



ON24

ON24 WEBINAR BENCHMARKS REPORT

2021

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EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

Since the founding of the World Wide Web, the amount of time people spend engaging on digital channels has grown at a breathtaking rate. And ON24 has been present for almost the entire journey since its founding in 1998. But the events of 2020 led to a sudden explosion of digital engagement.

Today, the number of ways B2B professionals can engage online is larger than ever. Audiences are spoiled for choice. And, having seen the experiences they can get as consumers, from Amazon for shopping to Netflix for film, meeting their expectations can be harder than ever.

So where does this leave the webinar? Is this channel still attracting and engaging audiences more than two decades after its invention?

The answer from our latest Webinar Benchmarks report is an unequivocal “yes.”

Even with all the different channels and experiences available, organizations dramatically increased the number of webinars produced. 2020 saw the number of webinars delivered on the ON24 Digital Experience Platform **grow by an astonishing 162%**. More than one-quarter of a million ON24 webinars hit the web. And of those, more than 100,000 virtual events had more than 100 participants.

More impressive is the growth in the number of people engaging with webinars. **Attendees shot up by 251%** to reach more than 60 million. **The hours of webinar content consumed grew by 290%**, with **61 million hours of content** being binged in 2020.

These figures show that webinars offer something special. When given the choice, audiences will choose conversation and two-way interaction over passive experiences. They will choose to access content on their own terms. They will choose experiences that are worthwhile. And they will choose experiences that get better and more personalized over time.

Webinars allow you to do all of this and to surface the signals to make every experience you offer even better than the last.

So, how are you performing when it comes to webinars? By analyzing thousands of webinars with millions of attendees, this annual Webinar Benchmarks report aims to provide a foundation for what “good” looks like. Come on in and find out how your peers are doing—and how you can create even better experiences in 2021.

METHODOLOGY

ON24® compiled this report based on data from the ON24 Digital Experience Platform. The events included in this analysis were selected from a random number of ON24 webinars conducted globally on ON24 Webcast Elite in 2020.



ON24 measured 100,482 webinars in this analysis



All webinars were held between January and December of 2020



All webinars had at least 100 attendees



Events represent a cross-section of more than 3,000 organizations



Companies range in size from Enterprise to SMB

More than 100 ON24 customers were surveyed to complement this analysis and add further insight to emerging from the ON24 Platform.

This study examines statistics across a webinar's lifecycle, including webinar promotion and registration metrics, interactivity metrics, audience viewing habits, and both live and on-demand attendance and conversion metrics. Unless otherwise noted, this study uses the following definitions:



Live webinars — Audio or video-based events streamed on a specific day and time.



On-demand webinars — Audio or video-based webinars attendees can view at any time, including archived live webcasts.



Registrants — A contact who registered to view an event.



Attendees — A contact who registered to view an event and attended that event

WEBINAR SUCCESS

WEBINAR VOLUME

59% of survey respondents plan to increase the number of webinars they produce in 2020.

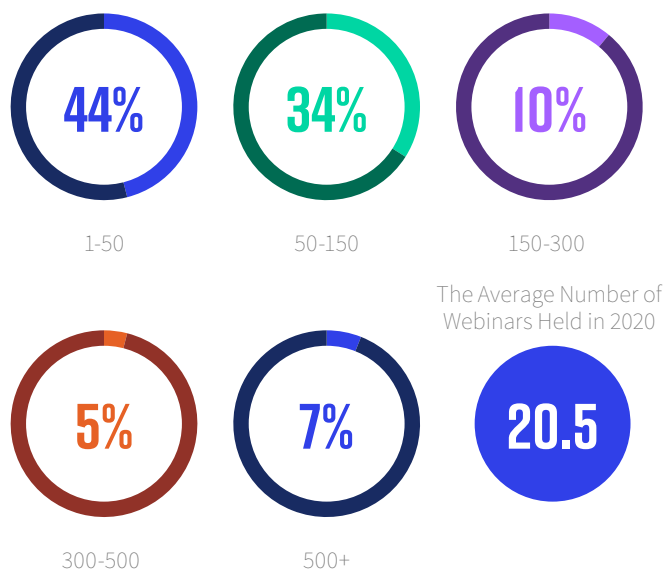
Webinars lend themselves to all kinds of communication activity. At ON24, we see three use cases that come up the most frequent: marketing, training and continuing education. Many organizations carry out all three.

The number of webinars a company delivers per year varies according to its audience, resources and business goals. There is no right answer — it's the quality of the content, not the number of webinars you produce, that determines whether your webinar program is successful.

Around one-third (34%) of survey respondents ON24 customers ran between 50 and 150 webinars 2020, with less than half (44%) running up to 50. Of the respondents, more than half (56%) say they plan to increase the number of webinars they produce in 2021.

Serialized webinar programs with an established host and format is one method producers can use to increase webinar volume while reducing the time required to set up an event. Around half (54%) of those surveyed take such an approach, with a further 9% planning to do so.

Number of Webinars Survey Respondents Ran in 2020



ON24 TIP: PRODUCE A REGULAR STREAM OF WEBINAR CONTENT.

Don't fall into the trap of seeing webinars as just a tactic to add on to the end of your marketing campaigns or education and training efforts. Instead, make them a regular and frequent part of your marketing activity. As you run more sessions, you'll find out what works for your audience — allowing you to continuously improve performance.

PRE-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

PROMOTIONAL CYCLE

15%

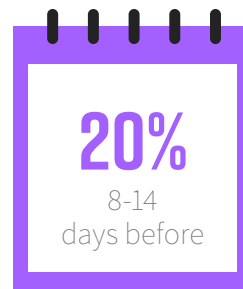
of registrants sign up to a webinar on the day it is broadcast.

Webinars help to build audiences and scale. The content of your webinar is a key element, but so is the way it's promoted. Getting people to be aware, if not excited, about webinars, should be a concerted effort that starts at least two weeks before launch, or even earlier.

About two-fifths (39%) of registrants sign up for a webinar more than a week in advance (i.e. eight days or more before the event). Very early registrants, those who enroll at least 15 days before the event, account for 20% of our sample — an eight-point decrease from both 2019 and 2018.

The majority (60%) of registrants sign up to webinars up to one week before an event. It's worth noting that although the proportion of late registrants, i.e. those signing up on the day of the event, dropped from 23% in 2017 to 10% in 2019, the percentage did go up to 15% in 2020.

This is likely driven by the increase in on-demand viewing, as registrants sign up for webinars earlier with the confidence that they can watch the recording later if they cannot attend live.



ON24 TIP: LONGER PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS = MORE REGISTRANTS.

Pursuing a longer promotion cycle can boost registration rates and increase the likelihood of converting registrants into attendees. Promotional emails shouldn't just be reminders though. Hit the ground running by including supporting content and building up excitement ahead of your webinar. Read more in our [Webinar Registration Best Practices Guide](#).

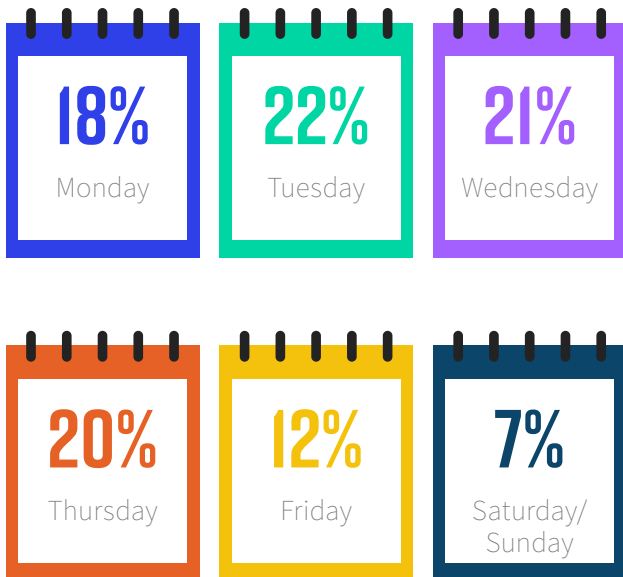


PRE-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

BEST DAYS TO SEND PROMOTIONAL EMAILS

64% of those delivering webinars for account-based marketing do so directly through email.

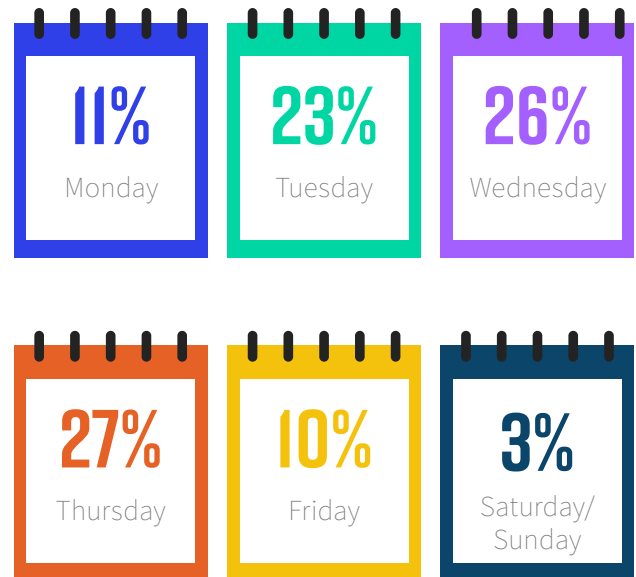
Email is the most effective channel for promoting webinars and driving registrants, so it's an area that requires careful consideration. As shown in previous benchmark reports, mid-week promotional emails perform best. **Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are the strongest performers**, accounting for around two-thirds (63%) of registrations.



BEST DAYS FOR WEBINAR ATTENDANCE

49% of ON24 customers say they have a designated host (or hosts) for their webinars.

Mid-week is also the best time to hold a webinar, with **Wednesday and Thursday** again emerging as strong performers. However, the best day for a webinar entirely depends on your webinar goals and your audience.

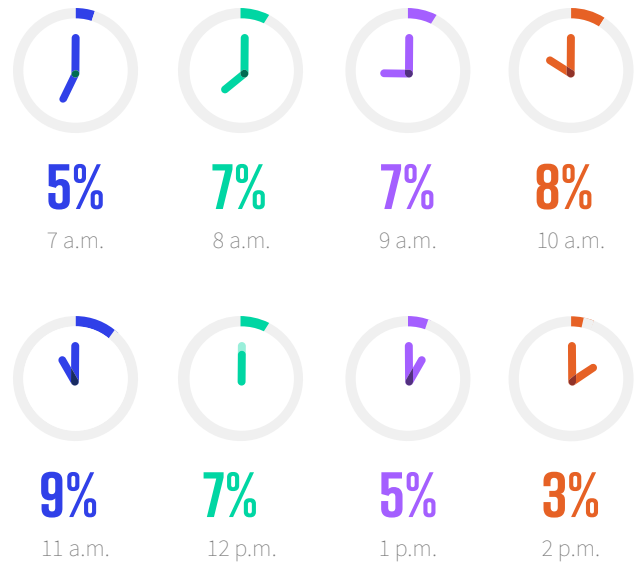


PRE-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

BEST TIME TO RUN WEBINARS

24% of ON24 webinars are broadcast between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. PT.

The best time to run a webinar is 11 a.m. Pacific (2 p.m. Eastern) as it avoids most conflicts on both American coasts. Other times to consider are 10 a.m. and 9 a.m. Pacific (1 p.m. and 12 p.m. Eastern). Remember that the optimal time to run webinars depends on where your audience resides so don't be afraid to experiment.



ON24 TIP: RUN YOUR WEBINARS AROUND THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY.

The best time for a webinar is one fitting in with your audience's schedules, but as a rule, lunchtime to early afternoon works well. If in doubt and you're in the US and covering multiple time zones, shoot for 11 a.m. Pacific (2 p.m. Eastern).

BRANDING YOUR WEBINARS

Today's audiences expect a consistent brand experience across all the touchpoints. **So it's good to see that some 96% of survey respondents report that their webinars look like their brand.**

While ON24's tools allow for any user to customize the look and feel of their digital experiences, many are going the extra mile. More than half of respondents (51%) say had a designer to help to brand their webinars.



ON24 TIP: CUSTOMIZE YOUR WEBINAR CONSOLE TO DRIVE ENGAGEMENT.

Take advantage of the webinar environment to build a connection between the attendee and your brand. A fully branded, customized webinar console helps you set your program apart from the get-go. Read our [Webinar Console Branding Guide](#) to learn how you can get started. When you're ready for the next level, check out our guide to creating experiential events.



PRE-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

AVERAGE VIEWING TIME

61M

hours of webinar content was watched through ON24 in 2020.

The optimal webinar length depends on the topic, content, audience and program's goals. The majority of webinars on the ON24 Platform last for around an hour but can easily exceed that if they cover a particularly complex issue.

This slight upward trend could be explained by the decrease in viewers using smartphones to attend webinars. In the last quarter of 2020, some 8.8% of attendees tuned in on a mobile device, down from 9.4% for the same period in 2019.

In 2020, **the average viewing time for webinars was 57 minutes.**

Average viewing time for webinar attendees:



ON24 TIP: USE WEBINARS TO BROADCAST YOUR IN-PERSON EVENTS FOR MAXIMUM REACH.



Reach a larger audience and create a more tailored experience by combining the impact of in-person events with the scale provided by webinars. Whether it is a hybrid event or a fully virtual conference, you can meet the needs of different personas and provide always-on content they can access on their terms. Check out our webinar on [How Box Uses Digital to Boost the Impact of In-Person Events](#).

LIVE WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

REGISTRANT TO ATTENDEE CONVERSION

58% of registrants convert to attendees on average.

Getting registrants is the first step in a successful webinar program, but the attendance rate is one of the key performance indicators you need to look at to gauge an event's efficacy. Usually, a conversion rate between 35% and 45% is considered good.

In 2020, the average registrant to attendee conversion rate overall was 58%. **For events with more than 100 attendees, the average conversion rate was 46%.** According to our data, communications and continuing education see the highest conversion rates (69% and 52%, respectively).

AVERAGE ATTENDEE RATE

66% of all webinars in 2020 featured some type of video.

According to our data, 44% of ON24 webinars in 2020 attracted at least 100 attendees — up from 41% in 2019.

Of these webinars with at least 100 attendees, the attendance rate for webinars with 300 or more attendees jumped to 33%, a three-point increase since our last report.

Average webinar conversion rate for webinars with more than 100 attendees:



69.30%

Communications



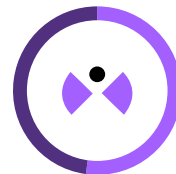
42.90%

Training



41.61%

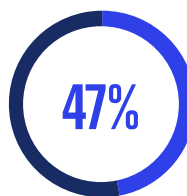
Marketing



52.16%

Continuing education

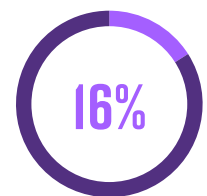
Distribution of webinar by size, as a percentage of webinars with more than 100 live attendees:



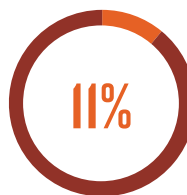
100-199



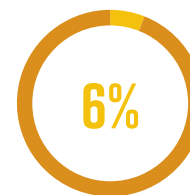
200-299



300-499



500-599



1,000+

LIVE WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

INTEGRATION OF ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

70% of all webinars in 2020 offered resources for attendees to download or engage with.

Two-way engagement is one of the key benefits of webinars, so encouraging engagement throughout each session is essential.

Overall, survey respondents rate the interactivity of their webinars as 3.2 on a five-point scale, up from 3.0 in 2019.

As was the case last year, the Q&A tool is the most popular engagement choice to drive audience interaction, used in 86% of all analyzed webinars.

Engagement Tool Usage:



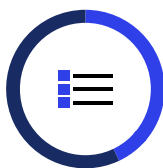
86%

Q&A



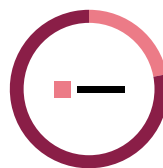
70%

Resources for download



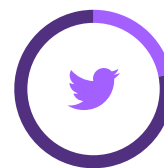
43%

Surveys



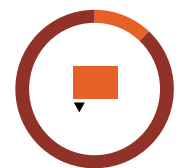
22%

Polling



22%

Social



12%

Group chat

Resource lists (70%) and surveys (43%) are the next most frequently used engagement tools. Compared to last year's report, the use of surveys has increased (up six percentage points).

However, driving engagement requires more than just presenting engagement tools within a webinar console or other digital experience. The skills of the host make a significant difference, which may explain the fact that half (47%) of survey respondents have at least one designated webinar host for their webinar programs.

Respondents are also looking to up their engagement game. **When asked to choose their number one priority for 2021, 43% stated that they would look to deliver more engaging and interactive webinars — a figure more than double that of the second most common priority, which was in improving registration for live events (21%).**

ON24 TIP: ON24 TIP: GO BEYOND LEADS TO MEASURE WEBINAR SUCCESS.

Define what engagement means for your organization, as this will help you identify the goals you need to measure progress against over time. Always keep track of conversion rates but don't forget about looking at drop-off points and attendee feedback. [Download the B2B Marketer's Guide to Optimization to find out more.](#)



LIVE WEBINAR BENCHMARKS







Roughly 66% of all live webinars in 2020 featured some type of video — 28-points higher than in 2019.

This suggests practitioners are becoming increasingly comfortable with the use of video technologies and are acknowledging the importance of incorporating video into webinars. Providing further proof is that 86% of survey respondents state that their presenters are on video more frequently since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

INTEGRATION OF VIDEO

36% of ON24 customers have bought new equipment for their webinar programs.

For ON24 webinars, videos include:

-  Studio produced
-  Webcam presentations
-  Integrated video clips
-  Streaming and screen sharing

While using video on a webinar requires little more than a webcam and computer, a good number of survey respondents have been making investments in hardware that helps lift the quality of their video experience. **Some 36% of respondents say they bought new equipment for their webinar program in the past year or before.**

ON24 TIP: USE VIDEO IN YOUR WEBINARS TO DRIVE ENGAGEMENT.

Video is one of the most effective forms of content you can use to convey your message, and adding video to webinars has been proven to increase audience engagement and viewing times. Turn passive viewing into active engagement by integrating relevant video content into your webinars. For more tips, read our guide on [Five Ways to Integrate Video Into Your Webinars](#).



PERSONALIZING WEBINAR EXPERIENCES

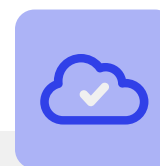
29% of ON24 customers integrate their webinars into personalized landing pages for target audiences.

Personalized experiences is critical to a modern marketer's success. With webinars, organizations can add a higher level of personal engagement, whether for specific accounts, industries, use cases or general account-based marketing activity.

Our survey of shows a healthy proportion are taking action to make their webinars more relevant to their target customers, **More than half of respondents (52%) use webinars as part of their account-based marketing efforts.** Of this group, the most common method of delivery for these webinars is through email, with 62% doing so.

Aside from account-based marketing, some 48% create webinars aimed at specific industries, while 15% do so by use case.

Furthermore, webinars do not have to be personalized in a standalone fashion. More than a third of respondents (34%) integrate webinars into personalized landing pages for target audiences, with a further 14% planning to do so. Such an approach can repurpose otherwise generic webinars into a highly-targeted offering.



ON24 TIP: FUEL ACCOUNT-BASED MARKETING WITH REPURPOSED WEBINARS.

The effort you invest in your webinars can continue to drive results long after the event is over. One way to repurpose your webinars is to embed them in a page that is specifically designed to engage the target account, which can include both the brand of your target account, downloadable content, contact us buttons and even the contact details of your customer success team. To find out more, check out [ON24 Target](#).

POST-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

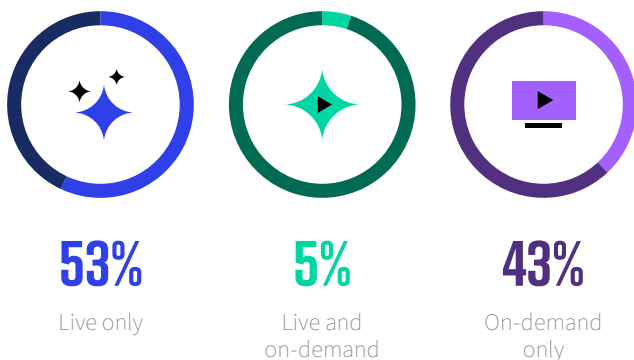
AVERAGE VIEWING TIME

57% of ON24 customers create webinars that go straight to on-demand viewing.

While live broadcasts remain the main type of webinar delivery because they encourage real-time engagement, on-demand webinars have increased in popularity as registrants can access them when it's most convenient for them. Doing a live webinar and then making the recording available on-demand can offer you the best of both worlds.

Attendee data shows an increasing preference towards watching on-demand webinars. Live-only attendance in 2020 saw a four-point fall in the past year while on-demand has risen by about the same amount.

ON24 customers appear to be responding to growing on-demand viewing, as 58% of respondents say they create webinars that go straight to an on-demand session. A further 14% are planning this for the year ahead.



ON-DEMAND VIEWING TIME

27% of ON24 customers use Netflix-style content hubs to promote their on-demand webinars.

On-demand webinars give your content long term viability. With always on, evergreen webinars you can continue to engage, educate and accommodate audiences you normally wouldn't be able to live. So, what's a good on-demand viewing benchmark? **In 2020, the on-demand viewing time for webinars with more than 100 attendees averaged 29 minutes.**



POST-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

POST-LIVE REGISTRATIONS

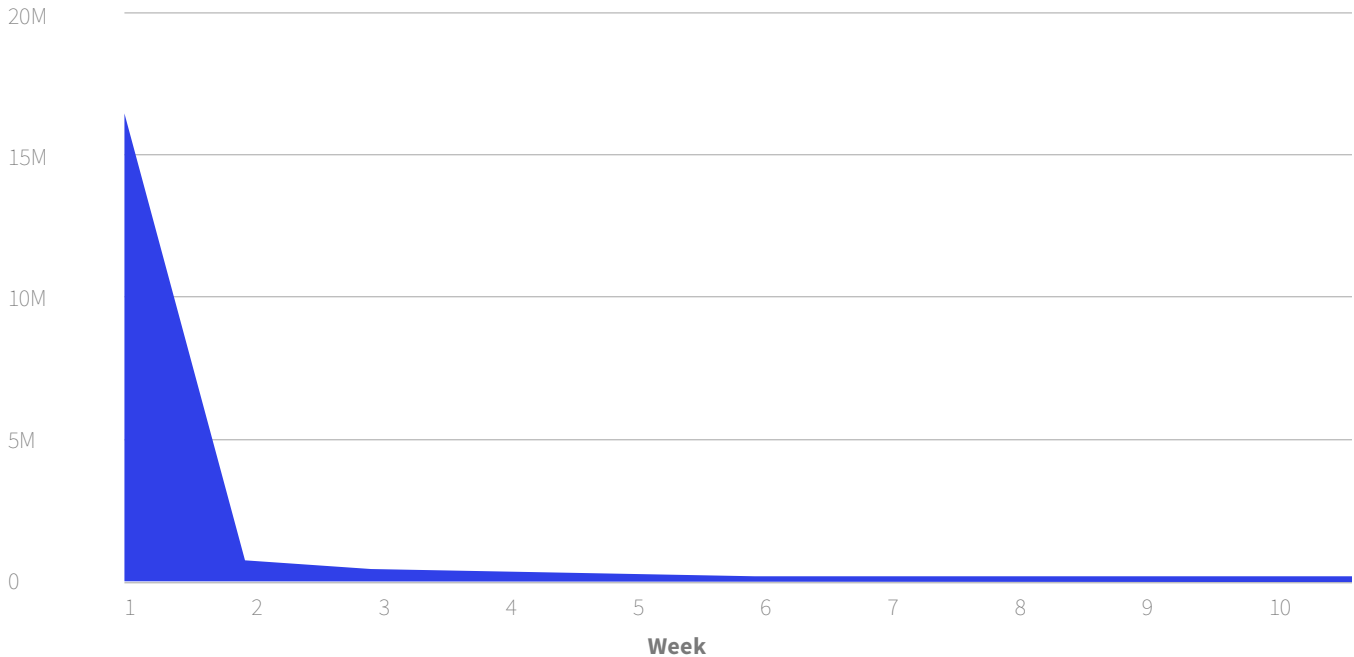
89%

of ON24 customers believe that webinars outperform other channels in creating qualified leads.

The popularity of always-on webinar content continues to grow. In 2020, for example, **43% of all attendees only watch on-demand webinars**, a five-point increase from 2019 and an eight-point increase since 2017. Of these on-demand attendees, the majority register a week after a live event.

To facilitate the increasing demand for on-demand viewing, those creating and promoting webinars should consider placing webinars and other content within a content hub. Indeed, more than one-quarter (27%) of survey respondents take such an approach, using Netflix-style content hubs to promote on-demand viewing.

Post-live Registrants:



POST-WEBINAR DATA

USE OF POST-WEBINAR DATA

66% of ON24 customers say their sales teams prioritize leads that come from webinars.

Webinar platforms should be integrated with technology stacks. Doing so expedites reporting and follow-up, streamlines handoff between marketing and sales and helps to accelerate the buyer journey. Integrating webinars with a CRM platform, for example, means sales teams have immediate access to account insights, enabling them to provide more targeted follow-up.

Webinars, along with the engagement data they create, are valuable. **Nearly two-thirds (60%) of survey respondents say sales prioritizes leads from webinars, likely due to the insight and buying signals they help to surface and deliver.**

This engagement data can also be used to find out ways of improving the webinar experience. By testing the impact of new approaches against the uplift in engagement score, those running webinars can continually optimize the performance of their programs.



ON24 TIP: ARM YOUR SALES TEAM WITH ENGAGEMENT DATA.

Webinars and other digital experiences provide powerful indications of intent through engagement data and analysis. Funnel these insights to your chosen CRM platform so your sales team can easily identify which prospects and accounts are engaged with your brand and how they've been engaging. Find out about how ON24 can help you do this using the [Prospect Engagement Profile](#).

MARKETING AND SALES CYCLE

WEBINARS IN THE MARKETING AND SALES CYCLE

72%

say that webinars directly impact pipeline and revenue.

Webinars help drive engagement and increase pipeline. As our survey shows, the vast majority of respondents (99%) agree that webinars represent a critical element of their 2021 marketing plan.

At a strategic level, eight in ten (81%) of respondents consider webinars to be either essential or critical while on average, respondents rate the importance of webinars to their digital marketing strategy as 4.0 on a five-point scale.

When it comes to the impact on the bottom line, the same survey results point to the fact that webinars do have a direct impact on both pipeline and revenue, with seven in ten (71%) respondents saying as such. Nine out of ten (90%) also believe that webinars outperform other channels in creating qualified leads.

Many also report a positive impact on their marketing spend, as three-quarters (78%) agreed that webinars help to lower their cost-per-lead.

Some **49% of these respondents also consider the quality of leads generated through webinars to be above average** (4 or 5 on a five-point scale), representing a 11-point rise since the last annual benchmarks report. Overall, respondents rate the quality of leads generated through webinars as 3.5 on a five-point scale (up from 3.3 previously).

Marketers are also using webinars across all funnel stages. Nearly two-thirds (65%) use them for mid-funnel activities, but webinars are also used for top-of-funnel (62%) and bottom-of-funnel (46%) efforts. Indeed, about half say they are using (40%) or plan to use (11%) webinars to drive key conversions such as demos, trials and appointment setting.



ON24 TIP: USE WEBINAR DATA TO CLOSE THE LOOP AND IMPROVE PERFORMANCE.

Make sure to collect and use data from your webinars to find out what works well and what doesn't. Also look to integrate your webinar platform with your CRM, marketing automation or e-learning systems — this will help those not directly involved with webinars to be able to see how each one of your customers interacts and engages. [Find out how ON24 Connect can help you with this.](#)

CONCLUSION

The data from our report shows that 2020 was yet another excellent year for webinars. We now see more than 167,000 hours of webinar content being watched every day. An average of 118 people enter an ON24 webinar every minute, and every four seconds someone is asking a question.

Over the past few years, we've seen not only an increase in webinar volume but also great webinar experiences. There's been a significant increase in the use of video, on-demand viewing is up, and technology is providing even more ways to engage with audiences.

More than two-thirds of survey respondents (67%) also use webinars to power virtual event experiences.

The ON24 Engagement Score is a 10-point scale that assesses an individual attendee's engagement with your webinar and content based on their average webinar viewing minutes, questions submitted, polls answered, surveys completed and more. As an aggregate across our four major webinar concentrations the ON24 Engagement Score remains strong:

Average ON24 Engagement Score per Channel Type

Our survey data also shows that in a post-COVID world, many ON24 customers anticipate that the changes they made in 2020 will stick. Only 11% say that the future of their physical event strategy will go back to a standalone approach, while 84% will adopt hybrid strategies. Separately, when asked more broadly about their expectations, 35% will reduce their physical marketing efforts while 12% are going all-in on digital channels.

But we also see that there is work to be done to convince others about the benefits of webinars and digital experiences. According to our survey of ON24 customers, 36% say that the most difficult challenge when promoting webinars internally is showing their value, with 32% citing revenue impact. This means there is more work to be done to show how webinars and other digital experiences help to achieve business goals. As Webinards, we need to make the case that webinars are the ideal channel for reaching our audiences and engaging them in real human ways.

IN A NOISY WORLD, WEBINARS ARE HOW WE DELIVER HUMAN ENGAGEMENT AT DIGITAL SCALE.

ABOUT ON24

ON24® is a leading provider of cloud-based software that is transforming how companies engage customers in a digital-first world.

The ON24 Digital Experience Platform makes it easy to create, scale, and personalize engaging experiences that drive measurable business growth. Through ON24 webinar, virtual event, multi-media experiences, we provide a system of engagement for audiences to choose and accelerate their own journeys. ON24 serves more 1,900 companies worldwide with offices throughout North America, EMEA and APAC. For more information, visit www.ON24.com and follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter.



**Want to take ON24 for a spin?
Sign up for a free trial of
ON24 Webcast Elite.**

You've seen what webinars can accomplish. Now see how you can go beyond the webinar and turn audience engagement into the actionable data and insights you need to convert prospects into customers with the ON24 Digital Experience Platform.

SHOW ME HOW

