in the near future.

Handling Your Q&A Session

Make sure you and your partners have enough prepared questions in case none are asked by the audience. One approach is to ask participants how the webinar's topic might be brought to a wider public audience.



Equipment

Enlist a Technical Assistant

Focus is crucial to a good performance so the last thing you want is to worry about technical issues. If that's a possibility, you may want to enlist an expert to help you.

Phone Service

Relying on the internet can be dangerous, especially in areas where Wi-Fi is unreliable. If that's the case, you may want to use a landline to convey your voice rather than a mic on your computer.

Make Sure Your Wi-Fi Is Stable

Your internet upload speed should be at least 3 MBPS.

Take Latency Into Account

Depending on your internet connection, there may be a delay of up to five seconds in what your audience sees when you move to a new slide. Get a feel for that by asking your audience if they're seeing what you're seeing and keep that in mind as you change visuals.

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Equipment

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Use Headset Microphones

Don't rely on your computer's built-in mic. The resulting audio may be tinny, distorted, or faint. Instead, invest up to \$100 in a high-quality headset or microphone.

Test Your Recording Software

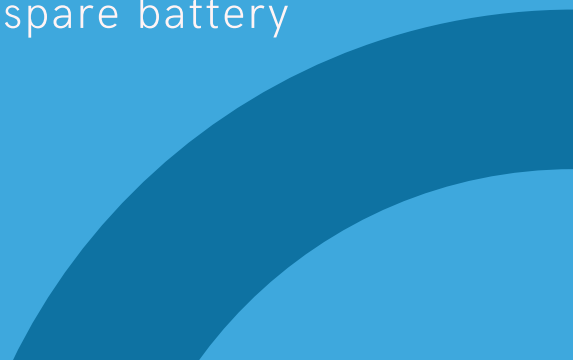
Once your equipment is in place, record a test clip and ask someone for their opinion of the sound and video quality.

Eliminate Ambient Noise

Mute all devices not needed for the webinar. Listen closely for anything in the room that produces ambient noise. Close all apps running in the background and turn off your computer notifications, cell phone, and anything else that might distract you. Then make sure your space won't be invaded by pets or children.

Keep Batteries Handy

If you can't use a cord to power your laptop, make sure it's fully charged. And, just to be safe, keep a spare battery handy for each device you'll be using.





Promotion

Create a Landing/Registration Page

Include the title, a brief description of the topic, date and time, and what attendees will learn. Include information about the presenter(s) including short bios and photos.

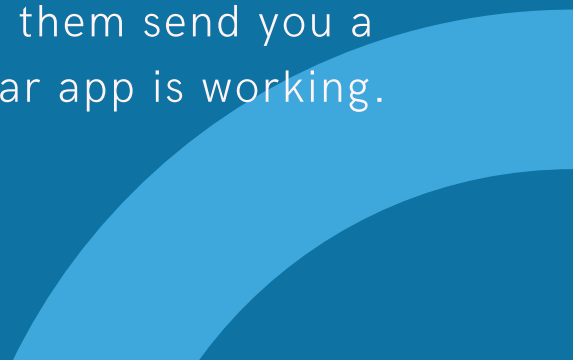
Use Email To Promote Your Webinar

- Keep the email short with a quick, easy-to-see link with which to register for the webinar.
- Send your first email at least 7 days before the webinar.
- Send out a reminder one day before the webinar and again one hour before it starts.

Rehearsal

Do a Dry Run

Before the presentation, get everyone together to do a dry run of the webinar as if it were the real thing. Make sure all equipment is working, the slides are in order, and the presenters know what they're doing. Have someone dial in to make sure your phone is working and have them send you a question so you can make sure your webinar app is working.



Just Before

Be Early

Make sure you're ready to go at least ten minutes before starting time. This will help you get things going on time and will also help you relax.

Just Before Show Time

- Close all unnecessary applications on your computer, especially Outlook and Instant Messenger. You don't want to be interrupted or display any personal or confidential info.
- Call into the meeting early. With many types of conferencing software, the audience will hear an annoying beep if you call in after them.
- Well before the webinar begins, put up a slide that says something like, "The webinar will begin in 10 minutes." That way, people will know they're in the right place. It's also good to update the slide to show the approaching start time and to make an announcement every few minutes so that people know the webinar is coming and that their audio is working.



Show Time

When To Start

Start the webinar two minutes past the hour. This gives people time to call in, but doesn't make anyone wait too long. Those who call in a couple minutes late will not miss much. It's tempting to wait for more people to join, but probably not the best idea.

Watch the Chat Box

Keep an eye on the chat box so you'll know when someone submits a question.

Curtain Time

Rule Of Thumb

- It's always best to leave your audience wanting more and knowing what to do to get it, such as obtaining more information or maintaining contact.
- One way to wrap up your presentation is by reviewing best practices or actionable advice. At the very least, provide contact information for all presenters as well as key contacts within your organization.

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Curtain Time

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Offer a Call to Action

Make sure the audience knows what you want them to do as a result of the Webinar, such as download a White Paper, sign up for a newsletter, or request follow-up contact.

Promote Your Next Webinar

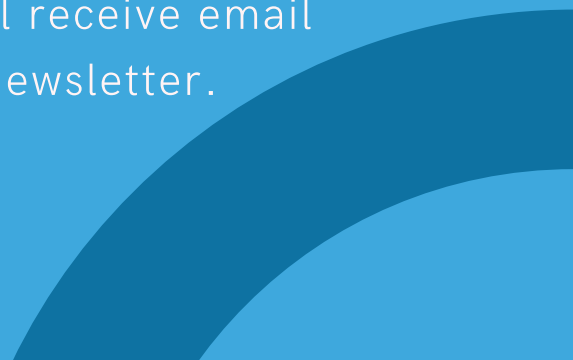
One way to keep attendees coming back is to ask them for possible topics to cover in your next webinar. Do this with a survey or simply ask them to submit their ideas in the comment or chat section of your webinar app.

Ask Your Attendees To Grade You

It's good to know how well you did so you can do better next time. The best way is to to conduct a simple survey.

Final Words

Be prepared during the sign-off to say the following:

- We hope to stay in contact.
 - If you don't mind, we'll add you to our email list.
 - So, unless you choose to opt out, you'll receive email alerts from us as well as our monthly Newsletter.
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Follow-Up

Hold a Post-Webinar Meeting

Conduct a post-event meeting with all the presenters to get their feedback about the technology you used, the audience reaction, and what did and didn't work.

Follow-up Email

- Within 24 hours, send attendees whatever information or materials you promised, such as survey results, White Papers, an audio or video recording of the webinar, or a transcript.
- Include people who registered but didn't show up as well as attendees who left the webinar early.
- Remember: Rapid follow-up helps people take next steps while the webinar is still on their mind.

Track Your Results

Some webinar software allows you to track the following:

- How many people registered
- Where your participants came from
- How many people attended
- How much time people spent watching the webinar