9 Management Practices for Exceptional Webinars

Proven strategies to build a lead-generation engine

Abstract

How do "Best in Class" companies acquire qualified leads for their sales teams?

Research consistently places Webinars as one of the top tools for lead generation. Yet, many marketing departments to do not have formal processes in place to maximize their results.

This white paper draws from first hand accounts of over 500 Business to Business marketers to examine Webinar effectiveness and defines the 9 Management Practices any company can embrace to ensure their Webinar initiative becomes the cornerstone of a proven lead-generation engine.

Table of Contents

Introduction

In the spring of 2008, MarketingProfs fielded a primary research study, **"B2B Sales Lead Generation: Integration of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0."** Webinars figured prominently in the research with nearly half (46%) of the respondents conducting them.

Several trends that emerged from the research are noteworthy for marketers looking to improve lead generation:

- "Best in Class" is a designation that can be applied to companies who employ better follow-up practices, more effectively integrate online media into the total marketing plan, more carefully track results, test and measure effectiveness more rigorously, etc.

- Lead scoring, in particular, stands out as a tool that correlates with "Best in Class" performance, lending further support to the hypothesis that marketing management practices generally are more important than specific media election or mix decisions.

- Five techniques can be classified as "bread and butter" tools for lead generation, lead nurturing, and customer retention. They are:

  ▶ *Newsletters*
  ▶ *Press Releases*
  ▶ *Case Studies*
  ▶ *White Papers*
  ▶ *Webinars*

"9 Management Practices for Webinar Excellence" is an exploration of how the companies profiled in **"B2B Sales Lead Generation: Integration of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0"** use Webinars for lead generation, lead nurturing and customer retention. In addition to the **MarketingProfs** research, the author draws on personal experience having participated in the planning, development and management of hundreds of lead generation Webinars across a variety of industry vertical markets.

A Look at Companies Who Conduct Webinars

Companies of all sizes conduct Webinars.

What do we know about these companies, why do they find Webinars useful and how frequently do they conduct them?

*Profile of the 46% of respondents who conduct webinars based on data collected in the MarketingProfs research **"B2B Sales Lead Generation: Integration of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0."***

What is Your Company Size?

Small	**45%** have fewer than 100 employees	
Mid-sized	**25%** have 101-1000 employees	
Large	**30%** have more than 1001 employees	

Why Does Your Company Conduct Webinars?

Generate leads	69%
Build loyalty	57%
Drive Website visits	40%
Drive offline business	28%
Increase brand awareness	69%
Build in-house database	37%

How Frequently Does Your Company Conduct Webinars?

1-2 per year	26%
3-5 per year	28%
6-9 per year	18%
10 or more per year	28%

How Long is Your Sales Cycle?

Less than 3 months	22%
3 to 6 months	38%
7 to 12 months	26%
Greater than 12 months	12%
Don't know	6%

How Many Years Has Your Company Been Conducting Webinars?

Less than 1 year	35%
One to three years	37%
Three to five years	19%
Over 5 years	9%

Where Does Your Webinar Content Come From?

Develop content in-house	68%
Use 3rd party vendors	18%

Do You Find Webinars Effective for:

Generating quality leads	47%
Producing large volumes of inquiries	38%
Generating cost effective leads	50%

Do You Use A Formal Process of Lead Scoring?

ALWAYS or SOMETIMES 63% *(compared to 42% of companies who do not conduct Webinars)*

What Makes a Successful Webinar?

Dynamic and recognizable speakers	70%
Formal follow-up process for following up with registrants	68%
Promotion	66%
Clear audience definitions and messaging platform	65%

Companies conducting Webinars for more than 3 years rate them as more effective than those conducting them less than 1 year.

Over time, companies find that Webinars are better able to deliver results across a broad spectrum of objectives:

- Generating leads

- Increasing awareness

- Building loyalty

- Growing internal database

Companies new to Webinars are more likely to see them as more effective in driving traffic to the Website, perhaps due to lower expectations stemming from inexperience with online lead generation, Webinars, or both.
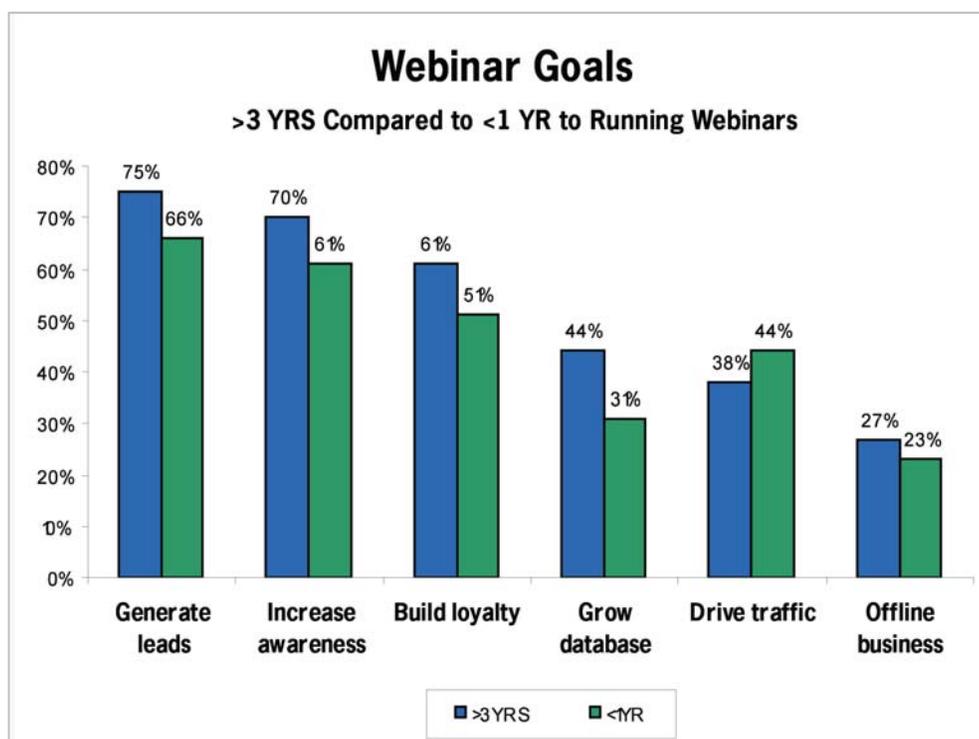

Figure 1: Companies who have conducted Webinars for more than 3 years see improved effectiveness

Companies conducting 6+ Webinars per year find them more effective in generating quality leads than those who conduct fewer Webinars.

Once a company starts running Webinars, they view them more favorably as "effective" in generating quality leads.

- 44% of respondents who conduct 3-5 Webinars per year reported that Webinars were "effective" in generating quality leads. In contrast, 59% of companies conducting more than 6 Webinars per year reported that Webinars are "effective" in generating quality leads. Just 26% of respondents who conduct 1-2 Webinars per year report them as being effective in generating quality leads.

**Webinar Effectiveness
in Generating Quality Leads**
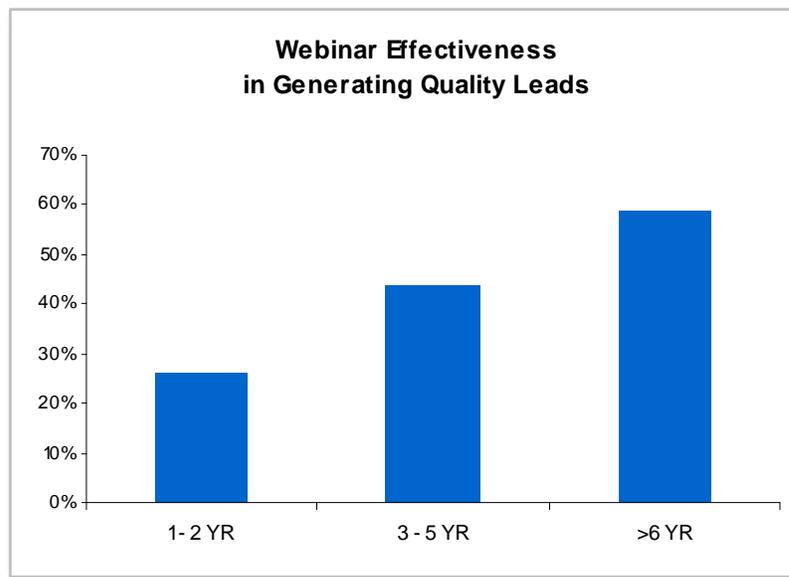
Experience conducting Webinars increases viewpoint of their effective as a lead-generation tool

Figure 2: Effectiveness Generating Quality Leads Based on How Many Years Conducting Webinars

Over time companies who conduct Webinars recognize they deliver leads AND have the ability to double to meet other marketing and business objectives.

- 66% of companies who have been conducting Webinars for less than 1 year say they do so to generate leads, while 75% of those conducting Webinars for more than 3 years do so to generate leads.

- 61% of companies who have been conducting Webinars for more than 1 year see them as a way to build loyalty (meaning repeat visits, reaching out to customers, etc.) while only 51% of those conducting Webinars for less than 1 year use them to generate loyalty.

Best practices emerge regardless of company size or length of time conducting Webinars.

Long sales cycles or short ones, million dollar transactions or deal sizes under $1000, there is little difference as to what these companies say make a successful Webinar. Regardless of size, companies find Webinars to be versatile and cost-effective and rely on them to generate leads, retain customers and nurture prospects.

The nine management practices that follow are intended to assist marketing professionals in planning, implementing and managing a single Webinar or a calendar full of Webinars.

Management Practice #1

Assemble a cross-functional team.

Lead-generation Webinars, while typically managed as a marketing project, require input from multiple departments in an organization. In smaller organizations, that may be just one person wearing many hats. But to be effective, it is important that stakeholders or functional areas have input.

Here are three steps to assembling a highly empowered cross functional team:

1. Assign a **dedicated project manager** to the Webinar initiative. The project manager will be accountable for the campaign but will do so with the support and participation of all organizational stakeholders.

2. The first stakeholder to get on board is an **executive sponsor**. The sponsor will lend credibility to the project and be instrumental in providing an executive perspective to the team's efforts. The executive sponsor will most likely be the head of sales or the head of marketing.

3. With the buy-in and support of the sponsor, the project manager is charged with assembling the members of the **cross-functional team**. The most likely participants to recruit for the team are:

    a. Marketing Communications
    b. Product Marketing/Product Management (if applicable)
    c. Sales (including account management if a different department)
    d. Finance
    e. Customer Service

    In small organizations, all these functions may actually be the responsibility of one person.

This team will define the goals of the Webinar. This includes agreeing among the various representatives the exact definition of a lead and what process to use to route leads to the sales department.

Next the team needs to develop a framework for this and future lead-generation campaigns. The framework will serve as a step-by-step road map to develop and manage the Webinar.

At the end of the program the team will measure results and give themselves a report card:

- How many leads were captured?

- What percent of registrants attended? (For live events only.)

- How much other content was accessed or downloaded?

- How effective were promotional/media sources? Did partners pull through? Was third-party media worth the investment?

- How many sales conversations were initiated by the Webinar?

- What worked and what didn't?

A well-formed cross functional Webinar project team will help any size organization foster closer collaboration between the sales and marketing departments.
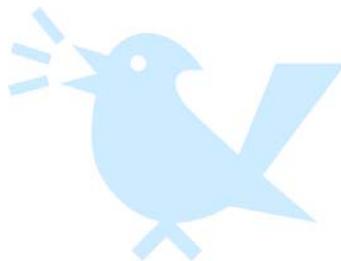
Management Practice #2

Align with sales.

Alignment between sales and marketing will naturally occur when the following takes place:

1. The sales representative on the cross functional team takes an active role in the planning, managing and measuring of the Webinar.

2. The sales representative keeps the sales department well informed on program objectives, key dates and required approvals.

3. A formal process is instituted for transferring leads from marketing to sales to ensure "sales ready" leads are followed up by sales, and all others are nurtured toward becoming sales-ready.

4. Sales has input on monitoring results and provides feedback including quality of leads and setting goals for future programs.

The sales representative will ensure the sales-engagement process is planned out with the team before the Web seminar is fielded. This includes input on qualification criteria including required and optional fields in registration forms and data that will be used for lead scoring if appropriate.

Webinars present an opportunity to begin a dialogue between sales staff and the incoming leads before the event ever takes place. Thus, sales must define for the team how to route leads to the appropriate representative or sales group as early on in the registration process as possible.

Once it is known that a lead fits a specific profile, an automated communiqué can be employed to introduce the registrant to the assigned sales representative. One technique for the team to explore is to solicit questions for the Webinar speaker(s). This starts a sales dialogue and is designed to reduce sales cycles, improve sales efficiencies, and increase conversion rates. Full team buy-in is required as there are multiple points of coordination. If questions are solicited in advance, a process must be in place to have questions addressed in the Webinar as well as in post Webinar follow up sales scripts and e-mails.

Perhaps most importantly, after the Webinar the sales representative will want to ensure the sales organization follows up with leads within 72 hours of the time they are generated.

Management Practice #3

Create a project plan.

Establish realistic timetables and promote your live event five to 20 days in advance. The shorter the promotion time, the less flexibility you have in affecting audience size. A five- to seven-day window is fine if you offer Web seminars frequently. A longer lead time allows for testing messaging and lists. Longer lead times also allow for multiple sends to your target audience.

In planning your timetable, work backward from the date registration opens. Take into account testing required, and allow time to evaluate the results and make changes if needed. Generally, it is a good idea to start planning nine to 12 weeks before a live Web seminar. On-demand takes similar timing, depending on the complexity of the production and the promotional plan.

There are a number of components of your budget that must be considered.

1. **Audience Acquisition/Registration**
   a. Consider whether in-house resources, such as house lists and sales invitations, will be adequate to build an audience for the Webinar. What size and quality audience can you generate from partners, industry associations and other sources that will not cost your company out-of-pocket dollars? Will you have to purchase outside lists and other forms of advertising? If an investment is required, consider the cost per registration and attendee; also, consider the likely number of leads from the registration and convert to cost-per-lead (See Management Practice #9).

2. **Speakers**
   a. Account for payment required by the speakers. Customers or partners may agree to speak at no cost. Recognizable names or industry authorities get high fees but will generate higher attendance. Before engaging speakers, consider whether the likely increased attendance will materialize in a reasonable cost–per-lead.

3. **Creative**
   a. HTML creative services are necessary to develop the registration page and other Web pages that promote the event. You need a Web page that contains information about the event and its speakers, as well as a registration form. Some Webinar platforms allow customized frames that further the branding of the marketer.

b. If PowerPoint slides should be used for the event, consider whether the speakers should use the same slide template or if each speaker should be allowed to use their own template. Sometimes allowing for each speaker to design their own slides preserves the integrity and objectivity of their content. However, make sure that all graphics are professional and engaging. Keeping the attention of your audience in a Webinar is far more challenging that in face-to-face environments.

c. Copywriting may be required for landing pages, emails and other Web-seminar elements, such as scripts for the speakers.

4. **Technology Platform and Other Technology Requirements**

a. Select a vendor to deliver your content to your audience based on your desired functionality; make sure to try the product before buying.

b. Consider such ease-of-use, engagement and reliability.

c. When comparing costs, include whether prices are fixed or variable based on attendance size, cost for a contract period or for one-time only, cost for audio (either streaming through the Internet or via teleconference lines), and cost for technical support and customer service.

d. Some platforms have built in e-mail sending capability. If you require more customized e-mails, consider a dedicated third-party provider.

e. If you want the Webinar to be recorded and accessible on demand, you may want your technology vendor to host the recording.

5. **Registration**

a. While most technology platforms include a registration system, you may incur additional costs if you want to automate the depositing of leads into your contact management or customer relationship management (CRM) system.

6. **Telemarketing**

   a. Will you phone registrants to remind them about the event?

   b. What is the phone strategy in contacting event attendees? Can you do this in-house?

   c. If you need to use the services of a telemarketing firm, leave time for training and ensuring that a process is in place to get leads into the system.

7. **Internal Project Management**

   a. Do you have sufficient in-house resources, or do you need to hire project management?
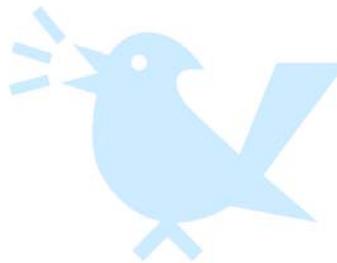
Management Practice #4

Develop a content strategy.

A Web seminar should not be a commercial for your company. The topic must appeal to the target audience and represent a critical issue facing your industry. This becomes an opportunity for your company to position itself as a thought leader with experience to solve the problem.

Compelling content is crucial for three reasons:

1. Content is the hook to get people to register for a Webinar.

2. Content will keep the audience engaged in a Webinar (or turn them away). Content can be the difference between attendees paying undivided attention or multi-tasking while logged on the event.

3. Content entices Webinar registrants to come back to your site.

Choose speakers carefully. In fact, 70% of all companies who conduct Webinars ranked **"dynamic and recognizable speakers"** as the number one determinant for a successful Webinar.[1]

Another important success factor for Webinars according to the **"B2B Sales Lead Generation: Integration of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0"** is a **"clear audience definitions and messaging platform."** Give careful consideration to how the speaker's message will translate within the framework of a Web seminar. Simply because someone carries an executive title does not mean they are suited to a dynamic, fast-paced Web seminar.

Credible subject-matter experts who are not affiliated with your company can often attract larger audiences. They do not have to present the entire message. Other participants might include company customers or partners. It is best not to have more than three active speakers. The majority of companies who conduct Webinars create the content for their events in-house but there are many valuable resources available for companies seeking third parties to develop content, for instance www.junta42.com/match is an online marketplace that matches marketers requiring content with custom publishers and freelance writers who will produce the content.

Finally, it is strongly recommended that speakers follow a tight outline. Why? The Web seminar must be managed on a minute-by-minute basis. Having your

---

[1] "B2B Sales Lead Generation: Integration of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0"

speakers follow an outline strictly helps you manage the clock. Regardless of how comfortable your speakers are with their content, having a "scripted" presentation improves their ability to deliver the content in a powerful and meaningful way. Also, it helps you design your presentation or demonstration to generate interest in your product or service. Ideally, Webinars are educational and not sales pitches.

Management Practice #5

Create communications that convert.

A Web seminar is a campaign. You'll need to create invitations, communications and registration pages. Dedicated email works best in generating the highest percentage of registrations. Viral techniques through social networks are increasingly effective in spreading the word.

Here are some important communication considerations to let prospects know about the Webinar and how they can register for it, some of which may be offered by your technology vendor:

▶ **Email**

- **Invitation** – Dedicated emails (HTML and text versions).

- **Registration confirmation** – Emails (HTML and text versions). This can serve as a "thank you" if you run on-demand Web seminars.

- **Additional reminder or acknowledgement** – This is mainly for live Web seminars and could include a reminder several days in advance, a "Thank you for joining us" or a "Sorry we missed you" email. Reminding registrants about an event via email maximizes attendance.

▶ **Web**

- **Registration page** – The more information you require on the registration page the lower the conversion rate. Be prudent in the information you request; if you will not use a physical mailing address don't ask for one. You can always augment with information from third parties and then go back to registrants via surveys, polls or other devices.

- **Event-information page** – Best practice for Website form conversion is to combine the information page with the registration page.

▶ **Other promotional elements**

- Web banners especially for your company's Website. Don't expect too many registrants from paid Web banner advertising.

- Pay-per-click advertising

- Custom communications designed to the specification of partners and media companies

Telemarketing reminders and proactive live chat and click-to-chat also play a role in engagement. Some marketers achieve as much as 500% ROI with live chat and others have seen conversion rates improve by as much as 10 times. When Website visitors are expertly greeted and assisted on the website, they like and appreciate our helpful guidance and the "human touch" added. If your company offers website chat, make sure to brief the chat team on details of the Webinar so that they are prepared to address questions and/or direct website visitors to the appropriate registration pages. If your company is considering chat, a focused Webinar campaign is an excellent event to explore how chat can help better engage with website visitors.
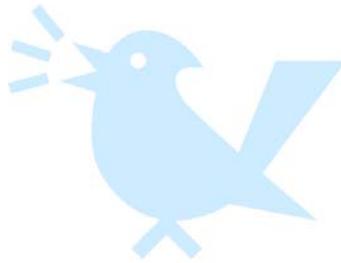
Management Practice #6

Get the right audience.

If you build it, will they come? In the case of Web seminars, the answer is no if you cannot get your message in front of your target audience.

Four high-level considerations for Webinar promotion (audience acquisition):

1. Market Planning

Develop strategies that leverage existing marketing assets. For instance, pick a topic or theme for your campaign that allows the business unit or product line to capitalize on existing company thought leadership. At the onset of the planning process, identify corporate and channel assets to deliver your message; this is not the entire audience reach. Consider using internal corporate lists, customer newsletters, and internal and partner Web sites, as well as blogs that company representatives frequent.

If you use outside media, make sure that the media companies understand the content. Put concepts into an RFP format, and ask the media companies to come back with enhancements. An editor or writer at a publication may have expertise that can be incorporated into the content, either directly or indirectly. Ensure tracking technology is in place to understand where ad units are promoted and where key promotional messages are delivered. At the end of the campaign, you'll want to know which media partners and which internal resources delivered the best promotional reach.

2. Branded Media

Branded media is a primary audience-acquisition strategy if you are interested in casting the widest net to prospects. Large media companies offer extensive reach through a variety of publications, with databases of magazine subscribers and online newsletters across various niches. A number of large publishing conglomerates have dozens or even hundreds of specialized B2B publications that can be matched to a specific audience. Even relatively small marketers can improve their audience-acquisition efforts by teaming up with publishers in a strategic manner.

Go beyond specifying target-audience attributes for contextual ad-serving or email selection. Negotiate appropriate levels of editorial participation. This can include syndicated content to custom-published articles and microsites. Marketers who already advertise in a publication have an easy way to start the conversation. Look to your agency or specialty company to assist with pre-

negotiated rates that take advantage of volume generated by multiple clients, media planning to maximize the media spend, and content and media consultation to help marketers create the most efficient media package.

Marketers should look for specialty companies that have strategic partnerships with publications to assist in obtaining more than simple sponsorship, ad placement or list acquisition. Negotiate to bring elements of social media into the program deliverables, blog posts and RSS-content updates, for example.

3. Supplemental Lists and Opportunistic Buys

Tap into buying networks and partners to spread the word. This offers marketers extended promotional reach for response-oriented lead-generation campaigns. Some companies, such as list brokers and list managers, specialize in this field. Others offer general-market buying power by assembling networks to augment campaign reach. This is where ad-word purchases, banner placements and other non-branded sponsorships can drive the audience. Link to any social media programs that are in place.

A partnership with a media company reinforces thought leadership *and* delivers superior reach. Incorporate tools such as Web site chat and social media overlays to ensure engagement. Partnerships with respected media companies establish and reinforce credibility. A lead generation Web seminar or other online lead generation vehicle can be placed near other relevant content on the publisher's Web site; this establishes credibility and reaps benefits from site traffic, which lead to more registrations. Marketers might be able to develop a lead-generation program that corresponds with the publication's editorial calendar, making the topic even more relevant.

4. Enroll the Support of Partners and Customers

It is important to include customers and channel or technology partners in your Web seminar program. This adds audience and helps your organization deliver meaningful and relevant content that addresses participants' interests. Some companies assign someone to work on managing a partner track to ensure participation. When working with partners, opportunities may arise to conduct cross-promotions or joint calendaring of events. Include articles and links to the Web seminar registration page in e-newsletters. Web site content, including promotional banners, contributes partnering opportunities to drive registration for your Web seminar. Email is the most effective tool to drive registration. A dedicated email from a partner to its house list yields the highest conversion rate.

Also, **incorporate social media and web optimized PR** releases to ensure the broadest reach and increase chances that your Webinar will spread to your target audience virally.

Management Practice #7

Make the most of each customer touch.

Whenever you interact with a registrant or attendee, you have an unprecedented opportunity—that is, their permission to engage them. Rarely is there a marketing program that gives so many customer-touch opportunities. Do not waste the chance to deliver a meaningful message. Give your target audience relevant information and links to other content that is important to them. You can do this through personalization and automation. More importantly make sure to have a formal follow-up process to touch all registrants regardless of whether they attend your event or not.

With a sales follow-up plan in place make sure to have a system to evaluate results. Consider:

1. What happens to contacts once they are in your registration system? Will they receive automated correspondence? If so, how many customer touches do you want to make?

2. Did the marketing team get the sales team the lead data in a timely fashion? Did the sales team follow up as expected?

3. What outcome do you want from the leads? (Examples might include scheduling a more detailed one-on-one demonstration, gathering information to send out a proposal or getting on the lead's short list and receiving an RFP.)

4. Can you track a lead through your system to revenue? If so, how long is your sales cycle, and is that a realistic metric by which to judge the quality of the leads generated by the Web-seminar campaign?

Always follow up a Webinar with "Thanks" or "Sorry we missed you" communications. In a world in which so much interaction is electronic, a physical thank-you note, even if it is auto-generated from a fulfillment house, makes a powerful impression.

By automating the registration process, companies can deliver the Webinar registration data collected into your CRM system in near real time. By automating from the registration process, companies are positioned to use the data for ongoing communications.

Other practices can be employed to engage with Webinar registrants, both on line and off. **"B2B Sales Lead Generation: Integration of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0"** found 19% of all companies conducting Webinars use telemarketing to qualify online responders and an additional 15% use telemarketing to qualify inquiries that are lead scored. This compares to 12% and 5% respectively for companies that do not conduct Webinars.

Of the companies conducting Webinars, 7% proactively invite website visitors to chat as compared with 3% of those companies who do not conduct Webinars. Over the next 6 months 20% of companies conducting Webinars are considering adding website chat to engage site visitors.
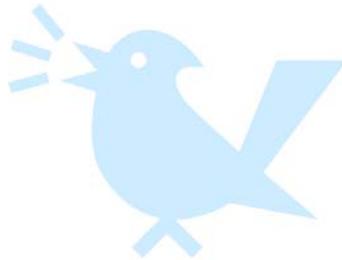
Management Practice #8

Add value with third-party vendors.

There are many options for selecting technology platforms and other vendors to support a Webinar initiative. The success of your program is enhanced if you assign one staff person to manage the project but you will certainly need the resources of third-party vendors to make it all work.

Web seminars have become more common in the past three to five years. This means you can probably find freelancers and contractors in your market with experience that can add value to the initiative or manage it. This is a good way to train in-house staff on best practices.

Consider the Web seminar from the perspective of your prospective audience:

1. Registration should be easy. Do not make it cumbersome or ask too many questions or have multi-page forms and questionnaires.

2. Offer both streaming audio and a telephone conference bridge for participants without speakers or for those who work in an office configuration not conducive to listening to audio on their computers.

3. Allow your audience to see the presentation and download the slides during and after the presentation, and allow for on-demand viewing from a recording, months after the live event.

4. Answer questions. Participants should receive a response at the event via live chat or within 24 to 48 hours by email.

When putting together your first Web seminar, look for a vendor that offers complimentary technical support and guidance when needed. Vendors who provide turnkey services—such as creative development, list brokerage and event management—are excellent sources for advice, as well. They have educated sales advisers and are typically relationship-oriented. However, these services are costly, so as you become more experienced, look to cut your costs by becoming self sufficient.

When selecting partners ask these questions:

1. Do you have needs for both live and on-demand delivery?

2. How large an audience do you expect?

3. Will you need application-sharing or some form of media?

4. Will anyone in the audience have firewall issues? Will they have speakers on their desks?

5. If the event is live, will you record it for subsequent on-demand delivery?

6. Will you use templates for creative elements, such as invitations, email correspondence and registration-page development? Will you develop the creative in-house or through a third party?

7. What do you intend to do with the registration data and data collected from the event?

Based on the answers, there are several options, each with cost considerations:

1. Outsource the Web seminar to an experienced creative-services agency or specialized vendor.

2. Buy a Web-seminar package from a publisher who allows you to provide a subject-matter expert to be featured during the event. You have the option of promoting the Web seminar to a broader audience than the publisher reaches. This is a good option if you have limited time and resources.

3. Work with a channel or technology partner to participate in one of their Web seminars, run your own promotion and share the leads.

4. Manage the process in-house and select the necessary vendors.

Checklist for Selecting a Webinar Technology Company
(Multiple vendors may be selected to address all the sections)

1. Company Profile and General Organizational Questions

This is found on the company website. However, if you are working with a sales person or account manager, inquire about company history.

- ✓ Are Webinars the core business?
- ✓ How many years has the company been in business?
- ✓ How many active Webinar clients does the company have?

2. Technical Questions

- ✓ Does the vendor have proprietary technology or license from another company?
- ✓ What "phone bridge" capabilities are in place to deliver voice other than "voice over IP"?

3. Analytics & Reporting

- ✓ What data is collected?
- ✓ How are reports accessed?
- ✓ Can the data generated in reports be exported into other formats?

4. Creative Services

- ✓ What tools, if any, are available to create invitations, registration pages and e-mail messages?

5. Event / Project Management*

- ✓ What event management capabilities, if any, are available such as monitoring the live Webinar, introduction of speakers, reading of Q & A, etc?
- ✓ Is the company capable of uploading presentation slides and assisting speakers with a practice run on the system?
- ✓ Is Help Desk staff available during events?

6. Training

- ✓ What training resources are available?

7. Pricing Questions

- ✓ Do you charge on a project basis or fee-for-services basis? What are your hourly rates? Explain.

* Note: This is an optional service that some Webinar technology companies offer. Depending on the technology that is selected, other 3rd party firms provide these services as an outsourced service.

Management Practice #9

Define success metrics and measure results.

A Web seminar is one of the best marketing tools to gain insights into the effectiveness of your marketing messaging, the value of your promotional dollars, the performance of your Web site conversion techniques and how well your sales process works. Web seminar data are real-time windows that allow you to see what works and what does not. Knowing what promotions deliver the most leads increases your ability to reshape your sales message and gives you the insight to increase promotional spending in areas that deliver the best results. This can lead to significant revenue growth. Using the data proactively for your next event should result in more sizable lead pools because you tap into the promotional vehicles that deliver the highest registration rates.

The other benefit of gaining insights from the data collected is that you can focus on those who demonstrate the most interest in your product or service. This results in faster close times. If you can identify those who are only slightly interested, a nurturing campaign can be developed to continue to incubate the leads.

Catalog as much data as you can collect. Associate the data with individual prospects, keeping in mind prevailing privacy best practices. This helps create smarter campaigns by tracking how well the elements work.

By tracking which prospects come from specific media placements—how many prospects, the quality of the lead—marketers know how well each media buy performs and can adjust accordingly. It is important to present the information in an easy-to-understand format and make it actionable not just for one campaign or event but also for an ongoing period. Look for resources that can assist in compiling the data and in presenting it not only for the team to evaluate and make continual improvements but also for the CMO to bring into C-level meetings.

Don't forget Webinar data is real-time. You're able to see how targets react to promotions and the profile of those who respond. Even monitoring a live Webinar event can be very revealing. Measuring how long individuals remain on a Webinar is a good indicator of engagement. Also, when a registrant shows up 10 minutes early for that "front row" seat, it is an early indicator that they have an interest in the subject at hand.

Checklist of the Data Elements to Collect

1. **Promotion - What is the best way to get people to register for your Webinar?**
   - ✓ Tracking codes of event promotion
     - Each media type (e-mail, web banner, etc). If e-mail is used, standard e-mail analytics such as open rates and click through rates are valuable to evaluate message effectiveness.
     - Each media source by name (include partners, in-house lists, 3rd party media companies, etc.)
     - Any A/B splits to evaluate messaging or creative effectiveness.

2. **Registration - What is the profile of your Webinar registrants?**
   - ✓ Capture all registrant data.
   - ✓ Match registrants to tracking codes.
   - ✓ Place registrant data in CRM system.
   - ✓ If lead scoring is used, how are the leads prioritized based on lead scoring criteria?

3. **Website - How effective is your website conversion?**
   - ✓ Number of unique visitors to the registration page
   - ✓ Number of registrations
   - ✓ Calculate conversion rate of registration page.
   - ✓ What other pages are these visitors hitting on the website?
   - ✓ Were other techniques employed to improve conversion such as chat, other content downloads?

4. **Webinar Registrant Data**
   - ✓ Attended or did not attend
   - ✓ How long was the participant on the event? Did they arrive early or stay through the final Q & A?
   - ✓ Did the participant ask a question and was it answered?

5. **Sales Engagement - What is your company doing with the leads and how effective is it?**
   - ✓ Update the webinar registrant data in a company database (or customer relationship management) system with as much information as possible.
   - ✓ Track touches with each participant (automated e-mail, phone, meetings, etc.)
   - ✓ Monitor sales cycle – how many leads were created, how many opportunities emerged and what sales were generated and over what period of time?

Conclusion

The nine management practices in this White Paper will help the marketing department transform ad hoc Webinars into a cohesive campaign and the cornerstone of a proven lead-generation engine.

Marketing organizations are focused on linking day-to-day priorities—especially qualified-sales leads — with the overall financial performance of the organization. Marketers who "get it" must demonstrate a direct impact on creating value — this is a challenge in today's quarter-to-quarter-oriented marketplace.

CMO's realize that, if they are to accept accountability, they must control programs from within. In an era of social media and Web 2.0 technology, to be successful they must develop and manage campaigns that help them *know the customer* AND *engage and listen*. There is no better tool in the CMO's arsenal than the Webinar.

Three final actions:

1. Bring the cross functional team together with the executive sponsor and review results. All facets of the program—including the tactical implementation, the speakers' and attendees' experiences and the quality of the leads—should be reviewed. Use this time to plan the next campaign and build on each experience so that you can design a framework for online demand generation that is optimized for your organization. Make certain the technology vendor you chose delivers a platform that is easy to use and manage, allowing you to put your attention on the content and communications.

2. Give yourself and your team a report card.
   - How many leads did you capture?
   - How many registrants versus attendees did you obtain? (For live events only.)
   - How many other pieces of content were accessed or downloaded?
   - How effective were your promotional sources? Did your partners pull through, and was the third-party media worth the investment?
   - How many sales conversations have commenced?
   - Does your automation need tweaking? How effective were your personalized messages? Did you import leads into your customer database system?
   - Did you test messaging or other variables? If so, what were the results?

3. Calculate Marketing ROI, it is the ultimate measurement of success. The answers to the questions above, combined with costs, will give you enough information to judge the effectiveness of your Web seminar program.

- Monitor expenses for the project, including the time of internal resources, creative services such as HTML design, email marketing costs and promotional expenses, such as online advertising and list acquisition.

- Ensure that you have access to the data needed to quantify the outcome of the Web seminar. These are the results from your answers to the questions above.

- You will then be able to calculate baseline data: Take your total costs and divide it by the results. For example, COST of $4,000 divided by 75 CAPTURED LEADS equals $53.33 COST PER LEAD.

- Marketing ROI can be calculated based on program costs and the results from the campaign:

Example:

| The ROI is calculated by dividing the sales revenue generated by the cost of the marketing activity.	
Audience	**20,000**
Program costs	**$4,000**
Response rate *(% of audience that visits your website)*	**0.75% = 150**
Registration conversion rate *(% that respond and register for the Web seminar)*	**50% = 75**
Number of expected responders who use the metric you are measuring: converted into customers, demonstrations, face-to-face meetings, follow-up phone calls	**5**
Average profit per sale	**$3,000**
Total profit from campaign = new customers multiplied by the average profit per sale	5 x $3,000 = **$15,000**
Cost per buyer is calculated by dividing the cost of the campaign by the number of new customers	$4,000 / 5 = **$800**

(Note: Comparing average ROI from each Web seminar will give you a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of each.)

About the Author

Joel Granoff is a veteran of high-profile and high-growth businesses; these include three Inc. 500 companies as well as corporate giants NEC and Compaq Computer Corporation. He has spent his career developing and managing multi-modal demand-generation campaigns in both B2B and B2C marketplaces.

Joel co-founded and is President and CEO of **BE GREETED™**, a chat lead-capture firm that helps companies improve website conversion using proactive live chat. Joel has a proven flair for discovering and embracing disruptive technologies that provide a competitive edge. He's passionate about the sensible deployment of technology to build and grow market share. Some key accomplishments include commercializing in-store coupon kiosks in the pre-Internet era; forging strategic partnerships as a charter advertiser in the launch of both Prodigy (1988) and CNET (1994); helping Compaq discover the Internet in the early and mid-90s and pioneering Webinars as a B2B on-line lead-generation technique, while contributing to Bulldog Solutions' 770% growth and recognition as an Inc. 500 company in its first year of eligibility.

Joel can be contacted at joel@begreeted.com.
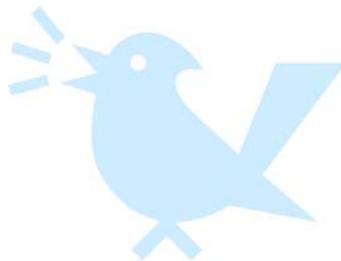
About MarketingProfs

Founded in January 2001, **MarketingProfs** is a publishing company that specializes in providing both strategic and tactical marketing know-how for marketing and business professionals in organizations worldwide. With more than 300,000 members and 300 contributors, **MarketingProfs** provides marketers with practical tools and information in many forms, including: articles, online seminars, templates, benchmark survey reports, buyer's guides, a discussion forum and a blog. With content updated weekly covering both online and offline topics, **MarketingProfs** helps professionals to stay current and effective.

About ConferTel

ConferTel is a leading provider of fully managed webinar services, delivering educational programming, training and lead generation webinars for corporations, associations, government agencies and non-profits. In addition, ConferTel is a software developer of IVR and web-based information services and communications solutions. Providing a range of event driven communications applications, including telephone, web and video conferencing, on demand record/replay, voice/fax broadcast, teleseminars, webinars, webcasting, online training, e-commerce, event management services, and other custom IVR and web-based applications.

ConferTel's innovative products and application development capabilities have helped thousands of clients save costs, generate income and increase productivity. We offer a consultative approach to assist you in developing the right solutions for your specific application and budget.

A Fully Managed Solution

Web-based Application - Access service from any computer with Internet access, no software to install.

Publishing Microsoft® PowerPoint®, Word, Excel and PDF Documents - No download for participants to view published files, store multiple presentations in your account for quick and easy presenting.

Multiple Presenters/Control Passing – Share presenting responsibilities with other participants.

Application and Desktop Sharing – Share an application or document with meeting participants in real time, optionally choose to share select documents and applications or entire desktop.

Online Registration - Bearing your company logo and accessible from your web site or email invitation, ConferTel will handle the event registration process.

Payment Processing - ConferTel securely processes credit card charges through our merchant account. Our per-registrant fee includes all fees associated with participant payment up to $100.

Verified Admission - Attendees are verified by a ConferTel operator to protect against unauthorized participants.

Registration Reminders - Each registrant receives reminder emails to enhance attendance.

Branded Greeting - Attendees are greeted with a pre-recorded greeting before being placed into the e-Learning seminar.

Professional Host – Each call will be handled by a courteous and professional meeting specialist who understands the importance of your e-Learning seminar.

Q&A and Polling - With interactive question and answer sessions and participant polling you can gain immediate feedback from your attendees. Polling can also be used as an attention monitor.

Recording and Archiving - Digitally record your and available to those who missed it live or for those who want to hear important content again.

ConferTel

ConferTel's Fully Managed Webinar Solution for Lead Generation

Get your sales people closing rather than cold calling. Focusing on prospects with a declared interest will allow them to increase their customer acquisition rate by up to 300%.

$9 Per Lead
No Up-Front Costs

What You Get:

Branded Online Registration

ConferTel will handle the event registration process for your webinar leaving you to focus on the marketing and content.

Registration Reminders

Each registrant receives reminder emails to increase attendance.

Phone & Web Delivery

Your attendees dial a toll-free number to join the conference. Our conference coordinator handles the web technology for your presentation so you don't have to.

Professional Moderator

You can rest assured that your call will be handled by a courteous and professional meeting specialist who understands the importance of your webinar.

Q&A and Polling

With interactive question and answer sessions and participant polling you can gain immediate feedback from your attendees.

Survey

In addition to Q&A and Polling, attendees receive a survey after the webinar which helps in further qualifying their interest.

Optional Webinar Marketing Service:

Pay-for-Performance Lead Generation

Get qualified B2B prospects, targeted to your industry and specific marketing criteria, for just $10 each and a one-time $350 setup fee. This is a great way to increase your lead generation results at a fixed cost per lead.

Getting qualified leads has never been so easy:

- **Reach the right people** — we promote your webinar on various social media networks to the target audience you specify

- **Pay only for Performance** — pay only after you have the leads in your hands and have reviewed them

ConferTel