B2B WEBINARS

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Webinars can be a great way to share knowledge and ideas, update a defined audience on a particular topic, demonstrate products and bring experts together, while also building brand authority and credibility.

But COVID-19 has intensified 'digital marketing fatigue' and the webinar calendar is overcrowded. To be successful, webinars need to be more relevant, targeted, compelling and well-produced than ever before.

Consequently, businesses need a clear rationale for producing webinars to ensure that the anticipated ROI is realistic and achievable, and that the target audience is receptive to the content.

With that in mind, this guide includes the key questions to ask before you embark on producing B2B webinars.

> In 2020, the hours of webinar content consumed grew by **290%**, with **61 million hours** of content being watched.
>
> On24 Webinar Benchmarks Report, 2021

1 . Business rationale

For a webinar to be effective (and to give you a good ROI), it's important to consider **why** you're committing the time, money and effort in the first place.

Ask yourself:

- What has prompted us to consider producing webinar content?
- What do we hope to achieve from it?
- How often do we intend to share webinar content?
- Are we intending to start a webinar series, or just one-off/adhoc content?
- How quickly are we hoping to see results?
- How much time and budget can we allocate?
- Who are we producing the webinar/s for (target audience/target persona)?
  - Where are they typically consuming or searching for information?
  - What is their schedule like – when will they watch?
  - What topics are THEY interested in and how have we validated this?
- Do we already connect with this audience?
- How do we intend to capture/grow the audience?
- Does the webinar need to coincide with a time-sensitive date – to tie-in with a product launch or the launch of market research results, for example?
- How will we measure the success of our webinar?

2. Subject matter and the audience

This is the part that matters most. **What** do you want to say? If you're not saying something of value to the right people then you're wasting your time and money.

If you want a business audience to engage, take something away from the content, remember you as a voice of authority on the topic and take action (whether that's ultimately to buy from you, seek counsel or strategic guidance etc), then what you share and **who** you share it with, is critical.

Ask yourself:

- What do we want to talk about?
- Why does this subject matter to the audience?
- What does the audience need to know? And how can we help them to find out the information they need?
- What makes us qualified to talk about this topic with authority?
- Do we need to invite subject matter experts as guest speakers or interviewees to bring greater authority/credibility?
- If so, how will we select them and what's their authority on the subject?
- And what reach do they have to support our message amplification about this topic area?
- Is there an active community already talking about this topic (e.g. LinkedIn groups)? Are any hashtags already being used around this topic?

3. Style and production

How your webinar looks is arguably just as important as the content itself. If you've identified a valuable subject area and have a captive audience eager to engage, but the format, visuals and production are poor, your webinar will be remembered for all the wrong reasons.

Ask yourself:

- What style/format will the webinar take? For example, broadcast-style workshop/seminar with a single voice, or panel-led with a moderator and invited guests/subject matter experts?
- If it's interviewer-led, who will host and what are their credentials as an authority on the topic, or as host?
- How long will the webinar/s be?
- Will it be live, simu-live or pre-recorded and streamed? Depending on this, who will plan and produce the content, will it be scripted, where will it be set etc?
- What level of audio and visual quality can be achieved depending on who will produce it and how it will be produced?

> Recent studies suggest that around **40% to 50%** of registrants turn into attendees and that **20% to 40%** of webinar attendees turn into qualified leads
>
> https://outgrow.co/blog/statistics-on-webinars

4. Platform

Plan **where** you'll host your webinar early so you understand the options regarding formats, file sizes, registration processes, costs, translation options, on-demand/archive options, test facilities, log-ins etc.

Ask yourself:

- Where will the webinar be hosted? If live, do we expect any audience interaction (live Q&A for example) as part of it?
- Would we prefer to use a self-service platform or a specialist virtual event company?
- Will the content be available on-demand after the event date? For how long? Where?
- What language will the webinar be in and are there options for translation?
- Can we invite the audience directly from the platform? How does registration work?
- How much is the platform going to cost us and is this viable with the budget?
- Can we do a test run to make sure everything is working as it should?
- Will we need technical support on the day for us or for our invited guest speakers?
- Are there any restrictions on file formats or file sizes if streaming pre-recorded content?
- How will the platform enable us to access participant data for follow-up communications?
- What analytics will we get post-event?

5. Promotion

Whether your guest list is a select few or you plan to issue an open invitation, actively promoting your webinar content is key. You need to offer tangible reasons to attend and you need to engage with people via the right platforms.

Ask yourself:

- How will we manage the marketing/promotion of the webinar?
- How will the invitation and registration process work?
- How can we appropriately target our intended audience?
- How would they prefer to receive communications from us? Via what channels?
- How far in advance should we be contacting them?
- How often should we follow-up prior to the webinar to drive registrations and how can we keep a track of who has already registered?
- What other promotional communication vehicles will/can we use?

73% of B2B marketers say that a webinar is the best way to generate high-quality leads

https://outgrow.co/blog/statistics-on-webinars

6. Wrap-up and follow-up

Webinars take significant time and effort to plan and execute well, so, it's worth considering **how** you can extend the content beyond the 'go-live' date of the webinar and the on-demand video that remains available for a time afterwards. Also, if you had a captive audience and usable data, you need a plan for how you'll sustain your engagement with them in the weeks and months after the event.

Ask yourself:

- What do we want the audience to do as a result of engaging with this webinar and how can we make that happen?
- How can we extend the use of the webinar content and create more opportunities to see/hear it?
- Can we create authored articles, blogs, opinion pieces and e-marketing collateral from the content and how will we share and promote this spin-off content?
- How can we engage with participants to get feedback, analyse ROI and help us to plan future content?
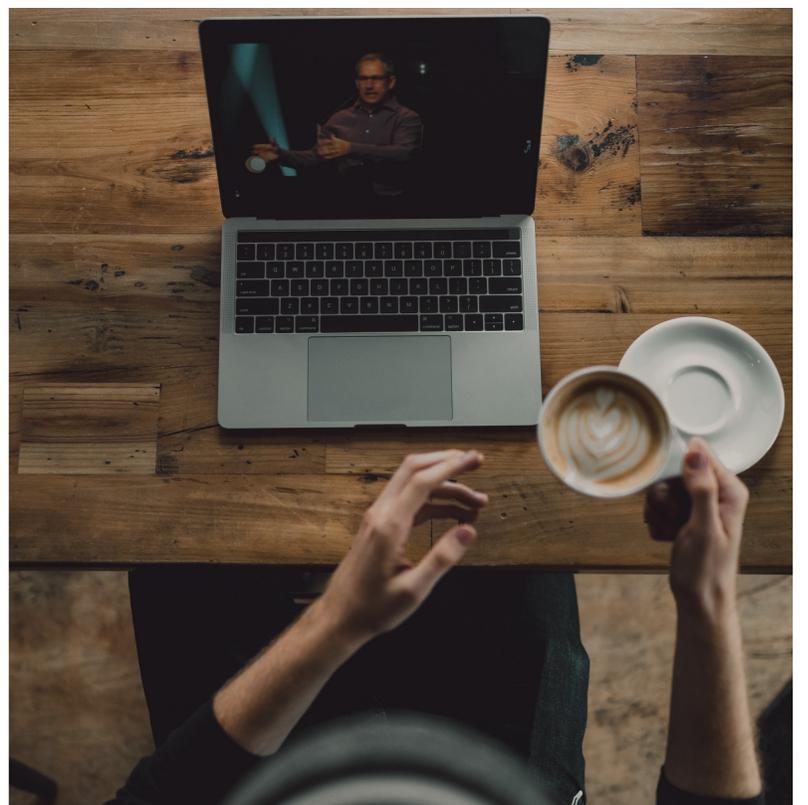
New to webinars?

If you're starting out with webinars, particularly in a new market segment, consider whether you could team up with an industry media partner to co-host and promote your webinar content as part of a commercial package. Many publishers are experienced at delivering this type of online event, including planning, production and promotion. They also have the contacts and influence to attract the right audience, which could substantially boost your success.

Preparation is everything

By asking the comprehensive questions included in this guide, you have the best chance of achieving internal agreement on the parameters for the event and achieving the outcomes you want. Planning is everything, and the content you publish embodies your brand, so it's important to get it right.

Get in touch

To explore how we can help, get in touch:

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