

STATE OF WEBINAR MARKETING REPORT 2019



AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND



ON24



Redback Connect

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

3

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

3

Section 1: Who uses webinars and how often?

4

Section 2: Who are we targeting with webinars, and why?

6

Section 3: Webinars: Made for nurture

8

Section 4: Live vs. On-Demand

10

Section 5: Organisational and resourcing challenges

12

Section 6: Power of the presenter

15

Section 7: Increasing engagement

17

Section 8: Promotion, integration and conversion

19

Section 9: Measuring success

21

Section 10: 14 ways to get more from your webinar program

22

CONCLUSION

24

STATE OF WEBINAR MARKETING REPORT 2019



INTRODUCTION

Webinars have come a long way since the days when you'd sign up for one only to find yourself listening to a thinly disguised sales pitch with patchy audio and static slides.

These days, marketers from a broad range of industries are aware of the educational pulling power, geographic reach and cost-effective engagement offered by webinars.

One-off webinars are giving way to webinar programs that are an integral part of the marketing and communications plan—generating leads, educating customers and bringing organisations together.

And marketers are seeing results, with 7 in 10 regarding webinars as a “key part” of their marketing and communications mix.

But questions remain over how effectively brands distribute and market their webinar programs—plus how effectively they integrate webinars into the sales and marketing funnel, and measure success.

Read on to learn more about the state of webinar marketing in 2019 and benchmark your own webinar programs against industry standards.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Managed webinar provider Redback Connect and the industries leading webinar platform, ON24 have joined forces to help marketers raise the bar and ‘ban the crappy webinar’. Both Redback and ON24 benchmark audience responses to webinars on an annual basis.



THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH WAS TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW AND WHY MARKETERS PLAN, MANAGE, EXECUTE AND EVALUATE WEBINARS. WEBINARS CAN BE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE IF MANAGED PROPERLY. WE WANT TO ENSURE MARKETERS ARE GETTING MAXIMUM VALUE FROM THEIR WEBINAR PROGRAMS.”

Sara Gonzalez, GM, Digital Events, Redback Connect

Tim Johnston, Director of Demand Generation, ON24

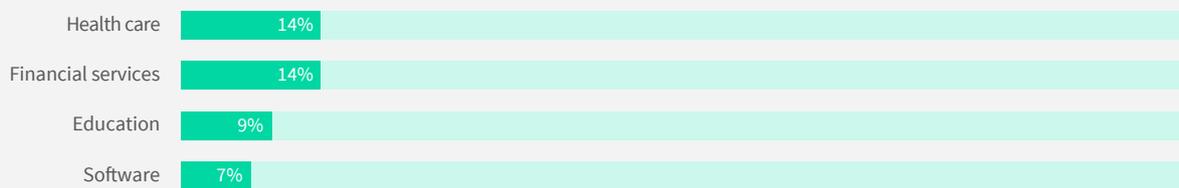
SECTION I: WHO USES WEBINARS AND HOW OFTEN?

We know from our long-standing research with audiences that webinars are a well-established part of most established digital marketing and education programs.

But what about the brands that host and run these same webinars? Which industries most commonly use webinars, and how committed are the organisations that use them?

Most industries now include webinars as part of their marketing and communications mix, an examination of the respondents to our inaugural State of Webinar Marketing study reveals, with more than 20 business sectors represented. The leading industries are financial services and healthcare—but webinars are now used by a broad range of sectors including education, software, media and construction, to name just a few.

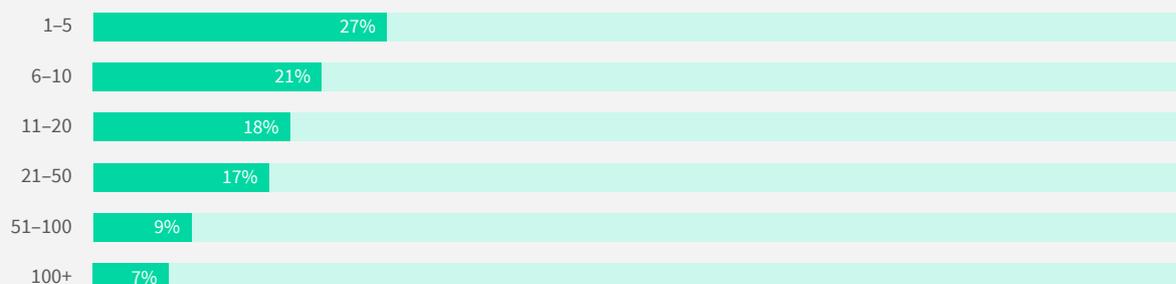
What industry do you operate in?



While there's no 'magic number' when it comes to how often brands should run webinars, it's clear more marketers are starting to see the benefits of regular programs as opposed to one-off events. As with popular podcasts, newsletters and other branded content, high-quality, consistent webinar programs attract and grow an engaged audience over time.

Two-thirds of respondents (72%) now run six or more webinars a year and one in three (33%) are heavy users, running more than 20.

How many webinars does your company run in a given year?



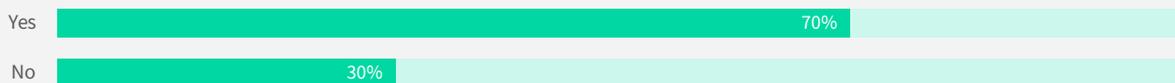


AROUND 29% OF REDBACK CUSTOMERS FALL INTO THE CATEGORY OF 10+ WEBINARS PER YEAR. WE MANAGE THESE CUSTOMERS' PROGRAMS AND THEY ARE RUNNING ONE WEBINAR A MONTH WITH GREAT SUCCESS. THE REASON? CREATING A CONSISTENT, HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAM OF WEBINARS BUILDS TRUST AND AUTHORITY WITH THEIR AUDIENCE OVER TIME."

Sara Gonzalez, GM, Digital Events,
Redback Connect

So it's not surprising that Australian marketers are committed to webinars as a marketing channel, with 7 in 10 of the respondents describing them as a "key part" of their marketing mix.

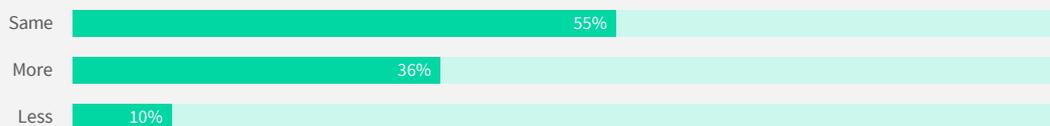
Do you consider webinars to be a key part of your marketing efforts?



Webinars are a cost-effective way to reach audiences at scale, with 87% of respondents indicating they allocate 1%–10% of their budget to the medium.

But that level of commitment only looks set to increase: 9 in 10 respondents expect to maintain or increase their spend on webinars this year.

Do you expect to spend more or less on your webinar program this year?



This makes it more important than ever that marketers know how to set up their webinar programs for the best results—including lead generation, engagement, nurture and return on their marketing investment.

PRO TIP

When launching a webinar program, consider branding it to create a separate look and feel. Take time to think about the series name, email banners and registration page, and how the program fits into your broader content or communications strategy.

SECTION 2: WHO ARE WE TARGETING WITH WEBINARS, AND WHY?

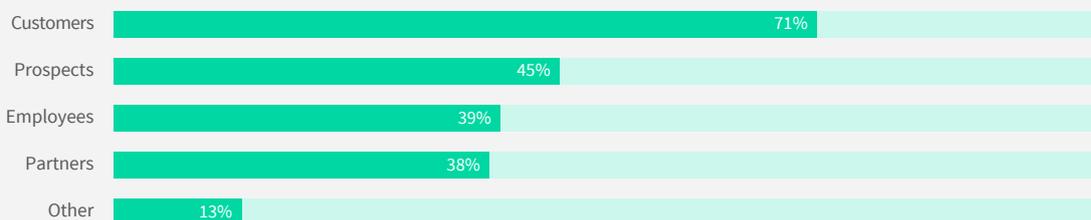
Webinars are used to communicate with a variety of marketing audiences for a range of reasons. And while many marketers regard them as great lead generation tools, they are being utilised far more broadly than for lead generation alone.

In fact, a majority of respondents (71%) use webinars to inform and educate existing customers, while 45% nominate prospects as a key audience.

But marketers also make significant use of webinars to communicate with employees and partners across distance and at convenient times.

Lead generation is the most popular reason for using webinars, with one in four (26%) nominating it as their primary objective. However engaging and retaining customers runs a close second at 22%.

We run webinars to the following types of audiences:





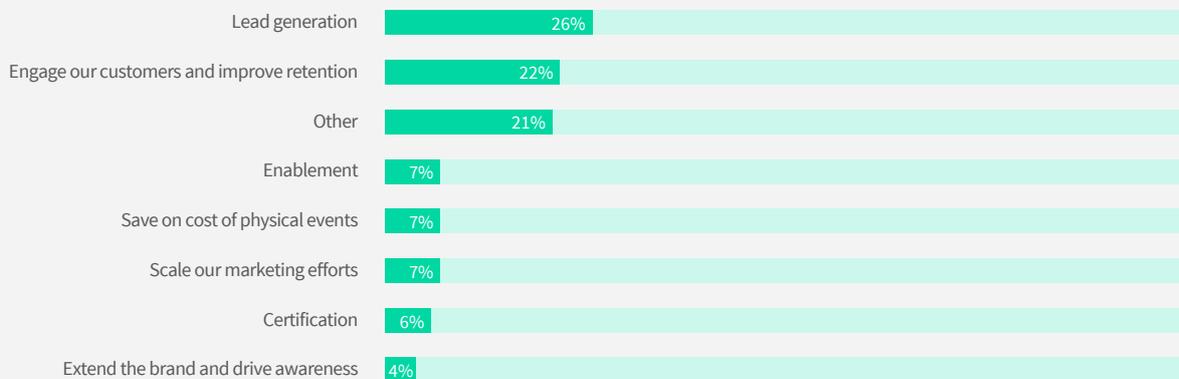
I LOVE THE FACT THAT WE CAN ENGAGE A MUCH BROADER AUDIENCE. RUNNING A WEBINAR HAS THE DUAL BENEFIT OF INCREASING OUR BRAND REACH AND CAPTURING AN ENGAGED AUDIENCE ON A PARTICULAR TOPIC WHICH IS STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT FOR US. IT'S THE BEST LEAD GENERATION TOOL I HAVE FOUND."

Survey respondent

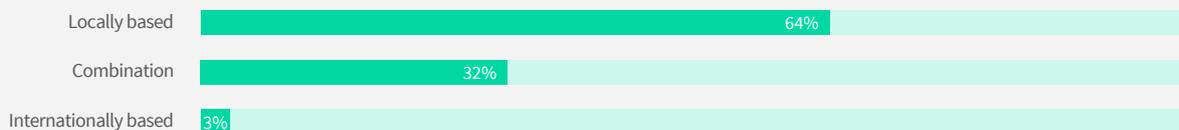
Marketers appreciate the cost-effective nature of webinars, with the vast majority (80%) saying webinars help to lower their cost-per-lead and 7% saying they use webinars primarily to lower the cost of their physical events.

By their very nature, webinars remove geographical boundaries and make it easier to communicate and collaborate across the globe, which is borne out by the fact 32% of respondents say their webinars speak to both local and international audiences.

What is the primary objective of your webinar program?



Our webinar audiences are generally:



SECTION 3: WEBINARS: MADE FOR NURTURE

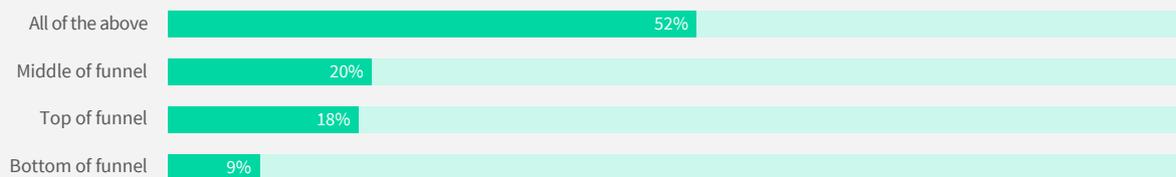
Marketers are sophisticated users of webinars, with respondents showing they recognise the need to provide content that educates and informs if they are to retain their audience, bring them into the sales funnel and nurture them through it.

Our previous research indicates that the main reason attendees abandon webinars early is because the presenter is too ‘salesy’ and not informative enough.

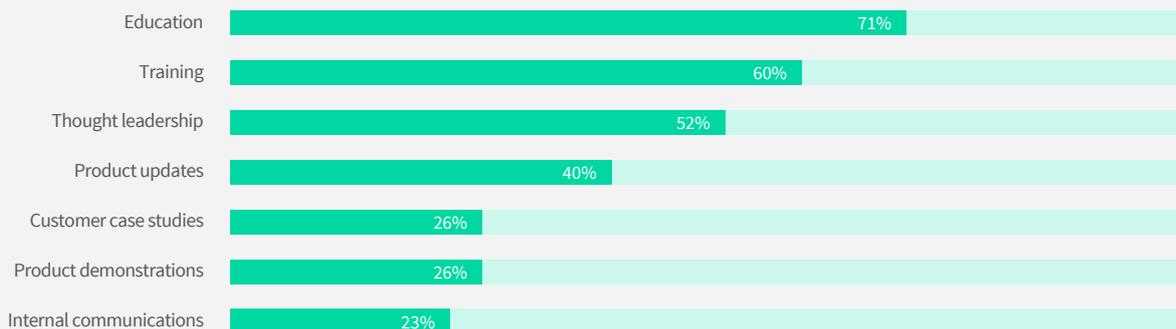
But when asked which type of webinars they run, respondents to this study overwhelmingly said they were focused on education (71%), training (60%) and thought leadership (52%).

While a majority of respondents (52%) said they target audiences throughout the customer journey—at the top, middle and bottom of the sales and marketing funnel—just 9% use them for conversion alone, reflecting the nurturing nature of most webinar content.

Are your webinar programs designed for:



Which type of webinars do you run?





WEBINARS ACCELERATE PIPELINE GENERATION LIKE FUEL TO A FIRE. THE MORE AN AUDIENCE ENGAGES AND INTERACTS WITH THE DIGITAL EXPERIENCES YOU CREATE, THE MORE BEHAVIORAL INSIGHTS YOU ARE ABLE TO PUT IN THE HANDS OF YOUR SALES TEAM TO INFORM ACTION.”

Tim Johnston, Director of Demand Generation, ON24

PRO TIPS

► Using webinars for lead nurture

- Thought leadership-style webinars should tap into the talent, experience, and passion inside your business or from your community to consistently answer the biggest questions on the minds of your target audience on particular topics. Hosting a panel

discussion is a great way to engage your audience.

- Take advantage of the features within your platform: Provide links for attendees to download additional resources while they are watching your event.
- Utilise your platform analytics: Engagement is about more than attendance. Look at how people are interacting in the platform and attribute engagement scores based on that.

SECTION 4: LIVE VS. ON-DEMAND

Surprisingly, the explosion and increasing popularity of on-demand video services such as YouTube, the ABC's iView and NetFlix is yet to be fully replicated in the world of webinars.

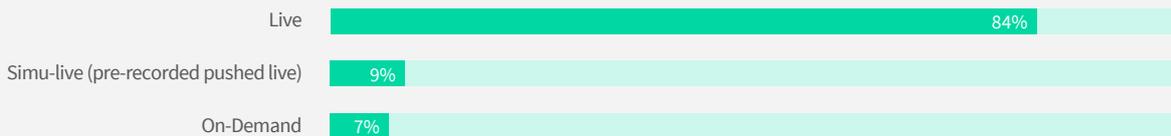
Audiences are increasingly time-poor, so convenience is a key factor when it comes to attracting viewers to any type of broadcast. Despite that, a significant minority of marketers are not maximising their webinar audience by allowing attendees to access the content at a time of their own choosing.

While most marketers still broadcast their webinars live, only three in four (73%) ensure their webinars are easily accessible after the event.

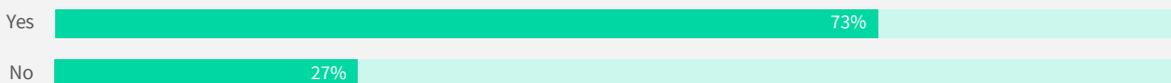
Significantly, one in three respondents (36%) say they don't know how to post on-demand webinars, while 18% don't think it's useful.

And less than half (45%) say they plan to promote on-demand webinars in the next 12 months.

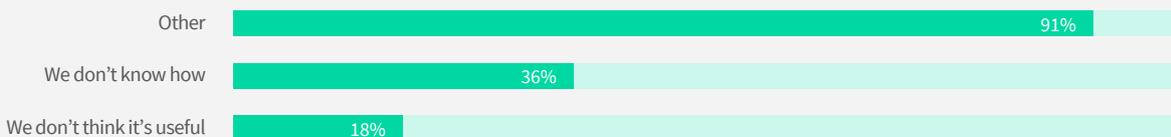
My webinars are predominantly broadcasted:



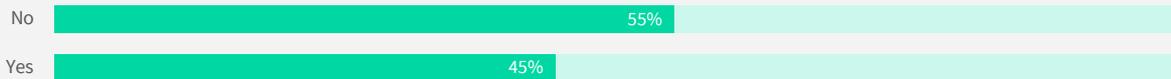
Are your webinars always available for on-demand audience consumption?



What's keeping you from posting on-demand webinars?



Do you plan to promote on-demand webinars within the next 12 months?



MARKETERS ARE LEAVING MONEY ON THE TABLE IF THEY'RE NOT INVESTING IN AN ALWAYS-ON STRATEGY. WE'RE IN THE "NOW ECONOMY" WHICH MEANS PEOPLE WANT TO CONSUME CONTENT IN THEIR OWN TIME, WHEN THEY'RE READY. WHILST, 35% OF PEOPLE STILL ENJOY TUNING INTO LIVE WEBINARS, THERE ARE STILL MANY THAT CAN'T ATTEND BUT EXPECT ACCESS TO AN ON-DEMAND RECORDING."

Tim Johnston, Director of Demand Generation APAC, ON24

PRO TIPS

► Creating on-demand webinars

- Use an on-demand hosting platform: Don't try and do all the hard work yourself! On-demand hosting platforms can host all your video content and supporting material. They can be branded with your chosen look and feel, and are great for gated content.
- Consider breaking up your content: Once recorded, you can edit the video of your webinar into smaller, bite-sized chunks and share these through other channels, such as social.

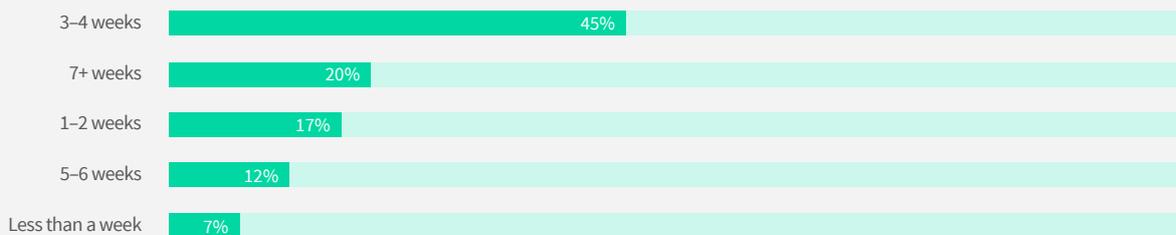
SECTION 5: ORGANISATIONAL AND RESOURCING CHALLENGES

It takes time to create high-quality, engaging webinars that can hold an audience's attention for anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour, according to our respondents. And since someone who has viewed a bad webinar is unlikely to return, it's important that the quality of your webinars is consistent from event to event.

Increasingly, marketing teams have a dedicated in-house resource or team member who is responsible for developing, marketing and managing webinar programs. This is because the best webinars are planned around strategic initiatives and are an extension of the content plan.

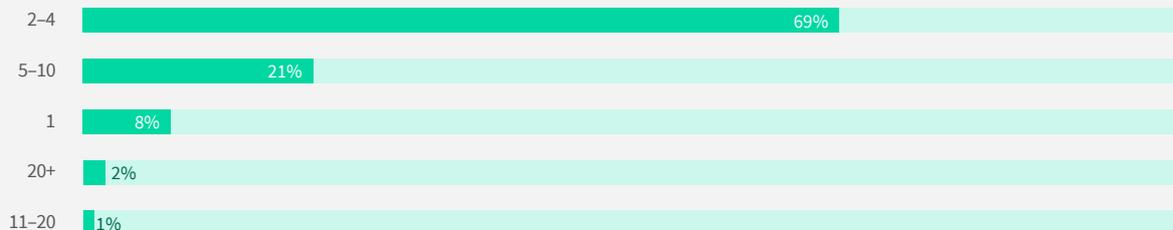
Most marketing teams spend a month or more to manage their webinars from concept to delivery, reflecting the length of time required to market the webinar and attract registrations, to identify and brief presenters, to create or adapt the content, and to deliver the webinar itself.

How much time do you allow for your webinar program to be produced from concept to delivery?



For most teams, webinars also require involvement from a number of team members during the launch, preparation and delivery of the webinar—between two and four people, according to a majority (69%) of respondents.

How many people are involved in creating your webinar program?



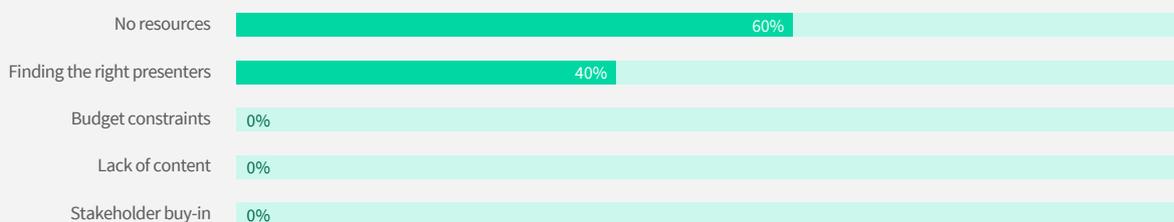
These two factors can contribute to significant organisational challenges when it comes to including webinars in the marketing mix—the main one being resourcing, with three out of five marketers (60%) nominating it as their biggest hurdle.

Resourcing issues are compounded when webinar programs are managed entirely in-house—which is what happens in two out of three cases (68%).

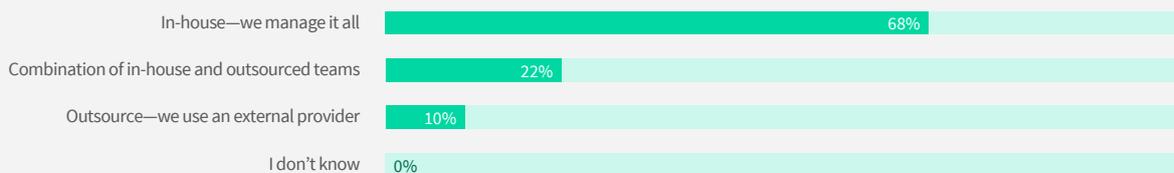
In fact, around half that number (31%) say they don't have sufficient resources to manage their webinar program.

A similar proportion (32%) use external providers to solve the problem, with 10% completely outsourcing their webinars and 22% taking a hybrid approach, involving a combination of in-house and outsourced resources, to manage their webinars.

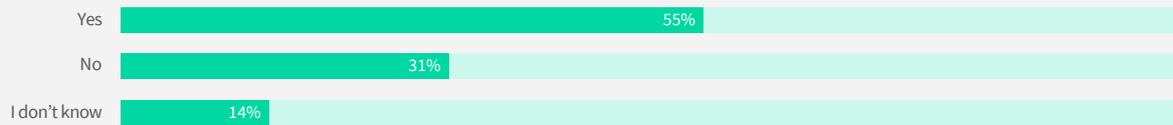
What's the main challenge you have when creating webinars?



Thinking about your webinar production, do you manage this in-house or outsource it?



Do you have enough resources allocated to your webinar program?



WEBINARS PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PUT A HUMAN FACE IN FRONT OF PROSPECTS WHILST SHARING KNOWLEDGE THEY WILL VALUE—WITHOUT US INCURRING THE TIME AND COST OF A SERIES OF ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS.”

Survey respondent

PRO TIPS

► Managing your webinar program

- Plan your content ahead of time: Content/webinar calendars should be an extension of other content you are creating
- Don't operate in silos: It's important to get sales teams involved so they can suggest topics and presenters and help share and promote your webinar content
- Consider using an external provider to shoulder some or all of the load if resourcing is an issue.

SECTION 6: POWER OF THE PRESENTER

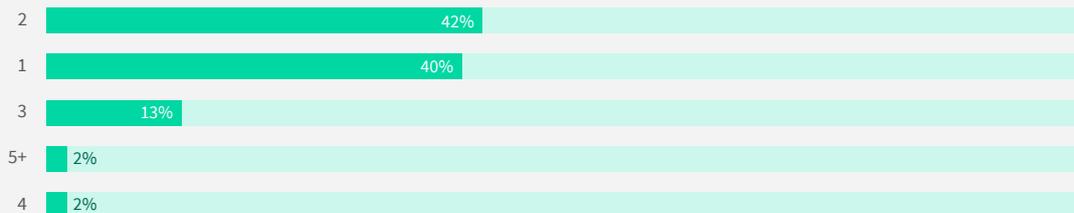
Passion and enthusiasm trumps everything when it comes to webinar presenters. According to the Redback Report on webinar audiences, for three years running, the most common reason attendees gave for abandoning a webinar early was because it failed to engage them.

Enthusiastic presenters drive engagement and attendees rate them as being more important than both content and platform features. The ideal webinar presenter is both knowledgeable and comfortable presenting online—it's a rare skill set and one that should not be underestimated.

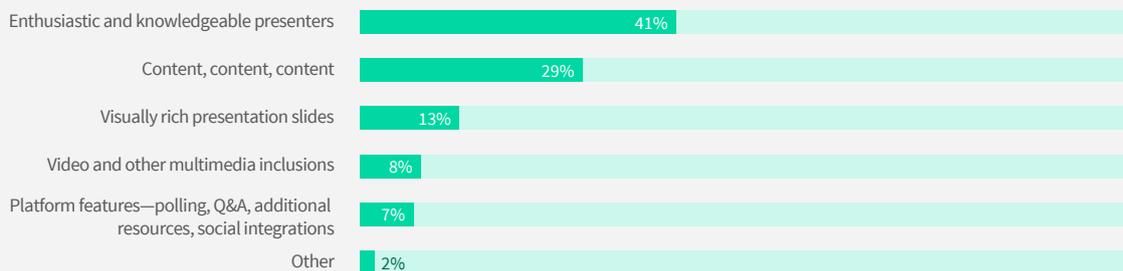
So it's not surprising that two in five respondents (41%) say presenters drive the most engagement in their webinars, and a similar proportion say their main challenge when it comes to webinars is finding the right presenters (see Section 5).

One or two presenters is the norm, and while one in two respondents (50%) say they have access to internal presenters, 17% bring in external presenters and 30% use a combination.

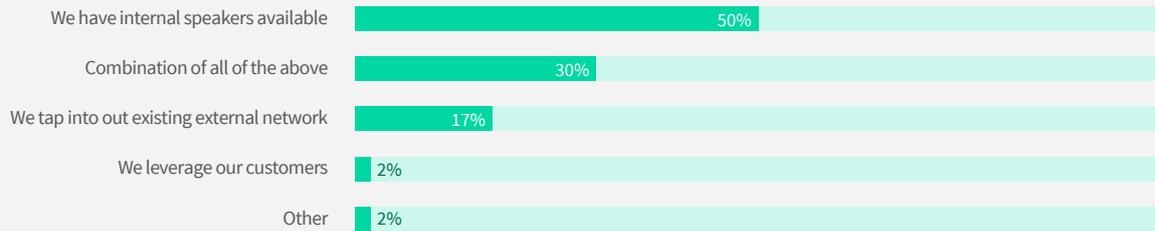
How many presenters would you normally have on a webinar?



What drives the most engagement in your webinars?



Where do you usually source your webinar presenters?



YOU CAN DO ALL THE MARKETING IN THE WORLD, CREATE THE MOST ENGAGING CONTENT, BUT IF YOU DON'T HAVE A PASSIONATE PRESENTER TO DELIVER IT, YOU WILL SEE DROP-OFFS."

Sara Gonzalez, GM, Digital Events,
Redback Connect

PRO TIPS

► Presenting

- Always have a facilitator: They are responsible for the introduction, housekeeping and QA, which frees up your presenters to focus on the content
- Consider having more than one presenter: 40% of organisers have just one, and conducting an interview with a second presenter can increase engagement
- A panel discussion between 3 or 4 presenters is a great way to mix up the format and keep your webinars entertaining

SECTION 7: INCREASING ENGAGEMENT

The content and supporting materials—such as slides, multi-media and video—are crucial if a webinar is to retain the audience’s attention—along with the presenter (see Section 6).

However the most common form of webinar remains audio webinars featuring presenters with slides—used by 62% of organisers. This was followed by presenters with slides and video.

There remains an opportunity to differentiate webinars and increase engagement by using live question-and-answer formats such as studio interviews and panel discussions; these formats were used by just 15% and 11% of respondents respectively.

Meanwhile, a majority of webinar organisers (58%) also utilise platform features to invite their audience to interact and participate in the event.

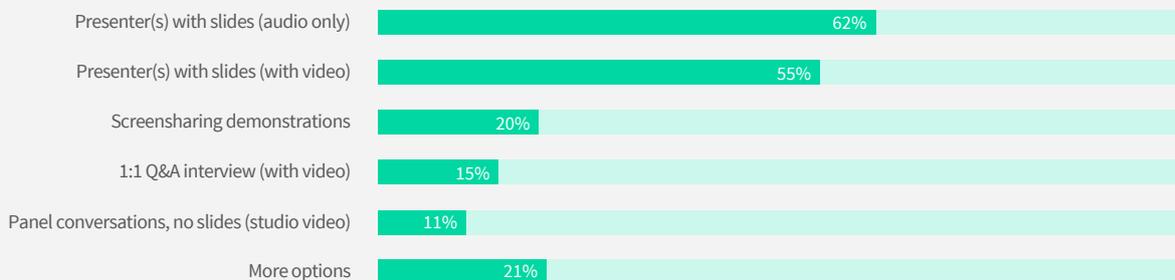
Do you build your webinars with interactivity in mind (e.g. taking breaks for attendees to respond to polls or responding to chat questions)?



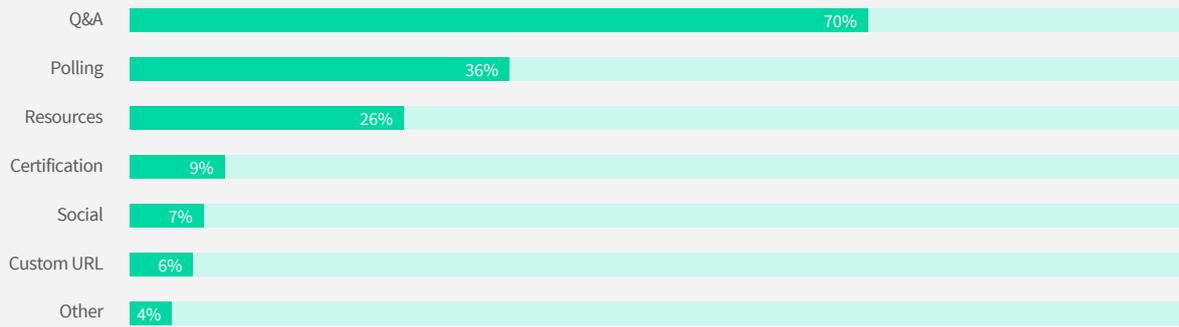
Using your webinar platform to enable the audience to ask questions and have your presenters answer them in real time was considered the best way of increasing interactivity and audience engagement, followed by polling the audience on a particular topic and presenting the responses during the webinar.

Sophisticated marketers were able to drive between four and six content ‘touches’ per webinar event.

Which webinar formats do you use most often?



Which platform features drive the most engagement in your webinars?



WE USE WEBINARS AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL SO IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THEY ARE INTERACTIVE, ALLOWING THE PARTICIPANTS TO BE INVOLVED AND ASK QUESTIONS."

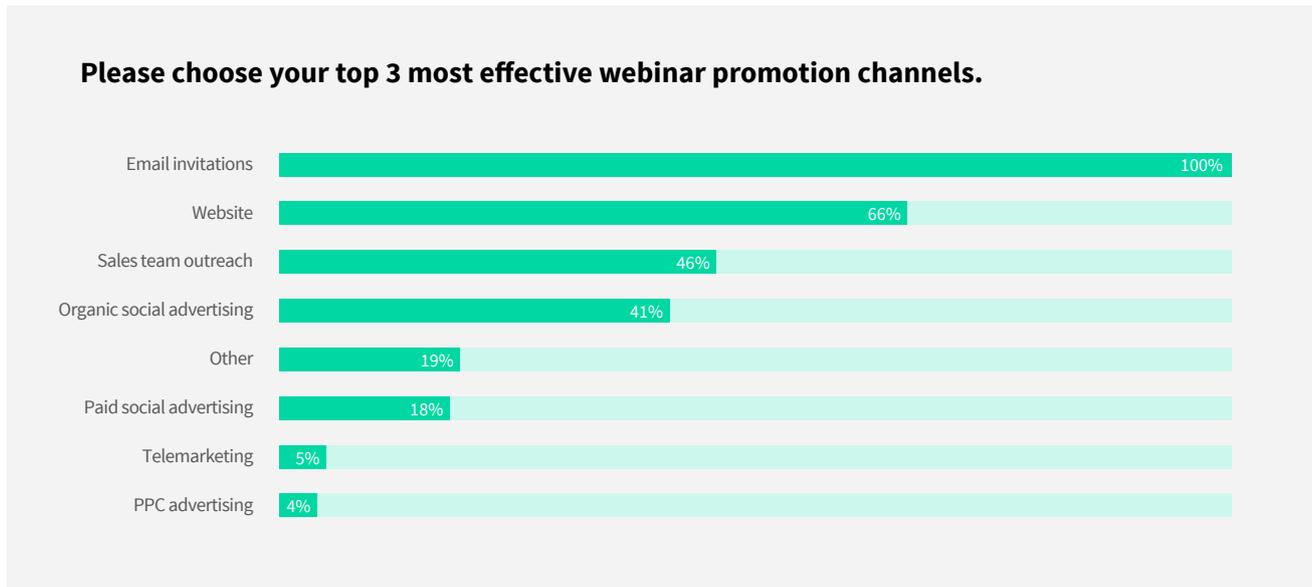
Survey respondent

SECTION 8: PROMOTION, INTEGRATION AND CONVERSION

We are always looking for new ways to market our webinars but email remains the universal go-to channel for promoting webinars.

Interestingly, other ‘owned’ media—such as websites and organic social—are not used as often, nominated by just 66% and 41% of respondents respectively.

And there remains a tendency to operate in silos, with a majority (54%) of marketers failing to enlist the sales team to help promote their digital events.

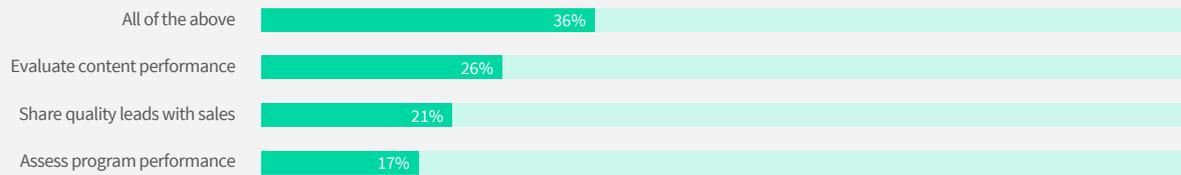


More concerning is the news that half of all marketers (51%) don’t integrate their webinar registration and engagement data with their CRM or their marketing automation platform—which means they are at risk of failing to incorporate webinars into their broader marketing and sales tech stack.

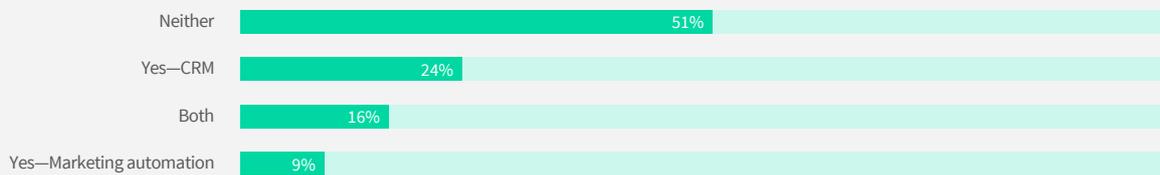
A total of 57% do share quality leads with sales, indicating other methods of communication and collaboration.

But if we truly want to run webinars for lead generation—and conversion—marketers must be better at understanding our customer journeys and integrating data with the sales cycle.

What do you do with your webinar data?



Do you integrate with a CRM/Marketing Automation Platform?



PRO TIP

Before launching into a webinar program always start with the end in mind. If lead generation is the objective, ensure your webinar registration data can be integrated into your martech stack and shared with sales. It doesn't end when attendees complete an exit survey!

SECTION 9: MEASURING SUCCESS

When it comes to evaluating our webinar programs, it seems we marketers are in danger of failing to get an accurate measure of success.

The most-tracked measure of a webinar’s success is the number of attendees, nominated by three in four respondents (74%).

However, webinar audience research from Redback and ON24 shows the average live attendance rate is just 35% of registrations—and a large number of people register for webinars in the hope they will be able to access them on-demand at their convenience.

But we know one in four marketers (27%) don’t make their webinars available on-demand at all.

That means a significant number of marketers are leaving value on the table by not being able to attract a full audience to their webinar program or capture on-demand viewing in their results. Those marketers are at risk of not getting maximum reach from their webinar program,

and are therefore unlikely to be getting the best possible return on their investment.

Just two in five respondents (40%) say it’s essential to be able to track engagement insights from their webinars. Meanwhile, only one in three (31%) track the number of leads acquired.

Despite that, the vast majority of us are satisfied with our webinar programs: 89% of marketers rate their webinar programs as effective to highly effective.

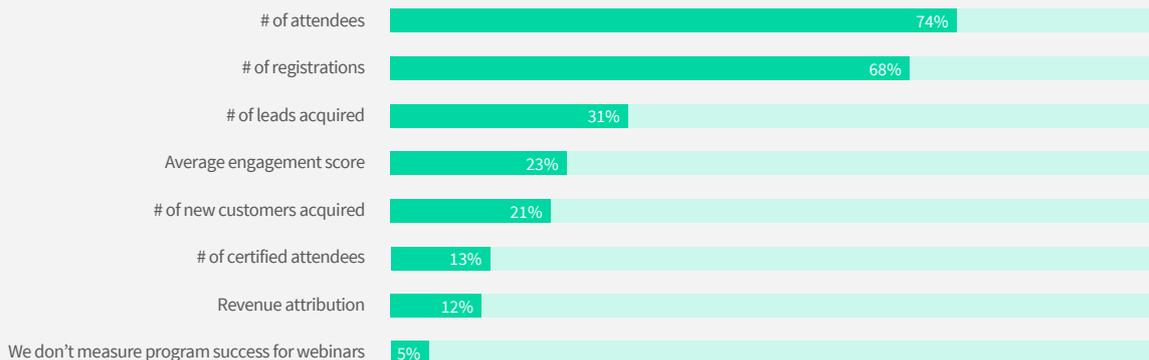
However, if we want to more accurately measure the return on investment from a webinar program, we need to factor metrics such as leads, conversion and revenue into the ROI equation.



WEBINARS CAN BE GREAT IF EXECUTED WELL, BUT OTHERWISE CAN BE PRETTY MUCH A FILLER MARKETING ACTIVITY.”

Survey respondent

How are you measuring success from your webinar program?



SECTION 10: 14 WAYS TO GET MORE FROM YOUR WEBINAR PROGRAM

Webinars are a cost-effective way to engage audiences at scale, but they can be so much more if marketers take a strategic approach. So, to maximise the return on your webinar investment:

1. Develop your strategic objectives

What are you trying to achieve with your webinars? Are they for lead generation and thought leadership? If so, think top-of-funnel content that inspires. If they're for training and retention, ensure they're available live and on-demand.

2. Integrate your webinars with your content strategy

The days of the one-off webinar are long gone. Develop a program of events or a series linked to your content marketing calendar. An eBook can be used as the basis of a webinar presentation, and if you've interviewed an expert or an influencer for a chapter—or a blog—they may be keen to be a guest presenter.

3. Consider branding your webinar series

Do your webinars have their own look and feel? Think about the series name, email banners and registration page, and how the program fits into your broader content or communications strategy.

4. Set your goals and work backwards to achieve them

What do you want your webinar attendees to think, feel and do after viewing your webinar? Incorporate a call to action or pointers to other content.

5. Manage your resources

It takes 2-4 people up to a month on average to launch and deliver a webinar. Get external help from a managed webinar provider if required, or use a hybrid model if that is a better fit for you.

6. Re-use your webinar content for short-form video

Consider incorporating video and interviews in your webinars, so you can edit them into shorter video clips for distribution on social and other channels. Structure your webinar into topics or sections with this in mind.

7. Make your webinars available live and on-demand

Host your thought leadership webinars live—it gives them more of an edge—but invest to attract an on-demand audience as well. Use an on-demand hosting platform to create catalogues of content. Many people register for webinars in the hope they'll be able to watch them at a time that suits and live attendances average around 35% of registrations. Consider how you'll promote your webinar to the other 65% of people who registered—and beyond.

8. Passionate presenters trump everything

When you get a great presenter, allow their natural enthusiasm to shine through. Consider using a facilitator to manage your Q&A so your presenters can focus on the content alone, and ensure they have the opportunity prior to the recording to build rapport with your presenter.

9. Be human

Have a rehearsal before recording your webinar but don't script everything. It doesn't have to be perfect, especially if you're broadcasting live. Have fun with it and show a human face to your audience.

10. Use your webinar platform interaction tools to drive engagement

Engage your audience early using your platform interaction tools—such as by inviting attendees to vote via a poll. Include resources such as slides and other complimentary content—plan for those moments of interactivity, so you can create a two-way dialogue with your audience.

11. Consider how you'll measure success

If the aim of your webinar is to convert leads into sales, it's pointless just tracking how many people viewed it. Look at engagement signals and strategically capture feedback in your polls and surveys. Assign values to these interactions in your marketing automation system to develop marketing qualified leads, and ensure the data is passed through to your CRM and sales team.

12. Benchmark your webinars against each other

Ask the same questions in all your exit surveys so you can benchmark your webinars throughout the year and keep improving them.

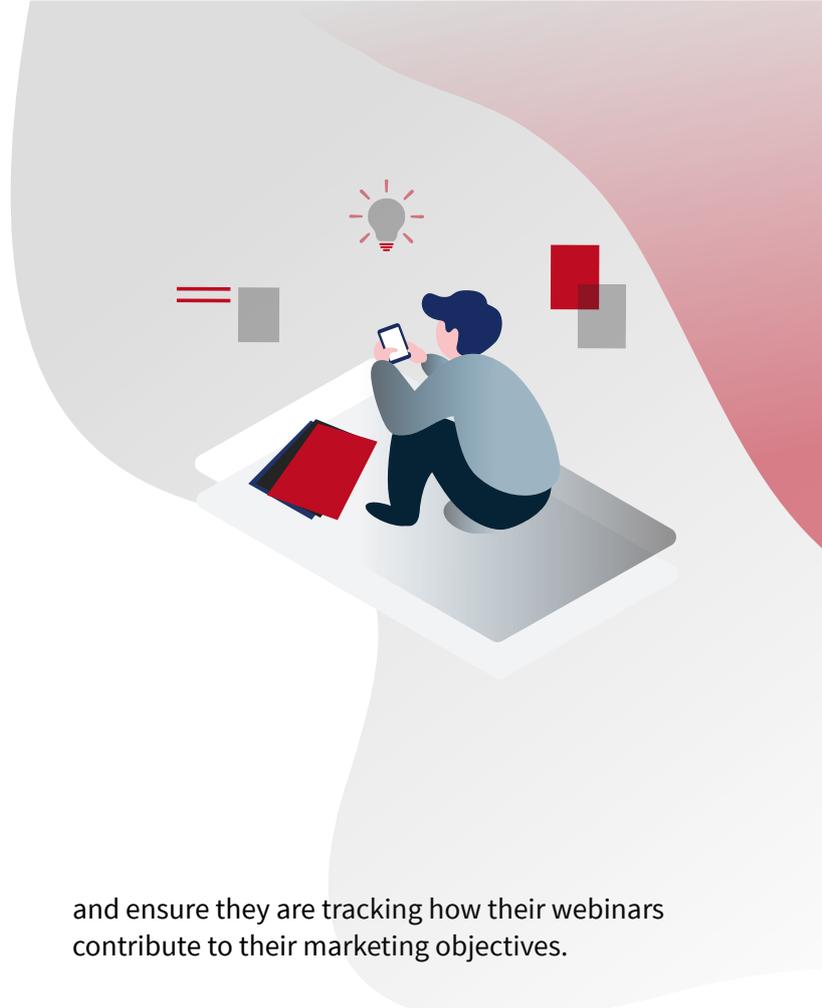
13. Integrate your webinar technology with your tech stack

You don't want to be exporting data into spreadsheets after your webinars. Investing in integrating your webinar platform with your marketing automation and CRM tools will save you time and increase alignment between sales and marketing.

14. Promote, promote, promote!

Promote your webinars in your newsletters, blogs, related pieces of content and via your presenters, sales team, on social and other channels. Don't forget to use your video snippets and invite your audience back to sample your on-demand library.

CONCLUSION



Marketers have made the leap to webinar programs that are part of their overall marketing program and most now consider webinars to be an effective part of their marketing mix.

But as an industry, we can do a better job of measuring success and achieving maximum return on our webinar investment.

So as a community, how can we move the needle?

Too many marketing teams are failing to meet the core needs of the audience by not catering for the on-demand market—and short-changing themselves into the bargain.

The ability of live presenters and expert panels to engage an audience—a key point of difference of webinars as a marketing channel—is not yet being fully exploited.

Meanwhile, before implementing a webinar program, marketing teams must know what they want to achieve—be it lead generation, nurture or conversion, to name a few key metrics—

and ensure they are tracking how their webinars contribute to their marketing objectives.

Ideally, marketers will integrate their webinar platform with their core marketing stack and the sales and marketing process to give themselves the best chance of success.

In a busy marketing and communications market, your brand must find its virtual voice and ensure your webinars can hold the attention of your audience in order to stand out from the crowd.

ABOUT ON24

ON24 is on a mission to redefine how organisations engage with their audiences, powering interactive, data-rich webinars and content experiences that help people connect on a more human level and make smarter business decisions.

Through the ON24 Platform, marketers can create live, always-on and personalized digital experiences, understand audience behavior and turn that intelligence into action. Informed by more than a billion engagement minutes—including 12 million polls, 1.3 million surveys, 1.5 million conversations, and conversion of over 17 million resources—marketers drive more revenue from ON24 webinars than any other digital channel. Headquartered in San Francisco, ON24 has a wide global footprint with eight offices in key regions, including London, Munich, Singapore, Stockholm and Sydney.

ABOUT REDBACK CONNECT

Redback Connect helps Australian and New Zealand organisations connect across distance in two ways. They provide the most convenient and innovative tele, web and video conferencing service available and we help design and deliver engaging Webinar Programs from concept to completion.