



Guide To Meeting Your Webinar Attendee Expectations

What do your attendees expect from your webinars?





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Introduction

As marketers, we know what we expect from our webinars. We know how many registrants and attendees we need, we know the level and quality of content we expect to deliver, we (should) know how much revenue we aim for as a result of running a webinar programme. But when we take a step back and are objective in our assessment, do we really know what our webinar attendees expect from our webinars? And, in no small measure, isn't meeting these expectations the basis for achieving our own expectations?

The expectations put on our webinars by our prospects can be divided into three areas: Pre-webinar, in-webinar, and post-webinar. Each of these is important and failure to sufficiently focus on them means we lose good-will and engagement from our webinar attendees, which ultimately results in loss of revenue.

Breaking expectations down in this way makes them easier to manage and achieve results. This structure also corresponds with the one used in [The Ultimate Webinar Check List](#), which contains 79 steps guiding webinar organisers to better webinar delivery.

Read on to find out which attendee expectations are covered in each of these areas.



Webinar Attendee Expectations

Pre-webinar Expectations

Quick and easy registration

Don't turn your webinars into Fort Knox. Long registration forms and complicated sign-up procedures are a major turn off for prospects. Six registration fields should be the maximum, but less is better. Any more and you risk losing a significant amount of registrations. Take your time. If you're delivering great content you'll have plenty of opportunity to collect more information about your prospects.

Your sign-up process should be as intuitive as possible, which includes your email reminders ahead of the webinar. Ideally, send an initial registration confirmation followed by two reminders ahead of the webinar. Your registrants will appreciate the reminder, and having opted in they won't perceive these emails as spam. Sending these reminders increases the likelihood of converting them into attendees, which is an important step towards converting them into customers.

Increasingly, webinar registrants also expect to be provided with a calendar reminder for the webinar. In a time-starved world, busy professionals are unlikely to create a calendar reminder themselves with all the necessary details. That is even more true, if it is their first touchpoint with your content. Meet their expectations by providing a one-click calendar reminder in an obvious location, such as the registration confirmation screen, email confirmation, or your email reminders.



Information about the topic and speaker(s)

Naturally, your promotional emails contain information about the webinar's content topic and speaker. It is designed to entice the initial registration. But why stop there? Registration is only one piece, but much more important is attendance.

Your registrants expect to see enough information about the topic and speaker to keep them engaged – and get them even more excited – in the 2-3 week run-up to the webinar. By not providing additional information during this time,

you risk losing a significant percentage of your potential attendees, as the memory of why they initially registered deteriorates. By telling them more about what makes the speaker(s) so well-qualified to speak on this subject, you pique their interest further and increase the likelihood of them attending on the live day.

These emails also provide an opportunity for them to share it with colleagues and peers. For that reason, your emails should always include the registration URL, in case they are forwarded to prospects who have not yet registered for the webinar.

Clarity on times and dates

It may seem obvious, but be clear about when the webinar is due to start, including full date (in a date format suitable for the target region, e.g. US date format differs from UK), time and time format (am/pm or 24-hr clock), as well as time zone.

To illustrate this point, if your webinar shows this: **8:00 o'clock on 03/12/2017** it could mean any of these:

- 8am on 3rd December 2017 (UK date format)
- 8pm on 3rd December 2017 (UK date format)
- 8am on 12th March 2017 (US date format)
- 8pm on 12th March 2017 (US date format)



These don't even consider time zones. Is it a webinar running in the US? Or London? Or Paris? Is it daylight saving time (i.e. summer) or winter time?

The point is this: be clear on what you communicate in promotional emails, registration page, and reminder emails. Make it consistent and accurate, or risk losing registrants and attendees.

Info on how to access the webinar

Ideally your webinar is intuitive and easy to access, but nevertheless be clear on the process and provide bullet points on it ahead of the webinar. Remind registrants of aspects such as being able to access the webinar from 15 minutes before the live time. Or, if you use double opt-in, remind them they need to



confirm their email address. Whatever your process, make sure you have a full and concise list without making it seem like the access procedure to a high-security prison.

Info and support for technical questions

Your registrants may intend to attend your webinar from different devices, such as smartphones, tablets, laptops and desktops. Each of these come with different hardware configurations and will be using different operating systems and browsers. It is prudent to point registrants towards a system requirements check, which is a simple link that checks the hard and software configuration. This indicates whether the webinar can be accessed with the intended device.

Not everyone can be expected to perform this check, so webinar organisers should place an obvious link to help/FAQs in prominent places, such as the reminder emails and webinar login page. Webinar organisers will want to avoid last minute access issues, when attendees expect instant and easy access regardless of the device being used. A particularly frustrating requirement is the download of an app to access the webinar from smart devices, which leads to consternation if it sprung upon any registrant last minute. There should be no need for the use of apps for high-end webinar platforms.



In-webinar Expectations

Timely start and finish

It is important to start and finish your webinar on time. Your prospects have agreed to give you their time, and much like you wouldn't turn up late for a meeting, your webinar should also start on time. Avoid overrunning on your webinar. Most people schedule their meetings in 30 minute or 60 minute slots. If you run over your allotted time, you either force attendees to leave the webinar because they have other commitments, or stay on at the expense of other commitments. Either way, avoid forcing your attendees to make that decision.

Ideally, you'll want to over-estimate the time it takes to deliver the webinar. This way, you can "give back" 10 minutes to attendees at the end of the webinar.

User-friendly interface

By the time your webinar registrants enter the hotly anticipated webinar, they are ready to see and hear something great. The last thing your attendees want to experience is a badly designed or user-unfriendly interface.



Make navigating the webinar interface intuitive by clearly showing where questions can be submitted, more content can be downloaded, polls can be taken and surveys can be answered. Failure to do so results in significantly lower engagement and interactivity. However, good lead generation relies heavily on both of these.

The key to getting it right is using the right tool for the job. For example, using a meeting / webconferencing tool to run webinars is the wrong decision. It may save cost, but that is an attempt to make savings in the wrong place. Investment in great webinar technology pays dividends during the lead generation process. There should never be a need for attendees to dial into a webinar by phone.

Great quality content

One of the most important aspects on any webinar is great quality content. Don't over-promise and under-deliver. If you do, it will be the last time your attendees sign up to one of your webinars. In the long run, it is better to run fewer webinars with excellent webinar content than more webinars with questionable webinar content. This doesn't mean you can't run a large webinar programme. In fact, there are many companies who run a very active webinar programme with excellent webinar content. What it does mean, however, is that webinar organisers need to pay close attention to the speakers they source and [how the content fits into the content strategy](#).

Interactivity

Webinar attendees expect to interact with speakers and organisers. You must provide the ability to do so. Use your webinar platform and interface to foster interactivity via Q&A, polls, surveys, social media and other channels.

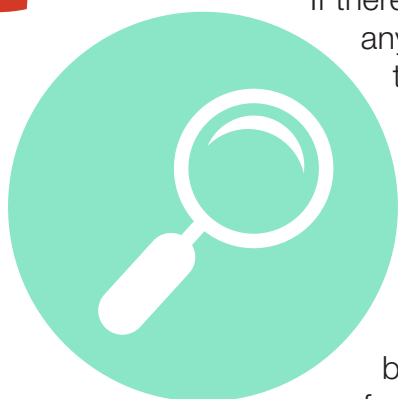
Interactivity doesn't just create engagement, which in turn creates better content recall, but a good webinar platform is also able to turn that interactivity into analytics insight. The more insight you have on your attendees, the more likely you are to provide additional content to nurture them through the sales funnel and run more accurate lead scoring against each attendee.

No technical issues

If there is one main thing all webinar attendees expect, it is not to experience any technical issues. There is a lot you, as the webinar organiser, can do to mitigate against technical problems. The main one is picking a highly reliable and reputable webinar platform. Don't be tempted to mis-use a meeting or webconferencing tool as a webinar tool. It just won't work as reliably, because it was not created to perform that job.

Beyond picking the right tool, your speaker and moderator training should cover how to proficiently use the presenter tool during the webinar and avoid user-error on the back-end. Also ensure you follow best practices for the equipment you use to run the webinar, regardless of whether it is an audio or a video webinar. Your webinar provider will have a list of best practices to follow in this area.

You can add a level of support by using a dedicated technical support person from your webinar provider, although this may come at a cost. In most cases, if you follow the technical requirements and best practices from a reliable webinar platform provider, you should not experience technical difficulties.



Post-webinar Expectations

On-demand version

Often neglected, but webinar attendees expect to see an on-demand version of your webinar, ideally with the same level of interactivity as in the live version. In fact, recent research showed that 28% of webinar attendees only viewed webinars during the on-demand phase. So, by not providing an on-demand version you lose at least 28% of your webinar attendees. That is a significant number.

The decision to provide an on-demand version is quite an obvious one, really. Think back to the last time you said these sentences to a prospect during a meeting: “I will tell you this info only once, and you will only have the chance to ask questions right now. I will not repeat myself and if you have questions at a later point, I won’t be able to answer them.” – you’ve never said this to any prospect, have you? Of course not. So why would you not offer an on-demand version of your webinar?

Follow-up and follow-on information

Any prospect who has attended your webinar is likely to be interested in the subject matter. As such, they expect to be provided with more information about the subject (follow-up information), as well as being ready to learn more about what follows on from this subject.

This is the classic sales funnel progression and an interested prospect will be happy to receive more valuable insight that helps them to make the right decision. Withholding this information makes you negligent as a marketer and unhelpful to a prospect who is interested in your offering.

Be sure to have a nurturing programme in place to continue the digital conversation with your webinar attendees. Prospects would be surprised, if it was them who had to make the first move to get more information from you. Don’t risk losing their interest, but follow-up and follow-on.





Overall Expectations

Any new webinar programme takes time to establish itself and build rapport with your followers and target audience. As a result, we tend to see an upward progression towards a steady average number of registrations and attendees. In other words, your second webinar will have more registrants than your first, your third will have more than your second, and so on.

Eventually you reach a steady average number, and at that point your audience will start to get used to regularly attending your webinars and obtaining information from them. Then, your webinar attendees begin to expect this source of information (i.e. your webinar programme) to be consistent, both in terms of content quality, as well as frequency of webinars.

Changes to cadence or quality can cause your audience to attend less frequently as they search for an alternative source of information that is more consistent, or to abandon following your programme altogether.

As such, organisers of the webinar programme have a big responsibility. They are as much community managers as they are webinar programme managers. Disrupting this community and its engagement with your content ultimately leads to a disruption of your lead generation and prospect insight.



Conclusion

Your webinar attendees have many expectations that you may not be aware of, or that aren't considered by your current processes. Meeting these expectations make your prospects more likely to engage further with your content and organisation, but ignoring these expectations can play havoc with your lead generation.

Breaking these expectations down into the pre-webinar, in-webinar, and post-webinar stages makes them easy to manage. Always remember why your webinar registrants have signed up to the webinar: something has enticed them to share their details with you and, as a webinar organiser, you should do everything in your power to make it as easy and trouble-free for your registrants to obtain that information.

Part of that is clear and proactive communications, easy and intuitive interfaces, as well as helpful and proactive follow-up resources. All of this should be part of a well-designed and consistent process that encourages ever-increasing engagement with your organisation.



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