

WEBINAR – MODERN MANAGEMENT METHOD

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ABSTRACT: *In this paper we have presented specific elements of using the webinar to support a business. After a brief presentation of the development of the Internet and IT technology, we have highlighted the need to use modern communication tools such as the webinar. Therefore, we have revealed the benefits of webinar implementation, especially in training or informing employees of companies with geographically dispersed locations, and a comparison with classical, frequently used methods. In the second part of the paper, after a classification of the webinars, we have showed some aspects of the operative management and the types of rooms used frequently for managerial communication and we have also indicated some functional aspects of the types of conference rooms from the simplest, organized through social networking to more complex rooms.*

KEY WORDS: *webinar, classical conference, online communication, managerial communication.*

JELL CLASIFICATION: *M10, M15.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since its occurrence, the Internet has been the largest point of reference in terms of communication which has allowed an unprecedented information outbreak in the history of mankind that has increased the importance of online communication resources. Thus, the exchange of information is the main objective of the existence of interconnected computer networks, with the extremely complex Internet network.

The Internet is an interconnected computer networking system that provides data communication services and access to information such as e-mail, file transfer, remote users' connection, newsgroups, Web services (Isac & Isac, 2015). The notion of Internet is a collection of physically separated networks, interconnected to form a single logical network.

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This informational system forms an informational and computing environment, offering a wide range of services and resources: libraries, data bases, at the same time representing a community from all walks of social-economic life located in various geographical areas who can always share information.

The extent of Internet development is determined by the major benefits it offers to all users in general but especially to business managers and results in substantial cost savings across the supply-demand chain, in the increase in quality and speed of customer service, entering new geographically inaccessible markets and, last but not least, in increasing the efficiency of the entire decision-making process by reducing the run period.

2. THE NEED FOR ONLINE COMMUNICATION

With the unprecedented technological advancements, the implementation of on-line communication by organizations from any field grows largely due to the need for organizations to communicate more quickly and efficiently.

Starting from the classical definition of the conference, which involves a public presentation of a theme in the field of science, art, politics, etc., with the intention of informing, instructing, paying homage, one can shift to a modern definition of it correlated with the information tools used.

Thus, with the evolution of science and the emergence of modern technologies, the conference has new shapes and dimensions, and the online conference that revolutionized the business environment has emerged, offering a number of major advantages. Making an online conference implicitly involves the existence of an existing technology support.

Thus, each user must have a display device that can be a computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone as the case may be. In addition, depending on the type of conference, the user must also have access to a video camera and microphone. The main information support is the Internet connection that has to meet some important features, such as the Internet connection speed, both for downloading and uploading.

3. USING WEBINAR TO REPLACE THE CLASSICAL MEETING

The word 'webinar' is a combination of two words: **web** and **seminar** (5), and it materializes in an online seminar or a seminar on the internet. Therefore, a webinar is a live web video meeting using the internet to connect the webinar host to an audience - viewers and listeners around the world (6).

Compared to the classical meeting, in the case of online conferences, there are a number of characteristics that are different and allow highlighting the advantages and disadvantages presented in the following table.

Table 1. Comparative analysis between the advantages of the online conference and the classical conference

Characteristics	Classical conference	Online conferences - webinar
<i>Participants in the conference</i>	Limited number of participants	Large number of participants depending on capacity of the conference room
<i>Interaction</i>	There is the risk that some participants may experience discomfort by direct participation	Participants are no longer stressed by a direct interaction with the other participants in the conference
<i>Getting involved</i>	Due to its face to face characteristic, participants are directly involved in talks, especially in the case of small conferences with not many participants	Some participants can do other activities as well during the conference or they can leave the conference room at any moment
<i>Dress code</i>	Participants must wear appropriate formal attire which is sometimes uncomfortable	Participants can wear casual comfortable clothes, most of the times as they would dress at home
<i>Recording the conference</i>	In order to refer back to the conference, it means it has to be recorded on video	Conference rooms enable automated recording of the conference therefore it can be accessed any time at a later date
<i>Feed-back</i>	The assessment of the conference process can be done through questionnaires or direct dialogue with the participants	An assessment of the previous conference is possible in order to eliminate the negative aspects and improve the next meeting
<i>Participants' behaviour</i>	Participants who monopolize talks, who get off on a sidetrack, or who do not obey the rules of the conference are harder to control by the one who presides the event	The chairman can give a simple command to the computer to eliminate or to block off irritable participants or the ones who disregards the rules of conduct of the meeting
<i>Statistical elements regarding the activity of participants</i>	The extent of involvement in talks can be assessed by organizers only manually, by filling out a questionnaire	In case of an online conference, the room generates an automated report which tells about the involvement of each participant, their answers, the frequency and length of their participation, etc.
<i>Sending out the information</i>	Steps to organize the meeting take time, and the passing on of information is not done quickly	The on-line organization of the meeting allows for the circulation of information and decision-making to be done in good time.
<i>Location of participants</i>	In order to attend the meeting, participants need to travel in from different cities, sometimes from abroad	It has the advantage of attending the conference from any geographical area or location as if you were in the conference room
<i>The schedule of participants</i>	Travel time is very important considering the distance to the	Online participation saves idle times

	meeting venue is significant, which can sometimes take even one day.	
<i>Travel expenses</i>	In the case of companies operating in different regions, travel costs, accommodation and daily allowance for participants are significant	Travel costs are inexistent
<i>Costs with organizing the conference</i>	Organizing the conference involves minimal protocol expenditure	Low organizational costs, the most important being related to the technology used

Even though the information comprised in the table above seems to present only the advantages of organizing a conference, we must also take into consideration a few disadvantages. The most frequent problems that can occur are technical for instance Internet connection or even computer settings which temporarily jam the conference or can block it.

Moreover, product presentation workshops are limited, for example in the case of cosmetics, they cannot be touched, smelled, one cannot see the hues, texture, etc. However, it is difficult to replace or to imitate face-to-face interaction with asynchronous communication because it lacks immediate feedback and involves less social presence (Wang & Hsu, 2008). Second, differences in preferred communication and learning styles as a result of the role of gender, ethnicity, and culture on online learning preferences is required (Stodel, et al., 2006).

4. OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF ORGANIZING WEBINAR

In the case of online conferences, some stages specific to the organization of classical conferences are eliminated, information is transmitted much faster and the volume of information that can be transmitted is much higher, which allows participants to prepare in more detail. The administrator of the conference occupies an important place in the sense that he is the person who makes the electronic notification directly or programmed automatically via the camera / software. It is also he who keeps in touch with future participants and receives the feed-back of users who share what they have learned or, as the case may be, any queries.

Steps for making a videoconference:

- Prepare the invitations with the appropriate theme;
- Send invitations by e-mail so that participants can join the conference
- Verify and set up the technical equipment; prepare the on-line scenario by finding an image and a background that create the conditions for a real dialogue; upload materials to the conference room; make a test call to verify the video camera, the microphone and internet connection; create system facilities such as voting systems, polls, brainstorming, question and answer systems, etc.
- Feedback where the conference room reports on the number of participants, the number of questions and answers, the time of joining and exiting the conference room.



Figure 1. Webinar Operational Network

Obviously, there are currently many online tools to organize conferences using social networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), mobile messaging apps such as Viber, Skype, or Whatsapp as well as specialized conferences with many operational tools and a very large number of participants, such as Go to Meeting, Elluminate, Live Meeting.

Skype. Even though it is not the only VOIP program used on the market, Skype has remained the most widely used and known app. The advantages of Skype are primarily determined by the fact that it is fully mobile - on phones and tablets as well as PCs, and also because of the ability to make phone calls from Skype (including landlines) as well as send texts to all mobile networks.

The Skype installation steps are: install the app then register your data and the program interface; from the application menu select the Friends tab and then Add friends by saving phone numbers and names; from the Friends menu choose New Group to create and set up a new group for the conference; in this new group you can set the title of the conversation, you can invite people from the already existing contact list.

Go to Meeting. *Go to Meeting* is a service created and owned by the on-line service department of the Citrix Systems and is a very useful platform for on-line meetings, videoconferencing, and sharing of documents, materials, projects and studies. GoToMeeting brings forth an impressive price / quality alternative and is used for up to 1,000 participants. The advantage of using this conference room is that it also allows feedback by keeping emails and setting up automated replies, statistics on the behaviour of participants in the conference room, from the time of joining and until they exit the

conference room, the possibility of recording the conference, dialogue and questions written through the chat app etc.

Even if there is no obvious classification of the conference rooms in specialist literature, they can be structured according to certain criteria.

- a) According to the objectives set by the conference:
 - *Conferences for business presentations*, namely presentations and promotion of products and services;
 - *Educational, eLearning-type conferences* that are mostly implemented in universities in order to organize classes that allow students to study from a distance or to organize online sessions to reduce abandonment (Nagy & Bernschütz);
 - *Training conferences* for their own employees and associates.
- b) Based on the number of participants:
 - *Conferences with a large number of participants*, requiring a technically feasible conference platform;
 - *Conferences with a limited number of participants*, for example 2 or 5, in which case these conferences become a debate that can be done online on Facebook or Skype.
- c) Considering the continuity of webinars:
 - *individualized webinars with distinct themes*
 - *Serial Webinars* that require continuity and address a wider theme that cannot be presented in a single session.
- d) Formats for webinar-session delivery:
 - *Presenter vs. multiple participants from one site*;
 - *Presenter vs. multiple participants from multiple sites*;
 - *Multiple participants from one site vs. multiple participants from one or multiple sites* (Wang & Hsu, 2008).

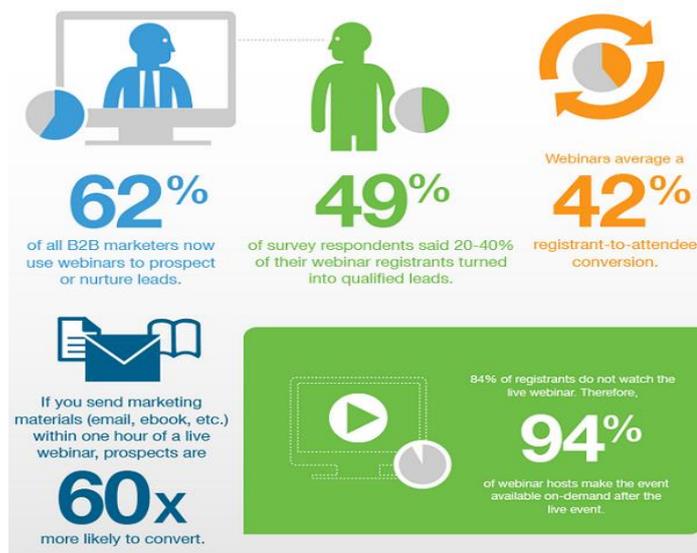


Figure 2. Statistics regarding the use of webinars

In conclusion, the main role of a webinar is to provide information. Acquiring new perspectives is the key goal of any marketing organization, and there is no better tool than webinars for increasing brand awareness and building credibility in the marketplace (10). The content of the marketing information must be interactive and should create lava-hot demand. From industry conferences to educational webinars, when you motivate people to invest their time and energy into your brand, you're on your way to rock solid customer relationships (11).

Statistics show that due to the technology available, a webinar can now be used easily and it fits within a modest budget. The most frequent use of webinars has been registered by trade managers; 62% of them use the webinar.

4. CONCLUSIONS

An essential feature of a Webinar is its interactive element driven by the ability to deliver, receive, and share information in real time. These tools have been attracting more and more attention with the advancement of online learning technologies because webinar tools facilitate real-time communication and enrich the interactivity in an online learning environment (Wang & Hsu, 2008). In conclusion, the use of webinars is an extremely effective communication tool and the advantages it provides are an important factor for their successful implementation in as many areas of activity as possible.

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