Digitally Based Interactive Learning Guidance

Holding meetings and delivering training over Webinar, Virtual Learning Environments and use of Video Conferencing Software offers organisations, presenters and learners/delegates alike some great opportunities for sharing information and can offer solutions that are both more efficient and environmentally friendly.

As travel is not required, it becomes much more possible to meet with people from all over your organisation without incurring large travel and time costs. With careful planning your meetings and training can be open to delegates from anywhere in the world.

You can plan shorter, more bite size training and meetings more often. Whilst we recommend sessions are around 45mins in length, longer sessions and even multi day conferences can be successfully delivered in this way.

In reality the good practices you already employ for face to face training and meetings still apply but in this guidance document we share some of our top tips for getting the most out of your web-based training and meetings.

Guidance for Presenters

If you need to go over 60mins, then you will need to plan and to allow for a break from the screen for everyone involved.

Make use of the software's engagement features. If you are meeting to collaborate on a document, use the notes software on the program to edit and comment together. If the program has a whiteboard feature, use it for making notes or charts. As with any training intervention or activity, try not to over use or attempt to shoehorn one in if they will not add value to the session.

Think about the content, are there simple tasks that someone can do at home with simple everyday items to help make a point or put theory into practice? Webinars do not have to be locked to the screen.

Your Environment: the basis of your webinar setup

Check your surroundings before going live with your webinar, you'll really have only yourself to blame if things go wrong during your live webinar because of environmental factors. The environment is the number one factor that people usually overlook.

Pick a quiet spot, pick a quiet place to present from and remember, a basic laptop microphone can pick sound up 20–30m away, so rooms away from traffic or other people are essential.

Make sure you are comfortable and that you will not be disturbed by external distractions, people entering the room, etc.

If you're using a Moderator (which we recommend for any webinar with more than 6 people) then the same considerations apply to them.

Make sure you have enough light

In video, as in photography, lighting is everything. It will impact how you look, the quality of the video. The better the light, the more beneficial it will be. Also, you don't have to invest in fancy equipment. Just pick a room with enough natural light coming in. Make sure that the source of light is not behind you to avoid backlighting.

How is your Internet speed?

Everybody hates a bad Internet connection. Especially when you're live-streaming the webinar! Nothing is worse than having your bitrate drop, seeing participants complain that they can't see your presentation well or can't hear you well. Fortunately, you can also prepare for this by making sure your internet connection is stable and reliable throughout your webinar.

To prevent any issue:

- Make sure you have at least 25Mbps (recommended) in download and upload.
- Stop any application on your computer that you do not need.
- Connect with your ethernet port rather than Wi-Fi.

Are you using a modern browser?

We recommended the following browsers: but also ensure you have the most up to date version and security updates:

- Google Chrome
- Firefox
- Safari (Mac)

Test microphones/cameras

Check your mic and camera. Double-check if you are using an external mic or camera.

Consider if the camera adds anything to your meeting or training, could you start with your camera on to introduce yourself and then turn off, this can help you or your learners if you have, or they have, slow internet connections.

The audio is likely to be the most important aspect of your presentation. Whilst most PC and laptop mics are excellent, it may be time to upgrade to a higher quality desk or lapel mic.

Use a Moderator

Managing the technical and people elements of the online event are as important (probably more important) as the presentation and the content. Trying to do everything is OK for small groups but for anything over 6 participants, we recommend a moderator and speaker partnership.

The Webinar Speaker: The speaker delivers the presentation.

Webinar Moderator: handles the people and technology and they can cover a range of tasks:

- Ensures everything looks and sounds as it should (especially if they are not in the same room as you!)
- They can help delegates with simple problems and advise them on steps to improve their experience
- They can collate questions for question breaks and answer some questions in the moment (using chat functions or emails)
- They can raise points or comments on the group's behalf, changing the dynamic of your presentation and varying the presentation method
- They can plan a running order for bringing delegates online to talk to the presenter
- Can run polls, quizzes and manage comfort breaks so the presenter gets a break!
- They can take notes or minutes in more formal meetings and settings, however, if this is an essential requirement, we recommend separating this role.

There is a lot to handle and it takes preparation and attention to do it well, so practice runs and clear responsibilities are essential.

Guidance for Learners/Webinar attendees

- **Log in to the web conference early.** Set your appointment reminder to go off five or ten minutes before the scheduled event start time. Log in to the web portion at that time. Some conferencing software requires a download and install on your computer and you want to give it time to take place. Even "instant-join" software may require you to update Flash or another underlying utility. Some conferencing software gives you better performance when it has time to cache upcoming slides on your computer for rapid access during the meeting. Even if none of these apply to you, logging in early gives you time to enter your identifying information, ask questions that you want to see covered during the session, and be part of the "quorum" that the host sees as sufficient audience size to start their content delivery.
- **Mute your audio if lines are open.** If your webinar host opens the phone or computer audio lines to let audience members speak, keep your phone/mic muted whenever you are not speaking. This helps avoid unwanted background noises that can distract other participants.
- **Be an active participant.** Provide your inputs to polling questions. Respond to requests for comments or questions. Let your presenter know what you are most interested in.
- **Be respectful.** If your webinar allows publicly-visible chat, keep your contributions helpful and considerate of the host and other participants.
- **Provide feedback.** It can be very hard for hosts to tell how the experience was from the audience's viewpoint. Help them improve their webinars to better match your needs and preferences by letting them know what worked well and what didn't work for you.
- **Connection and software issues.** It is often the case that issues with the software, sound quality and connection are with your device not the hosts, wherever possible, take advantage of test sessions, ask other people in your household/office to avoid streaming 4k movies (for example) mid-webinar and take our earlier advice of connecting early.

Risk Assessment and Safe Systems of Work

Every situation will be different and some workplaces may already incorporate the delivery of webinars in an organisation's safe system of work and risk assessments.

Regardless of if you chose to have specific policies or incorporate, here are a few considerations:

Workstation

If you don't use your normal 'workstation' to deliver your webinars, have you ensured the place where you do is appropriately set up (ergonomically).

Data Protection and GDPR

Data given for the purpose of attending a webinar should be used only for that purpose, using that data for marketing or other purposes should take place unless you have made that clear in booking conditions and asked for permission through 'opt ins'.

Security and unwanted delegates

There are many useful features in online software and it is evolving all the
time, but we recommend you disable the following to protect your meeting/webinar:

- "One-Click Join" or "Quick Join" links
- Do not allow delegates access to "Screen Sharing", this can always be turned on during the meeting
- Do not allow delegates access to "Remote Control"
- File transfer or sharing – we advise this is turned off, but if you do need to have file transfer on, only use specified file types
- Do not "Allow Participants to Rename Themselves"
- Always set your webinar to start when you arrive and disable "Join Before Host" functions
- If your software allows it, disable the "Allow Removed Participants to Re-join" function

Features or practice you should consider

The following are some features or practices we recommend you enable to improve your
security:

- "Mute Participants Upon Entry"
- "Identify Guest Participants in the Meeting/Webinar"
- "Waiting Room"
- "Require a Password When Scheduling New Meetings/Webinars"
- Do not put quick join links on websites or social media, collect delegate information via booking software or email invites and send the webinar links to the latter

Recording

Most meeting software has the ability to record your presentation and some allow the
recording of your delegates interactions, webcams etc.

This can be a great tool for improving your presentation and webinar/ online meeting skills
or providing a recording for those who cannot make the call or even turning a presentation
into a podcast.

However, as we discussed in the section on Data Protection and GDPR it is really important
to consider how you seek permission, ensuring you're really clear on what it is your
recording and why/ how it will be used.

It is also really important to consider how recording will change your presentation (what
and how you say it) and how your delegates will interact - no matter how comfortable an
audience is it will reduce their input into tasks and activities.

Ask yourself, how much value will the recording add? as it is possible to record a
presentation without an audience.