



INNOVEST SME
Accelerating Small Business



Webinar Success

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*Learning without
thought is labor lost;
thought without learning
is perilous.*

CONFUCIUS

PREFACE

Webinars are staples of modern business. Anyone can create a webinar and reap the rewards. When webinars are done well, they can increase your customer base and grow the knowledge of your brand. Webinars that are not done well can decrease the customer base and ruin your reputation. By following the advice in this book, you will understand the necessary steps to create a successful webinar.

*No great man ever
complains of want of
opportunity.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON



WHAT CAN A WEBINAR DO?

Webinars are useful tools that will benefit anyone who has content or product to share. Webinars are both methods of teaching and marketing. These online seminars provide the perfect opportunities to connect with people across the globe. Implementing webinars can help improve your customer base and provide the opportunity to share information about your company.

MARKETING TO PROSPECTIVE CUSTOMERS

Savvy business people understand that webinars provide the perfect opportunity to market to prospective customers. Webinars are useful tools that will help generate leads to sell your products and/or services. Webinars are used as marketing tools in several ways:

- They help you connect with people to generate feedback.
- They offer the opportunity to demonstrate expertise.
- They engage prospects without being overbearing.
- They provide a venue to announce new products or services.

Always remember to take advantage of these marketing opportunities when using webinars.

TRAINING OR TEACHING

Webinars must provide high quality information with credible teaching/training techniques. Typically, there are two methods of webinar training: in house or for hire. For hire training is easy enough to navigate; it requires you to work with other training professionals. It is often more cost effective, however, to implement in house training, which simply means that everything is done in house. In house training also allows you to personalize the information. In house training requires you to complete the following:

- Writing the script
- Setting dates
- E-vites/invitations
- Recording and editing
- Uploading
- Sending out links and other follow up

When choosing to use in house training, it is important to make sure that the resources, such as software, are available. You must have the time to create the webinar, and always ensure that the information is relevant and the production value is quality.

DEMONSTRATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Webinars are useful for demonstrations and presentations. These need to be customer focused, explain the products or services, and provide reasons why customers should choose your company. In order for the demonstrations and presentations to be effective, you need to engage your audience. There are a few basic ways to create effective demonstrations and presentations.

- **Catch their attention immediately:** You only have seconds to get the attention of your audience. You need to begin with something spectacular, like a gimmick.
- **Be amusing:** Use humor to engage your audience.
- **Be relevant:** Make the demonstration or presentation relevant to your audience.

INFORMATION SHARING

Successful webinars require relevant information sharing. There are different methods of information sharing that you can use to spread the word about your webinars.

When sharing information with potential customers, it is important not to send one too many communications. This is a fine line. People need reminders; however, too many reminders will annoy people and turn them off. Some experts argue that you should not communicate more than twice a week.

- **Announce the webinar:** Use websites, social media, and other venues to make the announcement.
- **Keynote speech:** Use keynote speeches to share information about your company.
- **Meetings:** Share information about webinars in meetings, and attempt to arrange meetings with new people.
- **Offers:** Share offers with potential clients and customers using websites, social media, and other venues.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Shirley decided to create a webinar about how to use her product. She was certain that she would reach more customers once they realized how easy and beneficial her product was. Shirley used every method of information sharing at her disposal. She emailed her client list about the webinar every day for two weeks before the release date. When the date came, she was extremely disappointed by the results. Shirley was not sure why so few people attended her webinar.

*Success is
dependent on effort.*

SOPHOCLES



SUCCESSFUL WEBINAR CRITERIA

Anyone can create a webinar, but not every webinar is successful. There are basic criteria that are essential to make a successful webinar. No matter how technically perfect your webinar is, you must include passion and value that directly translates to your target audience. By implementing the criteria outlined in this chapter, you will be able to make your webinars successful.

PASSION AND ENTHUSIASM

Passion and enthusiasm are the main components of every successful venture. If you do not have passion for a subject, why should your audience? Above and beyond everything else that you choose, you must pick a topic that ignites your passion and enthusiasm. Ask yourself if you are passionate about the topic for your webinar. If the answer is “no,” choose a different topic. Once you have a topic that reflects your passion, you need to make sure that this passion is reflected in your presentation.

Generate Passion and Enthusiasm:

- Use personal stories
- Smile

- Vary the tone and pitch of your presentation
- Gesture and move while speaking

VALUE

People are constantly inundated with sales pitches. When it comes to hosting webinars, you must deliver value. The value that you offer needs to resonate with your customers in order for them to choose you. In order to provide value, you need to understand what motivates your customer. For example, people purchase certain items based on quality and others solely based on price, and these choices vary with each individual.

When you are presenting value to your customer, you need to understand your customers' needs and wants. Then, you will be able to identify exactly how your product or service addresses the needs and wants of your customers. When you have the answers, you must show how your products or services will be able to benefit your customers.

KNOWING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Knowing how to deliver value requires you to understand your target audience. It is impossible to please everyone, which is why you need to know who your customers are (your target audience). This will require you to conduct some research and gather information. Begin by identifying the age, gender, income level, education level, and location of your customers. Once you have this basic information, you must determine how they interact with the world. What do they read? How do they share

information? This will allow you to tailor your webinars to your customer as well as advertise in the right locations. Again, this will take a little work on your part, but it is worth the effort.

GRAB AND KEEP ATTENTION

As we have already stated, it is important that you grab the attention of your audience immediately. It is just as important to keep their attention. After a strong opening, you need to keep the momentum going. Many professional presenters follow the 10-minute rule. This rule is based on the understanding that attention begins to drift after 10 minutes. This requires a simple change of course every 10 minutes, such as switching to a demonstration or slide show. There are other ways to keep the attention of your audience:

- **Use slides in moderation:** Slides with everything you say is just as boring as talking alone.
- **Use animation and images:** Make sure that are relevant to the webinar.
- **Use demonstrations:** Again, make them relevant to your topic.
- **Limit information:** Provide a basic overview, not an in-depth analysis.

Simple find the methods that work best for you, and space them out to keep your audience interested and motivated.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Alec was prepared for his webinar. He had an amazing presentation planned. He did not think that he needed to tailor the presentation because it would have something for everyone. The first four minutes of the interactive webinar were busy. Unfortunately, the interaction fell off quickly. Some people commented that the animation was too distracting and not very interesting. Others said that they did not see how the presentation related to their needs. Overall, only 3% of the viewers responded the way that Alec projected.

*In a lot of formats you can
be really experimental and
see what would happen.*

MARGUERITE MOREAU



FIND THE RIGHT FORMAT

When creating webinars, you must find the right format for your product or service. Part of discovering your format is in knowing your audience. Once you understand how to tailor the webinar to your audience, you must choose between live and prerecorded webinars. You will also need to consider the role of two person teams in your format.

TAILOR IT TO YOUR AUDIENCE

As we have already learned, successful webinars require you to understand your audience. Your audience will determine which type of format you will be using for your webinar as will your topic. For example, your audience would benefit from a live webinar for more complex topics that are likely to cause questions and require direct interaction. This will require your entire audience to access the webinar at the same time. On the other hand, prerecorded webinars are useful for simple topics, such as explaining the different uses for your product. Prerecorded webinars also allow your customers to access the information at their convenience, which is one benefit live webinars do not provide. Again, your topic and customer needs will determine which style of webinar works for you.

PRE-RECORDED

Prerecorded webinars are the easiest webinars to create. You record your material and then post it online. This way you have the opportunity to edit and revise the webinar before the public views it. Once you post the webinar, the public has the opportunity to view at their leisure. Pre-recorded webinars are one-sided forms of communication. There is always, however, the option of hosting follow-up events. These events can include Q&A sessions, which allow you to communicate with customers directly and answer any questions that may develop after viewing the information in your pre-recorded webinar.

THE LIVE WEBINAR

Live webinars require greater preparation than pre-recorded webinars. When you are live, you must expect the unexpected. Be prepared to answer questions and expand on the information that you present. No matter how confident you are in your material, you must practice your presentation and rehearse the process. This is particularly important if you are not accustomed to public speaking. The live webinar needs:

- Moderator and facilitator
- Tech support
- Interaction tools
- Live event support

TWO PERSON TEAM

A two person team will help ensure that your webinar runs smoothly. This is particularly true of live chat webinars. These teams include a presenter and co-presenter or a moderator and facilitator. Two person teams allow you to divide the work and maintain focus on the topic at hand. For example, a moderator or co-host can address chat questions and technical problems. This allows the webinar itself to keep moving forward by preventing the host or facilitator from getting sidetracked by other duties. The host or facilitator needs to focus on the goals of the webinar and work to achieve the objectives.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

James hosted his first live chat webinar. He thought he was prepared for the webinar, but he discovered that it was more difficult than he believed once the webinar began. While he was fielding questions, he fell behind in his presentation. He accidentally cut someone off in the middle of a question, and he managed to get his images out of order. Overall, the webinar was not the success that he hoped it would be. He was not sure what he could do to improve the next one.

*Marketing is no
longer about the stuff
you make, but about the
stories you tell.*

SETH GODIN



MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Marketing and social media are fully intertwined in the modern world. Webinars are no different than any other product that you advertise using social media. By utilizing social media and marketing strategies effectively, you will drive traffic to your webinars. Blogs, white papers, emails, deals, and hashtags are all useful in attracting more viewers to your webinar.

BLOG POSTS AND WHITE PAPERS

Blog posts and white papers are useful methods of marketing, and they should be familiar to most people who have a business background. White papers are longer and contain facts and statistics that prove a point to the benefit of your organization. You can easily include your webinar topics in your white papers. White papers should be used to guide blog posts on the same topic. You need to simplify and condense the material to a post of roughly 300 words, which is the recommended length for articles and blog posts.

People are more likely to read blog posts and white papers when they have high ranking on search engines. This requires an understanding of SEO or search engine optimization. SEO is complex, and you may need

further training on the subject. SEO is more than simply padding your content with key words. SEO looks at:

- **Content:** Your content must be consistent with the search terms and be well written and informative throughout.
- **Links:** You need to link to other sites that are authoritative on the subject.
- **The site:** Your website should attract the right traffic and be easy to navigate.

By creating quality content that supports your webinar topic, you will increase your marketing and social media presence.

EMAIL MARKETING

Never underestimate the importance of email marketing. This method is cost effective and provides a large ROI when it is implemented correctly. Effective email marketing is not useful when it resembles spam. The key is to communicate with customers and build relationships.

Email Marketing Tips:

- **Create an effective subject line:** The subject line should provide an accurate description of your topic and create a sense of urgency.
- **Make incentives clear:** Incentives should be easy to read and identify.

- **Get to the point:** Write brief emails, and try to have the entire email be visible without scrolling.
- **Provide links:** Offer links to webinars, signups, etc.
- **Connect with the customer:** Try to make emotional connections with personal anecdotes.

OFFER AN EXCLUSIVE DEAL

Offering exclusive deals is a tried and true method of marketing. Many people follow companies and subscribe to emails simply for the purpose of receiving exclusive deals. When offering exclusives deals, you need to avoid sounding like you are offering a sales pitch. Exclusive deals must feel like you are exclusively catering to your customers. This includes private sneak peeks and discount offers with social media updates. Knowing your client base will help you better tailor your exclusive deals to what they find relevant. Remember that something that you make available to the general public is not an exclusive deal. Your audience needs to feel special.

HASHTAGS

Anyone familiar with social media has seen hashtags. They are a group of words or a single word that follows #. They are used to promote brands, trends, and promotions. If you do not have a business hashtag, make one immediately. This will promote your brand and product. Once you

establish a hashtag use it. You must update your Twitter regularly to maintain the interest of your followers.

Next, you need to implement Live Tweeting, which will require a Twitter moderator. Use a hashtag to tag a conversation with your follower. For example, you could use #askanexpert. The point is to create a conversation that promotes your brand and your webinars. Like a live webinar, you must be prepared for anything. The more people you follow and get to follow you, the more people you will influence. When you are tweeting anything important, you should always ask your followers to RT or retweet your posts. This will increase exposure and sales. Be careful not to overuse hashtags. You want your followers to pay attention to your hashtags.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Matt was told by all of his friends that he needed to leverage social media for marketing. He decided to join Twitter. All he only had time to do was tweet twice a day, and he wasn't sure who to follow. He tweeted new sales, deals, and tried to create conversations with other people in order to secure viewers for his webinars. After a few weeks, he decided that social media was not useful for his type of business. He gave up on his account, and quit using twitter to promote his business, and he considered giving up on social media in general.

*Effort only fully releases
its rewards after a person
refuses to quit.*

NAPOLEON HILL



LEADING UP TO YOUR WEBINAR

The weeks and days leading up to the webinar will be eventful. As the date of a webinar grows closer, you must remain vigilant and increase your work. Success requires that you send reminder emails, practice, rehearse, and test your technology. With hard work and determination, you will find it possible to host an effective webinar that will improve your company image and increase sales.

REMINDER EMAILS

You should never overlook the importance of sending reminder emails; this is an essential step for anyone hosting a live event. Reminder emails are not the same as marketing emails. They have one specific purpose, which is to remind people about the webinar. These should not be sent as mass marketing emails; they are only used to remind people who have shown a genuine interest in the webinar that you are hosting. You should send two reminder emails when hosting live webinars or any follow up sessions. Send one the day before the webinar and another one hour before it begins.

What to include:

- Day and time
- Any necessary instructions
- Contact information
- Reminder of the webinar's benefits

PRACTICE AND REHEARSE

As the saying goes, "Practice makes perfect." Never underestimate how important it is to practice and rehearse your webinars. Before you practice, it is a good idea to watch as many different webinars and see which techniques do and do not work. Try implementing different ideas into your presentation and ask peers and friends for honest feedback.

You should rehearse the webinar more than once. The more you practice and rehearse the smoother the event will be. Rehearsals should include lighting, props, as well as any dialogue, if there is going to be more than one speaker. Take notes with each rehearsal identifying what you need to do to improve the presentation. Rehearse until you are satisfied with the webinar.

TEST YOUR TECHNOLOGY

You should always test your technology before hosting a webinar. Failure to run tests can result in disaster that damages your reputation and your bottom line. It is important to test all technology, not just your recording devices. You need to test the audio, visual, communication systems,

and any technology that is involved with props or demonstrations. The programs and systems that you use will determine exactly what you need to test and how it will be tested. Most systems come with testing instructions. If you are not sure how to test everything, consult an expert.

INSERT SOLICITED QUESTIONS

Asking your audience for questions ahead of time both involves them in webinar and provides you with the opportunity to address questions and maximize audience understanding. It is essential that you manage to insert some of these questions into your webinar presentation. A good rule of thumb is to include questions if more than one person asks them. Any questions that you choose must enhance the webinar and be relevant to the points you are trying to make. If questions would be better addressed in a separate Q&A meeting, schedule one. You cannot spend all your time answering questions, or you will never finish your presentation.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Grant decided to practice his webinar presentation ahead of time. He double checked facts and wrote an effective script. He stood in the mirror and rehearsed his script twice the day before hosting a live webinar. He was pleased with the pacing and focus, and he managed to address a few questions that his audience raised. Grant was confident that everything would run smoothly. He didn't realize that the sound was not working until someone texted him. By the time that the sound was back on, half of his viewers had already left the webinar. He offered to reschedule, but nobody seemed interested.

*If you don't drive your
business, you will be driven
out of business.*

B . C . F O R B E S



DRIVE UP REGISTRATION

In the weeks leading up to any webinar you host, it is essential that you drive up the registration. Doing some research to ensure that you avoid customers' SPAM filters will improve the chances of your message reaching them. Additionally, you need to choose an intriguing title and make the process of registration as simple as possible. It is always best to drive up registration ahead of time and secure the interest of current and potential customers.

AVOID SPAM FILTER

Many companies have fallen victim to the spam filter. Spam filters are useful for weeding out scams and junk mail, but they could also target emails about your webinar if you are not careful. Fortunately, it is easy to look up the top SPAM words and phrases so that you know what to avoid. Just as an example, using all caps, \$, or excessive punctuation (!!!!!) will often be flagged by a filter. Always find the most current list available and use it to guide your emails.

You should also create a plain text version of your email to avoid systems that will not view HTML code. By creating this alternative, you allow the server to choose which version the customer will see. You may choose to

only send the email in plain text. Either way, you will increase the chances of the email being viewed. After you have crafted your email, run it through a spam checker. There are different ones available, and some of them are free.

A GREAT TITLE

Many people fail to bring all of these elements together. Many short titles are to the point, but they are not attention grabbing. In order to be attention grabbing, your title should reflect the way that your webinar will benefit your target audience. Rather than using the title “Social Media,” you could use “Using Social Media to Increase Sales.” Knowing your target audience will help you find the best title for your webinar. Your title needs to be:

- Short
- To the point
- Attention grabbing

If you want to distinguish your webinar, you need to give it a great title. Your title is the webinar’s first impression. If it is boring or confusing, people will assume that the presentation will be boring or confusing.

SOLICIT QUESTIONS

You need to solicit questions during the sign up process. These questions will help you identify topics that you need to address ahead of time. Make the process easy for your participants by adding a text box to the

registration form where people can type in their questions about the topic. If you feel that the registration form is too long, however, you may choose to ask for questions in the confirmation message so your customer is less distracted. You may alter the location of your solicitation box in different webinar registrations to determine which one generates more feedback from your customers.

THE REGISTRATION PAGE

The ease of registering will help determine how many people register for your webinar. Complex registration pages can be frustrating, and frustrated people will refuse to finish signing up for your webinar. People who do not complete the form create an abandonment rate. A high abandonment rate indicates that your form is too long. The important thing to remember about your registration page is to keep it simple. Do not clutter the form with fields and boxes. Only include the information that you absolutely need on the registration form, such as name and email. If you fill the page with qualifying questions such as how long a company has been in business, you risk losing a customer. Your goal needs to be quick registration.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Heather decided that email was the best way to drive up registration for her webinar. She decided that she needed to make the email stand out to improve the chance of people opening it. She used all caps for the subject line and added extra exclamation points to create excitement.

When following up, most people told her that they never received the email.

Next, she decided to make a splash with the registration page. After look at different examples, she chose to use multiple fields and asked qualifying questions to create a sense of exclusivity. By the day of the webinar, only five people registered, and only three participated.

*Let thy speech be better
than silence, or be silent.*

DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS



PRESENTATION TIPS

Webinars are similar to other presentations; the main difference is that your audience is not physically present. Even though you cannot see your audience, you need to give the presentation the same level of attention as you would a physical meeting. By following a few presentation tips, you will be able to maintain the interest of your audience and create a successful presentation and draw viewers to your webinar.

SHOW, DON'T TELL

When it comes to presentations, the key is to show the information; don't just tell it. The goal is to create an emotional connection with your audience, which will increase both buy in and improve sales. Simply stating facts and figures will not engage your audience. You will be much better using visual aids that show the audience the supporting facts. Demonstrations are useful for showing how to do something. When you do not have physical demonstrations, try to include visual images. For example, a slide show will have more of an impact than showing a single spreadsheet. Regardless of the technology you use to share information, you need to make it visually appealing. Include high contrast colors and make sure that text is visible and easy to read.

SHARING YOUR DESKTOP

Hosting a webinar will require you to share your desktop. You need to prepare for this before the day of the webinar. Take a few basic steps to prevent any embarrassing moments during your presentation.

Steps to Take:

- Turn off systems that will cause pop ups (such as IM).
- Turn off auto complete. (Do this when using a browser)
- Remove embarrassing or inappropriate content or images.
- Make sure that confidential information is not accessible.

Once you have checked your desktop to make sure that it is safe to share, it is safe to follow the directions to share your desktop with others and complete your online presentation.

STRONG VISUALS

As we already stated, visuals are an important part of any presentation. They create emotion and increase a connection with viewers and customers. In order for visuals to be effective, they need to be strong. Strong visuals share a few basic characteristics:

- Limited words (Each slide resembles a billboard)
- Font matches the tone of the presentation (It should be changed as the tone changes)

- Images stand out and express ideas
- Use symbols when appropriate
- Diagrams should be creative and beautiful
- The images should tell a clear story

When you have strong visuals, your message will resonate with your audience and an emotional connection will be made.

SCRIPT IT

When you are preparing for your presentation, you should always use a script. The beginning and end of your presentation, particularly, must be clear and concise. You should completely script your introduction and conclusion. The rest of your presentation, however, should have a more conversational tone, especially if you are hosting a live event. In order to stay on topic, make a bullet pointed list of the topics that you need to address. This list will help you stay on track with your talking points and images. Since you will rehearse the presentation, there is little chance that you will wander off topic or lose track of your slides.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Tina was busy preparing for her presentation. She knew that images were necessary to reach her clients. She found some stock photos that she thought were nice, and she typed every scripted word onto each slide of the slide show. She also blew up the Excel spreadsheet with the facts and figures so that she could explain the potential financial growth.

She rehearsed the presentation, and she managed to stay on topic and stay within the allotted time. Tina was sure that the presentation was a success, but her feedback was underwhelming. Some of the participants complained that the presentation was boring and repetitive. They also said that the images seemed disconnected to the topic.

*For good ideas and true
innovation, you need
human interaction,
conflict, argument, debate.*

MARGARET HEFFERNAN



INTERACTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Your audience must be the focus of your webinar. Ignoring your viewers will guarantee that they take their business elsewhere. It is essential that you interact with your audience at every opportunity. Whether your webinars are live or prerecorded, you should find ways to interact. Polls, surveys, activities, solicited questions, and Q&A sessions all help you interact and connect with your audience.

POLLING AND SURVEYS

Polls and surveys are useful tools that allow you to connect with your audience. The feedback that your participants give will also help guide your presentations in the future. Polls that are given before or during the session may give you an idea of the viewers' background and/or interest. However you choose to interact with your audience, it is important that you frame the question in a way that benefits your audience rather than simply asking for information. For example, you could ask:

- “What is your involvement in (insert topic), and what do you hope to learn?”

Surveys and exit polls will help you collect feedback about the session. These may be given in the follow up materials. Once you have collected the results, you should post them for the benefit of your viewers.

ANSWER SOLICITED QUESTIONS

This will engage your audience while showing that you care about their concerns. You should have already inserted some previously solicited questions into the presentation. Questions asked during live events should be addressed as well. This is an excellent time to use Twitter, and a hashtag should be created for the webinar. The moderator will be able to weed out duplicate questions and provide the names of the participants asking the questions. Whenever possible, you should include the name of the participant who asked the question when you are answering it. This will help the participants feel included in the presentation.

ACTIVITIES

Introducing different activities throughout the webinar will encourage audience involvement and increase interaction. Create virtual activities similar to the ones that you would use in a physical presentation. For large groups, you may take advantage of online breakout rooms that allow people to work together in small groups. Effective activities include:

- Discussions
- Riddles
- Problem solving exercises

- Team assignments
- Games

When people work together to solve problems and discuss topics, they are more likely to become involved in the presentation. When you introduce activities into your webinar, you must carve out the time for your participants to complete the assignments.

Q&A SESSIONS

Q&A sessions are the mainstay of effective webinars. The type of webinar you present will determine how you handle your Q&A session. You may choose to dedicate a few minutes at the end of the webinar to answer questions. This is useful for simple webinar topics that are likely to generate basic questions. If, however, you are asked questions that require detailed responses, it is a good idea to schedule a separate Q&A session to take place after the webinar. You may choose to conclude the webinar with a Q&A and then schedule another follow up session. Try to address every relevant question that your participants ask. If you do not know the answer to something, promise to find out and follow up with the participant, and DO IT. Leaving questions unanswered implies that you do not possess the expertise you claim and/or do not care enough to address customer concerns.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Dean was prepared for his presentation. He addressed different questions in his script, and timed everything out perfectly. He even accepted questions during the presentation. He was extremely surprised when he was inundated with emails a week later asking questions about the webinar topic. Dean thought that he addressed everything in the webinar. Some of the participants seemed annoyed that he had not hosted Q&A session for follow up questions. He spent the better part of a week replying to emails, many of which asked the same questions.

*Sometimes when you
innovate, you make
mistakes. It is best to
admit them quickly and
get on with improving
your other innovations.*

STEVE JOBS



MISTAKES TO AVOID

When it comes to webinars, there are a number of mistakes just waiting to happen. Fortunately, you can avoid many of them if you are prepared. Being aware of common mistakes such as technical difficulties, ignoring your audience, lack of participation, and poor timing will help ensure that your webinar is successful. Pay attention in the following chapter, and you will learn valuable tips to help you avoid common mistakes.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

Technical issues are common problems for webinars. While it is not possible to predict every possible outcome, most technical issues are preventable. Simply checking everything beforehand will greatly improve your odds of a webinar running smoothly. Test and retest every piece of equipment and system that you are going to use. The days leading up to a webinar can be stressful, and it is easy to overlook something in the testing. Make a checklist to keep you from forgetting to test anything.

Common Things to Test:

- Login (it is often complicated or not working)
- Microphones
- Video equipment
- Links (make sure they are not broken)

IGNORING YOUR AUDIENCE

You need to reach your audience on a personal level, which is difficult to do online. This means that you need to include your audience in order to make your webinar a success. This may seem like an unnecessary reminder, but you can easily forget about your audience while you are moving through your presentation. Do not forget to provide a way for your audience to contact you during the presentation. Take advantage of social media and online chats, or allow your participants to call your moderator. Besides asking questions, your audience can tell you about any technical difficulties that are not occurring on your end. You ignore your audience at your own peril.

AUDIENCE NOT PARTICIPATING?

In every presentation, you run the risk of the audience not participating. Many people don't like being the first to speak in a room full of strangers, and this is particularly true online. It is your job to encourage audience participation. You must ask for participation. Do not simply assume that people will feel comfortable jumping in and asking questions.

One tip that is useful for encouraging participation is to plant a ringer. Plant someone in your audience to begin the questioning process. It is a good idea to have some questions scripted ahead of time. This tactic is particularly useful in Q&A's, but ringers can be placed in any interactive webinar.

TIMING

You must watch your time carefully when you are hosting a webinar. If your time is short, people will feel like it is not worth the effort and/or money. If you run long, you risk both boring and annoying your audience. Rehearsing your presentation will help you identify what you need to adjust in your timing. It is not enough for you to set a time and length for the webinar; you must schedule every component in your presentation. This includes the intro, demonstrations, presentation, questions, polls, closing comments, etc.

Create a timing sheet with the schedule for each component, and give it to everyone involved. The timing sheet will be different to each webinar. It will vary based on the level of audience participation, number of demonstrations, etc. Most webinars are an hour long. If you are scheduling a longer than normal webinar (90 minutes or more), schedule a break for your audience. You should also plan to begin the webinar a minute or two after the start time in case people are running late.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Betsy was prepared for her webinar. She tested her tech and rehearsed her presentation. She did not like Twitter and decided to communicate with her audience with follow up documentation and sessions. After the webinar, she learned that most of the participants logged off after 10 minutes. In the follow up, the participants told her that the sound went out after the first few minutes. No one knew how to let her know about the problem. After a few minutes, people began to leave the

webinar. There was little interest in the webinar she had scheduled the next week. Betsy believed that the technical problems were to blame, and she was not sure how to fix the damage to her reputation and the reputation to her organization.

*Success comes from
taking the initiative and
following up...*

ANTHONY ROBBINS



POST EVENT

The webinar may be done, but your work is not finished. You still have to follow up with people and post the event online. You should also contact no shows and focus on a call to action. By following up with people, posting events and making them easy to share, your webinar will reach a wider audience. This will increase your reputation and provide better exposure for your brand.

CONTACT NO SHOWS

You may be tempted to write off no shows, but this would be a mistake. Failure to show up does not necessarily equal lack of interest in your topic. There are many reasons why people fail to participate in webinars after registering for them. You should always contact your no shows. Send them the material from the webinar, and offer them the link to the posted event. You should also take the opportunity to invite them to another webinar scheduled in the future. There is every chance that your no shows will sign up again.

FOLLOW UP EMAILS

You should send a follow up email after each webinar. This should be done as quickly as possible (before a week has past). You may want to

include a recap of the webinar and list the topics covered during your presentation.

The email may:

- Thank the individual for attending (This should be done first.)
- Provide any additional materials
- Include a call to action
- Include links to the posted webinar
- Answer questions that you could not cover earlier
- Include information about upcoming events
- Provide a survey for feedback

You may want to include a recap of the webinar and list the topics covered during your presentation.

CALL TO ACTION

You should provide a call to action with every webinar. Your call to action is your invitation to take the next step, such as make a purchase. This can be done before the Q&A, at the end of the webinar, and in follow up emails and other communications. The call to action you create will depend on what you have to offer. You need to frame the call to action in terms of how you can benefit the customer and make the call to action clear. In the follow up phase of the process, you should only use one call

to action at a time. Providing multiple calls to action can cause confusion and distract them from your focus.

MAKE IT EASY TO SHARE

When you post your recorded webinar, you need to make sure that it is visible and easy to share. New people will not be able to view your webinars if they are hidden away. You should provide prominent links on your homepage. Also, look into ways to shorten the URL code. People are unlikely to remember long URLs. When the domain is easy to remember, your customers will have no problem telling their friends where to find it. You may have to pay for a memorable domain, but it will make your webinars easier to share. Having a URL ready for webinars beforehand means that you can post the webinar quickly and provide the link to your participants.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Wendy's webinar was a success. There were no complaints, and she managed to answer almost all of the questions that were presented during the event. She posted the webinar quickly and expected an increase in sales. She sent a follow email out 10 days later with a call to action. Three percent of the participants purchased, which was far less than Wendy expected. She was not sure where she went wrong. She decided that she needed to evaluate every step of the process.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Chad Udell:** Convert your best existing content into a mobile, usable, fresh user experience – this means rethinking what is the best and most relevant information. It's a technology and also a design issue.
- **Jack Welch:** An organization's ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage.
- **Matt Gentile:** Understand your audience and you will understand the impact of your message on each follower in your social media networks.
- **Jack Welch:** Willingness to change is a strength, even if it means plunging part of the company into total confusion for a while.
- **Isaac Mopatlane:** If you did not look after today's business, you might as well forget about tomorrow.



Rick Chisholm made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of \$300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.



Tala Chisholm is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.

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