

# HOW TO BUILD A KILLER WEBINAR PRESENTATION





# WEBINARS THAT ROCK VS. WEBINARS THAT FIZZLE

It's probably safe to assume that no one starts their webinar plan with the intention of settling for the same old standard corporate blah. Mediocre webinars just sort of... happen. And, according to a recent ON24 webinar poll, they happen a lot:

## WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO DELIVERING A SUCCESSFUL WEBINAR?

STANDARD CORPORATE PRESENTATION

63.9%

WHO KNOWS? WE'RE JUST HAPPY TO GET THE LEADS

16.8%

WE ARE BORING OUR AUDIENCE TO TEARS

13.6%

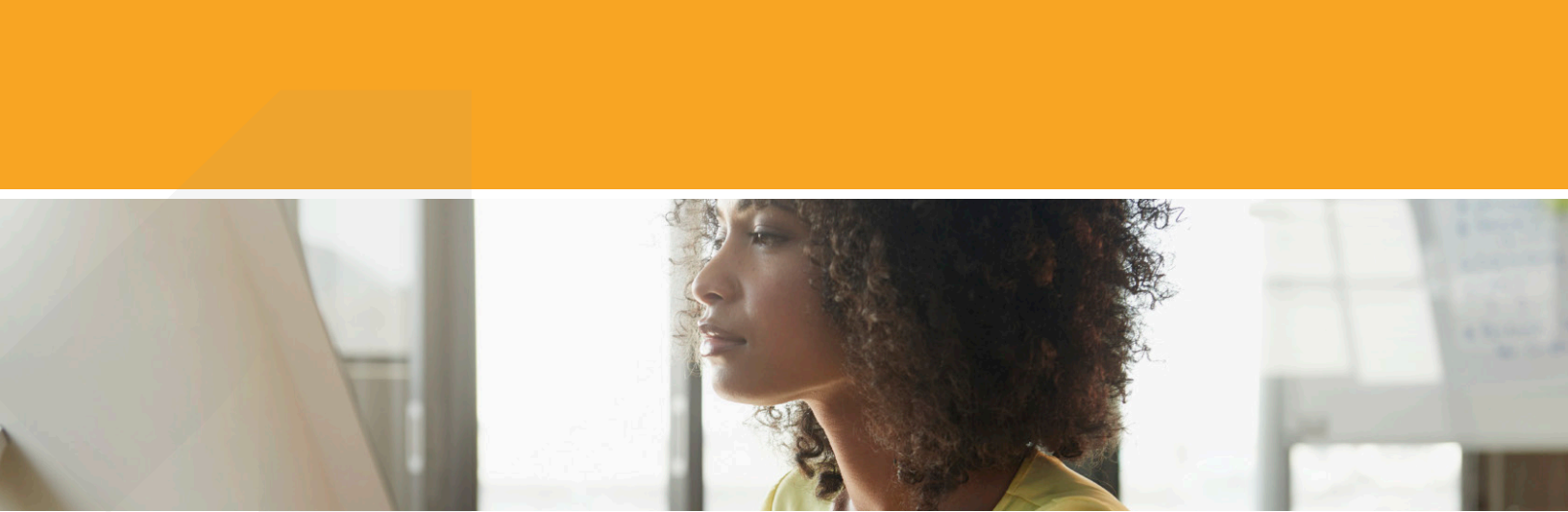
THEY ARE TOTALLY ENTHRALLING

5.8%

What would it take to make our webinars better? We don't need bigger budgets or better headsets (no matter how much we'd love to get bigger budgets and better headsets). What we really need is a change of perspective. When most of us think about webinar success, we think in terms of tangible marketing goals: registrations, leads, and conversions. If those are our only goals, even our most "successful" webinars will be missing something. And that something is audience appeal.

To be successful on every level, we need to plan webinars with the audience perspective in mind — and audiences have very different success metrics for the webinars they attend: Was it educational? Did it address my pain points? Could I relate? Can I use this information right away?

The following pages will take you through creating a webinar presentation step-by-step, from concept to the finishing touch on your final slide, in a way that puts the audience first.



# ARE YOU TALKING TO ME?

The very first question you should ask when you start planning a webinar is a simple one:

*Who is the target audience for this event?* If you can't answer that question, you're probably delivering a webinar for yourself instead of your market — and that's the best way to guarantee a resounding response of, "meh."

Consider where your target audience is in the buying cycle. If they've only just become aware of the products and services you offer, you can appeal to them with a thought-leadership webinar that will educate them about the space. On the other hand, if you want to reach people who are close to a purchase, consider delivering live product demos or short webinars that focus on specific, differentiating features and benefits.

Once you know where your webinar fits in the audience's path to purchase, tailor your message to their needs at the moment. What benefit can you deliver to people at this stage? That benefit will give you the topic of your webinar. Here are a few approaches that will get you to an audience-centric topic:

- **Solve problems**
- **Address pain-points**
- **Present new ideas**
- **Challenge the status quo**
- **Highlight new practices**





# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Now that you've identified your audience and picked a topic that will appeal to them, you're ready to give your webinar a compelling title. This is an important step: your webinar title will appear on promotional emails, the landing page, banner ads, social media, and anywhere else you want to attract attention for your event. In order to pull in eyeballs, you need a webinar title that promises to deliver the things your audience cares about.

In a single glance, your webinar title needs to summarize the benefit your target audience will get from attending. List-style webinar titles are particularly effective because they tell the audience exactly what to expect. When someone gets an invitation to a webinar with a title like "7 Ways to Enhance Your Webinar Promotions," they know they will be getting practical, actionable advice in that event. Here are some more examples of effective list-style webinar titles:

- **"10 Common Mistakes ... and How to Avoid Them"**
- **"7 Keys to Success"**
- **"5 Best Practices for Product Launches"**

Action words and "how to" titles are also especially effective. People are coming to your webinar because they have goals they need to accomplish, right? Show them how your event can help them achieve those goals. Here are some examples of good action-oriented webinar titles:

- **"Build Your Social Media Footprint"**
- **"Amplify Your Promotional Reach"**
- **"How to Optimize Content Delivery"**
- **"How to Drive Webinar Registration"**

## TIP

START LIST-STYLE WEBINAR TITLES WITH AN ODD NUMBER. IT WORKS!

# FRAME YOUR STORY

A truly solid webinar presentation must tell a story. What does that mean? Well, it all starts with the foundation of your narrative: the premise.

The premise of your webinar presentation is a single sentence that sums up the purpose of the webinar. If you can't sum it up in a single sentence, your webinar will probably be unfocused and the audience will leave confused instead of informed. And that's the opposite of what you want. Here are some general themes that will help you come up with a focused premise:

- **Addressing a specific pain-point**
- **Solving a common problem**
- **Introducing new concept**
- **Comparing two (or more) methods, strategies, or solutions**
- **Highlighting best practices for a specific topic**

Once you have your premise, it's time to build the story. The easiest format for your audience to follow is the structure you would see in a three-act play. That looks something like this:

- **Act One: Set the stage.**  
State your premise up front. Explain the issue you'll be addressing, discuss the current landscape, and call out the common pain points all your attendees will have.
- **Act Two: Deliver the message.**  
Go through your points or arguments one by one, devoting sufficient time to each. And never go backwards – that can be confusing to the audience.
- **Act Three: Summarize the content and re-state the value**  
Show how everything you just covered ties back to the premise you stated at the beginning of the presentation.

Of course, you won't devote the same amount of time to these three acts. In general, you want to devote about 20% of your presentation time to Act One, 70% to Act Two, and 10% to Act Three. Remember that presentation time is separate from Q&A time.





# CREATE AN OUTLINE

No, you can't skip the outline. Your outline is going to reveal weaknesses in your story or missing information that you might otherwise not catch until the live presentation. Besides, investing a little extra time in drafting an outline is going to make putting the rest of your presentation deck together much easier and faster.

Start by creating a new, empty slide deck for your presentation. Put in your compelling title from Step 2. Then add a blank slide and just start typing all the points you want to cover. Big ideas will be the main bullets — these are going to be the divider slides that tell the story of your presentation. Under each of those ideas you'll have a series of sub-bullets; the sub-bullets will be the individual slides that make up the body of your presentation.

You may find yourself re-arranging the bullets a few times. That's totally normal. Once you have an outline that feels like it has a good flow, think about how well it fits the webinar theme. Does your outline tell the story you set out to tell? Do you devote enough time to setting the stage, delivering your message, and summarizing the content? Is everything connected to the same central theme? If the answer to all those questions is yes, then you're for the next step.

## TIP

AS LONG AS YOU HAVE A SOLID OUTLINE, YOU CAN MIX UP THE WEBINAR FORMAT AND STILL TELL A GOOD STORY. CONSIDER INTERVIEWS, PANEL DISCUSSIONS, LIVE DEMOS, AND OTHER COMPELLING FORMATS.

# MAKE IT INTERACTIVE

We all know that adding interactivity makes webinars more engaging, increases viewing time, results in higher levels of content retention, and deepens the connection between the audience and the brand. But that doesn't mean you can slap in a few polls at the last minute and get all the benefits of fully integrated interactivity.

To get the most from interactive elements like surveys, polls, and social media, you need to build them into your webinar presentation from the beginning. Now that you have your outline, look for places where the presentation would benefit from audience feedback. There are always some natural moments that would be even more effective with direct audience engagement. Here are a few examples:

- **Level setting.**

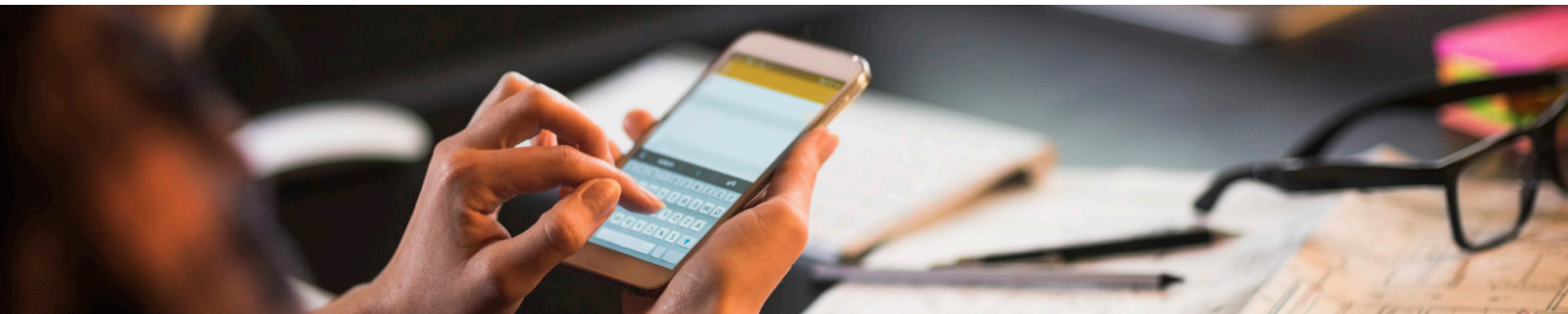
In Act One of your webinar story, you want to get everyone on the same page. What better way to do that than a poll? A poll will help you confirm your expectations about the audience, and the audience can get some confirmation from their peers that everyone is experiencing the same pain points.

- **Transitions.**

Sometimes it's hard to make a smooth transition from one subject to another. By adding a poll, reminding attendees to submit questions for the closing Q&A, throwing out a call to post something on social media, or even taking a few questions between topics, you can cover the seams and keep your audience focused on the topic at hand.

- **Sign-off.**

It's much more friendly to give your audience a chance to have the last word. A great way to do that is by including a post-event survey to collect opinions about the event and ask your attendees what they would like you to cover in future events.



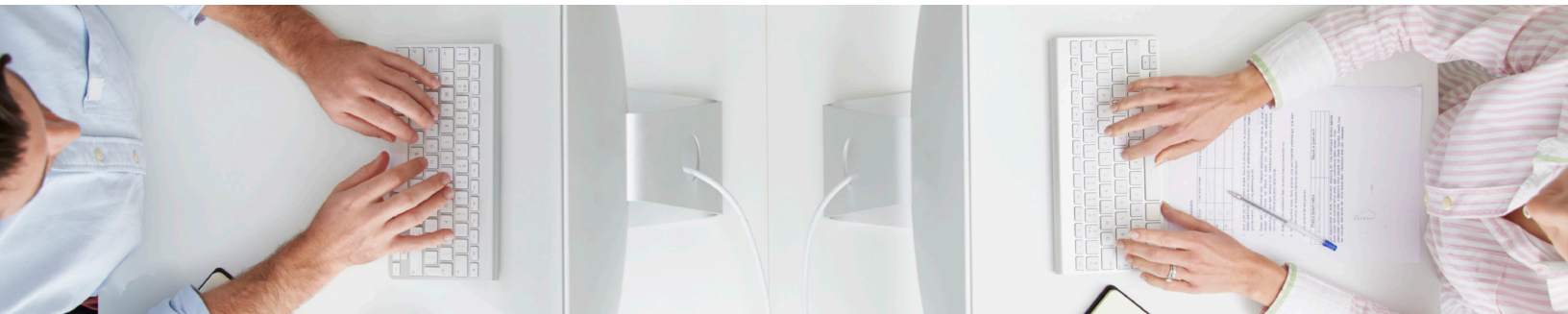
# BUILD THAT DECK

Alright! Now it's time for the fun part. And since you've already got a rock-solid outline, your webinar presentation deck will practically build itself.

Well, almost. Too often, even people who did a great job of putting the audience first when they came up with a topic and framed their story forget all about their attendees when they start drafting the slides. That's how you end up with over-loaded slide decks packed with too many bullets, opaque jargon, and self-serving sales pitches. And that isn't good for anyone.

Just like the subjects you cover need to be relevant, the language you use in your presentation deck needs to speak directly to your audience. Tell the story from their point of view. Keep the language light and natural, and focus on "you" and "we" instead of "I" and "me."

And be on the lookout for jargon. Keep in mind that the people coming to your webinar may not know your favorite industry lingo, or they may have their own specialized terms for some of the same things. Limit yourself to normal, everyday language. If you have to use a potentially obscure industry term, be sure to provide a definition for anyone in the audience who might not be familiar with it.





# MAKE IT PRETTY

You've got a great story. You're appealing to the audience. You're speaking their language. What more could they possibly want?

We all know how important it is to have a clean, professional-looking design for your presentation deck. Here are a few basic principles to keep in mind while you tweak the imagery in your slides:

- **A picture is worth 1,000 words**  
Instead of billions of bullets, give your audience an evocative image that gets the point across. Some of the best slides don't have any words at all.
- **Avoid cheesy clip art.**  
You know what I'm talking about: arrows, bullseyes, smiley faces with their thumbs up. Your audience has seen it all a million times before, so it won't feel fresh. And even computer-generated 3D clip art is starting to feel a little dated and out-of-place.
- **Be choosy about stock photos.**  
There's a lot of great stock photography out there — but there's also a lot of terrible stock photography. Pick images that feel natural, unique, and right for your brand instead of cliched shots of guys in suits high-fiving each other. (Unless that's your thing.)

- **Use only high-resolution images.**

A grainy, pixelated product shot can make you look unprofessional and could potentially turn off any prospects attending your webinar.

- **Don't pack your slides with clutter.**

A single image and a couple of bullets are all you need on any slide. If you find yourself packing in more than that, break the message into several different slides. That will make it easier for the audience to understand your message, anyway.

## TIP

GOOD WITH WORDS DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN GOOD WITH PICTURES. CONSIDER GETTING HELP FROM YOUR DESIGNERS OR AN OUTSIDE RESOURCE IF YOU WANT A LITTLE EXTRA POLISH ON YOUR SLIDES.





# GIVE IT A ONCE-OVER

Before a single customer or prospect sees your presentation, you should give it a final review. Does the premise come across clearly? Does it tell a good story? Does it look clean and professional? You want to deliver on the expectations your audience will have for this event. So make sure that you've covered all the topics you promised to cover in your webinar promotions — and no more. Your webinar should be lean and direct, with no filler, no non sequiturs, and no tangents.

It's a good idea to pull a colleague aside and deliver a dress rehearsal of your entire presentation. That will give you a chance to find all the places where the flow doesn't feel quite right, you're likely to go off on a tangent, or your point is a little confusing while you still have time to fix them.

And for the final check, pretend you're the target audience: would you come away from this presentation feeling like you'd learned something you could use right away? If so, congratulations! You've just created a killer webinar presentation.

## TIP

NO ONE LIKES TO BE PITCHED. MAKE SURE YOUR WEBINAR PRESENTATION IS FOCUSED ON HELPING, NOT SELLING.



# GREAT PRESENTATIONS MAKE GREAT WEBINARS

There are so many benefits to delivering effective webinars. You get more leads, you help move prospects closer to purchase, and, best of all, you get a chance to really engage with your target market in a way that's as entertaining as it is informative. And all it takes is a little extra planning to upgrade your webinar presentation from "eh" to "awesome!"

By putting your audience at the center of your webinar presentation, you'll find it much easier to deliver events that you feel proud of. So say goodbye to the "standard corporate presentation." Starting today, your webinars are going to be killer.

