



Transcript of Plain Language Podcast: Webinar Best Practices

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Webinars are an easy and cost effective way to deliver a presentation on any subject. What makes them so appealing is the ability to share information with a potentially global audience. However, the biggest challenge with webinars is keeping the audience engaged.

There are a number of ways to improve audience engagement and participation, beginning with proper webinar planning.

First, it's important to consider your target audience. How does the topic impact them? How do they feel about the topic and what do they already know? What do they need to learn?

The answers to these questions will determine the framing of your webinar, what it's about, and why your audience should care. Include these elements in the description of the webinar so that the audience knows what they will learn and why it's valuable knowledge.

You should also try to craft your webinar title so it is catchy, audience-focused, and clear about the webinar topic. For example, instead of "effective community-campus engagement partnerships" try "How to improve your CCE partnerships." The latter is more engaging and describes the value of the webinar for the audience.

Once you know the webinar audience and topic, it's time to recruit guest speakers and moderators. Approach speakers who are well-known if you can. Provide them with your webinar details and expectations, and request a bio and photo from them to include in the webinar promotions. With the guest speakers, determine event timings, such as how long each presenter will speak. From this, you can develop a webinar agenda to circulate to the team.

Now you're ready for the promotional side of the webinar! This means building the registration form, preparing the website posting and invitation emails, and sharing your webinar details on different media platforms. Your main focus is to encourage participants to register.

The registration form is a good opportunity to collect details about registrants to use in the planning for your next webinar. Think carefully about the information that will be useful, but be sure not to make the registration form too long or people might not bother registering!

Make sure a confirmation email is delivered following registration. It should reiterate the value of attending, provide instructions for accessing the webinar on the day of the event, and indicate that a reminder email will be sent closer to the date.

Now you need to prepare the webinar presentation!

When it comes to content, keep it simple and concise. It shouldn't be too theoretical. And it's recommended that your introduction and conclusion be scripted to ensure it's accurately delivered, but for the body of your presentation, use a point form outline. This will make it more conversational and engaging for your audience.



Be sure to make use of important learning strategies throughout your presentation so it's easier for attendees to remember what you're teaching them.

For example, consider breaking down the webinar into mini topic sections followed by an interactive activity, to hold attendees' attention. The best activities are ones that help attendees apply what they have just learned.

Help participants understand and contextualize information by relating it to what they may already know. Using personal stories and examples will also help establish connections and enhance information retention.

Repeating new information in several different ways will make it more memorable. And throughout your presentation, try to stimulate as many senses as possible through the use of images, voice, and interactions with objects, quizzes, and question-response chats using a mouse or keyboard.

To conclude the webinar, summarize the content and activities at the end of the presentation and briefly revisit learning outcomes. Don't forget to thank the audience for attending and be sure to send them any resources and links to the recorded session within 24 hours of the webinar.

Creating the perfect interactive webinar is not easy. In fact, it takes a surprising amount of work. However, with the right amount of planning, practice, and polish, you can deliver a concise, informative, and engaging webinar that will be useful for both you and your audience.

This plain language podcast is brought to you by the Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement project, a 7-year action-research project that investigates how to improve community-campus partnerships. For more information, please visit our website at carleton.ca/communityfirst/

Thank you for listening!

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