

BROAD MARKET *Insights*



Thought Leadership in Action for Life Insurance

Webinar Smart Trends: How & When to Use Interactive Virtual Experiences



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Not too long ago, if someone wanted to learn about new industry skills or trends, they would likely attend a local lecture or seminar.

But with the dramatic increase in remote learning, webinars have now become one of the easiest and most popular ways to share information. Whether it's for prospects or current clients, employees, or a business associate, webinars can provide an engaging educational opportunity for you to position yourself as an authority in your industry.

This online tool can be used for sales, marketing, and lead generation, as it can give you the ability to answer common questions and address a target audience that is ready to learn about your products and services. However, you may miss out on benefiting from the full power of this medium if you don't explore how to use interactive tools to maximize audience engagement.

To get the most out of your webinar, try integrating some of these marketing best practices.

Webinars 101

First, let's take a closer look at what a webinar is. This term loosely describes a lecture that is held for a group of people over the internet. These are typically held on webinar-specific platforms and software, such as GoToWebinar.

On a webinar, you can share your screen, a PowerPoint presentation, slides, photos, and other files. You can also simply use the video camera from your computer to display yourself talking.

Unlike on-demand content, webinars are typically held in real-time as a "live" event. However, depending on your company's compliance guidelines, sometimes the content may need to be pre-recorded and approved and shown as a simulated live event. Again, depending on your compliance guidelines, a question and answer (Q&A) session may or may not be offered. When possible, offering Q&A makes it possible to engage with your audience directly, creating a more intimate and authentic connection.

Webinars can be used as educational resources or even cost-effective base of a sales funnel, helping you attract more clients. Because they take place online, you aren't limited to any one geographic region. This can give you the ability to grow your business while sharing your knowledge and expertise to a larger audience.

Interactive Options to Consider

Anyone who's sat through a boring, one-sided lecture knows that the best learning experiences encourage the audience to engage with the speaker. To convert qualified leads to clients, it's helpful to include interactive tools throughout your webinar. Here are some to consider:

Polls and Surveys

Surveys can provide valuable information that you can use to better understand the needs and values of your target audience. Before the webinar begins, try sending out a short survey to your email list with questions that pertain to the topic you plan to discuss. You can share the results in your webinar.

It's also possible to hold short polls throughout the live webinar, giving the results in real-time. By scheduling time for polls or questions during your talk, you'll be able to give yourself a break from presenting and let your audience know that you value their perspectives.

Follow up after your webinar with another poll via email to keep your potential clients engaged.

Live Chatbots

To boost the attendance of those who have signed up for your webinar, you can create a chatbot to remind them. Chatbots can even run during your webinar as a way to help your viewers contact your customer service team or answer questions.

Quizzes

People who sign up to sit through a webinar may already know something about the topic you're presenting. Want to see where your audience stands? Quizzes are a natural way to gauge the level at which you can discuss your topic.

Do you want to highlight certain facts or themes featured in your presentation? Share them in a trivia game. Make a fun multiple-choice test as part of your webinar or send it out afterward when following up with your leads. You may even be able to offer an incentive prize for those who get the answers right, be sure to follow your organization's compliance guideline.

Live Q&A

Seasoned speakers tend to leave a few minutes at the end of their presentation for questions, and a virtual presentation should be no different. Webinar platforms often have chat boxes next to the presentation that allow viewers to share comments or ask specific questions.

Live Q&A periods can be intimidating for some speakers since you never know what someone is going to ask. If you don't know the answer, don't worry—you can promise to follow up with them, and then call them the next day with your research. The process turns a cold call into a scheduled appointment.

Open Discussion

Finally, your webinar may be on a topic that audience members have knowledge or experience of. Consider briefly giving center stage to audience members with interesting information that relates to your presentation.

Open discussions can provide new perspectives you may not have considered, and they can give you yet another opportunity to learn about your target audience so that you'll be better able to market to them.



Best Practices for Webinars

Hosting an effective webinar takes time and effort, but it boils down to a few core concepts. Marketing professionals suggest:

Planning Ahead

Avoid "winging it" when it comes to posing questions to your audience. With each of these interactive ideas, you should have a clear reason to ensure the tool or strategy builds engagement with your audience.

Offering Strong Visuals

Don't just rely on the camera. Similar to in-person lectures, your online presentation can benefit from strong visuals. Think graphs, charts, photographs displaying emotion, informational slides, and other images that break up the talking. Slides should be informative without being cluttered or confusing—you don't want to overload your audience and lose their attention.

Being Authentic

Finally, be yourself. It's okay if you slip up or need a moment to deal with a technical issue. A webinar isn't just about sharing your knowledge, but also sharing your personality. If you come across as a likable, honest person, your potential clients will be that much more likely to do business with you.

Try a Webinar Today

Webinars can be an integral part of a sales funnel, part of a planned social media outreach campaign, or even an exclusive added value for your existing clients. By integrating virtual interactive tools, you can make your webinar interesting, engaging, and effective in growing your business.

Reach out to your Pacific Life representative to learn about producer webinars available to you.

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