

A Rally Point Webinars White Paper:

How to Market Your Webinar

Part I: The General's Guide to Planning a Webinar Marketing Campaign



Introduction

Once a new-technology novelty, webinars have become a staple of business-to-business marketing. They offer a cost-effective way to generate leads, talk with prospects and drive sales. But beware of believing that simply offering webinars will create new business. They are no silver bullet.

90% of marketers polled by Wainhouse Research said they planned on using webinars to generate new business.¹

For a webinar campaign to be successful, it needs the right strategy. Just like a general staging his next great campaign, a comprehensive webinar campaign requires a cohesive plan before you can start. That means starting from the beginning, with creating the same kind of foundational planning that you would for any good marketing campaign.

Our Promise

Whether you are designing your first webinar program or trying to improve the results of your latest webinar series, by the end of this white paper you will learn how to:

- Determine what you want your webinar(s) to accomplish
- Identify the leads you want to target and the list(s) you will want to use
- Choose the content you will use in your presentation

To generate real sales results from your webinar marketing, you must do more than simply send a new eBlast to the same house list you always use. There is a great deal of other considerations to address.

¹ The Evolving Role of Web Seminars and On-line Events in the Marketing Mix, Wainhouse Research, May 2008.



A. What Will You Accomplish?

"Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat." –Sun Tzu

Every good plan starts with knowing where you want to go. Before you begin formulating your webinar marketing strategy, review your company's growth goals, and your goals for a webinar (or series of webinars) to ensure that your marketing efforts deliver the desired results.

Company Growth Goals

A company's growth goals are typically very specific, and they should be; this gives marketers a solid objective. The goals may include boosting sales revenue by a specific percentage, finding a pre-set number of new clients, or upselling to existing clients.

Ultimately, most companies define success as this: Did our webinar(s) lead to sales? But with sales cycles between 6 and 24 months, it could be two years before you have an accurate number. In the near term, you can use these metrics to assess your performance.

Before and during the webinar:

- How many qualified decision makers are we able to contact?
- How many qualified prospects registered?
- How many of those registrants attended the event?

- How many attendees voted in polls or submitted questions?
- How many attendees requested follow-up in the exit surveys?

After the webinar:

- How many registrants who did not attend the event watched the on-demand webinar?
- How many attendees accepted follow-up conversations?
- How many of those conversations eventually led to proposals?
- How many proposals led to sales?

Secondary Benefits from Your Webinar

Once you have determined your firm's overall growth goals, consider what additional benefits your webinar campaign(s) can provide.

While short-term lead generation is the primary reason behind most webinars, there are a number of valuable secondary benefits:

Identify long-term sales opportunities. Through poll questions, in-room chatting and other means, webinars offer companies a powerful method of identifying both short- and long-term prospects.

After the presentation, attendees can—and often



do—personally request follow-up information or a sales call via an exit poll or survey. This is the beginning of a long-term relationship with someone who may ultimately become a client.

Create a library of content. You can repurpose your webinar material to create other collateral that demonstrates your thought leadership. Such collateral includes white papers, eBooks, podcasts, presentation excerpts, articles, blog posts, and transcripts.

Build a reputation as a thought leader. Quality content is often the distinguishing factor between one expert and the next. Webinars provide you with a platform to demonstrate your capabilities, build your reputation, and generate a marketplace preference for working with your company.

Communicate with existing clients. Webinars can connect you with your current clients when you launch a new product, or wish to discuss management or company brand changes.

For example, one Rally Point client regularly acquires companies. To help ease its new customers' anxiety and walk them through the transition, the client holds regular online customer events.

Company officers directly answer customer questions and concerns, offer honest insight into the future of the company, and highlight new product launches.

Improve internal capabilities. Developing strong content provides a way to reflect upon and internalize the success of past projects. As you develop thought leadership content. In the long run, that learning process will help you to better serve your clients.

Develop partner relationships. Business leaders often team up with complementary organizations to promote a webinar. This builds strong working relationships with other companies, opens your company up to a list of targets to which you would not have access otherwise, and often leads to new business opportunities.

Worksheet #1: Goals and Strategies

Once you answer specific questions about your organization's goals, you can design a webinar marketing strategy to achieve them. Some questions to ask—and be specific as possible:

How much would your company like to grow this quarter or year? Think of a percentage growth, or a sales objective.

How will webinars contribute to your lead-generation efforts?

What results do you expect from your webinars? (Include new leads, new content, number of value-added touches, etc. in your calculations.)



Do You Have an Ideal Client Profile?

One major stumbling block that Rally Point Webinars faces with its clients is the lack of a specific client profile. You need a clear idea of who you want to buy your products and services; otherwise, how can you put together relevant thought leadership for what is a mystery group?

Look at your existing clients and ask:

- Which clients represent the most profit for you?
- Who are your favorite clients?
- What is the growth potential for these favorite clients? (Will they be profitable to you in two or five years?)

Once you have an idea of who you are trying to reach, you can put together a profile of your ideal client. Some additional questions to consider:

- Where are these clients located? (Do you need to keep them within a 100-mile radius of your home office, or can you communicate with them virtually?)
- What is the employee count and revenue of the company?
- What are the titles of your prospects? Are they the decision makers or are they influencers?

A sample ideal client profile is this:

Department Size. "We are targeting companies with sales teams of more than 100 people."

Industry. "We are targeting pharmaceutical and financial services firms."

Revenue. "Annual revenue is \$100M-\$250M."

Location. "The prospect is based in the U.S."

Other. "The prospect has a dedicated training department."

Other. "The prospect is in the growth phase of a business cycle."

Worksheet #2: Prospect/Client Profile

Now that you have identified your ideal prospects, you can begin to review the available resources to find those prospects.

Build your own ideal client profile, being as specific as you can:

Department Size: _____

Industry: _____

Revenue: _____

Location: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____



B. Reaching Out to and Connecting with the Right People

Now that you have decided what results you want your webinar marketing strategy to generate, you need to design a webinar marketing plan and decide which marketing tactics to employ.

Every company should have a number of marketing and sales initiatives on their calendars. Look at the overall plans to see how your webinar marketing ties in, and what bandwidth you have to dedicate specifically to driving webinar attendance.

For instance, you can promote the event in existing social media campaigns, newsletter sends, or blog post schedules.

Regarding bandwidth, a major marketing campaign (like one for a tradeshow) may affect your marketing team's ability to keep to the webinar marketing schedule. A tradeshow can also tie up your business development team, and keep it from inviting hot prospects to attend the webinar. If you have a full eBlast schedule already, you run the risk that any eBlast promoting the webinar becomes background noise, or worse, an annoyance.

Active vs. Passive Marketing

There are two phases of webinar marketing, being passive and active marketing.

Passive marketing begins as much as 16 weeks before your webinar date. Passive marketing allows you to drum up some interest in your webinar without using up the limited number of touches you have per client that could be used for something else. Rally Point Webinars has found diminished returns on aggressively marketing an event more than two weeks

ahead of time, because the less immediacy registrants feel to sign up, the less likely they are to sign up or attend.

Passive marketing campaigns include tweeting about your webinar, adding a link or plug to the "Ideas" section of your website and email signature, or mentioning the webinar in a side column of your eNewsletter. This can generate less than 5% to more than 20% of registrations depending on your list and social media following.

In terms of success stories, one Rally Point Webinars client had 5% of its entire emailing list register for a webinar, just from adding a blurb to the company website's homepage and to its newsletter. Another client generated 20% of its registrations by having influential Twitter users tweet about the event.

Active marketing usually begins in the two-week window before your webinar, when you use dedicated touches to your prospects to drive webinar registration.

This approach includes dedicated eBlasts specific to the webinar, prominently highlighting the webinar on your homepage and eNewsletters, and possibly banner advertising or renting lists to announce your event. This two-week window is also when your business development team can reach out to invite attendees or to prospects that may have gone cold.

The most successful marketing strategies employ a blended approach, including email blasts, phone calls, directed voicemail and social media outreach.

Use the sample schedule on the following page to develop your own webinar marketing calendar.

**Table #1: Sample Marketing Schedule**

Strategy	Weeks Before Your Webinar																
	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Game Day
Social Media																	
Twitter	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Facebook	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
LinkedIn	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Submit Webinar to LinkedIn Events	X																
Web																	
Blog	X				X				X				X			X	X
Cross-blogging																	
Press Release	X									X						X	
Highlight on Homepage	X																
Email																	
Add to Email signature	X																
Rented list eBlast																X	
Email house list										X						X	
Phone																	
Call to invite key prospects and clients										X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Identify Your Content

The next step in a strategic webinar plan is deciding what you will say, and to whom you will communicate this message.

Thought Leadership Versus a Sales Pitch

For most Rally Point Webinars clients, thought leadership makes for the best presentation. Such a presentation shares informative content rather than pushes a sales pitch. Your company can present its own expertise or host or co-present with another presenter whom you have invited to speak.

While only a select group of firms can be undisputed leaders in their fields (e.g., Harvard Business School, McKinsey and Google), every organization has something at which it is exceptional. You spend

40+ hours per week learning and crafting your core business functions. This information is valuable to your key markets.

(For more information on developing content based on thought leadership, read our article "How to Tap into Your Firm's Brainpower to Create Compelling Content and Company Culture.")

Adopt a Long-Term Perspective

Not all of your attendees are hot leads. In fact, according to research by the marketing and sales publication RainToday.com², only 25% of leads are short-term opportunities that will buy related services within the next six months. Another 50% of webinar registrants are likely to be long-term leads, who will buy related services at some point in the next two years.

²Lead Generation Benchmark Report: How the Best Firms Fill the Pipeline. RainToday.com (2010).



If you expect to send every webinar registrant a proposal in the next three months, you will invariably see your webinar as a disappointment. Instead, build your brand by consistently delivering thoughtful content to the 75% of qualified leads who will buy in the next 6-24 months.

Think Quality of Leads Versus Quantity

Most companies worry about having enough attendees at their webinar—they fear that only fifteen people will show up. While overall attendance is important, the best marketers know they have more to consider.

A company can produce a webinar on a popular social media topic and drive a lot of registrations. Those registrations will not yield the results the firm wants if it does not have any social media services that tie into the topic.

Rather than using large registration numbers as a measure of success, you must decide what action step you want attendees to take. Is it to have a follow-up meeting with you? In that case, you want decision makers and/or influencers to attend.

Quantity can have its benefits. If a topic is hot enough, a critical mass of people can promote an event on their social media platforms. Registrations quickly increase, and while a lot of them will be of poor quality, the sheer volume ensures that a lot will be of high quality. One Rally Point Webinars' client consistently has 40% of its webinar registrants come from people who found out about the event through their professional networks.

Keep Leads Warm

Webinars are a good means for nurturing existing leads. New content is a legitimate reason to re-contact leads, for example those who have downloaded a white paper or attended another webinar.

Sharing content you have developed since your last sales call is a low-pressure way to keep leads warm. You may also consider offering a smaller, targeted webinar, which enables you to re-engage with prospects that have gone a little quiet.

Enlist Sales and Business Development for Follow Through

Rally Point Webinars has seen companies fail when they thought that webinar marketing ended at the last PowerPoint slide. The final, critical step is making sure your organization takes action to following up on its leads—this is the entire point of holding an event!

To generate sales conversations from your webinar, assign a business developer (or two or three) to call each registrant, especially those who indicated during the event or on the exit survey that they wanted additional information. These are not sales calls. Rather, the business developer should call to set meetings between the prospect and the webinar speaker or a company leader.

Your webinar team should compile the intelligence and background details you elicited during the webinar. They should then communicate with the business development team which prospects to follow up with first.³

³Check out our Webinar Success Kit which has a Webinar ROI Worksheet to help you calculate the numbers you need to fulfill your goals http://www.rallypointwebinars.com/webinar_success_kit.htm.



Worksheet #3: Your Webinar Action Plan

Now that you understand why you need an action plan, make one of your own:

1. *How many new clients does your organization need to bring in this year?*

2. *How many clients will you generate using webinars?*

3. *Do you have any secondary goals for your webinar campaign?*

4. *List two topics for webinars that you know will generate short-term leads based upon existing sales conversations:*

5. *Based upon your sales cycle, what is a realistic timeframe to generate your first sale from a new webinar campaign?*

6. *List the name(s) of the person spearheading the webinar:*

7. *List the name(s) of the person who will call your webinar attendees within two days of your event:*

8. *Who is your webinar speaker?*



C. Finding the Right List

The days of “spray-and-pray” marketing (whereby you target tens of thousands of people with hopes that a few are interested) are over. For most marketing campaigns, contacting your prospects means finding a list—a well-vetted, carefully cultivated list.

Prospecting lists fall into four primary categories:

House List. These are the contacts currently in your company database. To determine if your house list is sufficient for your webinar marketing campaign, ask if the house list is of sufficient size or buying power to sustain your growth goals?

Partner Lists. Leveraging lists of existing business partners or other firms with complementary services is a good way to supplement your house list for minimal (and often no) cost.

For example, Rally Point Webinars conducted a webinar series with Infinite Conferencing, which is a webinar platform provider, and with Visible Gains, which provides a tool for embedding video into emails and websites. These companies offered complementary content of interest to our prospects, and we all gained more clients than we would have if we had worked independently.

Before you share your lists, be certain that you select the right partners. Find companies that share your marketing philosophy and high quality standards for the content you will co-promote.

Speaker Lists. Partnering with “celebrity” speakers is another means of generating new leads. Speakers with a large, loyal list and an active social media following can drive serious registration numbers. (As good measures, research your speaker on LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter, even Facebook. Social media gurus like Christopher Brogan [author of Trust Agents] or John C. Havens [author of Tactical Transparency]

will have thousands of devoted followers.)

One marketing agency, a Rally Point Webinars client, conducted a series of social media strategy webinars. For each segment, the company selected a speaker who had expertise in his or her field. This included an expert on blogging who had a large social media network. He actively previewed his webinar among his own blog followers, as well as among his LinkedIn and Twitter followers and contacts. As a result, the marketing agency generated more than 41% of its registrations from this “free” speaker list.

Rented Lists. You pay for each contact on a rented list. Some companies that rent lists charge by list size whereas others will charge per click-through. Companies will rent lists to obtain names to which they would not otherwise have access. If you are considering rented lists, you have several options, including business database providers like Mentor Tech and Jigsaw, and trade publications.

Finding a knowledgeable list broker is often a good first step in identifying the best rented resource for your online marketing. Brokers will listen to your firm’s business needs and help identify the appropriate list(s) for your company.

Filter Your List

Use filters to identify the prospects that match your ideal client profile in the lists you have, by:

- Industry
- Title
- Company revenue
- Geography
- Number of employees



By filtering your prospect list, you direct your marketing efforts at recipients who are in a position to purchase your goods and services, and who will (hopefully) make the best clients.

A technology consulting firm that specializes in data backup might target webinar invitations to chief technology officers in large metropolitan regions, and at companies with more than 200 employees. Such a firm would do damage if it failed to parse its list and sent 20% of its invitations to such irrelevant recipients as HR managers. By failing to filter its list, the company could burn its list out by bombarding it with inappropriate content. Conversely, if the firm sends emails infrequently, sending out a not-quite-relevant invitation might be harmless and might actually serve to keep the company's name top-of-mind with the prospects.

Use Content to Further Qualify Prospects

Even before you conduct a webinar, you can further qualify your prospects by sending relevant, targeted invitations and event confirmations. Consider A/B testing (a method of test marketing by comparing such elements as titles, subject lines or imagery) to prepare your eBlasts and registration pages. Adjustments in these things can pull in more registrants.

Crafting industry- or geography-specific messages will differentiate your webinar marketing campaign from other events aimed at "farming the masses."

Rally Point Webinars designed a campaign for a 24-hour workforce consultancy that served energy, mining, manufacturing, transportation and other industrial clients. The email campaign used a rented list and targeted 11 industries. Each list segment was directed to a separate landing page. For example the pipeline management group saw pictures of natural gas pipelines, and read gas-specific language. The

campaign with the rented list generated higher click-through and open rates than house list campaigns typically did.

Targeted content can also be used to intentionally limit your audience. Rally Point conducted a webinar aimed at companies that felt lost with their marketing initiatives (having not seen the results they desired). The campaign appeared to have a very low response rate—less than a third of its usual number of registrants. But, the registrants were highly motivated and comprised of decision makers. The webinar quickly generated two new clients. The topic was narrow in its appeal, but the quality of those prospects to whom it appealed was perfect.

Get Insight into Your Sales Targets

Databases or advertisers can only give you prospects according to the information they track. Qualify your leads further by gathering demographic information from prospects when they register for an event. But, be careful about asking too much of your targets—you must make it easy for your prospects to sign up for the webinar.

According to Cliff Pollan, the President and COO of Visible Gains, many webinar marketers only request the following three pieces of information:

- Name
- Company Title
- Email

Use your marketing team to fill in other qualifying details about your registrants. For example, the team can pull the company name from the email address by looking at what comes between the "@" and the ".com," and decide if this prospect matches the



"ideal prospect" profile that you have compiled.

Alternatively, some organizations opt to qualify prospects using custom questions on event registration pages. Add a dropdown menu to the registration page with one or two business intelligence questions to provide additional profile information. For example:

- "Do you have more than \$50M in leased equipment?"
- "Do you frequently engage in high-volume/competitive bidding processes?"
- "Have you considered developing mobile applications?"

Gathering detailed, accurate information from registrants allows you to tailor your content to the audience's key concerns, and to talk with the prospects who are the best fit for your products or services.

Complete Your Client Profile

Your profile work may not end once someone has registered. Some companies gather even more intelligence.

Other supplemental sources of data include these:

- Company websites
- Hoover's
- Jigsaw
- LinkedIn

You may already have much of this profile information from the questions (if any) you asked on the registration page. However, some details you are

trying to assess may be more of a "judgment call" based on your prospect's website or Hoover's profile. For example, looking at whether or not a target has a good website or an active marketing calendar might give you an idea as to how much money the client currently puts into marketing, and whether or not the client will be a good fit for your company.

Worksheet #4: Prospect/Client Profile, Part II

Now that you understand the value of clearly identifying your webinar invitees, ask yourself the following questions:

1. List three characteristics of your ideal client profile.

a. Industry? _____

b. Number of Employees? _____

c. Geographic Region? _____

2. Who holds the purchasing power at your target client? What is that person's title?

3. Do you have a preferred partner you would like to work with to co-promote a webinar?

4. What list resources will you use for your event marketing?

5. What one demographic question do you need on your registration page? (This is a wild card question—for example, "To which country do you export most?" or "Do you have a social media presence?")



Conclusion

As you learned in this white paper, webinars are about more than putting people in the virtual seats.

Just like a general staging his next great campaign, a comprehensive webinar campaign requires a cohesive plan before you can start.

This white paper has given you the right tools to:

- Communicate a clear vision of who your prospects are
- Design and execute a strategy to put the “right” people in the seats
- Know what your post-webinar campaign will look like, and who is responsible for which steps

Now that you have clearly expressed the goals of your webinar campaign, you can get down to the details of carrying out your marketing strategy. Use our 11-point checklist on this page (culled from the worksheets in this paper) to create a summary of resources and strategies that will set you up for tactical success.

In our second white paper of this two-part series (to be published), *How to Market Your Webinar Part II: Webinar Mechanic's Toolkit of Webinar Tactics*, we will provide examples of organizations that successfully used this approach. These organizations made such decisions as whether or not to embed video into their webinar invitations, and to identify celebrity speakers as webinar presenters.

You may have a great business model, expertise in your field, and clients who admire you. Now it is time to bring new clients and prospects to you.

Summary: Webinar Resources and Strategy

You have a webinar strategy if you can give specific answers to the following questions:

1. *How many new clients does your company need to bring in this year?*
2. *How many clients will you generate using webinars?*
3. *What are the secondary goals of your webinar campaign?*
4. *What are two webinar topics that you know will generate short-term leads based upon existing sales conversations?*
5. *Based upon your sales cycle, what is a realistic timeframe to generate your first sale from a new webinar campaign?*
6. *Who will spearhead your webinar marketing campaign?*
7. *Who will call your webinar attendees and registrants within two days of your event?*
8. *Who is your webinar speaker?*
9. *What lists will you use for your marketing campaign?*
10. *What external technology do you need to hold your webinar?*
11. *What are three characteristics of your ideal client profile?*



About Rally Point Webinars, LLC

We are a marketing and online event management firm. We specialize in growing companies with webinars.

We help professional services firms, technology companies, and large organizations grow their revenue by expanding existing relationships, finding new clients, and reaching new prospects with online events.

We do this by:

- Developing content that positions our clients as thought leaders.
- Generating qualified leads with targeted marketing campaigns.

- Running flawless events that impress attendees with quality and content.
- Supporting sales teams in having follow-up conversations that lead to up-selling, cross-selling, and new clients.

Drawing upon our work with a variety of companies and industries, we collaborate with our clients to customize and execute a webinar strategy that fulfills their unique set of goals.

Rally Point Webinars, LLC

139A Charles Street
Suite 297

Boston, MA 02114

(617) 517-0720

www.rallypointwebinars.com

service@rallypointwebinars.com

