

A close-up, low-angle shot of a hand typing on a black computer keyboard. The background is a bright, out-of-focus blue light, creating a sense of digital connectivity and technology.

Love
webinars
for lead
generation

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Introduction

Webinars are extremely versatile and can be used for a variety of purposes. Within the area of Marketing, lead generation is one of the primary applications for webinars. By their very nature, webinars are the perfect digital marketing asset, allowing organisations to attract, communicate with, and analyse the engagement of their audiences. No other marketing asset can claim this versatility and this is largely due to the fact that webinars were created with the internet in mind.

Many marketing and lead generation programmes lack the ability to add sufficient value at every stage and with every touchpoint. Webinars not only collect user demographic information, but adds a layer of behavioural data which is unmatched by other marketing assets.

In this whitepaper we look at 5 reasons why you should Love Webinars for Lead Generation.



What Are Webinars?

A webinar is an online presentation that combines an audio or video stream with synchronised slides and the ability to ask questions via a graphical user interface running in your browser window.

Good webinar platforms allow you to activate a variety of additional functionality in order to better engage your audience and collect user information about them. This functionality is accessible via on-screen options and interactivity elements such as polls, surveys downloads, and social media.

Webinars are self-hosted and provide their own registration forms, allowing organisations to run them independently from third party tools. However, integration with Marketing Automation (MA) and CRM tools is easy and beneficial. The analytical insight from a good webinar platform is highly desirable for any data-driven lead generation or marketing professional.



5 Reasons Why Webinars Are Perfect For Lead Generation:

Reason 1: Internet-age asset conceived for lead generation



There are two types of marketing asset: gated and ungated content. Valuable and long-form content is usually gated behind a registration form and used for direct lead generation, while simple content intended as a teaser or entry-level asset (for example infographics) is usually ungated (i.e. no registration form).

This directly reflects their value to the prospect and therefore whether marketers can expect their audience to submit a registration form in exchange for the information contained in the asset.

Despite over 20 years of online marketing, webinars are arguably still the only marketing asset conceived for the internet age. At least the only one valuable enough to keep behind a registration form. What do we mean? Webinars are the only asset that is self-hosted, i.e. it doesn't require a third party tool to be hosted, while also providing its own registration form and analytics.

Other popular marketing assets worth gating are whitepapers, reports, slide decks and videos, but all of these have their origins prior to the internet and rely on being plugged into other tools. As a result, this can create a disconnect and additional cost for using these assets. In contrast, webinars are self-sufficient while providing deep insight and usage analytics out of the box.



Reason 2: Multi-format for sales funnel targeting

Based on our previous point about webinars being an internet-age asset, webinars also come in different formats allowing their use for different applications. At a basic level, webinars are either audio or video format, while additional variations are provided by running webinars with different amounts or types of speakers, or as live, on-demand or simulative (for a full comparison, see our [Ultimate Guide To Picking The Right Webinar Type](#)).

Within Marketing this means webinars are able to target the entire sales funnel merely by switching its format and content.

For example, the top of the funnel can easily be targeted using low cost audio webinars with wide-appeal thought leadership content. The sole purpose here is to attract a wide audience and fill the top of the funnel. The evaluation stage of the bottom of the sales funnel can be better targeted with more engaging video content showing product detail, demos or a selection of speakers made up of experts and existing users. The latter will appeal more to prospects who are close to making a purchase decision.

Within the audio and video formats are other variations that allow webinar programme managers to refine their targeting and appeal, as well as making better use of their internal capabilities and resources.

Reason 3: Webinars are engaging and interactive

Step number one of good lead generation is creating an appealing content piece. Any content marketer worth their salt is able to do that. But it is how you package this up in an engaging way to create the highest output is a different matter altogether.

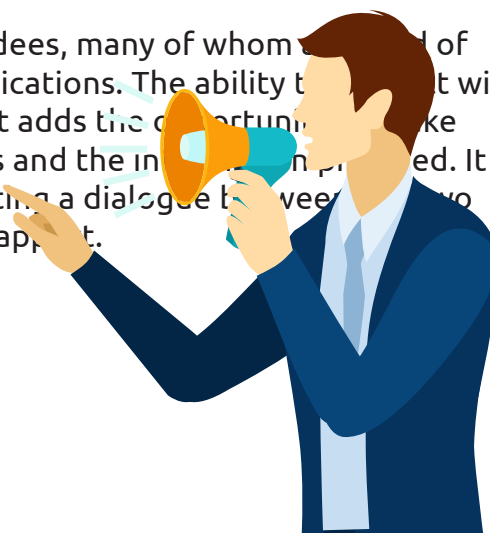
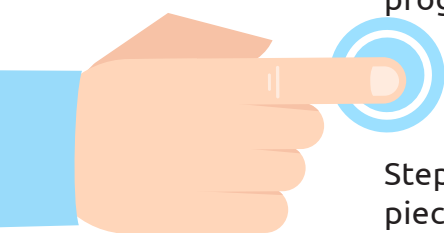
For example, if you create highly appealing content and make it available as a one-dimensional ungated infographic, you end up with vanity metrics such as clicks, shares and views. But on their own these don't tell us anything about our target audience, their usage, level of interest or engagement. There are no qualifying analytics or insight. For a data-driven marketer, this adds no value to the lead generation process – at least not in isolation.

Even gated content, such as whitepapers, doesn't feature any engagement or interactivity options beyond their content, CTAs, and registration forms.

By comparison, webinars are designed to engage and interact with audiences and compiling user (and usage) data into granular and real-time analytics reports. This engagement and interactivity is driven by the webinar feature set, so make sure your webinar platform of choice offers the best level of interactivity. This data is the core currency for any lead generation effort, which gives webinars a significantly higher standing amongst marketing assets.

This interactivity also appeals to attendees, many of whom are tired of one-dimensional and one-way communications. The ability to interact with the company and subject matter expert adds the opportunity to make presenters accountable for their claims and the information provided. It can be questioned and explained, creating a dialogue between two parties. In turn, this creates trust and rapport.

Throughout all of this interactivity and



engagement the webinar platform continues to collect and analyse the attendee, which allows marketers to provide more relevant information and drive the sales conversation.



Reason 4: Webinars are highly analytical

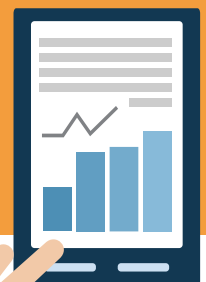
Some of the previous points have already hinted at webinars' ability to provide in-depth metrics for registrants and attendees (see separate list of examples). Depending on the webinar platform, your insight can be extremely detailed and analytical. A sophisticated and well-designed platform, provides the insight to empower your lead generation and achieve ROI for your webinar programme.

So what should you expect? A good webinar platform should allow you to track user behaviour even before prospects sign up to the webinar. For example, tracking codes allow you to measure the sources of your registrants. Did they find your webinar via your social media promos (paid or earned?), via your email promo (dedicated or newsletter?), your website (which page?), your PPC ads (which ad?), your slideshare account, your YouTube account etc etc. Arguably this is (almost) one of the most valuable pieces of insight available as it allows you to focus on the high-performing promotional channels.

However, combining this insight with additional information around user demographics, engagement with your content, attendee questions and poll results allows you to very quickly get a detailed picture of your audience and which attendees are most engaged. One market-leading webinar provider even provides an engagement score, highlighting the most engaged webinar attendees in real-time.

Some of the webinar metrics available:

- Lead source tracking (URL-based)
- Registration page visits to registration conversion
- Registrant to attendee conversion
- User demographics
- Attendance duration (live & on-demand)
- Poll results (individual and aggregate)
- Survey results (individual and aggregate)
- Resource download data
- Attendee questions
- Social media engagement
- Custom reports
- Overall engagement score



As a result, you are able to decide the progression of each lead into their next lead flow stage. The hottest leads can go to sales or follow a high-value workflow, while lower-end leads can be nurtured based on their current lead profile.



It is important that you evaluate the reporting capabilities available from the webinar platforms you are assessing, as this forms the basis for your metrics driven and ROI-focused lead generation activity.

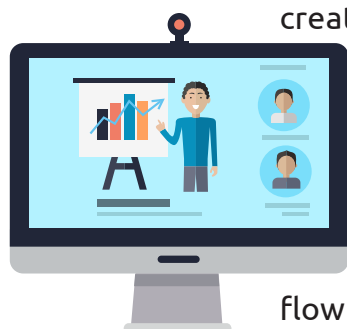


Reason 5: Webinars are integration-ready

While webinars are self-sufficient and highly analytical, the best webinar platforms also offer the ability to integrate more widely with additional marketing and sales technology, such as your marketing automation (MA) and CRM tools.

Consider webinars as the engine that drives both MA and CRM. The three should form a continuous closed loop in order to achieve the best results. Sophisticated webinar platforms allow the seamless integration with all major marketing and sales tools through APIs and other forms of integration.

This closed loop allows your MA to promote the webinar by driving registrants and attendees, while the webinar platform adds value by creating additional insight and data, which is fed into the CRM and MA systems to process leads depending on their sales funnel stage and readiness to buy.



Webinars are very valuable without this integration, but in combination with your existing tools you can create ultimate control and visibility. Compared to other marketing asset types, webinars provide a high volume of actionable data for your lead flow to use as qualification and trigger criteria.





Practical Lead Generation Webinar Tips

Having highlighted some of the main reasons why you should love webinars for lead generation, we'll also highlight some practical lead generation webinar tips. There are many more, but these are some actionable and value-add points to get you started straight away.

Tip 1: Run a co-marketing webinar

If you are not running webinars yet, make a start. Identify a partner, customer or industry contact to approach and run a co-marketing webinar with. There are several benefits in this approach, including shared cost, extended reach (by targeting both companies' contact databases), more leads (by sharing the webinar's leads), and shared effort of setting up and running the webinar.



In addition, a co-marketing webinar will provide you with new insight and metrics that you are able to compare to the performance of your existing assets. Bear in mind that webinar performance tends to improve over time as your audience gets used to this new form of communication and begins to engage with it more freely, so any early results are likely to improve even further.

Tip 2: Define a new metric

Using the above co-marketing webinar (or any existing ones you already have), and based on the list of metrics featured earlier on in this whitepaper, define a meaningful metric you are currently not measuring and begin measuring it. If you don't run webinars yet pick another marketing asset type such as a whitepaper.



For example, what about the conversion rate from registration page visits to actual registrants. This is a metric which is applicable to all gated content, but is often overlooked. However, if you are able to interpret it properly it will guide the way to increasing conversion ratios throughout your entire sales funnel.

Also compare across assets. In this example, compare the page visit / conversion ratio of your whitepapers to that of your webinars. Which asset performs better on the new metric you have defined? What can you do to improve it for the asset that is not performing as well? This is your opportunity to run some A/B testing, both between asset types (webinar/whitepaper) as well as within one asset type, to try and improve the performance metrics.

Tip 3: Compare existing metrics to webinar output

If you have a set of existing metrics that you measure frequently for non-webinar assets, compare them to the equivalent metrics of your webinars (or the above co-marketing webinar). This could include metrics such as click-to-open rates of your promotional emails that mention the asset type in the subject line (e.g. 'webinar' or 'whitepaper') or number of registrations for the particular asset.

Once you begin comparing, you are likely to notice a variety of additional metrics available for webinars that are not necessarily available for other assets. Add these to your list of metrics and begin comparing them from webinar to webinar.

Tip 4: Target different sales funnel stages

Utilise webinars to target different sales funnel stages. The vast majority of webinars contain top of the funnel thought-leadership content. This type of content has a wide appeal and makes it easy to attract a larger number of registrants.

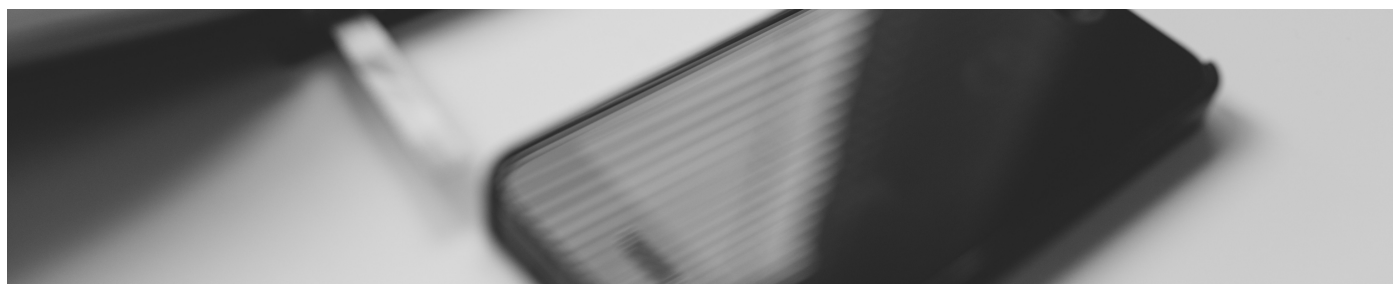
By focusing only on the top of the funnel, you are neglecting the middle and bottom of the funnel. The further down the funnel you go, the more qualified your prospects become. This requires more detailed and practical information, for example in the form of case studies, demos, and technical information, which is very different from the high-level thought-leadership content.

However, by specifically targeting the advanced sales funnel stages with appropriate content you will be able to attract leads who are close to making a purchase decision and guide leads from the top of the funnel through to the sales stage. Expect the number of leads to be smaller the further you go down the funnel. This should not be a reason for concern, but a confirmation that you are doing it correctly. It is normal for some leads to drop away as others become more qualified.

Tip 5: Create more content

Use your webinars as a source of content. Don't just run a webinar and then hope for the best. Repurpose the webinar content for social media shares, infographics, blog posts, videos, slideshares, whitepapers and other assets.

In doing so, you extend the life of your content and you make it available in a format that might be more enticing to a subset of your audience. Each of these new assets will have its own best way of being promoted. Ensure you choose the right promotional channel for each asset to gain the most momentum and interest.





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