

Immersive Content Marketing Webinars

This handout accompanies the recording of the 4 November 14 webinar, *Transform Your Webinars into Immersive Content Marketing*. The webinar was sponsored by Adobe Connect (read: free to you, not free to produce :). *Please* be sure to connect with them to share your thanks and comments.

Be sure to watch the recording if you missed it. Once you do, you'll realize why I don't just pass out PowerPoint decks — it's a demonstration of what we talked about.

What follows, however, is all we talked about plus a *pile* more tips. It's not all wordsmithed like a paper... just quick and dirty ideas that'll boost your webinar planning, design, and execution.

Best of luck to you as you grow your webinar skills. And obviously I'd be honored to moderate your webinar, consult with the team on program strategy, or train your presenters and facilitators. What I do is roll-up-your-sleeves hands on, so if you're thinking "webinar about webinars," well, I might not be your guy.

Stay in touch,

Roger

Roger Courville
Chief Aha! Guy, 1080 Group, LLC
TheVirtualPresenter.com
@RogerCourville
linkedin.com/in/rogerc

Webinars are different from many other forms of marketing and communication. They...

...have the potential for live, human interaction. Much more powerful than a white paper or email.
...have a whole lifecycle of engagement from promotion to confirmation/reminder emails to final survey.
...are easier to adjust on-the-fly for specific audiences. I call it "return on agility."

Think, "Movie producer plus"

Storyboard an immersive experience.

Movies don't have lots of bullet points. There's a visual track and separate audio track. Webinars have the added benefit of having live interactions (if you plan for them). The big takeaway: PowerPoint slides aren't the whole kaboodle.



Roger Courville, CSP is author of *The Virtual Presenter's Handbook*, *The Virtual Presenter's 102 Tips for Online Meetings, Successful Webinars with GoToWebinar*, and contributing author to *Business Expert Guide to Small Business Success*. He's an expert in the human factors of virtual presentations and workshops, and an internationally sought-after speaker on how to transform attention and results using live online communication technologies.

Roger has reached tens of thousands both live and writing for publications such as National Speakers Association, ASTD, Training Australia Magazine, eLearningGuild, and American Management Association. His 2008 paper "Five Keys to Moving Training Online" won TrainingZone.co.uk's Reader's Choice Award for "Top Download of the Year."

+1.503.329.1662 | roger@TheVirtualPresenter.com | TheVirtualPresenter.com | [@RogerCourville](https://twitter.com/RogerCourville) | [linkedin.com/in/rogerc](https://www.linkedin.com/in/rogerc)

Vary the length of your “shots.”

Movies, songs, professional speakers...heck, *life*...all vary in pace and intensity. Breaking up patterns with changes in sensory, cognitive, and social aspects of the psychosocial experience is how other professionals “bring ‘em back” when attention wanders. Do it in your webinars, too.

“Design in” the dialogue.

Unless the presenter is a pro, dialogue *with* an audience doesn’t happen. Especially virtually. Especially if you want to maximize the tools you have in the medium.

Adapt content to interactions with three steps: Objective, Question, Adaptation

Define a clear learning objective. Think of the socratic question that would lead participants to wrestle with...and get to...the “answer.” Adapt that question into an exercise that takes advantage of the webinar tools.

A few ideas for taking advantage of webinar distinctions in promotional communications:

Attend to win...

It doesn’t have to be gimmicky or expensive, and it can boost attendance rates.

Stay to the end to win...

It only makes sense to incent the behavior you want right?

Fill out the exit survey to receive...

It’s only fair to give/get value. Make it clear what you want (feedback), and reward those who participate.

Come interact with a luminary/expert!

Sometimes the ability to get a question answered is as powerful (or more) than all the content. It’s live and realtime...promote it as such.

Combine the webinar with an “infokit” (or paper, or...).

Registering for a webinar is almost always in advance of the date/time. Something additional also rewards behavior with something immediate.

Promote well in advance and immediately before.

Social media is part of nearly every webinar promotion plan. The problem is that you don’t have perfect reach. Promote too much at once and you’ll blow fans/followers out of the water. Spread it out.

Customize confirmation and reminder emails.

Don’t use the default. Edit the system-generated emails to include extra stuff, reminders of the value they’ll experience when they attend the live webinar, handout a worksheet in advance, or whatever.

Have the moderator mention future webinars.

It doesn’t have to be a long sales pitch to get additional exposure for other calls to action.

Use registration pages as mini-surveys.

Gather feedback! Use it in advance to dial in the presentation. Use it like a mini-research project to learn more about audience wants, needs, fears.

Designing Presentations for Attention

Ask, “Where do the eyes go?”

In a short-attention span world, it's critical we make sure that our point (visually), is clear. It must stand out. Key: Have a single idea per slide, or you'll find yourself having a difficult time finding a visual way to communicate it.

Connect ideas with directional transitions.

This one is best seen in the recording. In short, sometimes what you need to show is more than works for an individual slide. Use more slides, and transition between them in a manner connoting directionality or relationship.

Make fonts pass the squint test.

Did we say MOBILE? Unless you're 100% sure of the viewing environment of your learners, test to a worst-case scenario.

Use line spacing to improve readability.

Okay, this one assumes that sometimes you just need to knock it out and get'er done. Here's a bonus: <http://thevirtualpresenter.com/design/9-ideas-for-when-you-have-to-put-all-that-text-on-a-slide/>

Analyze, synthesize, visualize.

All that text is more impactful when presented in a visual manner. You need to have been there to see the demo, but here's an extra resource (free subscription required): <http://www.1080group.com/offers/bullets-to-visuals/>

Use multiple slides to speed creation time.

Not enough time for creating visual content? You and everybody else. Create one slide, duplicate it, and cut pieces out of the earlier slides. Voila! Builds that take waaaay less time than using animations (unless you're some kind of uber PowerPoint ninja).

Crop images for emotion.

You know how movie producers will do a close up? Or change the camera angle? Don't just drop an image on a slide — that's decoration. Put on your designer hat and ask yourself, *"How might I better tell a story with this image?"*

Reiterate instructions visually.

Want the audience to do something? Don't just tell 'em. Show them, too. Put up a slide with the instructions — it'll help you better reach those who might not have been paying attention.

Be careful with highlights.

Underlines, bolds, all that. Too much emphasis defeats the purpose.

Use animation for communication, not attention.

Flying things from Mars? Nope. Use animation when it contributes to what you're saying. Examples: showing directionality or relationship.

Put complete sentences or ideas in slide titles.

Research actually proves that retention is higher when you do this. In webinars you're in a shorter-attention span environment. Put the cookies on the bottom shelf.

Increase line spacing.

When you have to use a lot of text, consider making it more readable (on a computer screen!) by increasing the line spacing.

Have more immersive webinars even when your presenter's not that great

Ask for shorter presentations.

Presenters are often used to thinking, "45 minutes plus Q&A." Give yourself more time by asking them for less.

"Flip" the presentation.

Duration = detail (how much is presented) + dialogue (time for interactions of various sorts). You only get more interaction when...

Use an awesome moderator.

Not one who reads a crappy “Welcome” script and hangs out to field a few questions at the end. Awesome = someone who makes the presenter better than they are, someone who facilitates audience interaction even if the presenter doesn’t, someone who becomes the “voice of the audience” for not only questions, but comments, etc. Bacon awesome.

Ask your presenter what questions they’d most like to answer and avoid.

It’ll help you know what to serve up in Q&A. Or what questions to turn into polls.

Prepare questions as polls.

It might seem obvious, but this starts with forcing function — asking the presenter what question they’d want to ask. So-so presenters tend to talk instead of ask questions. There’s an added benefit: it helps get past just using polls for “engagement” (not so engaging), and more in the direction of asking interesting questions (more engaging).

Pause for Q&A.

If someone raises their hand in an in-person seminar, the presenter does something about it. Why not in webinars? Because we have lots of crappy examples that people model until they learn to do it differently.

Rehearse for transitions.

Don’t try to teach so-so presenters all the tools. When you do a dry-run, teach them how transitions will go... from moderator to presenter, back to moderator for questions or to narrate a poll, back to the presenter, and so on. Why? This’ll build confidence, and confidence comes through in voices.

When you’re the presenter...

“Make a deal” for their attention.

Email doesn’t wait and other distractions will keep coming at attendees. Try this: *“If you give me your undivided attention for 30 minutes, I’ll give you a mini-break to deal with urgent email. Then we’ll come back and finish the rest of the meeting’s agenda items.”*

Use what you don’t say.

This advanced tactic is one of using a slide to finish your thought. The learner has to look. “The biggest challenge when presenting virtually is... <shut up and change to next slide that has the answer on it>”

Find your inner Elvis.

In one of my recent studies we found that people attending training classes are statistically more likely to leave the class if they know they can watch the recording later? Why? Instructors don’t differentiate the experiences. We can fast forward through boring blather. I’ll be you’re fun when singing karaoke, right? Be THAT person.

Direct attention verbally.

“Over on the right hand side of your webinar viewer you’ll see...” Don’t assume they know where to look. Heck, don’t assume they’re looking at all.

Direct attention visually.

Highlighters, pointers, drawing tools of various sorts... they all create movement. Not only does this clarify where to look, movement itself is engaging.