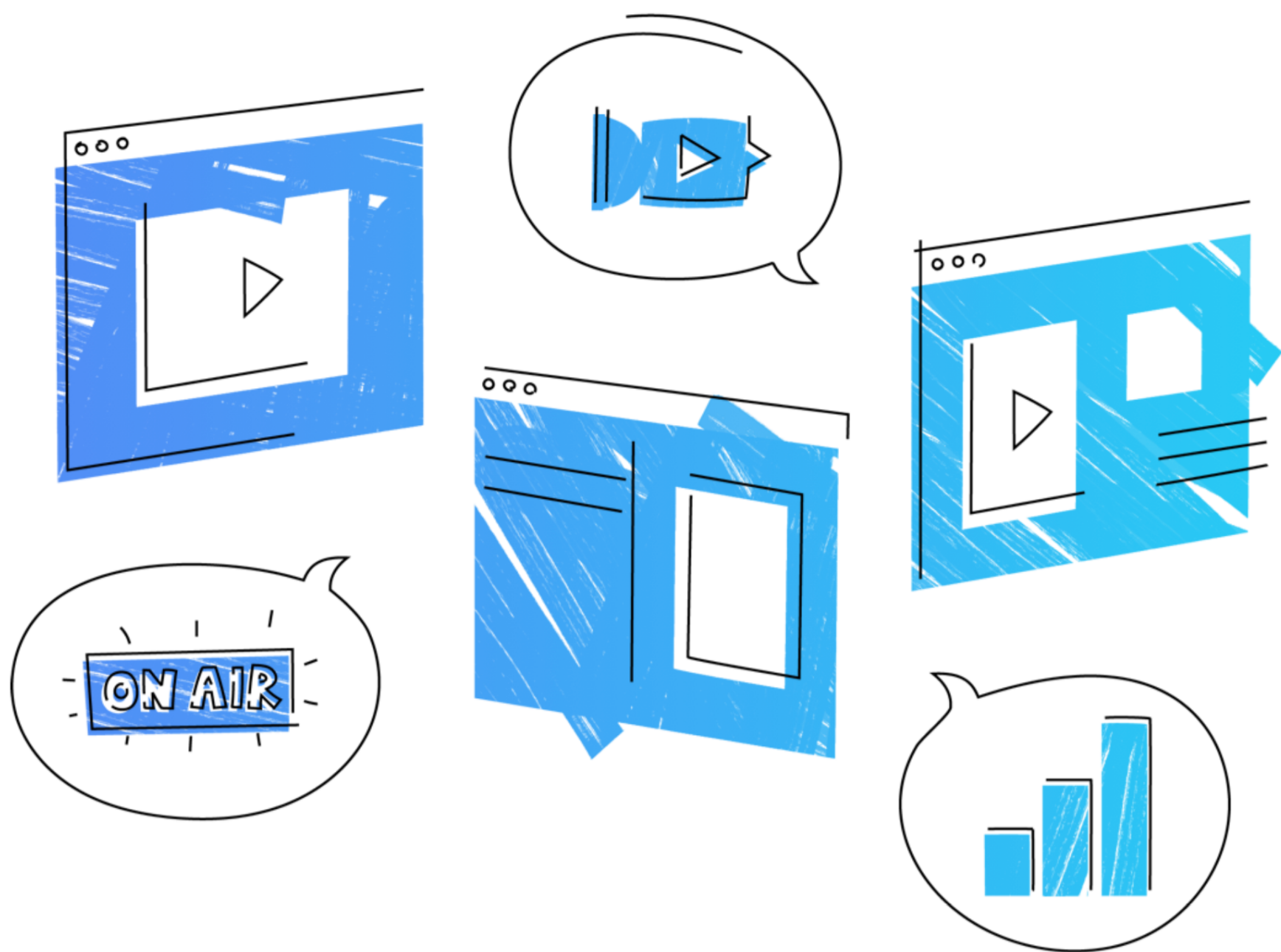


Webinar Marketing: The Ultimate Guide

Growing your business faster with webinars and video.



FROM BIGMARKER: THE #1 WEBINAR HOSTING & MARKETING PLATFORM

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Why the most successful marketing teams host webinars

Over three-quarters of Fortune 500 companies host webinars for one simple reason: webinars fuel growth through inbound marketing, onboarding, and customer engagement.

With the right planning and execution, webinars can play a valuable role at each stage of the funnel. At the top of the funnel (the Awareness stage), webinars can help you introduce products and services to new audiences, and position your company as a thought leader in your industry. In the middle of the funnel (the Consideration stage), webinars can help you build relationships and trust with prospects. At the bottom of the funnel (the Decision stage), webinars give you a chance to deliver more specific content and create opportunities to earn to a resounding "yes!" And though the funnel (the Post-purchase stage), webinars can help you onboard and engage customers, delighting them with value-added content and services.

No matter where in the buyer journey you're using webinars, you're probably measuring the number of people who register, show up, and ultimately engage with your events. These metrics are leading indicators of number of marketing qualified leads (MQLs) you're delivering, directly impacting sales.

The great thing about being in the webinar software business is that we have generated a ton of data: through hosting webinars with thousands of companies, we have a sense of the tactics that drive the greatest return on investment for webinar hosts.

If you're interested in insights like these, stay tuned: you're in the right place. In this book, we'll share our playbook for creating a program that maximizes

the reach and impact of webinars for marketing.

But that's not all! If you find this guide useful, we've got more. You're welcome to check them out below:

[BigMarker Guides >](#)

It starts with your audience

Like any other channel, before you execute, you should start with strategy and design. And like all good strategy and design, the first question is: who is your audience?

If you're a SaaS company offering a security service to CTOs, your webinars are going to look different than if you're organizing an online community of female entrepreneurs. In this simple example, the nature of each company's core customer drives a difference in strategy.

Here's a more complex example: imagine you're selling a complex, high-price product with a long sales cycle involving multiple decision makers within an organization. Each target is approaching the evaluation of your company from a different perspective: the CMO, CIO, and CFO could have three very different sets of questions that need to be answered before arriving at yes. And getting a yes from all three is crucial to ensuring the deal gets done.

If you're using webinars to support a complex sales process or an account based marketing plan, you'll want to design your program to address each of the key personas in your audience and each their key questions.

Investing the time upfront to create a roadmap integrating each audience,

each step of the buyer journey, and what matters to them along the way will pay dividends when you get to the execution phase. Having a clearly defined, audience-centric strategy for webinars is the single-most important determinant of success for marketing webinars.

More often than not, when webinar programs fail, issues with the How can be traced back to a lack of precision in defining the What and the Why for the program's audience.

Webinar Strategy & Audience Worksheet Example

To make sure you have the What and the Why right, it's a good idea to put a plan on paper. To help you start thinking about what one variation of a webinar plan could look like, we've included an example Audience & Strategy Worksheet for a fictional company that provides chat bot software for marketing teams.

This worksheet provides a brief or a plan for one specific audience at one specific stage of the customer lifecycle. The idea is that a webinar marketing approach would include one such brief for each persona at each stages.

Webinar Audience & Strategy Worksheet (Example)

Audience	SaaS Marketing Leaders (CMO, VP Marketing, etc.)
Webinar	Chat Bots: The New Face of Customer Engagement
Buyer Journey	Middle of Funnel (Consideration) Prospects engaging with this webinar are aware of chat bots and our product. Our goal is to communicate our unique expertise, how our tools help our customers, and move them along to the next stage: trial.
Data	What data do we want to capture? Before webinar: Name, Email, Title, Company, Are you using bots? During webinar: Which opportunity are you seeking using chat bots? Sales? Marketing? Service?
Information	What information do we want to communicate? After the webinar, we want the audience to be able to understand: - Value proposition & differentiation - Case studies - How they can get started in 5 min
Activation	How will we activate the audience to take the next step? We will provide 2 Offers: 1. Start building your bot today, get 25% off your first month 2. Free one-on-one consultation from a bot expert

Once you've defined your audience (or audiences), and have an idea of what topics, narratives, and proof points will move the needle for them, you're ready to start outlining content.

Developing your content roadmap

In the previous section, we talked about the Who and the Why, and in this section, we'll start talking about the What and the How. The result will look different depending on the types of webinars you're hosting and your audience's needs.

Here are some things to consider as you establish your game plan:

How broad should each webinar be?

Webinars should be broad enough to appeal to a wide enough audience, but specific enough to teach them something they may not know. For example, some friends at an inbound marketing agency recently hosted a webinar called Content Marketing for Lead Generation, and another team at a major research university recently hosted a webinar series about How Gamification Applies to Various Industries.

How much value comes from live interaction?

If it's a lot, then you should consider hosting live webinars. Live webinars are a great way to humanize your brand by connecting your team to real prospects and customers, building personal connections through real conversations.

67% of marketing executives say live events are the marketing channel with the highest ROI, so if you're not hosting live webinars today, you should

seriously consider them.

How frequently should you host live webinars?

From our experience, companies that are really serious about building powerful inbound marketing engines host webinars at least every month, any in many cases, even more frequently.

If they're building relationships with multiple audiences, or marketing multiple products, then someone in their company could be hosting a webinar every week. And if they're a large, diversified company like Google or Samsung, then someone could be hosting a webinar every day or even every hour.

How high-stakes are your live webinars?

If your live webinars are high-stakes, e.g., they have high level decision makers in attendance or are addressing a topic of critical importance to the buyer journey, then we recommend using webinar automation.

BigMarker's webinar automation capability is the most advanced in the industry, allowing you to program every aspect of your webinar to run on a self-driving automated timeline, so your presentation, videos, chats, polls, handouts, and offers execute right on time, as if they were happening live.

This approach reduces the risks of broadcasting live, and also frees you up to spend more time engaging your audience by responding to questions or moderating chat. After the presentation is finished, you could then make your automated event a hybrid webinar by turning on your mics and cameras to host a live Q&A session at the end.

We call that a win-win.

How important is it to make your content accessible all the time?

The single biggest drawback of a live webinar is that it happens at a specific date and time, so your window of opportunity to capture people with it is limited to the 2-4 weeks you're promoting it prior to showtime.

The good news is you can drastically increase the shelf life of your content by recording it, and then publishing that recording as a webinar replay or on-demand webinar. BigMarker makes this easy. With just a few clicks, your webinar becomes a video that you can push to the right prospects at the right time, or place strategically on your website or blog for people to discover when researching a particular topic. On-demand webinars are usually gated content, making them a powerful source of lead generation.

What about the best of both worlds?

What if you could combine the benefit of live interaction from a live webinar with the around-the-clock accessibility of on-demand webinars?

You can, with evergreen webinars. Evergreen webinars enable you to create an automated webinar one time, and then program it to self-drive every week, every day, every hour, or even in real-time as people land on your page, so members of your audience can find it and join in anytime.

The events run as fully-featured live webinars, as if they're happening in real time. But in reality, they're using content you've pre-recorded.

But what about the interactive part? Does that mean we have to pay someone to sit in these webinars all day to address questions as they come in from attendees? Nope.

Evergreen webinars integrate with your phone to send you push notifications or SMS messages when questions get submitted. They also integrate with Slack to send questions to a designated channel, so multiple people on your team can share responsibility. The result: you can respond to attendee questions in real time, making evergreen webinars truly interactive, just like live events.

Since there's no warmer lead than one asking you a question about your product, service, or content in real time, your inbound team will love the powerful machine you can build using evergreen webinars.

We realize that's a lot to digest, so the next page has a simple table to help you sort through it all. Once you've got a handle on what types of webinars are the right fit for your audience at each stage of the buyer journey, you're ready to start creating content.

Webinar Types & Benefits

Five webinar types commonly used by marketers...

Webinar Types & Benefits

Live Webinars

Real-time events that provide opportunities for prospects and customers to see and hear you, building real connections. They're virtual, so they're significantly easier and more cost-effective to execute than in-person events.

On-Demand Webinars

Pre-recorded videos, presentations, or workshops that are useful when your audience needs to access content at their convenience, making them a critical component of lead generation and customer onboarding strategies.

Automated Webinars

Live webinars on auto-pilot: they run themselves. Program your webinar's videos, presentations, chats, polls, handouts, and offers on your timeline, and watch the webinar drive itself, freeing you up to focus on engaging your audience rather than presenting content.

Evergreen Webinars

Automated webinars that run on a recurring basis. Set them up and push traffic to them, and people will be able to access them around the clock. Automate marketing, sales, and onboarding by combining the availability of on-demand with the interactivity of live.

Webinar Series

A sequence of webinars grouped with a single registration. There are two formats: Summits (ideal for thought leadership content presented over a single or multiple days), and Courses (ideal for teaching prospects and customers about your domain area).

Content Roadmap Template

We look at webinar types like tools in a toolbox: each one is useful for a specific job. The following example shows how high-performing commercial teams use a combination of webinar types to acquire and activate customers.

Webinar Content Roadmap Example		
Webinar Program	Webinar Type	Frequency
1. PROSPECTS (TOP OF FUNNEL)		
Thought Leadership Webinar Series Featuring partner companies & guest presenters	Live	Monthly
Product Announcement Webinars Pre-recorded with leadership, with moderated Q&A	Automated with Live Q&A	Quarterly
2. OPPORTUNITIES (BOTTOM OF FUNNEL)		
Evergreen Product Demos Segmented by buyer persona & journey stage	Evergreen	Hourly
Personalized Live Demos As needed, scheduled by Sales	Live	As Needed
3. NEW CUSTOMERS (ONBOARDING)		
Customer Onboarding Course Delivered via new customer dashboard	Evergreen Series	Real-time
Customer Onboarding Videos Available in Customer Resources	On-Demand	Always On

Want more customers? Tell better stories.

Content is king. You could have your targeting dialed in, marketing channels optimized, and get a thousand people to show up for your first webinar. But if the content isn't good, people are going to tune out or even drop off. And if the content isn't great, people certainly aren't going to share it or come back to your next event.

If you're going to ask your prospects to show up for you, then you'd better show up for them.

The key to producing successful webinars is giving your audience something they didn't have before: a story... an insight... something that gives them the ability to do a better job tomorrow than they did today.

If your content fails to create value, you're just wasting everybody's time and your webinar program is likely to fall flat on its face. So once you know who you're speaking to, what they care about, and how you're going to reach them, then it's time to start thinking about the narrative you're going to tell.

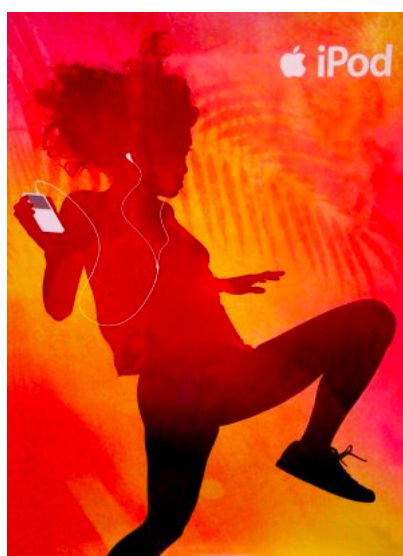
The narrative? What does that mean? The narrative means the story. Webinars are stories. Videos are stories. Articles are stories. The customer journey is one long epic story. In today's world, if you're in the marketing business, then you're in the storytelling business.

Stories are what draw us in, capture our hearts and minds, and lead us to make decisions. Joseph Stalin described this phenomenon by saying:

“A million deaths is a statistic. One is a tragedy.”

The insight at the center of Stalin’s remark is that people make decisions less because of data and statistics, and more because they hear a specific narrative that resonates with them, and leads them to buy in.

Think about a brand that people really love, like Apple or Patagonia. Is it the stats that make people love the brand? The 16 GB of LPDDR3 memory in your MacBook or the 1.4-oz denier polyester ripstop on your Down Sweater? Or is it the stories that the brands tell—stories of innovation, courage, and venturing into the unknown? While stats and product features are important for checking the boxes and delivering on promises of performance, they’re not what turn customers into loyal fans—it’s stories.



Apple and Patagonia create products with the best features. But they build brand love by telling stories about things much more important than features.

So for your next webinar—or any customer touchpoint for that matter—it’s a good idea to think about how you can incorporate storytelling into the content you create. You may find yourself inspiring a greater percentage of your

audience, activating them to not only buy your products and services, but also become a powerful word-of-mouth engine as they begin to feel like an agent of your brand, because your mission is aligned with their own.

To learn more about the research behind why storytelling is so powerful in sales and marketing, and for some actionable tactics you can use to create more compelling webinars, videos, and presentations, we suggest the following authors:

- › [Want a Better Pitch? Watch This. \(Andy Raskin, Firm Narrative\)](#)
- › [What's Your Story? \(Craig Wortmann, Kellogg School of Management\)](#)
- › [Thinking Fast & Slow \(Daniel Kahneman, Nobel Prize winning psychologist\)](#)

Storytelling from the world's best

While we've learned a little about storytelling over the years, Pixar knows practically everything. The animation studio founded by Steve Jobs and later acquired by Disney produced blockbuster franchises like Toy Story and Finding Nemo. Nobody knows storytelling quite like they do.

So when Emma Coats, a longtime Pixar story artist, compiled her list of the 22 Rules of Storytelling, we took note. We've included her list here in hopes that they help you find inspiration for your own stories.

Applying these 22 rules to your own webinars and videos might just help you capture your audience's attention, keep them engaged for the duration of your content, and close with a strong finish that activates — motivating them to complete the call to action you give them.

Keep in mind that depending on your webinar's audience and strategy, the storytelling tactics you employ could be different. Not sure where to start or what the right sequence of messages is? BigMarker has content and creative experts on hand to help you craft the perfect narrative for your audience.

Pixar's 22 Rules of Storytelling

1. You admire a character for trying more than for their success.
2. You gotta keep in mind what's interesting to the audience.
3. Trying for theme is important, but you won't see what the story is actually about til you're at the end of it.
4. Once upon a time there was ___. Every day, ___. One day ___. Because of that, ___. Because of that, ___. Until finally ___.
5. Simplify. Focus. Combine characters. Hop over detours. You'll feel like you're losing valuable stuff but it sets you free.
6. What is your character good at, comfortable with? Throw the polar opposite at them. Challenge them. How do they deal?
7. Come up with your ending before you figure out your middle. Seriously. Endings are hard, get yours working up front.
8. Finish your story, let go even if it's not perfect. In an ideal world you have both, but move on. Do better next time.
9. When you're stuck, make a list of what WOULDN'T happen next. Lots of times the material to get you unstuck will show up.
10. Pull apart the stories you like. What you like in them is a part of you; you've got to recognize it before you can use it.
11. Putting it on paper lets you start fixing it. If it stays in your head, a perfect idea, you'll never share it with anyone.
12. Discount the 1st thing that comes to mind. And the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th – get the obvious out of the way. Surprise yourself.
13. Give your characters opinions. Passive/malleable might seem likable to you as you write, but it's poison to the audience.
14. Why must you tell THIS story? What's the belief burning within you that your story feeds off of? That's the heart of it.

15. If you were your character, in this situation, how would you feel? Honesty lends credibility to unbelievable situations.
16. What are the stakes? Give us reason to root for the character. What happens if they don't succeed? Stack the odds against.
17. No work is ever wasted. If it's not working, let go and move on - it'll come back around to be useful later.
18. You have to know yourself: the difference between doing your best & fussing. Story is testing, not refining.
19. Coincidences to get characters into trouble are great; coincidences to get them out of it are cheating.
20. Exercise: take the building blocks of a movie you dislike. How d'you rearrange them into what you DO like?
21. You gotta identify with your situation/characters, can't just write 'cool'. What would make YOU act that way?
22. What's the essence of your story? Most economical telling of it? If you know that, you can build out from there.

Creating your webinar

Once you know who your webinar is targeting, what motivates them, what messages your story needs to include, and how you're going to tell it, you're ready to put pen to paper.

Your outline

We recommend starting with an outline: we generally start by populating a Google Doc with a straw man outlining the key points. We've included an example of what such an outline looks like for a Top-of-the-Funnel Awareness webinar hosted by fictional a SaaS Marketing Automation Platform.

Building on top of the straw man outline, we work collaboratively to fill in the content with our team. The outline also helps us identify the right partners and presenters to help us tell our story.

Identify and recruit partners & co-presenters

Identifying partners and co-presenters either happens at the earliest stage, or at this stage, after developing a good idea for the topic. At the earliest stage, it usually sound like, "We should do a webinar with AcmeCo to talk about the incredible success they've had." At this stage, it would sound more like, "This is a great story to tell. Who is the right company to tell it with?"

Benefits of working with partners & co-presenters

Working with partners and co-presenters makes the content of the webinar stronger because expert speakers give you more credibility, and having more speakers makes your content appeal to a wider audience while creating opportunities for interesting, engaging dialogue.

Second, working with partners and co-presenters gives you the ability to cast a wider net by cross-promoting the webinar, enabling you to reach further beyond your own existing network.

Sample Webinar Outline

Topic: How AcmeCo Increased Qualified Leads by 25% with Marketing Automation

Target Time: 35 minutes + 15 minute Q&A, will be recorded

- › **Introduction** (3 min)
- › **Poll:** Where are you joining us from today? (1 min)
- › **Story: Burning Platform:** AcmeCo was losing market share (2 min)
- › **Poll:** What problem are you facing? (1 min)
- › **Promised Land:** What if AcmeCo could unlock growth via automation? (2 min)
- › **Story:** Identifying Potential Solutions (5 min)
- › **Story:** Struggling to find the right solution (4 min)
- › **Story:** Aha! The right solution, How it worked (6 min)
- › **Results:** AcmeCo increased MQLs by 25% (3 min)
- › **Video:** AcmeCo CEO Shout-out (2 min)
- › **Poll:** Have you tried marketing automation? (1 min)
- › **Call to Action:** Start your free trial (1 min)
- › **Moderated Q&A** (15 min)
- › **Quick Demo:** Introduction to AutomationCo's solution (7 min)
- › **Call to Action:** Book a demo (1 min)
- › **Conclusion & Sign-off** (2 min)
- › **Exit Link:** AutomationCo Trial & Demo

Joint venture webinars

Joint venture webinars are a specific case of working with partners and co-presenters where you explicitly make a deal or arrangement with another company.

A common arrangement is that both companies cross-pollinate by independently promoting the webinar to their audiences via existing channels (e.g., email list, social, blog) and then sharing the combined registration list with each other. The result is that the companies grow together.

Joint venture webinars are a great idea in cases where another company has a complementary audience to your own and there's synergies in presenting content together.

Scheduling your webinar

Once you know what content you're going to present and who's presenting it, it's time to lock down a date. It's important to schedule far enough in advance that you have enough time to promote it. We generally recommend 2-4 weeks of lead time.

When's the best time to host a webinar?

The second factor to consider is start time. Based on nearly 10 years of data on webinar show-up rates by time of day and day of the week, the optimal time to host a webinar for B2B SaaS and services companies is probably Tuesday through Thursday, between 11am - 1pm in the local time where most of your audience is located. If your audience is geographically dispersed across multiple timezones, consider offering multiple sessions of the same webinar as a recurring webinar.

Optimal timing can of course change by vertical and audience. For example, we work with thousands of educators, coaches, churches, and nonprofits, whose audiences tend to tune-in after the workday, or even on weekends, so one size definitely does not fit all. Have any questions about the best time for your webinar? Shoot us a note or drop us a chat. We're here to help!

Building your deck

We're cruising now! After creating your outline and identifying partners and co-presenters, it's time to create your presentation deck, assuming you're going to use one. Call us old school, but we still think using a presentation is a good way to ground the conversation and make it easy for people to follow along, especially the visual learners.

Although, that statement comes with some caveats:

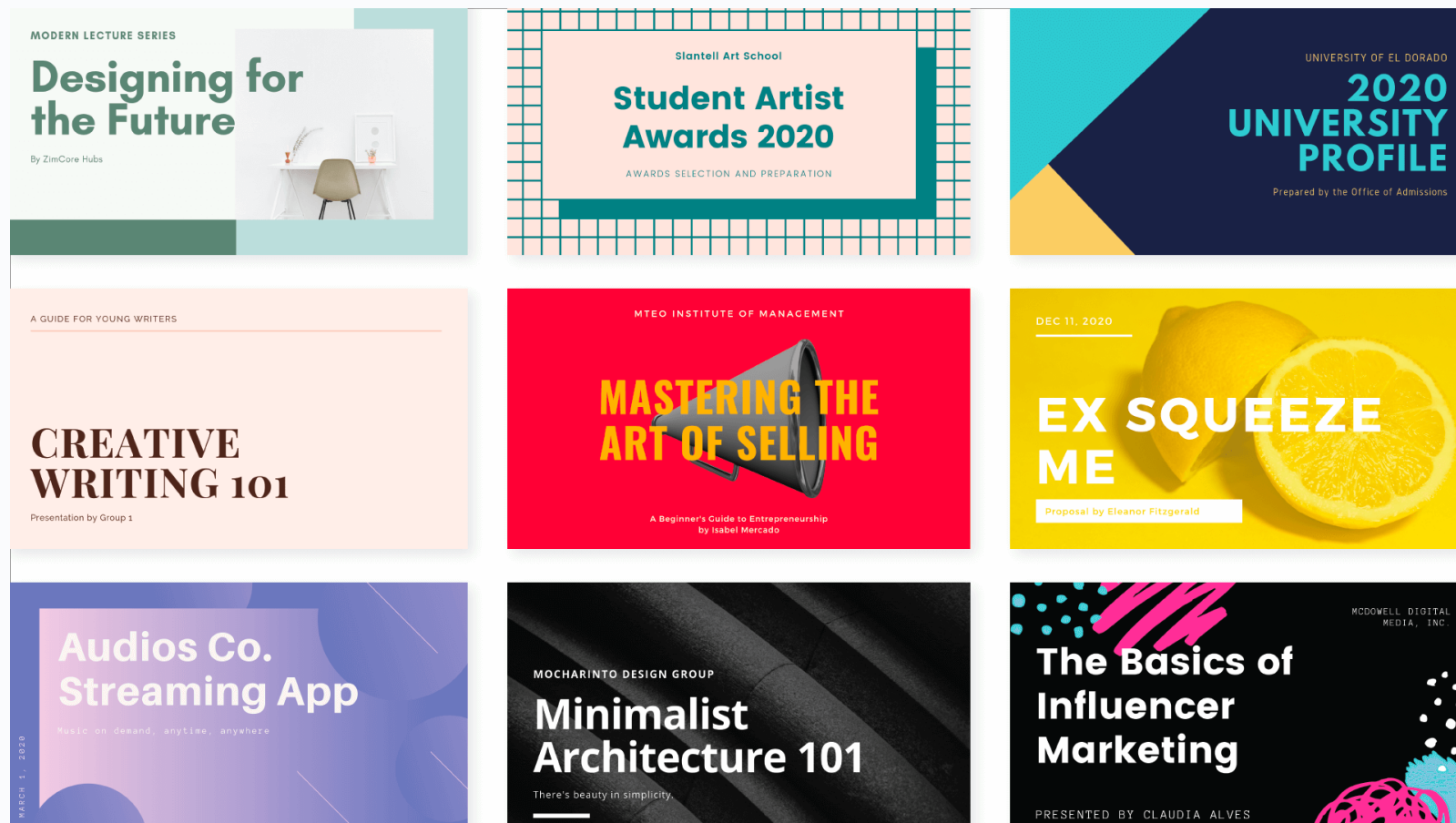
First, we recommend limiting the number of slides you use, and inserting stories, polls, videos, and Q&A in strategic places to break up the content and keep things interesting. In most presentations, there's a sweet spot in the 20-40 minute range where audience engagement peaks, and then usually falls off considerably, so most marketing webinars should not be too long. Using too many slides in a row without a break can stretch the boundaries of an audience's attention span.

If you have too much content to present in 40-50 minutes, your topic might be too broad, or you might want to consider breaking your webinar up into separate sessions of a webinar series. Of course, there are many exceptions to this statement, and if you're unsure, we're always here to help.

Second, we recommend keeping the slides light on content. Slides should enhance the message and provide simple, pleasant visuals that help people

make sense of it. Slides should not present the audience with a wall of text.

Finally, we strongly recommend breaking each build (if you use them) into separate slides, and uploading your slides to the webinar as a PDF.



The best webinar slide decks are visually engaging and not too dense, so they're easy to follow.

Because BigMarker's platform is built for accessibility across Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Edge, Mac, PC, iOS, and Android, but not all slide formats (e.g., PowerPoint) are compatible with all OS/browser versions, using a PDF is the only way to ensure that the content displays consistently for all attendees.

Should we use a script?

Yes and no. Your outline is in a way your script, and we recommend doing a

dry-run or two through the content so you know what you're going to say. But we don't recommend writing down each word you're going to say verbatim and reading off of a sheet. Presentations that are well prepared but spoken extemporaneously (rather than read from a script) come across much more authentically, which tends to drive higher levels of attendee satisfaction.

If speaking extemporaneously is not your thing, then by all means, write good notes and read off of them if you have to. Preparation is the most important thing!

Don't become a horror story

We've heard some terrifying stories over the years: like the presenter who forgot he wasn't wearing pants, or the other who thought it was a good idea to host a high-stakes webinar while his airplane was taxiing to the runway. Hint: both ended badly.

While guest presenters are valuable for the credibility and audiences they bring, they're also a liability. Onboarding them takes time and effort as they bring varying equipment and levels of technical proficiency, they sometimes back out at the last minute, and there's always the two-in-a-million risk they do something crazy.

A great way to manage the risk of guest presenters is to use webinar automation. BigMarker has a built-in automation capability that empowers you to program the events of a webinar (e.g., presentations, videos, polls, chats, offers) on an automated timeline, so the webinar can drive itself, like Autopilot on a Tesla.

Reduce risk and drive engagement by harnessing automation

When you use webinar automation, two beautiful things happen: First, you've removed about 95% of the risk from your live webinar because now everything that's supposed to happen happens right on time, automatically. And second, you've freed up the time during the live webinar, that you have otherwise spent presenting the content, to focus on engaging your audience.

The best part is, after using automation for the up-front presentation part of your webinar, you can go back to live mode to conduct a live, moderated Q&A session at the end. We call this a "hybrid webinar," and it really is the best of both worlds because you get the benefits of automation coupled with the connectivity of face time that only a live event can provide.

Now that you've built your webinar, it's time to start promoting it.

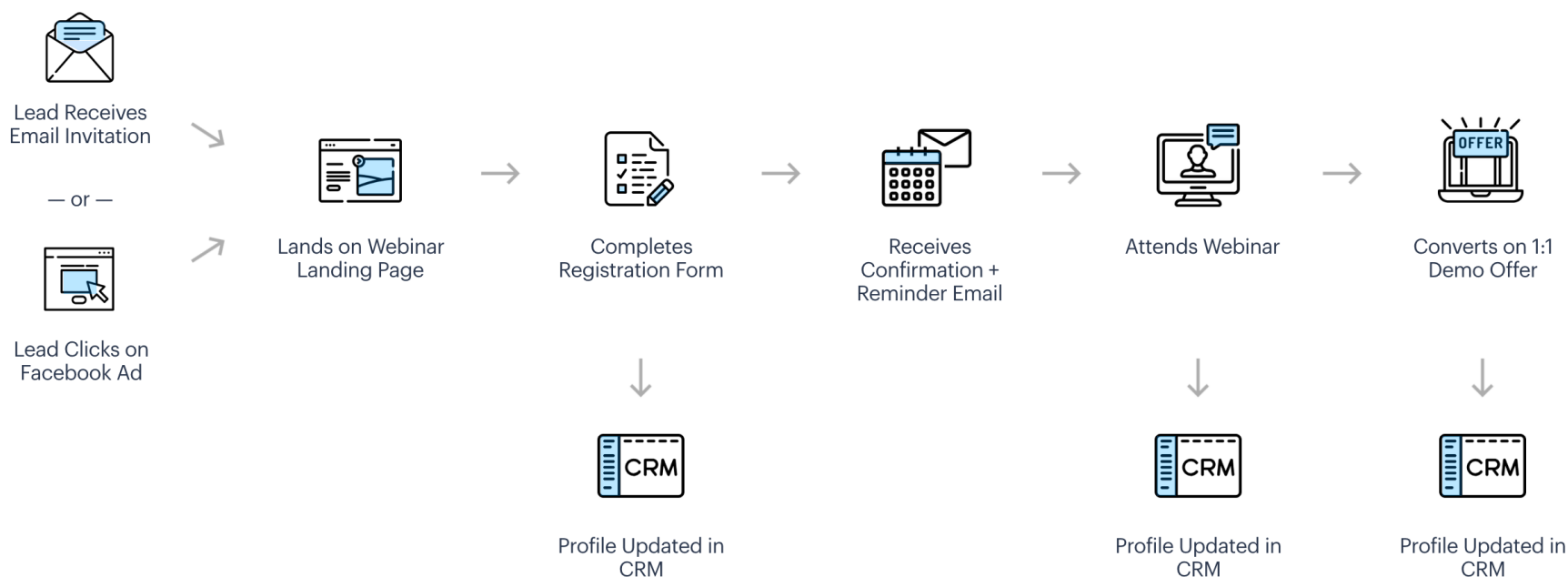
Promoting your webinar

Now that you have a good understanding of your audience and the content you're going to create to engage them, we're ready to talk about how you'll promote your event. Webinars are a great way to drive leads, create demand, communicate value, and create real connection with your audience.

The following playbook illustrates one lead generation flow you can build using BigMarker to drive one-on-one meetings with prospects (e.g., product demos, coaching calls, or strategy sessions). Depending on your objective, audience, and marketing channels, there are numerous other playbooks you could use. If you need help finding the right playbook for your specific use case, just ping

us. As always, we're here to help.

Webinar Marketing Playbook: Drive One-on-one Meetings



The number one question we get from webinar marketers is, “How is BigMarker different than other webinar platforms.” The answer lies in the fact that other webinar platforms started out as meeting tools, built for internal communication within teams, but BigMarker was built from the ground-up for webinars—which by nature are external communication with external audiences. As a result, BigMarker empowers webinar hosts to run the entire playbook, start to finish, from a single webinar hosting and marketing platform. This is the first of many differences between BigMarker and other platforms that we’ll explore.

BigMarker’s approach to webinar marketing

The difference between BigMarker and other webinar platforms is visible at every level, down to the very way the system is architected.

The first key difference is that BigMarker has always been browser-based with no-downloads. While downloads may work fine for meetings, for marketing webinars, we view them as a non-starter. Customers tell us that they see up to 50% improvements in show-up rates when switching from download-based software providers. Our point of view is that in marketing, conversion rate optimization matters, so maximizing show-up rate through no-downloads should be a requirement of every webinar marketing program.

A second key difference is the powerful marketing capabilities that BigMarker provides around every webinar. No other platform has the breadth of features for marketers from robust email campaigns, customizable landing pages, embeddability, integration with Facebook and YouTube live, monetization, formats including channels, courses, and series, and much, much more.

A third key difference is automation. BigMarker leads the pack in its ability to automate a single webinar, so you can reduce risk and focus on audience engagement. It also leads in its ability to automate a recurring, evergreen webinar, or even an entire webinar series, empowering you to create automated sales and marketing machines that generate qualified leads, appointments, and even revenue for you while you sleep.

A fourth key difference is integrations: BigMarker integrates with more tools and platforms than any other webinar software provider. We've teamed up with virtually every CRM, marketing automation system, course platform, landing page builder, and email provider on the market, including Salesforce, Hubspot, Mailchimp, ActiveCampaign, Infusionsoft, Constant Contact, Eloqua, Marketo, MailerLite, Thinktific, ThriveCart, Unbounce, and Zapier, so you can use BigMarker seamlessly with the tools you're already using to grow your customer base.

A fifth key difference is the ability to repurpose content. BigMarker is building the world's most advanced on-demand video marketing platform, so you can maximize the ROI of your time spent producing webinars by leveraging that content into other channels and mediums. Stay tuned on that front, as we'll be making some big announcements in this area soon.

Finally, a sixth key difference is in customer satisfaction. BigMarker is the #1 highest-rated webinar software in customer satisfaction on the most popular software review site, G2 Crowd. Our approach from the beginning has been to listen to our customers and build what they want, and it seems to be working.

Now that we've reviewed BigMarker's approach to webinar marketing through the lens of how we've chosen to build the platform differently than others, let's dive into some best practices and recommendations for each aspect of promoting your webinar content.

Create your landing page

Your landing page is your webinar's public face. It's where you send people to register before the event. And it's where they come back again to view the recording (or replay) after the live webinar has ended.

It's important because your success in balancing the art and science of landing page design — putting your brand's best foot forward while also driving conversion rate optimization — will be one of the key determinants of whether your webinar program is successful. The metric your landing page drives is called *sign-up rate*, or the percentage of people who visited the page that signed up.

If you're leveraging evergreen webinars, then the success of your landing page is even more important, because chances are you're spending real money to

direct traffic to the page.

Our goal is to give you options to help you successfully build webinar landing pages, regardless of if you're just starting out, or if you're running big time sophisticated evergreen campaigns.

For the 90% of webinar hosts who need a solid (but not over-the-top) landing page builder, BigMarker provides 15 conversion-optimized landing page templates that you can customize in minutes. For those who need more, we offer Unbounce and Hubspot integrations, so you can build landing pages with the higher levels of customization on the most powerful landing page builders.

Finally, for those who need maximum customization, we offer embeddable registration forms and a robust API (docs.bigmarker.com), so you can go nuts building completely custom pages and integrating them with BigMarker registration.

Regardless of where you host your landing pages, your registration forms are customizable. It's common to collect name, email address, and company name from registrants. But what about other fields like job title, company size, phone number, or even an input field to take in questions before the event? Each of these fields could be potentially valuable depending on your goals. Just be careful not to overdo it, as forms that get beyond a handful of fields tend to be susceptible to steeper drop-offs in completion rate.

While building your landing page and registration form, you can also customize your registration confirmation page, the page people see immediately after registering. Here, you can configure what follow-up actions you want registrants to take, including adding the event to their calendar or sharing it with their friends.

You can also embed a big friendly call to action to push them to the next step or engage them with another piece of content while they wait for your event to start.

Once you've customized your landing page, registration form, and confirmation page, it's time to start getting the word out.

Create your email invitation campaign

Email invitations are still the #1 channel for driving traffic to webinars, but that's changing. Nonetheless, after you design your landing page, you'll want to begin working on invites. There are a few metrics here that you'll want to pay close attention to. Delivery rate will primarily tell you about the quality of your list. Open rate will tell you about both the quality of your list and your subject line. And click-through rate will tell you about the quality of your content and how interested your audience is in the topic, description, and presenters you've put in front of them.

For the 90% of webinar hosts who need a solid email platform for webinars, BigMarker provides just that, with customizable content, design, and scheduling of campaigns for webinar invitations. There are a couple things you should consider before scheduling invitations:

First, do you want to enable one-click registration? When this feature is turned on, people who click the Register button in an email invitation will be registered automatically, and redirected to your registration confirmation page. When it's turned off, they'll be directed to the registration page, where they'll have to fill out your registration form.

Second, when do you want to schedule invitations to send? We've found that emails sent in the morning and evening tend to have the highest open rates,

but there are always exceptions to the rule and nobody knows your audience better than you do.

Set up your webinar's automated emails

Inviting people to your webinar is the first step, but getting them to show up takes more work. Fortunately, we've taken the manual work out of the process with automated emails.

The most important automated emails are registration confirmation emails and registration reminder emails. Registration confirmation emails are sent to people immediately after registering, and registration reminders are similar, except they're sent at predefined intervals before your webinar starts. Common intervals include 24 hours and 1 hour before the webinar starts.

Both emails typically include all the important info the registrant needs to attend, including date, time, and their personalized URL so they can log into the webinar with their name already populated in the system.

The majority of attendees who show up click into a live webinar from one of these emails, so they are a crucial part of optimizing another key metric: show-up rate.

Promote your webinar on social media

To promote live webinars, we generally recommend a three-pronged approach:

First, promote on your regular social media channels: the most common are LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. Second, promote in any relevant groups that you manage or in which you're a member. Finally, leverage the networks of your partners and co-presenters to cross-promote and extend the reach of

your webinar to new audiences.

This last point makes the biggest impact in terms of reaching more people and building your list, which is why recruiting the right partners and co-presenters is so crucial.

For recurring, on-demand, and evergreen webinars, you're in less of a race to get people registered before a certain date, as these webinars are not on-time events, but rather persistent pieces of content that people can always engage with. That characteristic gives you more flexibility to experiment, trying various approaches to reaching the right message with the right audience at the right time, in order to maximize your content's reach and impact.

Depending on your webinar's use case and objective, there are other specific tactics to consider.

For example, if you're a B2B SaaS company working to generate leads and free trials, you'd likely use a different approach than you would if you were a career coach working to generate new clients, or a wellness expert selling an information product.

Each of these examples has a different optimal recipe for the use of paid ads vs. organic, audience parameters, design, and copywriting. By optimizing and scaling their own recipe, the best webinar hosts achieve a 4-5x return on investment on social ad spend, generating hundreds of thousands, or even millions of dollars in revenue.

If advanced webinar marketing strategies are applicable to your business, BigMarker has a team of webinar marketing experts on hand to help.

Embed your webinar into your website

BigMarker provides four easy ways to integrate your webinar into your website. The first is an easily customizable registration widget, which provides multiple formats to achieve your desired experience.

The first format is a single-webinar card, which is good for featuring a webinar in the side bar of a blog. Or, you could feature multiple cards on the same page to create a content grid featuring multiple webinars.

The second format is a multi-webinar card, which is similar but features a stream of multiple webinars, similar to how you'd expect a 'Related Articles' feed to appear on the right side of a media site.

The third format is an embeddable registration form, which makes it easy to capture registrations using BigMarker when you create your own webinar landing pages on your website, CMS, or landing page builder. When building the page, you add your desired text and media, and then simply embed the registration form with a single HTML snippet. That way, when people register via your page, their data is automatically captured by BigMarker, triggering any downstream events you have configured, including registrants being sent confirmation and reminder emails, their permissions being reflected in the live webinar, and both registration and behavioral (engagement) data being appropriately categorized and passed to your CRM.

The fourth format is a simple registration button, which makes it easy to build a one-click registration into your website.

Beyond these four, you also have various advanced options using integrations, webhooks, and our API. Each of these options give you the power to design much more customized experiences for your audience and deeply integrate

BigMarker's capabilities into your workflow. To learn more, we recommend looking at our [Integrations](#) or [API Documentation](#). And as always, our team is here to help.

Promote your webinar in your email newsletter

In addition to promoting your webinar via a dedicated email invitation, another good opportunity to reach more people is to give it a mention in a regularly scheduled newsletter. To avoid it competing with your newsletter's main message, we usually see these mentions toward the bottom of the email, under a headline that says something like, "PS: Join our upcoming webinar."

Promote your webinar on your blog

A blog post is a great way to tee up your webinar and tell your audience what to expect and why they should attend your event. It's also low hanging fruit: if you're already doing the work to develop the outline and presentation for your webinar, it doesn't take long to repurpose that into a short piece of content for your blog.

In our view, creating the blog post for the sole purpose of promoting your webinar is less interesting and exciting to readers; rather, the post should stand on its own as a valuable piece of content that happens to be the same topic as your webinar. At the top, bottom, or throughout this piece of content, you have the opportunity to invite people to join your webinar. To give them the incentive, it would be smart to tell people that the webinar will go deeper, providing them more value on the topic.

Another smart way to provide more value is to offer exclusive giveaways in the webinar that your audience can't get anywhere else. Tools, such as guides, assessments, and playbooks, as well as opportunities to engage deeper, such

as free trials, demos, coupon codes, and one-on-one coaching sessions are effective hooks to get your audience to take the next step.

Create a teaser video

A teaser video is a great way to create excitement for your event, while addressing your audience in a more dynamic way than your typical text and image post. Even a simple 30-second video shot on your smartphone that says, hey guys, we're hosting an web summit, masterclass, or workshop on this or that topic...here's what we're going to cover...here's who we have lined up to speak to you...and here's what you're going to get out of joining...can go a long way to not only drive interest and engagement around your event, but also create a touchpoint that positions you as a thought leader within your network.

Promote your webinar with partners

Working with partners and co-presenters gives you the ability to cast a wider net in promoting the webinar, enabling you to reach further beyond your own existing network.

Joint venture webinars are a specific case of working with partners and co-presenters where you explicitly make some sort of deal or arrangement with another company.

A common arrangement is that both companies independently promote the webinar to their existing audiences via their existing channels (e.g., email, social, blog) and share the registration list with each other. The result is that the companies grow together.

Joint venture webinars are a great idea in cases where the other company has a complementary audience to your own and there's synergy in working

together to present content.

Your powerful marketing engine

Once you've set up a workflow like the one we've walked through over the past few pages, you will have built something more powerful than just a sequence of tactics: you will have a powerful, repeatable, and scalable marketing engine that, with some tuning, can drive customer acquisition and activation with a ton of built-in leverage — meaning you build it once, and it continues to deliver value over time.

In BigMarker's platform, we strive to help you maximize the ROI of your webinar and video programs. One of the ways that we do this is by making it easy for you to save your favorite settings and configurations into templates, so you can experiment, optimizing various aspects of your webinar marketing engine, and save the configurations that work best so you can duplicate them for new campaigns and products, iterate on them some more, and continue to benefit from them for months — or even years — to come.

Preparing for your live webinar

Now that you've put in the important upfront work to understand your audience, develop content that's compelling to them, recruit partners and co-presenters, develop a great story and present it visually, and build a powerful webinar marketing engine, you're ready to start preparing for your live event.

Get ready to go live

Fortune favors the prepared, and if you're planning to go live in front of a large group of customers or prospective customers, we recommend double and

triple checking that you're really ready. A while back, we asked you to please not be the next horror story we hear about, and we'll repeat that cry again here because this is where most of those horror stories begin to fall apart.

You would be amazed at how many times we've seen a high-stakes webinar blow up because the team hosting it was not sufficiently prepared, because they didn't invest 30 minutes to do a dry-run to learn software they've never used before. Every software is a little bit different, and because of the high rate of innovation, it evolves quickly. The best thing you can do is prepare.

Onboard guest presenters

Guest presenters are a live webinar's single biggest point of failure. They're busy, they don't want to invest the time to do a dry run, they're running between meetings, or worse, they're in a car, boarding a plane, or trying to call in with one bar from Yosemite.

The good news is challenges like these are completely avoidable. First, we recommend sending each guest presenter a calendar invite featuring a quick checklist of the things they need to know: their link to join via the web, their dial-in number to join by phone, and date and time they need to show up.

Second, we recommend scheduling a quick dry run with each guest presenter at least 2 days before the webinar. It works best when you get them on the phone first and then connect via the web. Ideally, you should ask them to join the dry-run from the same location (and internet connection) that they will use for the live webinar.

That way, you can uncover any issues with that presenter's setup early, and you'll have plenty of time to create an alternate game plan. For example, if the guest presenter is on an office wi-fi network that is slow or unstable, you can

ask them to plug into Ethernet. Or if their IT department has strict firewalls that block video, then you can ask them to join by dialing-in. Both of these issues are common last-mile internet challenges that some guest presenters in some offices face. But the problems they can cause in live webinars are completely avoidable with a little bit of preparation.

Set up your Waiting Room & and Exit URL

Your waiting room is the screen that attendees see when they join the webinar early, before your presentation starts. You can customize it with a logo, background image, countdown timer, and even a video that they can watch while they wait. As you're making final preparations for your webinar, this is a nice finishing touch to add to the experience. And while you're thinking about the experience of attendees joining the webinar, now's a good time to think about when they leave the webinar. Use the Exit URL feature to redirect attendees to a website, landing page, or follow-up offer after the webinar has ended.

Practice, practice, practice

If you're hosting webinars or using a new webinar software for the first time, did we mention how important it is to practice? Not to beat a dead horse, but even after you practice a couple times, you should practice a little bit more.

Seriously consider leveraging automation

If your live webinars are high-stakes, e.g., they have high level decision makers in attendance or are addressing a topic of critical importance to your buyer's journey, then we recommend using webinar automation. BigMarker's webinar automation capability is the most advanced in the industry, as it allows you to

program every aspect of your webinar to run on a self-driving automated timeline, so your presentation, videos, chats, polls, handouts, and offers execute right on time, as if they were happening live.

This approach reduces the risks of broadcasting live, and also frees your team up to spend more time engaging your audience by responding to questions or moderating Chat. After the presentation is finished, you could then make your automated event a hybrid webinar by turning on your mics and cameras to host a live Q&A session at the end.

Going live

Now that you're fully prepared for your webinar, you're ready to go live. Here are some best practices for you to keep in mind as you're presenting:

Start strong

“A stunning first impression is not the same thing as love at first sight. But it’s surely an invitation to consider the matter.”

- Lois McMaster

Within the first 60 seconds of your webinar, your audience should know that they're in the right place, the conversation will be valuable to them, and most importantly, that it will be worth their time. When hosts fail to deliver a clear and concise summary and value statement in the beginning of their webinar, we see significantly higher drop-off rates after the first few minutes.

Present confidently

“Either you run the day or the day runs you.”

- Jim Rohn

We probably don't have to sell you on the idea of presenting confidently. You already know that confidence will lead to a better audience touchpoint and a stronger impression. When you're on stage, you have to step up, rising to the occasion. This means being well-rehearsed in what you're going to say, and how you're going to say it.

It means speaking clearly, articulating your ideas thoughtfully, and not speaking too quickly. It means having good posture, strong eye contact with the webcam (if you're using one), letting your personality shine, and being authentic to your own personal voice, as well as your brand's voice.

Engage your audience

Very infrequently do we want to listen to someone drone on for 60 minutes about a topic. The easiest way you can keep your webinar interesting and ensure your content is memorable is to make it interactive for your audience. Here are a few tactics we suggest:

First, open your webinar with a poll, in the first two minutes of your event, just after providing the opening summary and value statement. Some of our favorite webinars have used a one-two punch approach by splitting the opening poll into two questions: one that's more serious and captures valuable data from the audience, that your team can follow up on, and a second that's more fun and light-hearted to set the tone for the event and tell the audience

that it's okay to take their guard down a little bit.

Second, open the Q&A board to invite questions from the audience, and solicit the help of teammate to moderate. Or, if your presentation is driving itself because you're using webinar automation, then you'll have time to focus on the audience's questions yourself.

But what if your audience doesn't ask any questions? Great question! Even if people are a bit shy or pretend to know everything about the topic you're presenting, there's still engagement value and social proof in seeing all of the questions come in. Accordingly, we'd recommend having a few members of your team seed the Q&A board with some good questions throughout the early part of your webinar. Not only will this approach spark conversation, but it will also give you the ability to highlight the key pieces of information you want people to take away from the presentation.

Capture data from your audience with polls & quizzes

Consider adding one or two more polls throughout the webinar to keep pushing the event as close to being a conversation as possible, while of course also taking advantage of the opportunity to capture more valuable data from your audience. You can even pop-up a quiz or survey at the end of the webinar to capture feedback, see how well the content was understood, or even provide the basis for certifying the audience in the topic you presented.

Keep it interesting by rolling-in videos

No matter which cable broadcast network you watch—ESPN, CNN, etc.—they all have a few key things in common. One of them is that they create interesting programming by rolling video footage into their broadcasts. Can you imagine how boring the news would be if it was just a talking head reading

off a teleprompter for 30 minutes?

The videos that newscasters introduce provide variety and color to the story being shared, showing the audience what's happening, rather than just telling them. Webinars are no different, so if possible, we recommend rolling in at least one or two short videos into each event to keep things interesting.

Give ‘em what they came for with handouts

If people leave your webinar with a more positive perception of your brand, then it's a win. While most webinars are free to attend, we're still asking the audience to spend valuable time with us. So how do we ensure they get their money's worth? One way is to give them something to take with them, so they can use and apply what you've taught them.

Supplying valuable, actionable handouts like white papers, guides, and checklists helps attendees apply the takeaways from the webinar to their everyday lives. And because it takes five to seven touch-points before your brand is truly memorable, it's also a great opportunity to give your audience some branded content that they might just keep handy on their desktop.

Push your audience to the next step with CTAs and offers

Every marketing tactic should have a call to action (CTA), and webinars are no different. But your CTA can vary widely depending on what business you're in and how you're using webinars.

For top of the funnel webinars, the call to action could be to start a free trial of your product. For middle of the funnel webinars, it could be scheduling a one-on-one demo or call with a member of your team. And for bottom of the funnel

webinars, it would be to purchase your product or service.

We've tried to make this final call to action as easy and impactful as possible with our Pop-up Offers feature. Simply write the copy of your offer, add an image, and add a link to the landing page where your offer lives. Then trigger the Offer when you're ready in a live webinar, or program it for just the perfect time in an automated or evergreen webinar.

Record your webinar to repurpose your content

Be sure to record your webinar so the content you produce in it can live on and continue to bear fruit over time. Aside from providing access to the replay for registrants who missed it or attendees who want to watch it again, there are many other ways to repurpose your webinar, which we'll share after discussing the best practices for following up with your audience.

Follow up with your audience

Push registration and engagement data to your CRM

Because we built BigMarker from the ground up for marketers, every step of the process is designed to generate valuable customer data for you.

From the moment a prospect opens an invitation email or visits your landing page, to the questions they ask and polls they answer in your live event, to the time they spend watching your on-demand videos, we track every click and give you the ability to analyze it with reports. Even more powerful than reports, however, is the ability to push all of that data to your favorite CRM and marketing automation platforms with our integrations.

We recommend configuring integrations before going live, so the data flows seamlessly and arrives where you need it when your event is over. Or in the case of evergreen webinars and on-demand videos, the data flows in real-time to the systems you use every day to manage customer relationships.

Follow up & share the recording

Because attendees gave you their valuable time, a thank you is definitely warranted. So say thanks! They'll also probably want the replay, so sending the recording would be nice. It also probably wouldn't hurt to send links to where they can download the handouts, or find the offer you shared, since you spent the time to prepare them, and a few attendees may not have had a chance to click them in time during the live event.

Segment your messaging

We recommend segmenting your follow up message by audience. At the very least, attendees should get different messages than those who registered but did not attend. And if you want to go above and beyond, adding a personalized note to any VIP prospects is a nice added touch.

Finally, depending on the business you're in, how your team is structured, and where in the funnel you're hosting webinars, there are some other things to consider:

For example, if you're on a marketing team hosting webinars to nurture leads, and you see that a contact on a deal that's being actively pursued by a member of your sales team, then giving that rep a heads up that their contact asked a question would be a good idea. Of course, if you're using a CRM integration, then this process is automated, but a little nudge or heads up never hurts!

In another example, if you're on a customer success team hosting webinars to onboard customers, then a good follow up to attending a webinar might be receiving some sort of certification on a product or process. Companies like Salesforce and Hubspot have done a fantastic job rewarding users who complete onboarding courses, providing them valuable certifications that signal their proficiency in areas like digital marketing.

Ask for feedback

Another great way to follow up with your audience is to ask for feedback, and while it's useful to get the input of attendees broadly, it's even more useful to ask for the input of individual attendees who have not asked any questions or engaged with any of your other content or offers. Simply asking them, "What did you think?" could be a good low-commitment way to ask them to continue the conversation.

Repurpose your content

While live webinars are great for creating very deep engagement with a specific audience at a specific time, a limitation is that they only reach a specific audience at a specific time. We can increase the return on time and budget allocated to live webinars by repurposing them.

Repurposing content stretches ROI

The idea of repurposing is that we start with a piece of long-form content, like a 45-minute webinar, and break it up into a larger number of short-form pieces that can be distributed across channels. Here are some ideas:

Publish your webinar on-demand

Starting with the obvious, publishing your webinar on-demand is a no-brainer. At BigMarker, every webinar hosting account comes with a channel where your webinars — past and present — live, and where your audience can find all of the great content you've created. You may also want to create a section of your website or blog to host an archive of past webinars. We make it really easy for you to embed on-demand webinars hosted on BigMarker into these pages, with all of our lead generation, interactive features, and CRM integrations built-in.

Create bite-sized, snackable videos

From a 45-minute webinar, you may be able to pull five to ten little thirty-second to one-minute segments to create snackable videos.

The videos could include the faces of presenters speaking, or it could just include audio with a background graphic or slide. We also recommend adding subtitles, so that when people encounter your video scrolling their feed, they can consume it even if they can't listen (because they're on a crowded bus without headphones, for example).

Create a podcast

Going forward, we expect a greater convergence between webinars and podcasts, because they're so similar in how they're conducted and what they offer. However, the defining characteristic of a podcast is that — despite having audio and video versions available online — they are primarily consumed via a podcasting service like iTunes or Spotify. Extracting the audio from your webinar and trimming a couple parts to optimize for listening is not

too heavy of a lift, and can significantly expand the size of your audience.

Create a white paper

The transcript of a 45-minute-long webinar is multiple pages long, and is often stuffed with phenomenal insights and soundbites from presenters. By transcribing the webinar, editing it down into readable sections, and repurposing some of the graphics from your slide deck, you can produce a white paper in just a few hours, far less time than it would take to create one from scratch.

Create a series

Once your webinar program has been in flight for some time, you'll have created dozens of events on a variety of topics. Ultimately, categories or themes will emerge, and you'll see the opportunity to create a video series for a particular topic, category, or segment of your audience.

BigMarker makes it easy to create and publish a series, by giving you the tools built right into your account. If the webinars or videos you want to include in your series already exist, all you have to do is create the series, design the page and write a description, and choose which content to include. Series can be free or paid, and you can apply the same lead generation and integration settings to them that you can to individual webinars.

Build traction over time

In marketing, success rarely happens overnight. Usually, it's consistency and optimization of a tactic or channel that drives results—and webinars are no different. With all the options to record, publish replays, embed and repurpose content, it's easier than ever to build a strong base of content that continues

to deliver results for years to come. Our approach to building traction with content over time is centered around your channel, the place where all your content (past, present, and future) lives. Over the past 10 years, we've seen some of our favorite channels grow from a few subscribers to tens of thousands, driven by passionate teams creating valuable content.

Closing thoughts

When we first started building BigMarker, interactive marketing was still a new concept and the word "webinar" wasn't well-known. Being a part of the evolution of how companies engage with their customers has been a great journey, and we're excited for you to see what we're working on next.

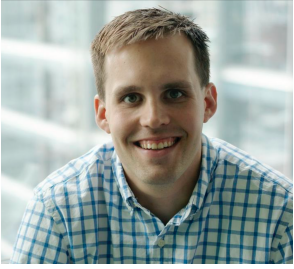
If you're ever looking for feedback on your ideas, or someone to help you build out the program you envision, please reach out. We're here to help!

We're here to help!

If you're just getting started with your webinar program, or are trying to breathe new life into an existing one, our Customer Success team would love to help you think through all things webinar strategy, content, design, and marketing.

Email us at hello@bigmarker.com.

About the Authors



Justin Brown is a product designer and marketer passionate about helping companies grow faster by telling authentic stories that build stronger relationships with customers. He is BigMarker's COO & Head of Product.

Email Justin at: justin@bigmarker.com



Zhu-Song Mei is a software engineer passionate about connecting people with the knowledge they need to become the best version of themselves. He is BigMarker's Founder & CEO.

Email Zhu-Song at: zhu-song@bigmarker.com