Whitepaper

Best practices for your webinar

A guide from Webex Webinars

webex
by CISCO

Contents

webex by cisco

In this guide, you'll gain useful tips on hosting great webinars, from preparation to execution to follow-up. Learn how to quickly create effective events that generate valuable leads for your business.
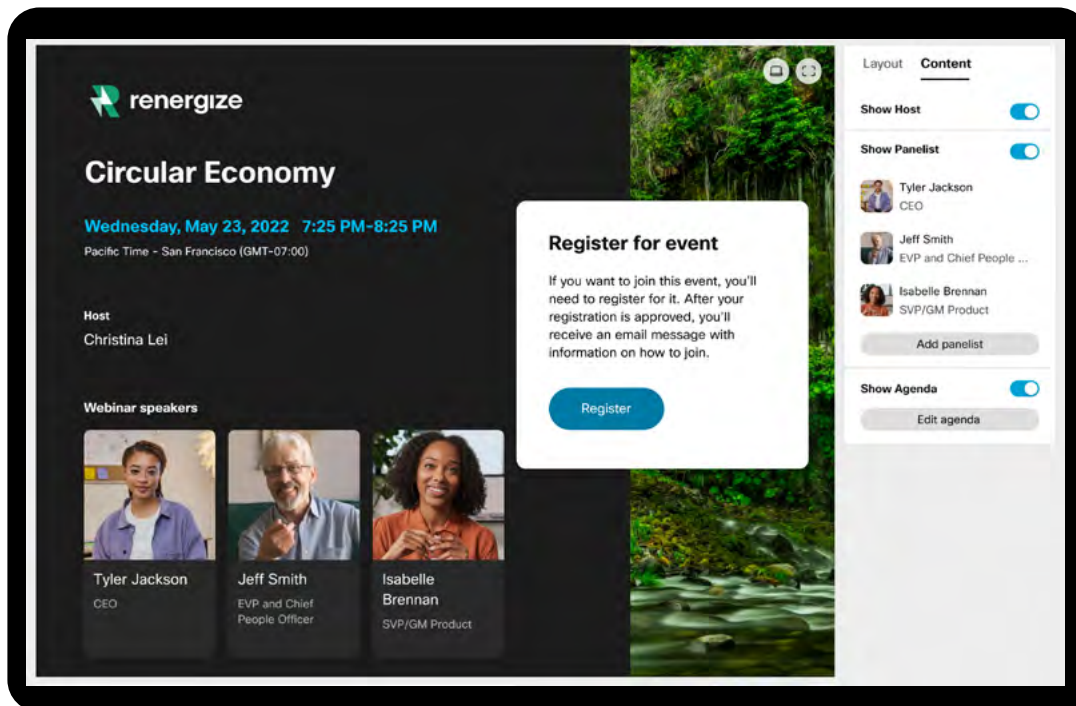
Webex Webinars allows you to create unique landing and registration pages with custom logos, images, and colors.

Before your webinar

Make it short and sweet

First, plan how long your webinar will last, aiming for one hour at the most. On average, 30 to 45 minute sessions have the best audience retention rates. Optimizing your time will help you hold onto your attendees for the entirety of the webinar.

Pick a time that works across the globe

Trying to expand your reach can be difficult when portions of your target audience are asleep. Utilize time zone tools for a side by side view of times in a single place. And for those that still can't attend live - record the webinar and use it for an on-demand replay.

webex by **cisco**

Assemble a team

A webinar host is responsible for all initial logistics and selecting co-hosts and speakers. The hosts and co-hosts can help manage production on the backend, along with running practice sessions and the webinar itself. In addition, co-hosts can help with production and can also support Q&A, polls, and other audience interactions. Speakers and panelists with relevant expertise and engaging speaking skills should also be considered.

For some webinars, you may want to consider leveraging a professional services team to help manage all the logistics before, during, and after the webinar. With this support, you can stay focused on delivering great content.

Plan to go live

While many webinars are recorded and posted as on-demand webinars, live webinars allow for direct contact between presenters and attendees. You can even enable a webcast to run a live stream on popular streaming platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and LinkedIn to gain access to a larger audience.

Q&A sessions, live polling, and live product walkthroughs can let customers engage with subject matter experts, allowing concerns to be addressed right away. This more personal method can get potential prospects in touch with your company much faster than if they had watched an on-demand webinar.

Promote your webinar

Schedule your webinar to be on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday and have it start at 10 AM, 11 AM, 1 PM, or 2 PM. Midweek webinars at these times typically show the highest attendance.

Start promoting at least one month before your event and send an initial email with an overview of the webinar and a link to your registration page. As your webinar nears, send periodic reminder emails to keep anticipation up. Also, make sure to enable auto-reminders on your calendar invites to help increase attendance.

Build an attractive landing page

Design an eye-catching landing page to drive interest in your webinar. Add speaker bios, headshots, and an agenda to give your audience a sneak peek into what they're registering for. Use your brand colors and don't forget your logo. Aim for the same look and feel as your custom email template. Also consider adding relevant images to further elevate the look and feel.

webex by **cisco**

Spread your content out

Give registrants a reason to keep coming back and engaging with your company. Think of each webinar as a part of an ongoing series and prepare each one as a piece to a larger puzzle. Work with your digital marketing team to ensure that registrations are for a series, and not for a single webinar.

Prepare polls in advance

Have your polling questions ready beforehand so you can seamlessly transition into them during your presentation. Encourage participation from your audience so they can see how they compare to their peers. Use their answers to start relevant discussions and apply insights to future webinars.

Run a practice session

Practice makes perfect. Rehearse your planned webinar to work out any technical kinks, smooth out transitions to other presenters, and time each section of the presentation to ensure a good pace.

Keep attendees engaged during the practice session

It's important to get your audience engaged from the moment they join a webinar. While you're in a practice session, build excitement with upbeat music, pre-webinar polls, and discussion topics in the chat.
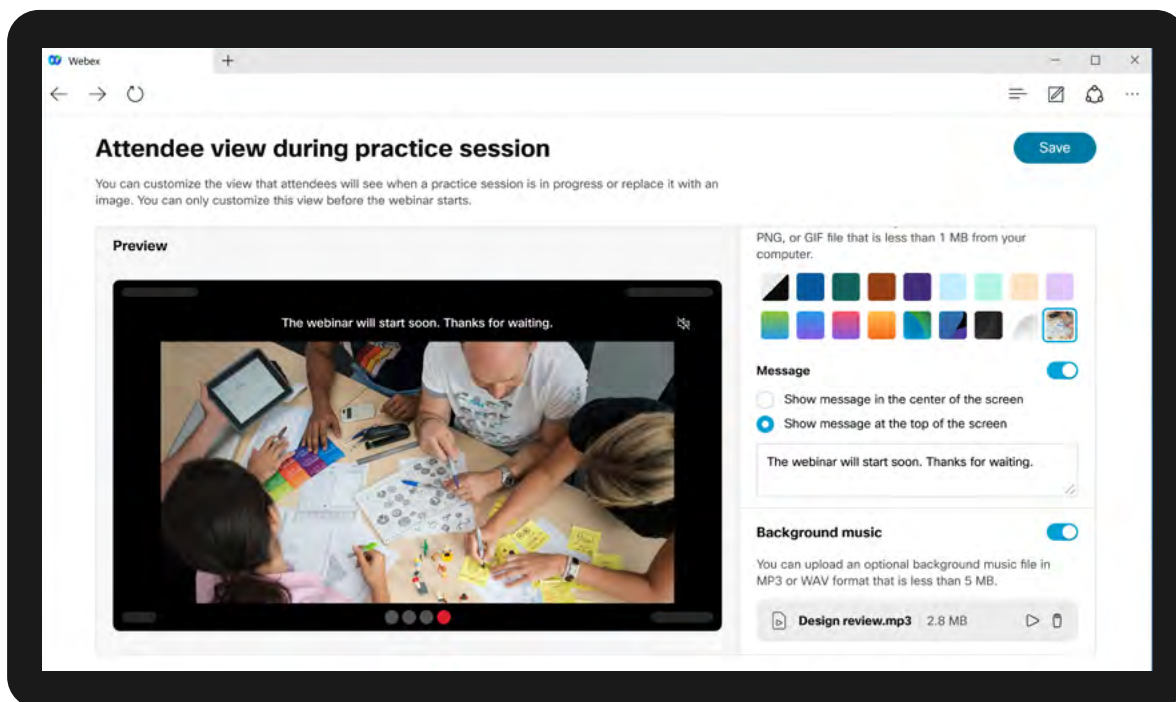
Webex Webinars allows you to upload an image, music, and display a custom message to keep your audience engaged while they're waiting for the webinar to start.

webex by cisco

During your webinar

Use a second monitor

A second display can allow you to continuously share what's on your main monitor without any disruption. If you need to quickly look something up, you can use your other display. You'll also be able to better keep track of chat, read notes, and run Q&A and polling without having to click around and lose your train of thought.

Be concise and to the point

Stay focused and on topic by reading prepared bulleted points in the notes section of each slide. These will also help you avoid the practice of reading the slide content to your attendees.

Record the webinar for on-demand replay

Make sure to hit the record button so you can use your webinar file as an on-demand lead generation asset. People will value a chance to be able to go back and review sections that intrigued them. And, people who missed the webinar will definitely appreciate a recorded version.

Be mindful of your stage layout

Use a stage orientation that best displays who and/or what you'd like to feature most. A fireside chat layout which displays speakers side-by-side would be ideal for a panel, while a demo layout would work great for a product walkthrough or a slide presentation. More advanced features like immersive sharing can make presentations more interesting and bring your content to life.
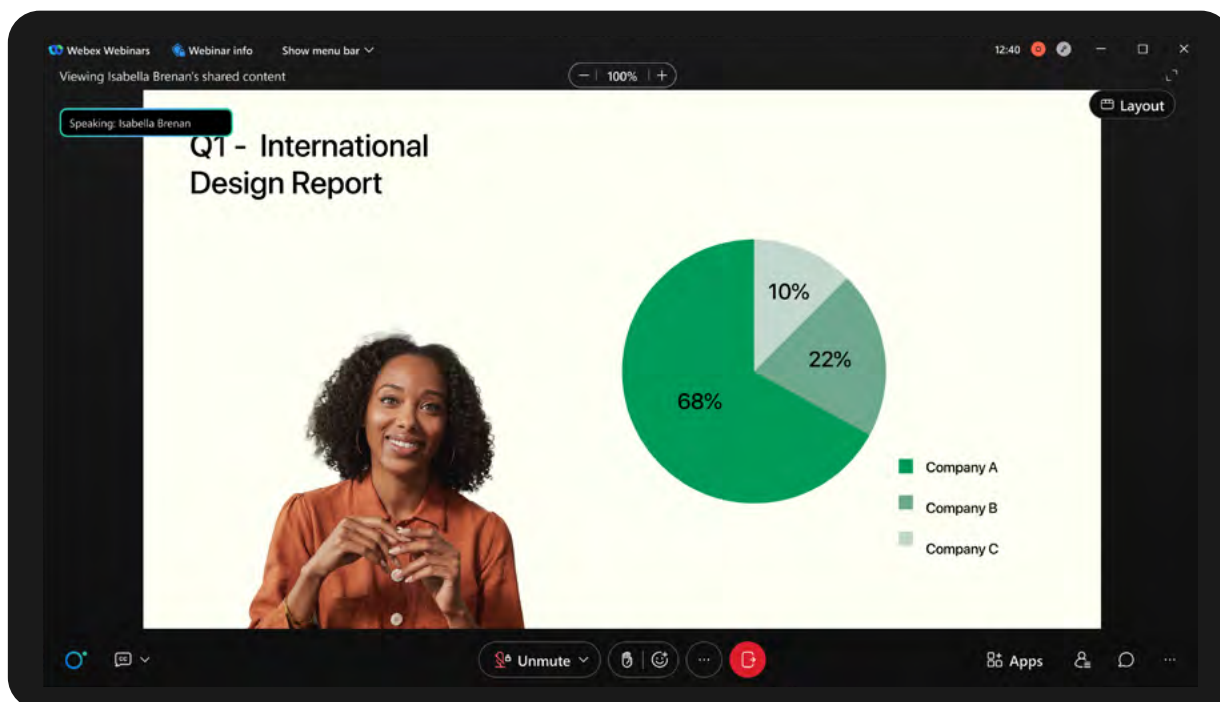
Put yourself front and center when presenting with immersive share in Webex Webinars.

webex by CISCO

Review your background

Assess your surroundings and ensure that your physical background is professional, well lit, and doesn't contain anything distracting. Take advantage of virtual background capabilities if you'd like to feature yourself in a different environment, or try something fun and eye-catching (if it's appropriate for your webinar).

Use polling frequently

Keep your audience engaged and make things interactive. Use integrated polling tools to ask attendees questions in various formats (multiple choice, rankings, ratings, or open text) and then review the results in real-time to spark further discussion.

Provide accessibility to everyone

Give attendees more ways to participate with real-time closed captions and translation options. For additional options, invite live interpreters to also give attendees the option to listen to the webinar in their preferred language.

Break your audience into smaller groups

Encourage viewers to attend your breakout sessions with pre-assigned leaders for more focused discussions on the specific topics they want to learn more about.

Engage with Q&A

Address thoughtful questions and concerns from attendees. Use chat and Q&A capabilities to see which questions are the most popular and upvoted.

Move prospects through the funnel

End by giving your interested attendees at least one call to action. Instantly redirect your audience to a designated page, or use the chat to provide clickable links to relevant resources. It's critical to sustain interaction with your company so you can move prospects further down the sales funnel. You've captured their interest; don't lose them.

webex by **cisco**

After your webinar

Provide a survey

Listen to your audience. Let them know that you value their opinions and would like to gather their feedback with a survey. Their suggestions can help you build and run better webinars. You can either redirect attendees to a survey once the webinar closes, or you can provide a link in your chat and/or follow-up email.

Send a follow-up email

Always follow your webinar up with an email to thank registrants for attending. In this email, you should include contact information for your sales team, a link to the recorded webinar, any resources that you mentioned during your presentation, and anything else that may be valuable or applicable. You can also send a "Sorry We Missed You" version of your follow-up email to registrants who didn't end up attending. This is a great way to keep those leads engaged.

Download reports and review data

Examine attendance and activity reports to get clues on what worked and what didn't work. See what percentage of registrants actually joined, along with how long they stayed with you. Sync this data with your company's CRM tools to add information about prospects and enable sales to have better conversations with them.

Also review any unanswered questions that may be valuable to address later. You can provide the answers to these questions in your follow-up email, or even go over them in your next webinar.

How Webex can help

Improve your results now

Webex Webinars can help your organization provide engaging and memorable experiences for everyone. The intuitive and feature-rich platform allows you to effortlessly host presentations ranging from small intimate sessions to massive events with global audiences. Learn more at webex.com/webinar.html.

For more information
Please visit webex.com/webinar.html

Webex by cisco