Seven Tips for Creating a Great Webinar
## Seven Tips for Creating a Great Webinar

### Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is a Great Webinar?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tip 1: Launch a strong invitation process</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tip 2: Create a powerful Welcome Slide</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tip 3: Use interactive technology</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tip 4: Use PowerPoint animations effectively</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tip 5: Post an on-demand version immediately</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tip 6: Schedule multiple opportunities for viewers to attend</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tip 7: Launch a strong follow-up process</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting it all together</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using Technology for Cost-effective Marketing

Webinars have become the most popular and effective online method for inexpensively communicating new ideas to large audiences. Though Webinars have rapidly expanded in number however, quality and effectiveness have not been consistent.

The overall measure of effectiveness is the degree to which Webinars meet their goals. *Did they help audience members by leaving them with new ideas, plans or skills? Did they move some portion of the audience to follow-up to the "next step"?*

Based on these measures, how effective were the many Webinars we’ve attended? For most of us, they ranged from “Great, highly effective” to “Weak, disjointed and unsuccessful.” Most are somewhere in between those two extremes. With a few relatively minor changes however, almost all can be dramatically improved.

Many authoritative opinions in this area have targeted presentation skills or PowerPoint slide quality. These are undoubtedly areas where most Webinars could be improved. For immediate first aid however, this report offers seven tips that may result in quicker fixes to supporting success, adding more customers and meeting audience expectations.

**Our Seven Tips are:**

1. Launch a strong invitation process
2. Create a powerful Welcome Slide including the presenter’s picture
3. Use interactive technology to include attendees as part of the program
4. Use PowerPoint animations effectively
5. Post an on-demand version of the program immediately after presenting it
6. Schedule multiple opportunities for viewers to attend
7. Launch a strong follow-up process for every program
Keys to Capturing Your Audience

A great Webinar is meaningless without an audience. A successful invitation process is the key to creating that audience. So what does it take to launch a strong Invitation process?

A recent study demonstrated that more than half of the people, who received a Webinar invitation and registered for the event, still didn't attend. There were many reasons for that sharp drop-off. In some cases the time and day were inconvenient. In others, interest was only lukewarm and registrants simply forgot about it. In still other cases, instructions were unclear or the task of connecting became too difficult due to the need for installing software plug-ins. The study also showed that many other people didn't register because they didn't receive the invitation sent to them or didn't clearly understand the information in it.

✓ Step up to Twenty-First Century Design

A well-designed invitation process can address many of these issues and convert many more invitees into Webinar audience members.

The usual vehicle for Webinar invitations is an email message, with a connection link for people to register or directly attend. Even if recipients are potentially interested in attending however, a relatively small percentage of prospects actually respond.

✓ Keep it Personal – Avoid the Spam Traps

One reason for that disappointing response is that many email systems reject invitations that seem to be spam. Marketers should therefore do everything possible to stay out of spam traps. First, they should ensure that messages are sent one-at-a-time to named individuals, instead of sending bulk email to a list. The subject line needs to be compelling, but must avoid terms like "money making opportunity," "free gift," etc. since spam-catcher software filters out subjects like those as typical spam solicitations.

✓ Use Appropriate Repetition Step

Marketers need to think of their invitation process as a small, multi-touch campaign to sell their Webinar. Every invitation campaign should have a minimum of three email touches. Don’t forget the sales mantra, “Tell them what you're going to tell them; next, tell them; and then tell them what you told them.”

Because many people schedule their time two weeks or more in advance, the first email should launch at least two weeks before the actual Webinar event. The second email should be 3-5 business days before the event. The third should be on the day prior to the event, or early in the morning of the event day, when the Webinar is scheduled for mid-day or later.
Each email should be different, though each one has the same goal. They all must sell the event and re-forward the connection link, suggesting that recipients place the event and link in their calendars with a reminder before the actual event. Whenever possible, marketers should strive to make their email messages feel like personal communications, rather than notices or announcements. If their email system permits list processing a message with a salutation, opening with a friendly greeting like “Dear Martha” or “Dear Jim” leads more readers to pay attention to a message. Studies also show that an HTML email that includes a photo of the presenter is more likely to be read.

From: Ashley O’Brien  
To: Mark Delaney  
Cc:  
Subject: Attracting New Prospects With Online Social Networks

Dear Mark,

In response to so many requests from members, we’re happy to announce a Webinar presented by Dr. Kathryn Martin, CEO of Chicago International, Inc. and best selling author of New Media Marketing for the New Millenium. The Webinar is scheduled for January 27 at 1PM EST. As part of this interactive session, Kathryn will provide step-by-step instructions on combining social networks like Facebook with Twitter and blogs to identify and attract new prospects for any business. She will also explain how Fortune 500 Companies like American Express, Time Warner and Nike have profited from these strategies.

In this free Webinar, Kathryn will explain how to scale the successful programs of big companies to meet the needs of any organization. Throughout the Webinar, she’ll take questions and make recommendations to address actual challenges faced by audience members.

To attend, go to: http://www.martinwebinar.presenternet.com
Passkey: newmedia
Dial-in Conference: (208) 844-0842 PIN #187231

We look forward to meeting you online!

Cordially,

Brenda Thomkins  
President, Business Training Corp
Tip 2: Create a Powerful Welcome Slide

Capture and Keep Your Audience

A Welcome Slide offers the first sights and sounds of every Webinar. Experienced network marketers know that it can be more than a typical cover slide of a PowerPoint presentation.

When viewers first connect with a Webinar, the program seldom begins immediately. Marketers know that people will arrive at different times. Some will arrive several minutes early, a few will arrive precisely at the scheduled time and several will drift in over the first 2-3 minutes. All should see the Welcome Slide, since presenters usually wait a few minutes before beginning the actual Webinar material.

As attendees drift into the online conference room, the Welcome slide should hold their interest. One item that is usually effective is a photo of the presenter. Attendees typically pay attention to a photo. It psychologically connects them to the voice they are going to hear.

Along with the photo, the slide can include some interesting personal information about the presenter. This might be notes about his or her background, personal interests or successful record in the area to be discussed.

Sandy Martz is your host for this Webinar program. An independent Exotic Gifts consultant for more than 3 years, she was previously legal counsel for a major Chicago retailer. Sandy began her Exotic Gifts business part-time, and is now a full-time consultant earning more than $200-thousand per year!

Exotic Gifts Create Happy Customers

WELCOME!
Your presenter will be with you in a few moments
In some environments, tasteful family pictures can also appeal to attendees. Since early viewers will see this slide for a few extended minutes, it’s useful for the slide to include embedded background music.

**Tip 3: Use Interactive Technology**

**Change the Game – Engage Your Audience**

Interactive technology can be the "game changer" that transforms an average Webinar into a great one. It makes a difference in several ways:

- It provides a way for the presenter to ask questions to a large audience and capture all responses for later use
- It offers a method of soliciting audience questions for the presenter to answer at the most appropriate times
- It changes the audience member’s role from passive listener to actual participant
- It enables presenters to request audience responses that are appropriate to the individual slide under discussion
- It provides a way for On-Demand viewers to re-direct the presentation to select the subjects that most important to them

Online systems use several different tools to enable interactivity, such as chat software for asking questions and polls with structured answer choices. Full interactivity however, enables individual slides to record answer responses from audience members. Unlike polls which only display results for a moment during an online session, fully interactive systems record results and generate reports used for follow-up actions.
Put the Power of Interactive Technology to Work

In the interactive slide sample above, all audience members move the sliders on their screens to register a number from 1 to 10, according to their interest level. Every attendee becomes a program participant, after listening to the presenter’s comments about gold investments. By asking the question at this precise point, the presenter can capture a true response when the participant fully understands the issue being discussed.

The responses, comprised of each participant’s interest level, become part of a report used as follow-up. This report is more than simple data collection taken at registration. It is an interactive qualifier. It permits the presenter to segment his or her follow-up plans, to immediately contact people with the highest interest level.

Interactive presenters use similar tools effectively throughout their presentation, to gain different kinds of results. In some situations, they offer checkbox choices that enable audience members to re-direct the presentation, according to the areas that are the most interesting to them. Unlike a poll which only displays totals, this kind of interactivity captures each response along with the name of the participant. Combined with other responses, they become valuable information for follow-on discussions.
Hold Audience Attention

Many presenters use PowerPoint animations only as a means of advancing a list of text bullets one-at-a-time. Animations can do much more for them and for creators of on-demand presentations.

Because Webinar presenters and audience members can't see each other, the presenter’s greatest challenge is to keep listeners engaged. Animations used effectively can be a major tool in holding viewer attention. The key is to use the right kind of animation at the most appropriate timing.

Many Webinar slides have a very "busy" appearance because presenters use them to deliver a waterfall of information. In many situations they need an online pointer or annotation tool to direct attention to the right photo or graphic image. Effective animations however, can advance text labels, photos, charts and images one-at-a-time. Presenters can advance these items and even make them disappear to correspond with their discussion. This constant change keeps viewers attention and reinforces the presenter’s statements as they are made.

The chart that follows displays four successive images of the same slide, with animations advancing to correspond with the presenter’s discussion. The presenter clicks to activate the next animation according to his or her verbal discussion.

In image number 1, the presenter is setting the stage for a comparison between two online presentation system types. In image number 2 the presenter has advanced a "pictogram" of the typical system and explains one of the system’s disadvantages. Image number 3 adds the PresenterNet pictogram to the display, as the presenter describes the specific differences between the two system types. Finally image number 4 includes the added text bullets that compare the benefits of the two types.

By using animations in this way, the presenter has kept the audience's attention and used images to reinforce spoken words. Animations are as valuable in on-demand presentations as in live Webinars. In preparing on-demand slides, the pre-recorded voice is consistent. This enables the presenter to use animation timings to advance animations, rather than the mouse clicks of a live presenter.
Prepare for Immediate Audience Follow up

Before presenting a Webinar, presenters should create a pre-recorded version to be posted online for on-demand viewing and listening. To maintain momentum and continuity, the on-demand version should be made available, immediately following the live Webinar.

An on-demand version allows the Webinar presenter to communicate with people who don’t have the time to attend a scheduled presentation. It also enables satisfied attendees of the live presentation to recommend it to friends or colleagues.

To create the highest quality pre-recorded version, PowerPoint includes easy-to-use tools that enable users to embed voice in each slide. Along with that capability, marketers can also use animations timed to their voices. The combination of spoken words and animations creates a very powerful effect that helps viewers to easily understand the story as it is told.

Pre-recording the presenter’s voice onto PowerPoint for an online presentation has another great advantage. Marketers can audition their own work and repeat the voice portion of any slide to ensure that it sounds right. If the presenter uses interactive slides, they can access reports of viewer responses and answer questions by responsive email.
In many cases, this process means that users who can’t take the time to attend a live presentation actually view an online version that is as effective as the actual live event.

**Tip 6: Schedule Multiple Opportunities for Viewers to Attend**

**Improve Your Odds**

Since the goal of nearly every Webinar is to get audience members to a "next step," the measure of success depends on the number of people that attend. Unfortunately it is almost impossible to select a day and time that will be convenient for the vast majority of potential attendees.

If the same Webinar is scheduled for two distinctly different times, the total of two audiences will be greater than the potential audience for any single hour in a given week. In many situations, the best practice is to schedule one program for daytime during business hours and one for an evening of the same week.

For some people who have very strong interest, the second presentation offers an opportunity to repeat the program to ask additional questions. Others may view the first presentation and send colleagues, family members or team members to attend the later version.

**Tip 7: Launch a Strong Follow-up Process**

**Tailor Your Follow up – Use Individual Responses**

The purpose of every presentation is a follow-up step. A follow-up step can be many things. It might be a commitment for further discussion at a specified time and place. It might be a promise from the prospect to view an on-demand presentation, which in turn has its own follow-on step. Since many audience members don’t follow-up independently, presenters must drive a process to offer the required steps.

The presenter's first follow-up action should be an email message thanking all attendees for attending. If possible the message should provide an "encore" link, directing participants to an on-demand pre-recorded version of the Webinar posted online. It may also provide first notification of the next Webinars scheduled on related subjects.

By using the information captured from interactive audience responses captured during the Webinar the presenter can do much more.

Whether the Webinar goal is sales, training or marketing awareness, every effective Webinar launches a mental decision process. Audience members agree (or disagree) with a series of ideas, products, services or additional training opportunities. As interactive presentations progress and participants become more engaged, presenters have an opportunity to suggest various choices to prospects. Each choice presents a qualifying question that furthers the path to a next-step commitment.
By capturing each attendee’s responses with interactive slides, presenters have the information they need to tailor a follow-up process for any audience member. Some attendees may have used interactive responses to request a contact or additional information. Others may have responded to questions that indicate high interest. All of these obvious prospects should be contacted by phone or personal email messages within 1-2 days after the Webinar. The remaining attendees can then be sorted to receive appropriate materials or to be flagged for future marketing according to their interests.

In some situations Webinar responses may include questions that were not fully answered during the live Webinar session. Answers to these questions may provide opportunities for dialog. In all cases, responding to follow-up questions one-on-one supports the presenter’s or company’s brand and opens doors for additional actions.

### Putting it all together

**Long-term Success**

An effective Webinar is more than an online slide show. It requires solid preparation, effective execution and strong follow-up.

Webinar presenters who know their subject can create and deliver a good PowerPoint presentation. The rest of the ingredients—an effective invitation process; a strong Welcome slide; effective use of animations; well-planned interactive dialog; a pre-recorded on-demand version; effective scheduling; and a strong follow-up process—complete the recipe for Webinar excellence and long-term success.