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Brief #4



MINUTE MARKETER

How to Use Webinars to Drive Content Marketing

13 quick tactics for including webinars
in your marketing strategy

30-Minute Marketer: How to Use Webinars to Drive Content Marketing

13 quick tactics for including webinars in your marketing strategy

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TACTICS YOU CAN LEARN OVER LUNCH

Welcome to the *30-Minute Marketer* – a resource from MarketingSherpa featuring bite-sized tips for busy marketers.

In this report, we focus on using webinars to drive content marketing.

A webinar is the perfect blend of a whitepaper and a live event. You can convey important material in a more dynamic way than on a written page—but without asking attendees (or your staff) to invest the time and expense of traveling to a live event. In a webinar, you can use video, graphics, and even interactive elements to get the audience excited about the material. Once they're engaged, you can then direct them to your other content resources.

We at MECLABS are fond of webinars—be sure to check out the resources section at the end of this report for a link to a behind-the-scenes look at our Web events.

In this report, we'll show you:

- Why webinars should be a part of your marketing strategy
- How to make sure your webinar topics interests your audience
- Tips for promoting your webinar
- Ways to capitalize on post-event interest

We know you're in a hurry, so we won't make you wait any longer for these tips on how to make webinars a valuable part of your content marketing strategy.

Enjoy!

Bobbi Dempsey
Editor, *30-Minute Marketer*

About 30-Minute Marketer

Our 30-Minute Marketer reports were designed with you in mind. We know you've got lots to do and not a lot of time in which to do it. You need quick, simple tips that you can put into action right away.

For each 30-Minute Marketer, I scour the vast MECLABS library of marketing research, from MarketingSherpa case studies, to MarketingExperiments optimization tests, to MarketingSherpa benchmark reports, and edit down the research into an actionable piece to help you improve your marketing performance right now...or, at least, when you're done with lunch.

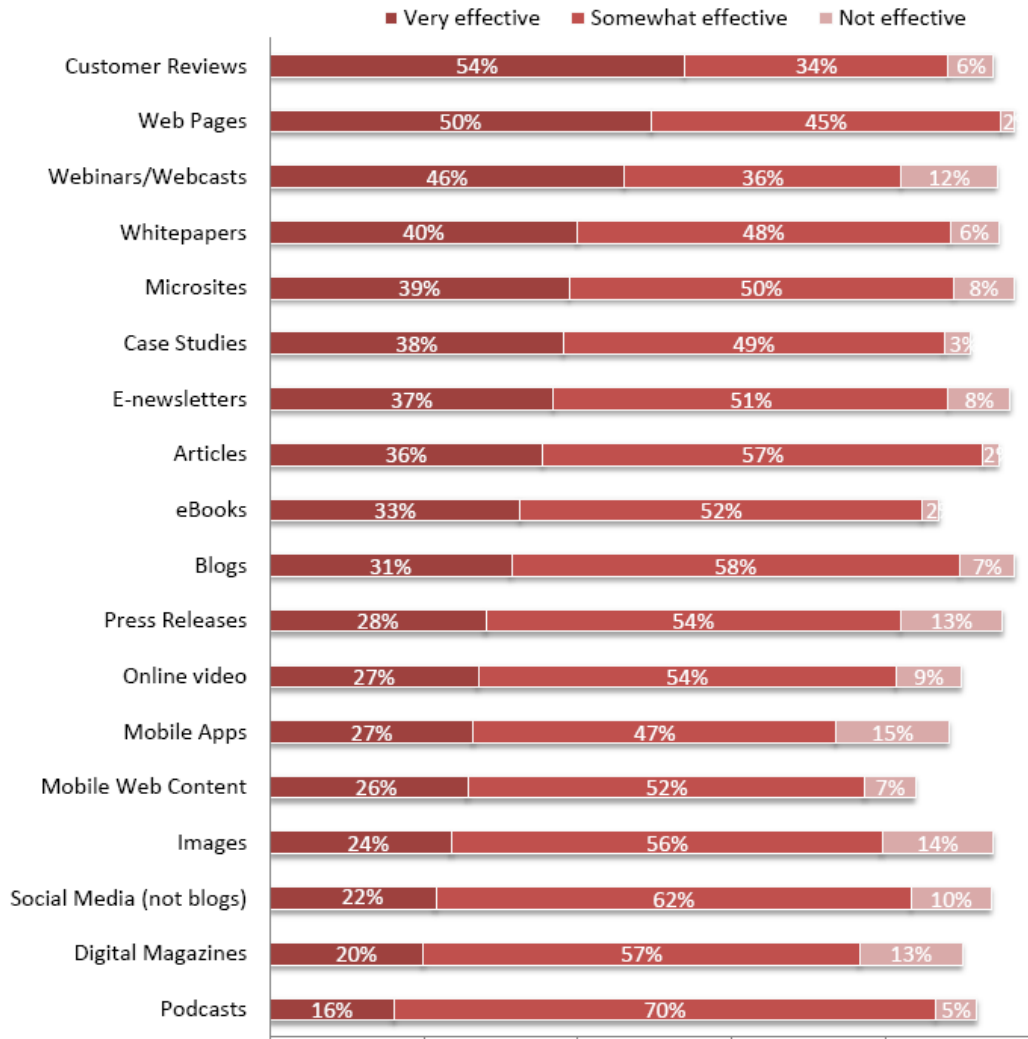
Why a Webinar?

A webinar provides a way for you to bring your content to life. Think of it like an animated 3D whitepaper.

As this chart from the MarketingSherpa [2012 Search Marketing Benchmark Report – SEO Edition](#) shows, most marketers find webinars to be either somewhat or very effective, in terms of helping them achieve marketing objectives. In this survey, marketers ranked webinars as the third-most popular tactic.

Chart: Level of effectiveness in achieving marketing objectives, by content product

Q. Please indicate the LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS (in terms of achieving marketing objectives) for each of the content products used by your organization.



Source: ©2011 MarketingSherpa Search Marketing Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded April 2011, N=1,530

TACTIC #1: UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR AUDIENCE WANTS

Use analytics such as frequent search terms on your website to get some insight on what your readers want to see. It can also be helpful to check out social media sites and online groups where your target audience congregates, to see what sort of questions they have or what topics they're eager to learn about. In [this MarketingSherpa case study](#), Danny Brown, CEO, Bonsai Interactive Marketing, an Ontario, Canada-based social media and marketing agency, described how he used a variety of analytics to increase readership across his entire content marketing strategy.

Of course, if you really want to know what your audience wants, just ask them. Send out a survey to your existing list that asks what topics they would like to see covered in an upcoming webinar.

TACTIC #2: MAKE SURE YOUR WEBINAR WILL BE WORTHWHILE

Before you decide to host a webinar, make sure you can provide something of value. You are asking people to take a chunk of time out of their busy day and you don't want to waste their time. While it's okay to repurpose existing material as a basis for your webinar, you need to offer something your audience hasn't already seen on your site. The MarketingSherpa blog post, [Marketing Webinar Optimization: Five questions to ask yourself about webinars](#), provides some good tips for determining if you have something of value to say, and whether you are communicating it in an effective way.

TIP: This is a case where you want to focus on quality, not quantity. It's pointless (not to mention annoying to participants) to have frequent webinars in which you have nothing new to say. In [this article](#), we show you how strategic procurement firm SciQuest switched from weekly webinars to less frequent—but more relevant and engaging—events, and saw attendance increase by an amazing 422 percent.

In [this MarketingSherpa case study](#), we show you how HubSpot decides on topics for its frequent webinars by studying attendance metrics from past events to see which previous topics proved most popular—and also by paying attention to any burning questions previous attendees still wanted answered.

TACTIC #3: CHOOSE YOUR HOST WISELY

When choosing a candidate to host your webinar, you obviously want someone who will come across as friendly and fun. But this person should also be highly knowledgeable about the particular topic, and, ideally, a recognizable name the audience may know.

You also want someone who can help create a buzz by promoting the webinar through social media channels. For one webinar series, HubSpot selected a company employee who maintained a popular blog that had an enthusiastic group of subscribers.


TACTIC #4: EXECUTE A WELL-PLANNED EMAIL CAMPIAGN

Probably the most important—and most challenging—aspect of hosting a webinar is making sure people register and attend. Every webinar organizer's worst fear is waiting anxiously while registrations barely trickle in, or even don't come at all.

You should start your email campaign at least several weeks before the event. For example, HubSpot sends a series of several emails. Some of these messages were specifically geared towards people who had previously attended one of the company's other webinars (for these messages, the subject line clearly indicated that the webinar would contain new and exciting material).


They then send emails the day before the event, and on the day of the event, each stressing that time was running short to register for the webinar.

EXAMPLE: HUBSPOT INITIAL EMAIL PROMOTING WEBINAR



Hi %%First Name%%,

Do you know the best times to publish your blog posts? Or how about the most retweetable day? Are you sending your emails at the right time and on the right day? Get the answers to these questions and more at my upcoming [Science of Timing webinar](#).



During the webinar, I'll be releasing a top-secret, awesome, new Twitter tool that [webinar](#) attendees will get exclusive access to. And after the [webinar](#), we'll be hosting an after-party, where experts will answer any of your timing or Inbound Marketing questions on the hashtag #timesci.

More than 20,000 people registered for my last "Science of..." webinar. You don't want to miss out. [Reserve your spot now!](#)


When: Tuesday, March 29 at 1PM ET

Sign Up for the Science of Timing!

During this complimentary webinar, you will learn:

- * The best (and worst) times to get retweets
- * The best (and worst) times to post to Facebook
- * The best (and worst) times to send email
- * The best (and worst) times to publish blog posts

Hope to see you there,
-Dan



Dan Zarrella
HubSpot Social Media Scientist

[Tweet This Webinar!](#)

TACTIC #5: USE SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER PROMOTION AVENUES

The MarketingSherpa article [Webinar Promotion that Delivers: Use Email, Social, Viral Referrals and Video to Boost Attendance](#) shows how IDES, a search engine and materials directory for the plastics industry, has developed a standard, comprehensive communication

Tip: Come up with an original Twitter hashtag related to your webinar. This helps in promotions and also makes it easy to track Twitter comments as the event occurs.

plan they use for all of their webinar events. This allows them to see a 37 percent attendance rate on their live webinars and a 55 percent lead capture rate from visitors who view an archived presentation.

Some of the promotion venues IDES uses include:

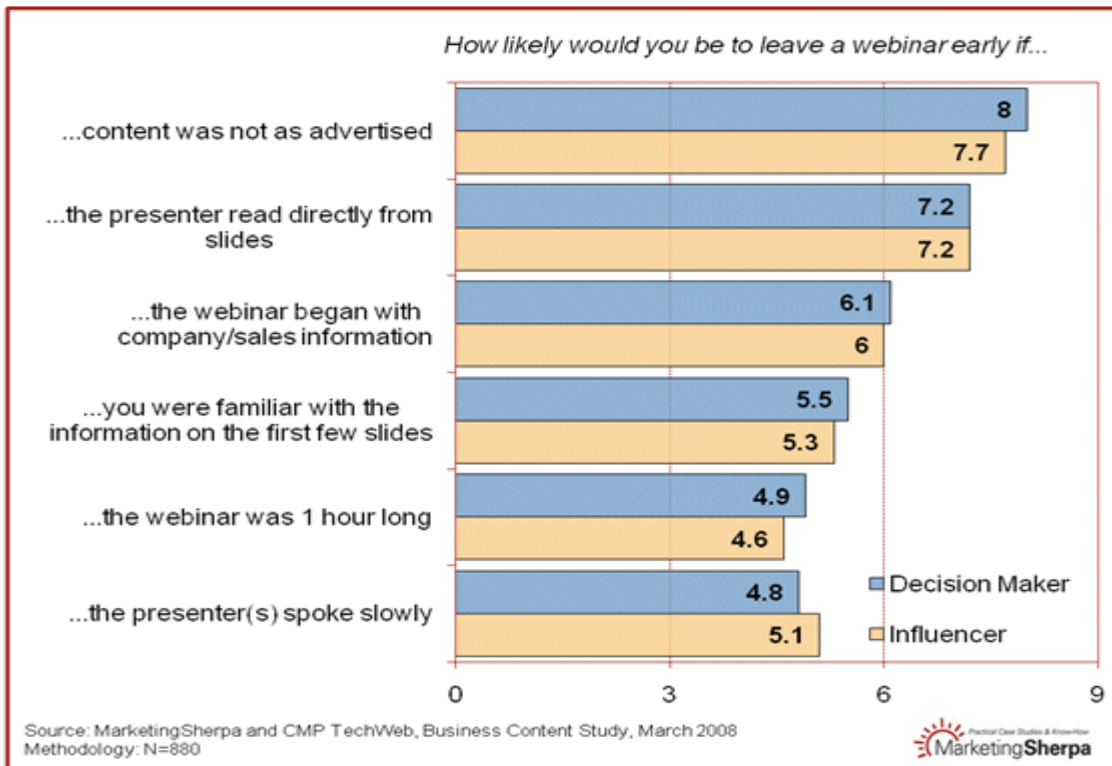
- Posts on their blog
- Social media blurbs
- Feature in email newsletter
- Prominent visibility on company website

TACTIC #6: ENCOURAGE REGISTRANTS TO HELP SPREAD THE WORD FOR YOU

If people are interested enough to sign up for your webinar, they would probably be eager to tell others about it, as well. Be sure your registration page and/or emails alerts include "tell a friend" and social media sharing options.

TACTIC #7: AVOID PITCHES THAT OVER-PROMISE

This is important – when promoting your webinar, be sure your copy is accurate and that your webinar will deliver on what is promised. As the MarketingSherpa chart below illustrates, the number one thing that prompts attendees to leave a webinar is if the content turns out to be not what they expected.



TACTIC #8: PREPARE THE STAFF

Webinars (especially large ones) often involve a variety of staff members; both the "visible" participants and those behind the scenes. It's important to make sure you have sufficient staff on hand well before the webinar opens. You want sales staff at the ready, of course, but you should also have tech staff on alert prior to and during the webinar, in case attendees have any problems.

At the very least, all staff members should have the basic information about how people can register, connect and/or call in to the webinar.

TACTIC #9: BE PREPARED TO TWEAK CONTENT ON THE FLY

The level of interactivity in a webinar can vary, but attendees typically have some way of submitting questions before or during the event. While this can be a great way for attendees to engage with your presenters, it can also add an element of surprise. You may find that the questions lead into areas you hadn't planned to cover, so you may need to think on your feet.

If nothing else, you can note that this may be a topic you'll explore in a future webinar (and then you will want to immediately start working on putting together this information for the upcoming webinar).

Tip: assign one or more staff members to monitor social media sites during the event, to watch for Tweets (especially those using the hashtag you've created for your webinar) and posts made by attendees in real time. This can alert you about what has excited your audience, or any questions/concerns they may have.

TACTIC #10: OFFER AN AFTER-EVENT BONUS

If the event goes well, people will likely still be eager to ask questions or share their opinions at the conclusion of the webinar. Should this happen, be prepared to take advantage of this momentum by allowing attendees to chat with you on Twitter or other venues after the webinar ends. The HubSpot team held a 30-minute Twitter "after-party" following one of their large webinar events, which gave people a chance to ask questions they didn't have time to ask during the webinar.

TACTIC #11: DO YOUR POST-EVENT DETECTIVE WORK

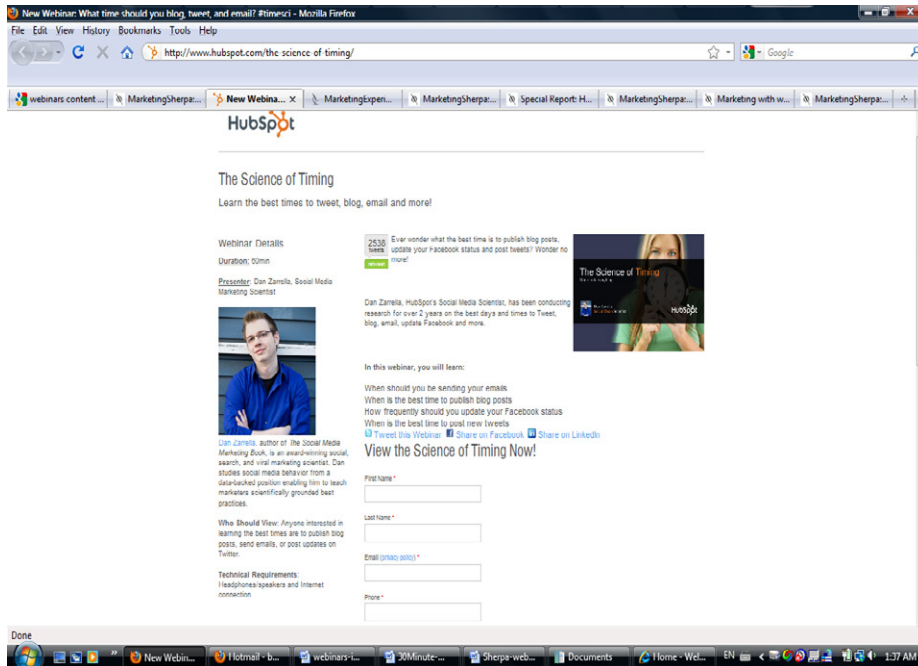
The research you conduct right after the event can provide valuable insight as to how to develop additional content. Adding an exit poll to the end of the webinar (or emailing a quick survey immediately following the event) gives participants a chance to provide feedback while the information is still fresh in their minds.

TACTIC #12: MAKE AN ARCHIVE AVAILABLE

One common complaint about webinars is that the information moves too quickly for attendees to write everything down, possibly causing them to forget some relevant points. To eliminate this issue, you should host an archive of the webinar somewhere on your site, where people can access it at their convenience. Not only does this help keep attendees of the live event engaged, it also allows you to attract an ongoing

stream of viewers. (In post-event communications with attendees, be sure to encourage them to share the link to the archive with any friends who may be interested.)

EXAMPLE: HUBSPOT'S PERMANENT ARCHIVE PAGE OF WEBINAR EVENT



TACTIC #13: TURN ATTENDEES INTO LEADS

A key aspect of the webinar (and content marketing overall) is your ability to successfully funnel readers/ attendees into your lead generation process. This is where it can be helpful to carefully design the registration page and follow-up survey to gather important details that might help in assessing and cultivating these leads. You will also want to make sure you follow up with attendees while they are still excited about the event, and the benefits they received from taking part in the webinar.

Useful Links and Resources:

MarketingExperiments blog: [A Behind-the-Scenes Look at MarketingExperiments Web Clinics](#)

MarketingSherpa article: [Reformat, Reuse, Recycle: 5 Strategies to Stretch Your Marketing Content](#)

MarketingSherpa Toolkit: [How to Produce a Webinar](#)

MarketingSherpa [Sample Webinar Plan](#)

MarketingSherpa [Special Report: How to Sell Sponsored Webinars](#)

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