

How To Make Webinars Part Of Your Content Marketing Strategy





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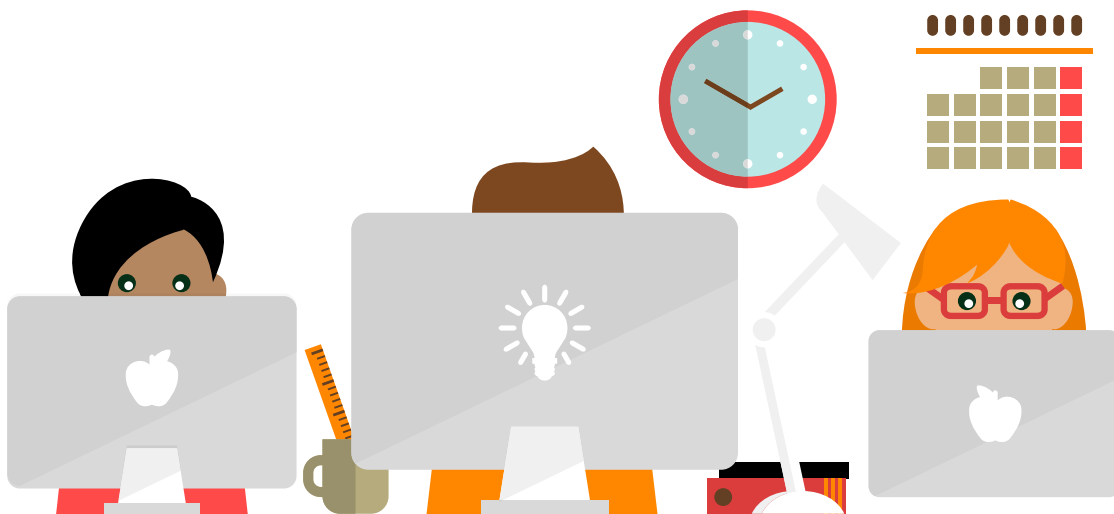
Introduction

Content is at the core of modern marketing. It is the foundation for effective inbound marketing, lead generation, and the prospect's journey from self-education to a willingness to engage in a sales conversation.

It is no secret that Google has been developing and adjusting its algorithms and ranking criteria to reflect and reward sites with unique, fresh and regular new content. This development reflects the natural way in which conversations take place. Those with new and interesting things to say get the kudos – in real life as well as on Google.

The challenge this poses for organisations is to create a continuous output of content. Long gone are the days when the company brochure was the only piece of content and the website was a copy of that brochure. Content types have grown in sophistication and in number, while target audience preferences have also diversified.

Your content strategy should address these preferences, but remain agile enough to change shape in line with developments from Google, prospects, and the marketplace. In this document, we investigate how to react to the rise in webinar popularity and integrate them into your content marketing strategy.



10 Steps To Integrate Webinars Into Your Content Marketing Strategy

Google Trends shows that the search term “webinar” overtook “whitepaper” in popularity in 2008. That trend has continued and accelerated ever since then. When it comes to long-form content, i.e. content that contains enough value to warrant being gated behind a registration form, whitepapers have traditionally held pole position. However, webinars arguably are the only marketing asset that was conceived with the internet in mind. It is the only marketing asset that is self-hosted, provides its own registration forms, and contributes its own detailed analytics. This independence from third parties makes webinar technology versatile and powerful from the outset.

Perhaps this versatility has also resulted in confusion about where, or how, to include webinars in a content strategy. Below we outline and explain the best way to make webinars a permanent and productive part of your content strategy.

1. Be intentional and have a plan

A content marketing strategy should never be made up on the spot or exist only in the minds of those executing it. It requires thought, planning and structure, and is therefore best written down. The process of writing down goals turns intentions into a plan, instead of just being a wish.

The same applies to making webinars part of your content strategy. Be intentional and write them into your content strategy, because if you don't define and document (!) a content marketing strategy you won't be integrating your webinars into anything. Your plan should answer why you should include webinars, but also how and where they can be integrated into your existing content marketing strategy.

The Content Marketing Institute found that organisations that document their content marketing strategy:

- Are far more likely to consider themselves effective at content marketing
- Feel significantly less challenged with every aspect of content marketing



- Generally consider themselves more effective in their use of all content marketing tactics and social media channels
- Were able to justify spending a higher percentage of their marketing budget on content marketing

So, documenting your content marketing strategy, not only reduces your challenges, but it also increases justification for more budget – which will be useful for your webinars.

The good news is that you have already started with this process by reading this guide. Follow the advice in this document to help you formulate your plan.

Definition: Webinar

An interactive streaming audio or video presentation with synchronised slides, delivered by one or multiple speakers to a larger audience (“one to many”) via a browser.

2. Understand webinars

The key to successfully integrating anything new is to understand what you are integrating. This is as much about understanding webinars as a tool, as it is about understanding the features of any given webinar vendor.

Webinars are different to webconferences, skype calls, videos on YouTube, podcasts, conference calls and many other tools that may be referred to as webinars. Don't set off on the wrong path from the very beginning, but be sure you understand exactly what webinars are and what they can contribute.



How To Make Webinars Part Of Your Content Marketing Strategy



LIVE WEBCAST:
Love Webinars For... Lead Generation

Moderator:
STUART PERKINS | DIRECTOR | 247 WEBCASTING

Speaker:
LEV CRIBB | FOUNDER | INBND GROWTH MARKETING

Summary

Title: Love Webinars For... Lead Generation
Date: Available On Demand

In this webinar attendees will learn why webinars are the perfect tool for lead generation. With 2017 just around the corner, many marketing and lead generation programmes lack the ability to add sufficient value at every stage and with every touchpoint. Webinars not only collect user demographic information, but add a layer of behavioural data which is unmatched by other marketing assets.

Our speaker, Lev Crabb (Founder of INBND Growth Marketing), gives practical insight into how webinars differ from other marketing assets and what makes them so well suited to lead generation, as well as sharing five actionable tips on how to get started.

Register now to secure your place in the webinar.

Speakers

Speaker: Lev Crabb
Founder
www.INBND.co.uk

Lev Crabb started INBND to address one big problem: the disconnect between lead generation and sustainable revenue growth. Or in other words, between marketing and sales. He saw too many companies grow in spite of their lead generation efforts, not because of them, and identified a way to accelerate growth.

Growth Marketing addresses the dysfunctional relationship between sales and marketing departments, as well as the misalignment of activities and goals. Lev has spent the last 20 years working in Marketing and Sales roles for companies including ON24, UKFast, and Scotchwhisky.com.

Moderator: Stuart Perkins
Director
www.247Webcasting.com

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I'd like to discuss my webinar strategy with a webinar expert

*Denotes required.

REGISTER

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MY DASHBOARD

Total Registrants 109	Total Attendees 109	Attendee Conversion Rate 100%	Registration Conversion Rate 100%
Live: 0 (0%)	On-Demand: 109 (100%)	Attendees vs. Registrants	Registration vs. Registration Page Hits

Event Summary

Event Duration: 65 min Questions Asked: 3

Avg. Live Duration: 0 min # of Poll Responses: 0

Avg. On-Demand: 83 min # of Survey Responses: 0

Attendance: Live

Attendance: On-Demand

Registration Timeline

Registration Source

Personalised webinar console

www.247webcasting.com
Twenty-4 Seven Global Media Limited

Speaker Bio

Moderator: Stuart Perkins
Director
www.247Webcasting.com

[f](#) [t](#) [in](#)

Love Webinars For... Lead Generation

MODERATOR:
STUART PERKINS | CREATIVE DIRECTOR | 247 WEBCASTING

SPEAKER:
LEV CRIBB | FOUNDER | INBND GROWTH MARKETING

#LoveWebinars

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Join Lev and our very own Martyn Cox for a live webcast "Six expert webinar hacks" 3pm GMT January 31st register no...

about 2 hours ago By 247webcasting

Reply

When it comes to promoting webinars, different rules apply compared to other marketing assets. Why?... <https://t.co/DiM3WslA8M>

Fri Jan 20 2017 By 247webcasting

Reply

Why you should Love Webinars For Lead Gen. Join us in an hour (3pm) for expert insight

Q&A

Refresh Now

Please enter a question Submit

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Free Trial

Webinar analytics dashboard

6

In the DNA of a true webinar platform is the ability to generate leads by collecting user demographics (registration form), engaging a large audience (scalable interactivity elements), and analysing interactivity (detailed analytics). Webinars achieve this via an internet connection and browser, as opposed to phone lines and plugins.

As a result, webinars offer a wealth of prospect insight, based on their interaction with the webinar content and interface. This insight reaches far beyond any insight marketers get from other marketing assets. Webinars are therefore not only a communication tool, but a way to engage, nurture and qualify leads. They provide actionable metrics and insight, as opposed to meaningless vanity metrics such as views, shares and other metrics that are disconnected from personally identifiable user data.

3. Do your platform due diligence

First you need to decide what value webinars should contribute to your content marketing strategy, and then you need to decide which webinar platform will achieve this in the best possible way.

Peer reviews and recommendations are good, but nothing beats your own due diligence. A competitor running webinars may give you an emotive justification, but to create a sustainable and commercially justifiable business case requires you to understand how webinars work.

Bear in mind that many webinar platforms may offer – on the face of it – similar features, but the devil is often in the detail. Especially if you plan to make full use of your webinar platform's capabilities and integrate with your existing tools and system, you will want to be sure that you are aware of any potential stumbling blocks and caveats.

Knowing what analytics output you can expect from a webinar platform is one of the key aspects you need to determine. Platforms that excel at engaging attendees provide much deeper analytics and insight as a result. Limited analytics mean limited engagement, and therefore limited value. No amount of pretty design can make up for a lack of data and insight – a valuable point to keep in mind when assessing different vendors.

Here are some tips for your due diligence:

- **Request a demo of the webinar platform**
Webinar vendors should welcome the opportunity to demo their platform and should do so with a representative who has all the technical details to hand. Don't let a sales rep take over the conversation.



- **Ask for a free trial**

After you have had the demo, request a free trial. Again, this should be something the vendor is happy to provide. A free trial gives you the opportunity to delve deeper into the platform's functionality and test drive it. A trial is probably the single most important due diligence factor – so much so, we have created a free guide on [how to get the most from your free webinar trial](#)

- **Ask for references**

Peer reviews are a good way to get insight into a vendor and their platform from the customer's perspective. Depending on the industry sector or company policy, personal customer references can difficult to obtain. If this is the case, check for customer case studies and take a closer look at the list of existing customers using the platform.

- **Run a co-marketing webinar with a partner or peer**

While your free trial gives you detailed practical insight, especially if you manage to run a real webinar during the trial period, nothing quite beats the real-life scenario of running a full webinar. Connect with partners or customers who have experience in running webinars, or who share your interest in evaluating the technology, and agree to run a co-marketing webinar. You will benefit from sharing the cost, workload, and responsibility.

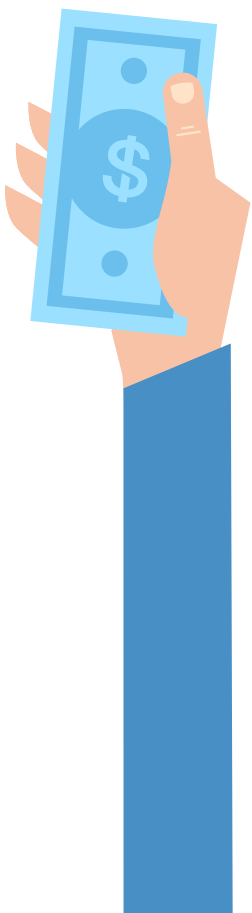
If you go down this route, lean on your chosen webinar provider to contribute with advice and assistance, in order to make your first attempt a resounding success.

4. Get buy-in from all stakeholders

Successful integration of webinars into your content marketing strategy requires stakeholder buy-in. The four main stakeholders for webinars are:

- C-level: for budget approval
- Marketing: for implementation and usage
- Sales: for lead follow-up
- Subject matter experts: for contribution with knowledge and presenters

If any one of these stakeholders is not on board with, or unaware of, the use of webinars you may come across stumbling blocks later. This is not to say that you need prior approval from each of these stakeholders, but they must be made aware of the commercial benefits webinars can bring to the entire organisation, as a well-integrated part of a content strategy.



5. Set goals for your webinars

Now we're getting into the implementation phase. The hands-on stuff. You are likely to have done a similar exercise for your other content. With the investment of time and budget you're putting into the integration of webinars into your content strategy, you will want to determine the following:

- **What role do webinars fulfil as part of the content strategy?**
Lead generation is the obvious answer, but break this down further and think about lead nurturing, sales funnel stage targeting, persona targeting, customer communications, internal communications. Breaking it down in this way will provide a clearer view of where webinars contribute to the content strategy and execution.
- **Which parts of the sales funnel do webinars target?**
Defining this point helps to further determine the nature and role of your webinars. It also helps to generate ideas for content topics.
- **Which personas do your webinars target?**
Webinars may be more relevant to some personas than others. Don't assume webinars are for everyone. Getting this point right could save you a lot of work and increase the overall productivity of your webinars.
- **What is the goal for your webinars?**
Different types of webinar (see above) will have different goals. The important part is to define and set the goals, even if you have to revise them later. Without goals, you risk drifting and not properly integrating or optimising your webinars into the content strategy. These goals should be specific, for example "Generate at least 10 hot leads per webinar", or "Result in 2 closed opportunities within 3 months" etc.



6. Make webinars at least equal to other forms of content

Webinars are tremendously powerful and versatile. Give them the focus they deserve and allow them to become the star of the show. You may be in a position where another asset (e.g. whitepapers) are producing great results. It's only natural to not want to change that. But without trying, you won't know whether webinars can produce even better results. Run A/B tests to compare performance and spend time on your webinar programme. It is unlikely they will produce the same or more results from day one. That's because you and your team need to get used to the technology and how you can make it best work for your organisation. But your audience also needs to get used to this new way of communicating with them. However, with the significantly higher level of engagement and analytics, webinars are likely to overtake your best performing marketing asset, if you give it the opportunity to do so.

7. Create spin-off content from webinars

Don't make the mistake of trying to integrate webinars as a standalone tool, meaning they shouldn't just be promoted in isolation. You need to create touchpoints between your webinars and other marketing processes. One way of creating that connection is to create spin-off content from your webinars. Below are just some of the content that can be easily produced from each webinar:

- Pre-webinar blog post about the webinar topic
- Pre-webinar teaser video with the presenter
- A whitepaper of the webinar content
- An infographic with highlights from the webinar content
- Social media updates with facts and stats from the webinar content
- One-page summary for outbound and sales teams
- Post-webinar blog post and summary of the content
- Post-webinar blog post with all answers to the questions submitted during the webinar
- Post-webinar video with summary and impressions with the webinar moderator
- Slideshare deck of the presentation

By producing this spin-off content (and linking back to your webinar from each of these) you connect the webinar with social media, blog, newsletters, sales, YouTube and other channels. It will be hard to say you've not integrated your webinars with your content marketing, if you produce this volume of content and share it with your target audience.



8. Integrate webinars and analytics into Marketing Automation and CRM

Go beyond the integration of webinars with various promotional channels, by connecting your webinar platform to your Marketing Automation (MA) and CRM tools. If the goal for webinars is to generate data and leads, then the goal of the integration with MA and CRM tools is to close the data and leadgen loop by identifying sales-ready leads.

Great webinar tools often hold a lot of individual lead information, but the wider context of how this lead has previously engaged with your organisation allows your marketing and sales team to act decisively and in a timely manner.

9. Create a repeatable and easy to manage process to run webinars

Due to their versatility, webinars can require more work than simpler and less versatile marketing assets. Luckily, the best webinar platforms allow you to automate many processes. Nevertheless, it will pay in the long run to give someone on the marketing team the responsibility for webinars. This dedicated attention, even if it is not full-time, ensures consistency and the ability to optimise over time.

This focus will allow you to sustainably integrate webinars into your content strategy. A common stumbling block, when you try to scale a webinar programme, is the availability of expert speakers. A dedicated webinar resource can work with speakers (internally and externally) to ensure a steady availability and flow of contributors.

Check lists are your friend when you try and optimise and speed up processes. Create your own, or speak to your webinar provider about check lists that can help guide you to faster and easier webinar output.



10. Extend promotional routines to include webinars

Get your marketing team to submit a list of all promotional activity with an audit of which marketing assets are being promoted. For example:

- Monthly newsletter: Promotes whitepaper and blog
- Weekly emails: Promote events and whitepapers
- etc

You may already have a promotional calendar that contains all of this information. If so, great! Now you will need to rearrange it to make space for webinars. Bear in mind that webinars come with a recommended promotional cycle of 3 to 4 weeks. Unlike whitepapers, which are available instantly and on-demand, webinars are usually live and therefore benefit from a longer promotional run-up. 3 to 4 weekly emails achieve the best results. Whether or not that is split across different audiences (e.g. email list, newsletter subscribers, customers etc) is for you to decide.



Conclusion

Webinars are versatile and very engaging. They hold the potential to revolutionise your lead generation and marketing communication, if you integrate them correctly into your content marketing strategy. Knowing how webinars work, what they are capable of, and where they fit into your organisation's lead generation and communications cycle helps you to integrate them into your content and communications strategy.

Treat webinars the way you would treat a new employee. Give them a good place to sit, surrounded by support to get them started, spend more time with them when they're new, and assign them a manager for direction. In time, that employee will grow into a key contributor and leader in your organisation and you'll wonder what you ever did without them.





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