



12 Steps to a wildly successful webinar

Carrying out a successful event requires simple, yet important steps to ensure both marketers and attendees gain all of the benefits of online events.

Nearly two-thirds of B2B marketers say online events are by far one of the most effective content marketing tactics.¹ But carrying out a successful event requires some simple, yet important steps to ensure both marketers and attendees gain all of the benefits of online events, including real-time experience, engagement, and convenience.

If you're ready to produce your first online event, this 12-step checklist takes you through the entire process – from planning to post-event follow-up – to provide you with the information you need to get started.

¹ Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs, [“B2B Content Marketing: 2015 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—North America”](#)

Planning

Step 1: Determine your goals

What's the purpose of your event? Use online events for:

- Lead generation
- Town hall meetings
- Major company announcements
- Demonstrations

Once you've decided to produce an event, be specific about what you want to accomplish.

Step 2: Identify your audience

Who is your audience? What is their attitude or knowledge about the topic? How will the information benefit them?

- Create a profile and, from your profile, develop content and promotional copy that speaks to the audience's needs.
- Define terminology for attendees who may have only a little subject knowledge.

Step 3: Build your team

You need a strong team. Here are the roles you need to consider:

- **Panelists/presenters:** Identify subject matter experts who have clout and terrific speaking skills.
- **Technical support:** Have support available just in case you encounter any glitches.
- **Host:** Your host will start and end the meeting, record it and monitor it for any non-topic attendee questions.
- **Moderator:** The moderator is your emcee and may be the same person as the host. Find someone comfortable taking charge.
- **Marketing automation manager:** Don't forget the backend for tracking and follow-up.
- **Polling coordinator:** This could be the moderator and/or the host, or you can assign someone just for this role.

If your service provider offers it, consider event production assistance if your event is complex, you're new to this medium, or absolute polished perfectionism is essential.

□ Step 4: Schedule your event

It's time to set the date and time.

- Consider optimal days of the week (research shows Wednesday and Thursday are the best days of the week, with Tuesday close behind).²
- Schedule events keeping time zones in mind.³

Preparation

□ Step 5: Create your content

Develop a host/moderator script that includes these elements:

- Welcome
- Housekeeping items
- Presenter introductions
- Q&A session
- Closing comments

Now is also the time for presenters to create informative, clear, engaging content for your audience.

□ Step 6: Review the logistics

Consider the following:

- Presenters' physical locations
- Lighting and sound
- Background noise (Presenters should have a quiet space where they won't have interruptions.)

□ Step #7: Promote your event

It's time to get the word out. Follow this proven cadence to maximize registrations and attendance:

- **4 weeks out:** Announcement and registration link on your website and in blog posts, newsletters, email invitations, and social media
- **1 week out:** Email reminder to non-registrants
- **2 days out:** Final email reminder to non-registrants

Insert a poll early in your presentation to assess audience topic knowledge, in the middle to keep attendees actively involved, and at the end to gauge further interest.

² ON24, [“Webinar Benchmarks Report: 2015 Edition”](#)

³ ON24, [“Webinar Benchmarks Report: 2015 Edition”](#)

- 24 hours before: Reminder to registrants
- 1 hour before: Final reminder to registrants

Interject polls to allow speakers to respond to results spontaneously.

Step #8: Conduct a full dress rehearsal

This is the most important step! Have a complete dry-run exactly as you'll do it on event day. Time it to make sure you don't run over.

Check video, audio, and any other tools you'll be using along with the content.

Execution

Step #9: Get ready

The day has arrived. At least 30 minutes before start time, test your video, audio, and slides. Make sure presenters mute all electronic devices including computers. Have technical support standing by.

Step #10: Lights! Camera! Action!

When it's time to go live, your moderator and presenters need to exude enthusiasm. Keep things lively by...

- Having two or more presenters so they can have a conversation rather than a monologue.
- Requiring presenters to speak from brief notes and not scripts.
- Interjecting polls to allow speakers to respond to results spontaneously.
- Including live questions and answers either during the presentation or in a Q&A session at the end.

Post-event

Step #11: Send thank-you and sorry-we-missed-you messages

It's not over when the event ends. Send follow-up emails to attendees and no-shows within 24 hours. Include a link to the recorded event and a follow-up offer; for example, a relevant asset to download.

□ Step #12: Incorporate your recorded event into future marketing campaigns

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Use on-demand webinars as assets in integrated marketing campaigns.
- Promote recorded events in blog posts and across social media networks.
- Create a web page with all recorded events and make the link easy to find on your home page.
- Repurpose webinars by editing into short, informative clips to put on your website, use in email campaigns, or promote via social media.

It's a wrap...

Do your upfront planning. Prepare thoroughly. Create engaging content. Follow up.

Successful events give your audience valuable information and help build trusted relationships that lead to sales and loyal customers

More information

For more information on tools to meet and present online, contact Cisco at 877-509-3239 or visit the WebEx website at www.webex.com.

Promote recorded events in blog posts and across social media networks.