

# Webinar v.2 METHODOLOGY

webinar  learn

*Video conference use for adult learning*

Project consortium:

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# 1. Introduction to webinars

## Etymology

The term **webinar**<sup>1</sup> is short for web-based seminar, a presentation, lecture, workshop or seminar that is transmitted over the web. “Webinar” is a contraction of the terms “web” & “seminar”. It describes a specific type of web conference (Wikipedia<sup>2</sup>). The online Merriam-Webster dictionary gives a similar definition, though narrower in scope:

*“a live online educational presentation during which participating viewers can submit questions and comments”.*

Some argue that webinars encompass a one-way stream, from the speaker to the audience with limited audience interaction. However, these one-way broadcasts are perhaps more accurately called webcasts. Webinars themselves are more collaborative and include polling as well as question and answer sessions in order to allow full participation between the audience and the presenter.

Usually, web conferencing technologies on the market have incorporated the use of VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) audio technology, to allow for a completely web-based communication. However, in some cases, the presenter may speak over a standard telephone line, while pointing out information being presented onscreen, and the audience can respond over their own telephones or speaker phones allowing the greatest comfort and convenience. Depending upon the provider, webinars may provide hidden or anonymous participant functionality, making participants unaware of other participants in the same webinar.

## Short history

Real-time text chat facilities such as IRC appeared in the late 1980s. Web-based chat and instant messaging software appeared in the mid-1990s. In the late 1990s, the first true web conferencing capability became available from Starlight Networks (“Online broadcasting”), StarLive product (“Apps for streaming services”) and dozens of other web conferencing venues, most notably WebEx followed thereafter.

A trademark for the term “webinar” was registered in 1998 by Eric R. Korb but was difficult to defend; it is currently assigned to InterCall. Web conferencing started with Plato, a small standalone system that supports a single class of terminals connected to a central computer.

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1 Another definition with general reference for hardware requirements and internet connection is available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWz8ppM9DzM>

2 Wikipedia is considered to be one of the best sources for fast-changing technologies.

## 1.1. What is a webinar?

Webinar, as defined for the purposes of this methodology, is:

*“A web-based seminar with transmission of video and audio content online (over the internet) from one source to a limited audience with the purpose of training”*

A key feature of a good webinar points to the following interactive elements: the ability to give, receive and discuss information. An interactive function can be fulfilled by discussion boards and online chat-rooms provided on the same website as the webinar. This either allows trainees to discuss the content as an online community or, in some cases of live discussion and panel shows, allows to contribute to the show directly which can be relayed directly to the panel. As the trainees are given an increased level of interactivity by allowing them to submit information to the discussion (be it text, graphic, audio or video), the experience will become more engaging for them, creating a better learning experience.

Webinars are mainly delivered live. However, they can be recorded and delivered “on demand” giving the flexibility to the viewer to watch the webinar whenever they wish. In some cases, rather than requiring a download like a video podcast, a recorded webinar might use a progressive video stream onto the user’s computer so there is no need for hard drive space or dealing with the problem of leftover media files.

The on-demand ability to share and distribute recorded webinars via a portal or database, plays a vital role in the learning process. It means that content is at the fingertips of trainees, and that unlimited playback is possible.

## 1.2. Related terms

Webinars correspond to a one-way communication online. There are other ways similar such as web-conferencing or broadcasting.

### **Web-conference**

Web conferencing refers to a service that allows conferencing events to be shared with remote locations. The predecessor of a web-conference is the video-conference. Basically, video conferencing is the exchange of a live video feed between few or more participants to connect webinar members, so that members at a distance cannot only be heard but seen as well. Before the availability of high bandwidth internet connections, signals were carried over point to point connections established via ISDN lines.

Web conferencing, on the other hand, involves the connection of multiple audience members or participants to a virtual room or space, where files can be shared or exchanged. With web conferencing the live video component is not obligatory. Here, there are multiple levels of engagement on both the part of the presenter and the audience/participants. For the use of the current methodology, we have identified web-conferencing as the term most closely related to the notion of a webinar.

Many of the elements combined to form a webinar match with those used in a web-conference. Web conferences are used in the business world to conduct meetings between groups of people over a network such as the Internet. During such meetings software is used with functionalities similar to the software needed for a webinar. However, during a **web-conference**, communication has a “many to many” structure, which implies that even if one person is leading the conference, **all participants have equal**

**opportunities to take part simultaneously.** This means that in many cases, a web-conference can take the form of a meeting, where an agenda is set but is not definitive.

The **webinar**, as opposed to a web-conference, has a slightly different structure. The person leading the event has **the opportunity to decide which participant should be given the right to speak and when.** The notion of a webinar, in the way we understand it, excludes features found in a standard meeting. It implies a training or educational element and is similar to seminars and workshops, which require following a stricter “lesson plan”. Webinars are for larger crowds, with a strong leader/presenter with a specific agenda, whereas on-line meetings are meant for smaller groups (up to 10 people) to discuss a subject where everyone should have a say.

### Broadcasting vs Multicasting

The type of webinar and its intended impact will determine which of the following communication methods are chosen.

**Broadcasting** is the transfer of audio and/or video content **from one point to a dispersed audience.** The distinguishing feature of a broadcast is the **limited interaction** possible between participants (they often are not able to actively participate in an event, cannot ask questions or conduct discussions). Examples of this style of online broadcast are conferences, concerts, group meetings and football matches.

**Multicasting** on the other hand, is a form of **broadcasting of multimedia content** over a network based on the principle that the content is first sent to a content distribution network media server, which sends it on to the various viewers. This solution is used in webinars and allows transmission to multiple people at once, even when there is a relatively low-speed internet.

	Web-conference	Webinars	Broadcasting
<b>Number of users</b>	Small group < 10	Large group 5 < 1000	Large group 500 <
<b>Interactivity</b>	Voice for all	Feedback using chat and questionnaires	No feedback
<b>Agenda</b>	Flexible	Fixed	Fixed

## 1.3. Webinars in training

The use of this technology for learning is still considered to be at the primary stage. However, as with news and entertainment, the growth of its use within teaching practice is expanding rapidly alongside the capacity of trainers and learners to support the technology. The potential which webinars hold within training, particularly for adult education and continuing professional development within small and medium businesses, opens up a huge market for in-house upskilling of staff where traditionally the staff would have to be sent on training days, often at great cost to the company. Also, the option for webinars to either be live and interactive, allowing a simulated classroom experience, or on-demand for trainees to watch when and as often as they want, makes training of this type very flexible and therefore efficient, particularly for small businesses.

As the use of technology in non-compulsory education has become more widespread, educators have begun to use these technologies as an additional core skill in more traditional areas of learning, as well as in subjects such as IT, which this technology lends itself to. This has led to a culture shift in education with more acceptance of what is called “blended learning”, which refers to educators using new and innovative technologies in conjunction with more traditional teaching methods practiced in the conference room to deliver their training.

The majority of webinars tend toward the broadcast-style described above, with a lecturer (or other person) delivering content to a group, while an e-learning webinar with a small number of participants (less than ten trainees) may have a high level of interactivity and reflects a blended learning structure, as participants are granted additional control. The amount of interactivity permitted in a webinar should be inversely proportional to the number of participants. As a result, large groups will lead to webinars similar to a traditional broadcast format.

Although these new technologies support learning, many still use them with the traditional teaching styles they have adopted for the training. While many underlying methodologies common to all teaching practice are allowed to function using new technologies such as webinars, the effect of these technologies can be maximised by developing new processes and teaching styles specific to the new technologies. This document sets out to address how you can deliver the most effective teaching and learning through webinars.

## 1.4. Key features of a webinar

The most typical features of a webinar can be summarized as follows<sup>3</sup>:

- On-line environment;
- Use of software:
  - ♦ Webinar providers require specific software;
  - ♦ Participants must have Internet access;
- Live event (scheduled at a precise time);
- Participation by invitation only;
- Limited duration of 1-2 hours presenting content (using audio, video, sharing screen, ppt presentations, etc.);
- Interaction with participants (audio, chat, quizzes, surveys, whiteboard, “hands up” button, etc.);
- Partial anonymity of participants;
- Giving rights: the person running the webinar may give different rights to the participants (e.g. make them presenters). It gives the participants more options (e.g. screen sharing, file sharing, etc.);

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<sup>3</sup> More details about webinar software features is in chapter 2.1.1.

## 1.5. Advantages and challenges of webinars

### 1.5.1. Advantages

#### Cost-efficiency

Rapid development of infrastructure and software used for remote communication makes webinar technology itself cheaper and more available. As the costs of enhanced software decrease each month, the trainee's satisfaction increases. Distance learning is becoming a far cheaper alternative to traditional training as fast Internet connections are standard in every educational institution or enterprise.

Cost-savings (in terms of accommodation and travel) are one of the key advantages of webinars. Webinars help reduce costs in:

- Time commitment required by the trainees;
- Travel and accommodation;
- Training materials;
- Evaluation of training;
- Post training materials preparation.

Below is an example of the savings that could be made on typical meetings or trainings. The figures provided are rather low compared to intercity travels for employees.

Aspect	Measure	Saving in €
<b>Meetings</b>	Traveltime 1 hr per participant: 60 € 8 members	<b>480 Euros</b>
<b>Trainings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Product update</b></li><li>• <b>Process update</b></li></ul>	Traveltime 1 hr per participant: 40 € 15 members	<b>600 Euros</b>
	Training Room fee with coffee, soft drinks	<b>300 Euros</b>
<b>Marketing activities</b>	Brochure printing	<b>300 Euros</b>

For a more precise calculation of savings, as well as an appreciation of the positive impact on the environment when switching to webinars, for training purposes, the WebEx Carbon Calculator, can be useful (<http://www.webex.com/lp/carboncalculatoronly.html>).

#### Convenience

Webinars save time by offering trainees the capability to choose an hour that is most convenient to them. In addition webinars eliminate the need for costly facilities, allowing trainees without such access to participate. Webinars are accessible from any place, requiring only a computer and the Internet, broadening accessibility to include participants throughout the world.

### **Post-training availability of content**

Webinars allow the trainer to record teaching sessions easily for other trainees (and to make them available on-demand).

### **Orientation function**

Webinar sessions provide those looking to raise their qualifications or retrain in a certain subject area a viable option to try various subjects if they are unsure of the specifics of what they want to study. Thanks to webinar technology, trainees can attend different webinars to check themes and topics before choosing often expensive traditional training formats or post-graduate studies.

### **Increased openness and less personal communication barriers**

The partial anonymity of webinar participants benefits individuals fearing criticism and negative (non-constructive) feedback, allowing them to ask questions freely. Webinars also encourage new ideas from shy participants (e.g. Where can our company make improvements?).

## **1.5.2. Challenges**

### **Attentiveness**

This style of learning also has its challenges. Trainees participating in traditional training are generally more focused on their studies than those participating in a webinar. While a webinar is in progress, trainees may browse the Internet, work, read and do many other things that might distract them and detract from the training. Engagement activities provided by the trainer can avoid this situation.

### **Technical issues**

To conduct a webinar properly, a trainer needs software and the knowledge and experience to use the software as intended, requiring the trainer to spend additional time learning the software. Participants have few technical issues to consider besides installing the webinar software and following any on screen prompts in case of a desktop-based software or checking the latest version of the necessary plugins (Java for instance). Users usually have access to computers meeting at least the minimum requirements to participate in a webinar.

### **Limitations of the non-verbal communication**

Traditional meetings allow participants to be more flexible and interact more than during webinar sessions. In a webinar, dialogue is limited and interactivity becomes a challenge. However, a skilled trainer can use multiple techniques to minimise this effect.

### **Limited time**

A webinars limited duration (1-2 hours) forces content to be planned by the minute and limits the instructors ability to be flexible with time. As stated above, webinars have quite a lot of advantages, which form a promising alternative to traditional classroom activities resulting in the growing popularity of webinars. A variety of techniques exist to help the trainer overcome challenges presented by this new medium to ensure that the sessions are conducted efficiently. Ensuring a highly satisfied customer is a matter of employing the correct training methods to transmit content most effectively. Moreover, the possibility for the participant to play the recording of the webinar as many times as he wishes, allows the trainer to not have to repeat himself in order to achieve pedagogical efficiency. He can therefore focus on being concise and to the point in his presentation.

## 2. Webinar technology

### 2.1. Hardware and bandwidth requirements

As with education in the classroom, webinars should be available to all and therefore webinar software should be compatible with the majority of computers currently in use. The physical hardware required varies, depending on the level of engagement intended by users.

To view a webinar, the bare minimum required is a personal computer with a broadband internet connection and current software updates of Java and Flash. This will allow a minimal level of interaction. However, as the level of interaction is raised, the more engaging the experience will be for the user. For example, the addition of headphones to the computer set up will create a fuller experience for the user.

This hardware will allow the user to interact at a basic level with the webinar, allowing them to see and hear the content being transmitted, typing notes and perhaps writing to forums or chat rooms regarding the webinar. The introduction of a microphone and/or a webcam raises this level of interactivity as it gives the viewer the ability to broadcast themselves through the webinar. The addition of an audio/visual representation of the user being broadcast brings a more flowing interaction with the webinar and will more clearly communicate the persona of the user.

	Trainer / Moderator	Trainee
<b>Computer</b>	Middle end computer	Any chosen computer for home-office use equipped (low end)
<b>Internet connection</b>	Stable internet connection: 1024/512 kb/s (down-/upload speed)	Stable internet connection: 512/256 kb/s
<b>Peripherals</b>	Webcam or other video camera, headphones and microphone (attached headset recommended)	At least headphones or speakers and microphone. Some sort of webcam is recommended
<b>Back-up</b>	Quiet environment with good acoustics. Clearly lit with the possibility of extra lightning	Basically any location. Of course quiet one is recommended

*Webcast technology requirements.*

This table is only a model and the actual requirements should be based on tools used in the webinar. Requirements will change as network capacity increases and computers develop. However two trends are particularly evident:

First, the trainer must use a computer that meets the recommended specifications for running the

webinar software, a large (+19”) monitor or dual display to allow the trainer a comfortable workspace while keeping certain controls out of trainees sight.

Second, the participant’s computer does not need to be exceptionally fast nor have lots of memory. The most important features are the capability to run a web browser and up-to-date installations of Adobe Flash player and Java RTE. Often there are some technological myths regarding participation in webinars such as that in order to take part in an interactive webinar you need a very powerful computer. As a rule, an average computer designed for office work or home use can handle the webinar software as long as the software running is current and complete. Therefore, the percentage of people who, for technical reasons, are unable to participate in webinar is very low.

The factors affecting bandwidth are:

- Audio and Video upload/download quality settings;
- Number of webinar participants.

There are a substantial number of Internet users who connect to the web using high speed alternatives such as ISDN modems, DSL, dedicated T-1 access and cable modems. Viewers with faster and more (512kbs/256+) consistent connections will have a better viewing experience.

## 2.2. Webinar technicalities

A solid lesson plan, a capable trainer and an avid group of trainees are certainly the basic elements needed to successfully conduct any training course. Nonetheless, even if these requirements are met a webinar training session may be disrupted by a number of factors related to the delivery of the content. Here are some basic instructions for conducting a successful webinar.

### 2.2.1. Place

As webinars are Internet-based, they can be delivered from virtually anywhere. However, selecting a superior location is recommended.

#### **Sound**

A webinar is crucially dependent on high-quality audio. Using excellent equipment will not guarantee a successful webinar if background noise is present. Disturbances such as street traffic, co-workers, ventilation systems, and buzzing lights will have a detrimental impact on the production quality of the webinar.

The level of these disturbances can be evaluated by listening to the space and being mindful of potential sources of noise. Please note that an empty room, devoid of furniture and fixtures, may lead to a low-quality sound experience. It is recommended that one employ acoustic mats, where possible to eliminate excess noise.

#### **Video**

If you intend on using video, an appropriate background is crucial. Find a clean wall or hang a cloth or paper-board behind the presenter to ensure a professional look. The presenter should be on an uncluttered background, free of advertisements, slogans, or copy-written images.

Actors	Workspace
trainer	personal laptop
moderator	desk space, documents
co-presenter	quiet environment
support trainer	clearly lit, good acoustics

*Elements of a comfortable and professional work environment.*

Please ensure that the trainer and any co-workers each have their own workstation (even if teaching as a team) that features ample desk space for all required equipment.

### 2.2.2. Camera angle

In order to achieve the best framing for a webinar, the camera angle should be level with the eye of the trainer, like in a TV news broadcast. With many camera models, especially those built into notebooks, this may prove difficult. As a general rule, however, the higher the better (but not higher than the head of the trainer).

Also, it is best if the camera is a few degrees either to the left or right of the speaker, so the trainer is not in the middle of the frame. If the trainer gesticulates while speaking, they should set up the camera in a way that allows trainees to see their arms and hands. Before broadcasting the trainer has to make sure that the web camera is connected to the computer and that it is operational.

Although a webinar is far from a Hollywood movie, the same rules and principles of visual composition apply to movies. Although the video stream will not be the most crucial element in most training courses, it has a strong role in supporting the transfer of knowledge from trainer to learner.

### 2.2.3. Lighting

Another key element in video is the lighting. It is said that photography is the art of painting with light, and the same goes for video, webinars included.

Lighting the subject of a video is a very broad subject and will only be addressed here in a simplified approach. Light the trainers face from the side (45o angle) in order to allow soft shadows and ensure it is the brightest object in the shot. This can be achieved by using lamps or by having the trainer sit next to a window during daylight hours.

Avoid bright lights behind the trainer as this may result in a silhouette, preventing participants from seeing the trainer's face.

### 2.2.4. Audio

The audio broadcast part of the webinar is arguably the most important element as the majority of information will be transferred by voice. For this reason, it is necessary to ensure that the audio broadcast is of a high quality (see checklist below). Forcing trainees to listen to a crackling, noisy voice broadcast will quickly result in them growing tired and losing interest in the lesson.

Before conducting a webinar, the trainer has to make sure that the microphone is properly set-up. A wireless microphone and headset is the best solution, as it allows free use of the hands. USB headsets require no installation and bypasses the sound card allowing users to avoid common driver problems. Although most laptops have a built in microphone, it is best to use a microphone headset as it will more accurately pick up the trainer’s voice. Be aware that using loudspeakers will almost always result in feedback, and should be avoided at all times.

Before conducting the webinar the trainer should check the following software/hardware settings:	✓
Check the audio/video if it is not disabled;	
Check if the audio is not disabled/muted;	
Check if the earphones/a microphone are properly plugged in and that the volume-control is not switched off;	
Check you are using the correct input device – Your computer may have more than one input device for a single task (e.g. camera microphone, built in microphone and line-in microphone);	
Check if your audio is properly set up in the webcasting software – Most webcasting software comes equipped with a technical “wizard” enabling you to set audio/video devices;	
Check the volume control and be sure to set it at all available points (software, sound card, headphones);	
Check if there isn’t an echo. It can happen when you don’t use a headset and the audio from speakers goes to the microphone;	
Everyone should have a headset.	

*Settings in the webinar software.*

## 2.3. Webinar software

Many pieces of webinar software are web-based applications and do not require installation. However, they still require popular technologies such as Adobe Flash or Java TM, installed on most machines. A further benefit to this, beyond the lack of installation, is that the software will work across multiple platforms and operating systems. Some software applications also feature mobile versions.

### 2.3.1. Functionalities

Within this paper we have identified a number of functionalities that are beneficial to webinar software. Some of these functionalities are essential to delivering the webinar, while others simply enhance the learning experience. As with all software, the number of functionalities available to the user depends on the development of the software and this is reflected in the cost. We have evaluated a variety of pieces of software ranging from freeware/shareware software available to paid options.

The following functionalities are generally found in most, if not all, webinar software suitable for education:

- Video & audio transmission (allows trainer and participants to see and hear each other);
- Chat (allows to communicate between participants by typing text. Therefore they do not interfere with person who speaks using microphone);

- Real time whiteboard (allows one to draw on a shared whiteboard);
- File sharing, e.g. distribution of reading material;
- Note sharing;
- Screen sharing (ability to view the screen of the presenter/lecturer);
- Surveys/quizzes (on-line questionnaires).

Further options which may be useful and are available in some of the more advanced software options are:

- **The ability to toggle moderator/trainer during the session** – this can be helpful for webinars for smaller groups as it allows trainees and trainers to work collaboratively by switching roles;
- **The ability to view a downloaded file through the software** – this is helpful for discussion purposes;
- **Webinar recording ability** – this can be very helpful as it not only allows trainees who have not attended the webinar to view the content while also working as a form of digital note taking. This ensures trainees can devote their full attention to the webinar during a live session. The recorded webinar must be published by the trainer;
- **Polling application** – this can be an excellent way to carry out assessment;
- **The ability to publish questionnaires** – this can be an excellent way to give feedback to trainees on the assessment quickly and easily.

In order to define the effectiveness of a piece of webinar software we can ask questions such as:

- Is it a web application (i.e. browser-based) or does it require software installation?
- What is the maximum number of users at the same time?
- What is the value of the software in terms of costs and included functionality?

### 2.3.2. Resources

There are a number of software packages, both free and commercial, which can be used for educational purposes.

#### Examples of webinar software:

Adobe Connect 8

ClickWebinar

GoToMeeting/GoToWebinar

AnyMeeting

BigBlueButton

DimDim

FastViewer confered

Fuze Meeting

Spread

Mikogo

TeamViewer 7

Saba Webinar

RHUB GoMeetNow 4.3

ooVoo

Latest releases of webinar software may be followed by many lists and reviews<sup>4</sup> published online. Additionally, most of them have trial versions which help to test all functionalities and then decide on the specific solution.

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4 Exemplary reviews : Top Ten Reviews, <http://webinar-services-review.toptenreviews.com/>;  
Croice Blog: <http://croice.com/blog/webinar-software-comparison-the-top-four-webinar-providers-reviewed/>;  
Online Meeting Tools: <http://webconferencing-test.com/en/online-meeting-home>.

# 3. Organisation of the live Webinar

As mentioned, webinars have a variety of uses in entertainment, business and learning. Nevertheless, the main focus of interest in this paper will be only one form of webinar use, live broadcast for educational purposes. Many aspects of live webinars, such as technology or learners' motivation, can impact the effectiveness of training. The institution that organises a webinar has the most important role to play, that being the responsibility to provide an engaging, well-structured and organised session.

Within this chapter roles and responsibilities of the key players during a webinar will be described. Please be aware of the fact that some of these roles do not necessarily have to be different people (i.e. an experienced Trainer might be able to also handle the role of the moderator and Technical support). The following roles are identified:

Role	Responsibilities	Remarks
<b>Moderator</b>	Manage introduction, and closeout, integrate trainers and experts; summarize questions for Q&A	Managing sub-rooms if applicable
<b>Trainer</b>	Prepare and present content, make use of training tools	Can also act as moderator
<b>Expert</b>	Supply specific knowledge	Based on professional or personal experience and know-how
<b>Technical Support</b>	Assure the webinar SW is working; deal with SW/HW issues of the trainees	Focus is on resolving issues (possibly using work-arounds)
<b>Trainee</b>	Learning, active participation and feedback	Possibly for a fee

*Roles and responsibilities of the webinar team 3.1.*

## 3.1. The aim of the webinar

An institution that wants to organise webinar training has to answer a fundamental question: What do we want to achieve with this webinar? Here is an initial list of possible answers:

### 1. **DECISION: Why should we select webinar in the first place?**

- Due to the geographical dispersion of learners and trainers, a webinar gives one an opportunity to avoid travel, which in turn reduces costs and saves time;
- To easily enrich a course program by inviting guest lecturers to present remotely;

- As an alternative for learners who cannot attend the training in person because they are unable to travel or ill;
- To increase access to education;
- To offer a “teaser” for free;
- To generate revenue for licensed products.

## 2. GOAL: What do you want to achieve with this webinar? (With regard to who is your audience):

### a. External participants

- Get new customers interested in your products or services;
- Generate revenue from a new feature or service;
- Present a new functionality to existing customers;
- Show how to resolve well known issues with your company’s products or services;
- Deliver a free/paid training module;
- Deliver a free/paid training module as part of a curriculum;

### b. Company insiders, business partners, etc.

- To learn about a new procedure or software release with the possibility to ask questions immediately;
- To present a new idea/approach and to receive feedback (advanced project management meeting)<sup>5</sup>;
- To align the training approach of various experts, residing in different locations;
- To receive an update on legal changes with the possibility to immediately ask questions;
- To have a senior professional to explain/train a specific scenario with the possibility for other trainees to review the recorded session;
- To learn in easily digestible steps (e.g. one hour every week) about different aspects of a larger learning task – with the possibility to use surveys and/or questionnaires. Successful participation might lead to a certificate.
- Regular monitoring of the post-training effects: are the newly presented processes/regulations well understood and implemented by the employees?
- Assure on-going certification for a specific product or service.

## 3. TOOLS:

- **What software will be used during the session?**
- What are the other technical conditions?
- Is it possible to use these materials “interactively” (e.g. using whiteboard tools)?
- If you use media requiring high bandwidth (e.g. HD video) – do you know of any bottleneck in the connection
- Are all trainees well connected?

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<sup>5</sup> As found on <http://www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/p19562/Think-Cranfield/Think-Cranfield-2013/April-2013/How-to-network-your-organisation-s-learning-webinars>

While webinar software can also be used as a technical platform to conduct international business meetings and to share project results or to agree on project status, these possibilities will not be discussed further within the framework of this methodology.

## 3.2. Roles

### 3.2.1. Trainer's role in webinar training

A trainer who knows webinar technology will be able to independently lead his training for a small group (6 people) with success. In a webinar for a group larger than 20 people, help of a moderator and possibly technical support is more crucial. However, no matter how big the group may be, the trainer has a large number of workshop/training responsibilities.

Above all, the trainer needs to prepare a theme and structure for the webinar, as well as all associated materials including multimedia presentations. It is important therefore that the trainer feels at ease in the webinar environment, has experience that allows him to assess the capabilities of the software and to choose the right tools and content. In the case of webinar training and workshops where participants cannot see the trainer, they are focused primarily on the presentation. It must therefore be designed in an aesthetically pleasing way to the audience, but must also be functional and effective. Good knowledge of the software package being used to prepare a presentation is helpful here.

Keeping in mind that materials used in webinar workshops usually come from various sources and will be in an assortment of formats, it is important for the trainer to have at least a basic knowledge of different technologies, software tools and possibly hardware (e.g. Intel vs. MAC).

Below we present a graph showing the importance of a trainer's skills relating to **Virtual Instructor Led Training (VILT)**. According to the research, the most important skills a webinar trainer should have is:

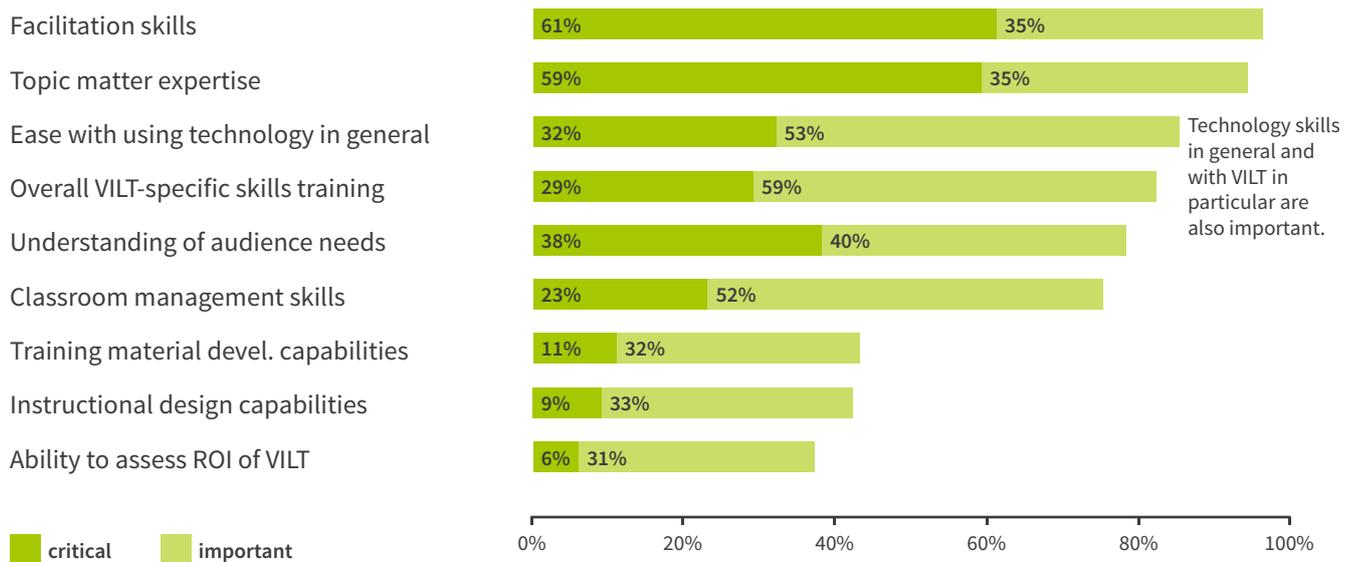
- the ability to formulate their thoughts clearly and in a way that is accessible to the participants;
- fluency in the presentation of a topic, skills connected with the ability to use webinar technology, technological know-how and ease with using technology in general and specific knowledge of leading workshops online (overall VILT-specific skills training).

However, although these skills are integral to an efficient training session, but they are not a key element. In this style of training the content will always be of fundamental importance.

Apart from the skills outlined above, there are skills connected with the training process itself. These are:

- understanding participants' needs;
- classroom management skills;
- training material development capabilities;
- instructional design capabilities and the ability to assess and evaluate VILT.

## Importance of VILT Instructor Skills:



*Delivering Virtual Instructor-Led Training (VILT), 2010, General Physics Corporation (GP) and Training Industry, INC.*

The organiser of the webinar should provide the trainer with information about trainees and learning outcomes well in advance of the training session. The organiser must be ready to answer the following questions:

- What is the aim of the particular webinar?
- What do we want the learner to be able to do?
- What is the expected level of participants' skills/knowledge?
- What type of trainees will participate in the webinar?
- Is the webinar for a closed or open group?
- What is the number of trainees?
- Do the trainees use this kind of software frequently?
- Will there only be one session or do we expect consecutive sessions, and if so, will each have the same attendance?
- What kind of hardware will be available during the training?
- Will participants use their own computers?
- Is the broadcast made for single or multiple groups?
- Is technical support provided for the learners and the trainer?

The trainer's job is to choose the right methods to accomplish their teaching goals. However, the organizer must provide the trainer guidance in the field of technology and the use of webinars in training. If the trainer is well trained and informed, they should be ready to prepare a good lesson plan.

## Competences of the web trainer – synchronous and asynchronous

**Synchronous:** Webinars and web-meetings with adequate communication links allowing for immediate interaction between trainer and trainees

**Asynchronous:** Webcasts, e-mail, Computer Based Instructions, where the trainee can generate feedback, but they cannot directly influence the delivery of the training or learning module.

What skills should the trainer, conducting trainings in virtual sessions, have? The list below was based on the author's own experience as well as German sources (including the book "Tele-Tutoren" by Christina Rautenstrauch, Bertelsmann, 2001).

### 1. Knowledge about learning styles using e-learning:

- Knowledge of learning theories related to e-learning;
- Knowledge of issues related to independent learning and motivation of the participants in a situation of self-study (self-paced learning);
- Knowledge of various methods and strategies for learning via e-learning and selection of tools that allow you to use these methods;
- Advising participants on the selection of appropriate methods of self-study. Diagnose strengths and weaknesses;

### 2. Knowledge of the learning process of adults

- Knowledge of different learning theories;
- Knowledge and experience in the preparation of teaching materials;
- Knowledge and experience in creating an environment/platform supporting the learning process;
- Knowledge of time management and stress management techniques.

### 3. Communication competences

- Clear diction and voice production;
- Ability to conduct and sustain conversations;
- Knowledge of and ability to use questioning techniques;
- Knowledge of and ability to create netiquette tailored to the needs of different groups;
- Knowledge of vocabulary related to computers and e-learning. The ability to explain these concepts to people without a technical background;
- Knowledge about the limitations of synchronous and asynchronous communication;
- Ability to select the appropriate communication tool.

### 4. Moderation competences

- Knowledge of group processes, particularly occurring in groups working online;
- Ability to provide knowledge and encourage exchange of information;
- Practical skills in moderating discussion on chat, forum, in the virtual room;

- Knowledge about setting tasks for groups working online;
- Ability to give feedback in a manner adapted to the online environment;
- Knowledge of methods and collaboration tools (synchronous and asynchronous).

### 5. Knowledge of hardware, software and the Internet

- Efficient use of the computer - knowledge about basic computer components (eg, what is RAM and how much memory do I have on my computer) and the operating system;
- Ability to handle a variety of programs, both typical (eg MS Office) and custom (e.g. mindmeister). Ability to learn new software;
- Knowledge of operating principles for the online training platform (synchronous and asynchronous). The ability to compare platform functions;
- Ability to verify the quality of the Internet connection and selection of internet connection which meets the course needs;
- Ability to build an online knowledge data base and selection of tools;
- You enjoy working on a computer, using the internet, and using new software. You are skilled in managing multiple online accounts;
- Ability to deal with technical problems.

Source: Marta Eichstaedt, *Blog o Webinarach*,

<http://www.webcomm.eu/kompetencje-trenerazskolen-online-synchronicznych-i-asynchronicznych/>, 03.2012

What software will be used during the session and what are the other technical conditions? Is it possible to use these materials “interactively” (e.g. using whiteboard tools)? If you use media requiring high bandwidth (e.g. HD video) - do you know of any bottleneck in the connection (are all trainees well connected)?

### Trainer and Moderator

While the trainer can count on the support of the moderator, to the trainees he appears as the person who conducts the webinar. Their success depends on a previously prepared scenario and training materials as well as experience. Trainers, who assume at first that they know the topic well and are good speakers, usually struggle with their first attempt to conduct a webinar. A lack of preparation, where relevant skills are not geared to the webinar format, are visible right away, and such webinars tend to be failures.

### Trainer survival tips for the first webinar:

- Conduct the webinar about subjects you know by heart;
- Conduct at least one “training session” up-front with another person sitting remotely, who will then pass-on feedback to you;
- Prepare the timing plan in detail (and try to stick to it);
- Prepare all materials before the session – do not leave any item to last minute inspiration;
- Prepare your “session dashboard” well in advance; depending on the speed of your internet access, it might take up to an half an hour to upload your presentation as well as all the supporting documents;
- If you do not have a moderator and the microphones of participants are disabled, don’t forget to look at the chat window. Avoid getting carried away and just talking about the subject without interruption.
- Encourage Qs.

### **The Trainer's Learning responsibility:**

It is the trainer's duty to lead the session in an engaging manner that keeps participants focused on the training/learning process. It is easy to forget this when we cannot see the audience and the signs of how we are perceived do not reach us. Most often, for people without previous experience it is advised to assume their presentation should be more engaging and dynamic. There are people who have a more natural tendency to be brief and energetic which is very useful in webinars, and certainly after a few tries, each trainer is able to choose the style and form appropriate to the audience, which at the same time fits their skills.

### **Dealing with Questions**

The trainer, perceived as an expert on the topic, will have to field questions from participants. The trainer must respond to questions in a professional manner, directly following the seminar.

### **Responsibilities in representing the organizing company**

In many cases, the trainer will represent the company organising the training, so it is up to them to also perform the standard housekeeping tasks of the webinar such as delivering appropriate salutations and informing trainees of any formalities of the webinar. The moderator, who may have more information which is not related strictly to the training, can fill in for the trainer in appropriate situations, such as when the trainer is a guest speaker (see also other section: Subject Matter Expert, p. 37) invited by the company organising the webinar. However, in this case the trainer should also find out about the company, which has organised the webinar.

### **Webinar evaluation**

A very important duty of the trainer is the evaluation of the training. The following tools are suited to this task:

- Review the seminar (post-mortem) or evaluate usage statistics via webinar software;
- Review quiz answers of trainees;
- With some software the trainer can view statistics concerning not just answers which were given in certain quizzes, but also information showing audience participation;
- The Trainer should be able to view data showing the length of the session, the number of participants and their participation times. Even the fact that some participants were quitting the session during its course, partially shows whether the webinar was engaging and well led.
- Based on the goals and aims set before the session: Did we meet our target/ partial goal?

During webinars it is possible to successfully use such data, and not evaluate the webinar solely on feelings and grades from evaluation surveys.

### **3.2.2. Moderator**

According to the Webster's Dictionary<sup>6</sup>, the definition of the "moderator" implies:

*"a) One who, or that which, moderates, restrains, or pacifies;  
b) The officer who presides over an assembly to preserve order,  
propose questions, regulate the proceedings, and declare the votes."*

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6 Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, Cambridge University Press,  
<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/>

As we can see, in the webinars the role and the characteristic feature of the moderator is quite similar. The moderator is usually employed by the company organising a webinar and represents the company among the participants of the webinar, unless such responsibility can be taken by the trainer. The moderator may refer his experience in webinar use and start the webinar, correctly introducing the trainer to the participants, which allows the trainer to establish authority. It is mandatory for the moderator to possess above average communication skills. Typically, a moderated webinar session could have the following structure:

- Moderator: Assuring registered participants are present and possible technical issues are resolved;
- Moderator: welcomes trainees and informs them about the expected behaviour during the session;
- Moderator: topic introduction;
- Trainer: delivers topic;
- Moderator: Manages feedback cycle (chat, possibly voice);
- Trainer: responds to questions;
- Moderator: closes the session.

Additional experts, and/or trainers will result in a more complex timeline.

### **The Moderator as a Co-trainer**

During a webinar, trainers may find they have to deliver a presentation fluently while at the same time pay attention to questions from the trainees and text-based comments from remote attendees. The moderator is the person who helps the trainer deal with the high volume of trainee interaction. The moderator can focus on the organisation of the class discussion. They can easily follow comments and questions, categorise them into topics and present them to the trainer in the time reserved for discussion.

The trainer expects the following assistance from the moderator:

- verify trainees are involved in the webinar using chat (and other tools);
- monitor discussion boards/chat rooms for inappropriate behaviour;
- keep the trainer up-to-date on the trainees' participation in the webinar;
- notify the trainer regarding important information.

While skimming through chat, the moderator can find out what the opinions and questions of the trainees are even before the trainer. The moderator should also possess at least the minimal knowledge on the topic of the training session. He may help the trainer by quickly verifying the chat questions, and presenting the most interesting ones to the Trainer or reducing their amount via functionality called "moderated chat" only approved Qs and comments will also be visible to others in the chat room.

### **The Moderator as a Technical Support person**

Tech support will be one of the roles of the moderator. They will most often have a superior knowledge of webinar software and it's special requirements (beyond that of the trainer). Because of the technical problems often experienced by the participants, the moderator should also have access to a dedicated telephone line, so that he can advise the participants outside the webinar in the event of any technical issues for them. It is advised to publish these telephone numbers well ahead of the webinar.

### **Other possible duties of the Moderator**

The duties of the moderator may also include the creating part of the training: organising marketing materials and gathering publications with side notes on social networking sites. They can also be asked to organise materials and recordings of the webinar to be made available after the training session along

with a review of the webinar itself. The moderator will be the right person for such tasks when it comes to a training/workshop company organising webinars, for he not only knows the company but takes part in the sessions himself.

### **Moderation for large webinars**

As we can see – the moderator’s duties are very versatile and range from organising the training with the trainer to more technical issues. For this reason, it is advised to divide these duties between the moderator, a technician and a co-trainer/webinar assistant, during large webinars.

### **Moderation for small webinars**

While large webinars need dedicated people for the different roles, on small webinars with only 4-8 trainees, the different roles mentioned above might all be carried out by one single trainer. It is advised, however, that this trainer be experienced in running webinars and that he/she understands the underlying tools of the platform.

### **3.2.3. Expert**

The Expert is used in many webinars to support the key message of the trainer, or the Moderator might select for a specific topic not to work with a trainer but with one or more Experts.

Experts are practitioners in the area of the content of the webinar and might also be recognized on a regional or world-wide level for their expertise (e.g. a University professor or a Government official, a senior Executive from a large corporation).

Experts will often be connected to the webinar remotely; so it will be very important to make sure that their internet connection will allow for easy streaming of audio or video.

### **Expert selection**

The selection of Experts is often done by the organizing company, but could also fall into the responsibility of the Trainer or the Moderator. The following capabilities are important when selecting an expert:

- Recognised within the subject community;
- Good speaker/presenter;
- Ability to maintain a clear focus on webinar subject;
- Able to give short and clear statements to open questions;
- Availability for the time of the webinar confirmed;
- Experienced in using computer tools.

### **3.2.4. Technical support**

Having the Technical Expert available will free the Trainer and/or Moderator from potential connection problems and will allow them to focus on the content.

The Technical Expert can be located either centrally or be connected remotely.

The technical expert’s key skills must possess the following qualities:

- Must be a good listener to trainee’s issues;
- Able to respond in an easy-to-understand and calm fashion;
- Excellent technical knowledge of the internet and the selected tools;
- Ability to find suitable workarounds, if the primary problem cannot be resolved quickly.

### 3.2.5. Types of trainees

The training organiser is responsible for providing information about their remote trainees to their trainers (adults/children, professionals/laymen, etc.) and how many of them will participate in the training.

If we consider the types of trainees, first of all, the trainer has to know who will attend the training, and this depends on the nature of the webinar:

- Closed, limited audience (invitation required, known identity of the participants);
- Advanced users (advanced users of computer programs);
- Anonymous users.

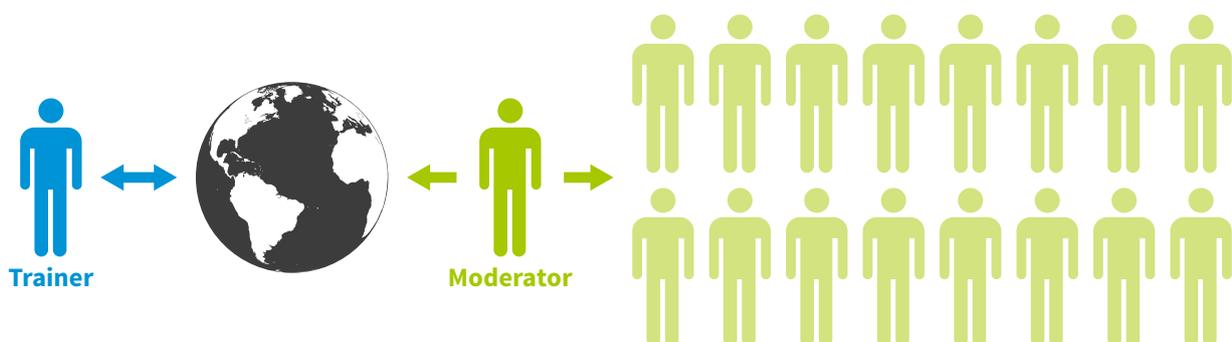
All of the types mentioned above require a specific approach (e.g. advanced users (usually) do not need an “opening ceremony”; “Do you hear me? I don’t hear you... , How do I set up my camera?”) this part takes up extremely large amounts of time for inexperienced users. Anonymous users have their own specific habits (see most open internet discussions) and the administrator has to control such a user using available tools for the whole session.

Another factor that determines a webinar is the location of trainees. There are a number of possibilities:

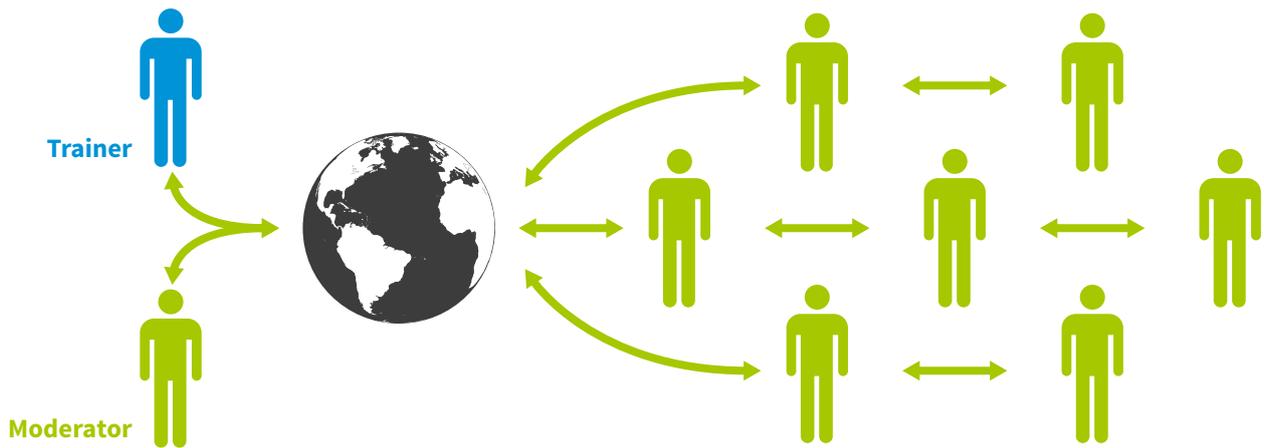
Both situations require a different approach to preparing webinar training. The trainer has to know how to structure the training, what types of activities and interaction might be used, and whether they will be supported by technical staff.

Also, the number of trainees in the group is significant when organising a successful training. There is one general rule for webinar use: the more users – the less interactivity. This rule of thumb has to be considered when planning the structure of the webinar session.

#### Local trainees in the same conference room with Moderator + remote trainer



## Local trainer (with local moderator) + remote trainees



Number of trainees	Interactivity level	Structure of the webinar
<b>Up to 6</b>	High level of interactivity – the session can be led as a dialogue. The trainees can interrupt the lecturer spontaneously. There are allowed interactions between particular trainees – e.g. via chat. Also bi-directional audio or video can be applied, if technology permits.	Structure and content can be changed, if necessary, according to feedback and level of interaction.
<b>7 – 20</b>	Limited audio/video responses (lecturer can select who will be allowed to talk). There will be special polling tools to express the particular learning progress of the trainees (e.g. “raising hand” button or yes/no buttons). Polls, voting, and similar tools are important.	Structure and content are moderately flexible. Session length may be extended/shortened per trainee feedback. Each topic area should be followed by a Q&A.
<b>20+</b>	The level of interactivity depends on the size of the webinar team. If the trainer is on his/her own, only polls can be used. If there is at least one moderator (and possibly additional trainers/experts) chat can be allowed and will be pre-sorted for the trainer/experts.	The structure needs to be firm. The users will be more or less anonymous and the likelihood is high that there will be late starters and early finishers.  Attendance discipline is a matter of content and its implication for the future of the trainees.

*Level of interactivity and webinar structure in the context of the size of the group.*

# 4. Planning and preparation

Teaching and on-camera presentation require specific skill sets. As trainers vary in teaching styles, strategies, and experience, they must prepare themselves for holding a webinar to avoid experiencing a decline in their self-confidence and charisma while on-camera. According to that, for beginners it is recommended to use avatars or an uploaded picture of themselves. It gives better control over the presentation as there is no need to focus on the facial expression. This approach is also less demanding on bandwidth.

Standard approaches which include aims, goals, objectives and content areas are too limited and must be expanded on for use in a webinar.

Creating a tightly scripted experience is an important step to presenting with confidence and appearing professional. Make sure to outline participant-trainer interactions, detailed learning activities, and evaluation procedures.

Addressing issues of trainer competency development and setting up a clear and precise training structure is crucial, especially for less experienced trainers. As it is evident, webinar trainings are similar to traditional trainings. We can transfer certain practices and rules directly from regular training to webinar methodology.

**While planning your training structure and selecting subject matter consider the following points:**

- Divide the topic into easily digestible content elements with each focused on a self-contained area of the topic;
- Select materials based on their effectiveness in communicating to trainees;
- Combine offline and on-line teaching methods to create a blended learning experience;
- Individual activities should be balanced with team activities to allow for the topic to be more easily understood;
- Use a clear structure to conduct your webinar to ensure others may follow your work.

Putting together a training program structure suitable to the objectives and conditions of a particular training can be quite complex. The more elements taken into account during the planning process, the easier the program is in the later stages for the educator to conduct. This is extremely important in cases when the training is conducted by more than one educator.

Program structure must strongly take into consideration the characteristics of the group, such as its predisposition to concentrate in a longer time period (an hour or longer). It is desirable for the program structure to be transparent and clear, not only for the educator guiding the sequence and timing of particular parts, but also for the trainees. A clear program structure makes it easier to verify and modify for the individuals controlling or responsible for approving a given training program and allowing it to be implemented or financed.

**You must consider the following when preparing a training program:**

- Collect **resources** and create a **structure** that will help you provide an efficient learning experience;

- Provide everyone with the **information** that they require to succeed;
- Prevent problems by keeping **alternative materials** on-hand, and preparing a variety of training scenarios.

A checklist will help you in planning for equipment, infrastructure, and material requirements. A checklist, used properly, will ensure standardization over your entire curriculum. An example checklist is demonstrated in the following Table:

WEBINAR CHECKLIST	✓
I had a target group analysis	
Language and materials are adjusted to the target group	
I have all equipment and materials	
I have a plan B	
My internet connection is stable	
I have a headset	
I prepared quizzes and other tasks for trainees beforehand	
I have my training scenario, including objectives, modules, exercises, time, resources, the content of the exercises, material and tools	
I set the rules and conditions of the training before it starts	
I know how long it will last	
I am aware how people from my training team are prepared	
All materials are already uploaded to the virtual room	

*Checklist for trainer on how to get prepared for webinar.*

**Preparation is the key to running a successful webinar:**

- Plan to allow for **flexibility**;
- **Respect your trainees** by answering their questions, speaking at their level, and providing content that gets them interested in learning;
- Make sure to have the following at all times: **presentation** materials, required **software**, **back-up files**, computer with a webcam;
- **Maintain contact** with the organizer of the training session.

As a trainer you should enter the room up to **an hour prior to starting a training** session in order to: ensure equipment is present and in working order, and your presentations are ready.

## Literature covering webinars in education<sup>7</sup> suggest taking the following preparations:

- Provide information about the trainees and learning objectives;
- Demonstrate webinar technology to reduce trainee apprehension, for those inexperienced in its use;
- Agree on the format of the webinar session;
- Agree with the expert on a time for their Q&A;
- If the expert is not comfortable with giving a speech, suggest an interview style;
- Establish moderator requirements per expert request;
- Prepare the learners, give them information about the guest;
- Instruct trainees to ask questions.

### 4.1. Session planning

A successful webinar will feature a series of preparatory tasks (varying based on the client, topic, or group of trainees involved):

#### Task I: Analysis of the webinar objectives

##### Answer the questions:

1. Define the goals and objectives of the webinar.
2. Is the main organizer of the webinar an institution, company or other entity?
3. How will accomplishments be measured<sup>8</sup>?

##### Think:

Understanding the objectives, gives one the possibility to plan the whole process properly and avoid complications. This is important because the trainer has so many different tools to choose from during the training, and having a proper picture in mind will help him/her to choose them properly as well. Let's remember that we have to set the indicators for whether our goal was achieved or not. Examples: expanding the knowledge base of traders regarding technical details of their products and communicating the results of an audit.

#### Task II: Analysis of the webinar participants

##### Are participants:

1. ...from the same organisation?
2. ...internal or external?
3. ...familiar with online software applications?
4. ...comfortable working with a computer?
5. ...clear regarding their expectations?
6. ...clear regarding their motivation in taking the training?
7. ...clear on their ability to cooperate?

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<sup>7</sup> Caladine Richard, Enhancing E-Learning with Media-Rich Content and Interactions, 2008 Idea Group Inc.

<sup>8</sup> For more information please check chapter 6.

8. ...experienced with the subject matter?
9. ...in the same time zones?

**Think:**

When you think of who the trainees are, it may actually reveal how they will behave during a webinar. People who are anonymous may disrupt the webinar, on the other hand, people who know each other from the same organisation but do not get to see each other often, will be likely to chat with others about things not connected to the training itself. The ability to meet the participants' expectations is valuable and may increase their motivation to actively take part in the training. Consider demographics (age, gender etc.) and possible cultural differences between learners. Additionally, their ability to self-direct their own learning, learning style, and preferences should influence the instructional design for the webinar.

If you are not sure how to answer those questions, you can have learners fill in a short questionnaire. If possible, schedule webinar for a homogenous group (same level of skills, knowledge and understanding of the issue discussed.) It will help to increase the level of learning efficiency and the webinar will move smoothly.

### Task III: Set the forms of the training

**Answer the questions:**

1. How many people will take part in the session?
2. Where will it be transmitted from?
3. How are they dispersed geographically, do they all have access to their own computer?
4. What time will the training take place?
5. What tools will be used?

**Think:**

There are cases of multiple users taking part in a webinar using one computer workstation. It may also happen that the trainer will not be available in the place from which the webinars are usually transmitted, so it will be impossible to give them the dedicated equipment and the right internet connection. It can greatly affect the form of the training which requires previous preparation.

### Task IV: Planning the webinar session

**Answer the questions:**

1. Date and time of the training.
2. Structure of the training.
3. Form of the training.
4. Training staff members and their duties.
5. Use of interactive tools.
6. Training requirements.

**Think:**

The design of the session will depend on the answers to questions from tasks 1-3. Set schedules that best suit your learners (consider time zone differences if applicable). The structure and form of the training will be different for different topics and learning goals – as well as the number and characteristics of the participants.

### Answer the questions:

1. What are the functional requirements of the software?
2. What is to be expected from the equipment?
3. What are the possible challenges for the participants (do they have easily predetermined solutions)?

### Think:

A training plan should describe technology usage. Even the best materials and tools will turn out to be useless if the participants are not capable of using them. Part of this may have to do with the equipment's effectiveness or the quality of the internet connection, and here everything should be adapted to the trainee.

## 4.2. Getting the materials ready

Using different media with a large number of graphics is becoming a standard. Internet connections are getting faster and the trainer's perception of the well-designed graphics is increasing and this is affecting the results of training. The key to a successful webinar is an interesting and engaging presentation, but also a good mix of different multimedia elements and many hands-on examples as well as supporting arguments..

### 4.2.1. Presentation

An integral part of a webinar are additional materials and presentations. As a visual medium, webinars depend largely on graphics. The graphic approach and design must be coordinated with other informational elements to enhance and clarify messages and learning points.

#### Space

When designing a presentation, it is necessary to make the best use of the space provided in the webinar. The margin may serve as a sort of table of contents, which will help the user get oriented in the structure of the presentation. It is not worth choosing wide proportions if there is no practical reason for it, because we will not gain anything this way, yet we are limiting our space for presenting another tool.

#### Design

Graphics should always have communicational and educational value. Simple and straightforward graphics are the most effective<sup>9</sup>. The most popular presentation tool that can be easily used during a webinar session is PowerPoint. This format of presenting a series of slides with text, images, and simple animations is a great way to illustrate information provided during a lecture. Although PowerPoint is a common and well known presentation tool, many users actually keep making the same mistakes. A trainer who presents slides should avoid legibility problems, such as too small fonts or lack of consistency in style.

The correct layout of the slides for a presentation, taking into consideration elements, such as the graphics and the font being used (normal text, header and footer, bullets) is also very important. It should seem professional, yet not too overwhelming, so it does not take away from the content of the slides. A well designed layout can also be a commercial tool because it will be branded by the webinar organ-

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9 Piskurich George M., The AMA Handbook of E-Learning, Amacom 2003.

isers. This is important when we think of the possible distribution of the material to the wider range of people. While designing the layout, we should consider the specificity of projecting the text on screens of different diameters. Content should be clearly legible on a net book with a 10 inch screen as well as a 30 inch multimedia monitor.

Unlike in a traditional conference room, there are a variety of forms for presenting content in a webinar. You don't have to always use slideshows, but they can be very useful as visual aids that help to draw participants' attention, facilitate learning and enhance memory. But you need to use them wisely. Remember that in a webinar you communicate primarily with your voice; don't overload the participants with additional text on screen. Instead, use images to grab their attention and illustrate the main points. The visuals should be informative and serve learning goals; avoid graphics that are merely decorative. A good example of instructional graphics are: drawings, charts and diagrams, symbols, photos or screen grabs.

Software for presentation design lets us use all kinds of extras that actually affect the visual character of the presentation. Complicated animated elements should be avoided. Most webinar software will struggle with complex animation. Converting between formats may also prove difficult.

Use the text sparingly, only when you need to emphasize, inform or clarify something. Onlignment

**How to conduct webinars?**

- GET PREPARED**
- PRACTICE**
- CHECK YOUR COMPUTER SETTINGS**

**How to conduct webinars?**

Web conferencing refers to a service that allows conferencing events to be shared with remote locations. In general the service is made possible by Internet technologies, particularly on TCP/IP connections. The service allows real-time point-to-point communications as well as multicast communications from one sender to many receivers. It offers information of text-based messages, voice and video chat to be shared simultaneously, across geographically dispersed locations. Applications for web conferencing include meetings, training events, lectures, or short presentations from any computer.

Examples of good and bad practice in webinar slides preparation.

(<http://onlignment.com/>) provides examples of meaningful use of on-screen text:

- for an agenda;
- for titles, which signpost the current topic;
- for anything the participant might want to take a note of such as terms, verbs, names or quotes;
- for labels on diagrams, photos or charts;
- for lists, bulleted or numbered.

**Effective Slide Presentation Tips<sup>10</sup>:**

- Use a simple PowerPoint template in a landscape format;
- Use dark print with a plain light background or light print and a plain dark background;
- Allow for a 1 inch margin on all borders;
- Limit the number of words per slide:

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10 Webcasting Processes and Best Practices, Ontario Telemedicine Network 2007.

- ◆ use no more than 5 bullets of information per slide;
- ◆ use brief phrases instead of sentences;
- Keep any graphics simple:
  - ◆ use simple bold tables like pie charts or bar graphs;
  - ◆ avoid complex tables and scatter plots;
- Use a consistent font size:
  - ◆ at least 30-point font for text and 44-point for headings;
  - ◆ select a simple, clear, and bold font such as: Arial, Tahoma, Verdana;
  - ◆ avoid italics;
  - ◆ use lower case for text;
- Avoid animation and special effects such as: sounds, fly-ons, fade-ins:
  - ◆ use simple slide transition;
  - ◆ remember about simplicity.

There is a difference between a presentation prepared for live presentation and a presentation for archiving purposes. If trainees want to re-use a presentation the trainer should prepare a transcript of the presentation.

PowerPoint presentations are by far the most popular presentation element. However for webinars it is advisable to convert it to PDF format. Many of the webinar software tools available allow file sharing. A file access option makes it possible for the trainer to upload files to trainee's computers so they can access them on their own. These might be spreadsheets, text documents, audio or video files – the only limit is the file size, which is usually 10 megabytes depending on the internet connection speed of the trainer and course trainees.

Regardless of the potential of a piece of new media, the trainer should consider how to use training time in the most effective way. Reading text documents during, e.g. a 45 minute session, could be considered a waste of time. Webinar sessions need a good plan of activities which will be creative and enhancing both for trainees and the trainer.

#### 4.2.2. Other materials

It is important to remember that the webinar session is not only the multimedia presentation. Always keep other materials handy. Depending on the ability of the webinar applications, you can use video, audio, text and graphics. It makes the presentation a lot more attractive and helps the participants get involved in the training process more easily. It is indeed important that the materials be tested earlier when it comes to compatibility with the application and the bandwidth. Don't risk interrupting a presentation by using HD content, as this may disappoint participants or even disable the webinar.

Elements which engage participants, such as quizzes or surveys, should be planned at this time. It's important not only to plan the content of elements and their appearance on the timeline. It is advisable to share some reading materials with the participants beforehand, to give them a glimpse of what is going to be discussed in the webinar. It will give them more time to prepare specific questions!

### 4.2.3. Balance

Something very important about not only the presentation, but the materials used during the webinar, is to choose the amount of content so the participants don't get overwhelmed. It is good to avoid large amounts of text on a slide. Keep your slides focused on the topic at hand, and avoid repeating yourself.

Graphics used in the presentation should help explain the content. It is good to use diagrams or charts in place of text. We can confidently use graphs that show correlation between topics, that help visualise numbers, illustrate a process, or that point to important matters and help with understanding.

## 4.3. Contact with trainees

Announcement and enrolment procedures play essential role in the webinar preparation. Both are crucial if organisers want to attain full attendance and not to miss anyone during enrolment process.

### 4.3.1. Announcement

Webinar announcement has to be clear and understandable – the less text, the better. Potential trainee should see all the information at first glance and it should be possible for him/her to decide straightforward about possible participation.

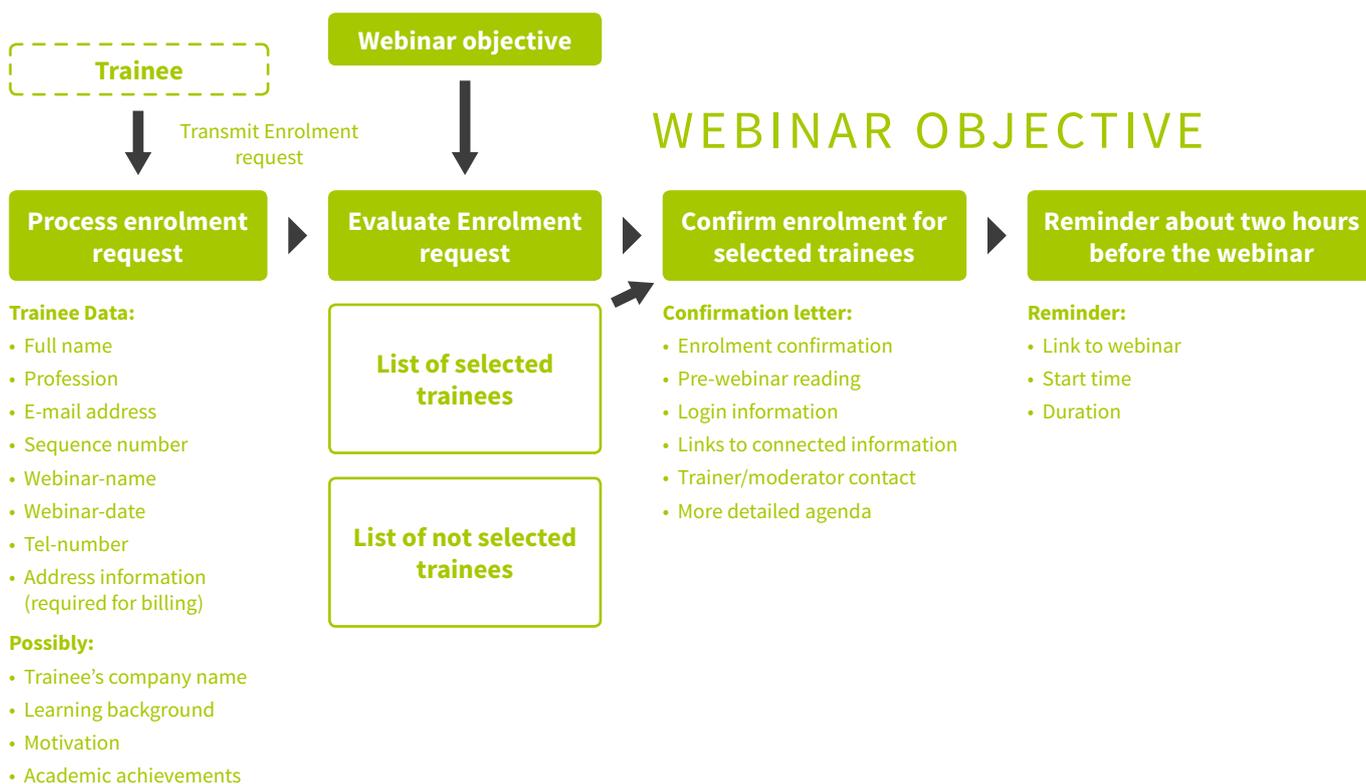
The announcement for the webinar needs to declare the following key aspects:

- Topic;
- Date and duration (normally not to exceed 75 minutes);
- Max. number of participants/trainees;
- Trainee's prerequisites;
- Link to registration website (or at least other registration information);
- Participation benefits;
- Fees (even if for free, this should be stated);
- Related picture;
- Target group.

### 4.3.2. Enrolment

As we invite trainees to a webinar, we must keep in mind that by its nature, it's difficult for many trainees to remember having joined in the first place. Quite a few people resist writing down their webinar in a calendar; many register last-minute. Some software has enrollment plugins built-in, which allows for automatic enrolment.

## The enrolment process should consist of the following crucial steps:



Организационен процес по записване за уебинар. Източник: екип на проекта webinar2learn 2012.

The above steps generate numerous data and require preparation work. Of course, if you receive cancellation information from a selected trainee, you can then move one trainee up from the list of non-selected trainees.

Usually an enrolment process consists of at least few of the following steps<sup>11</sup>:

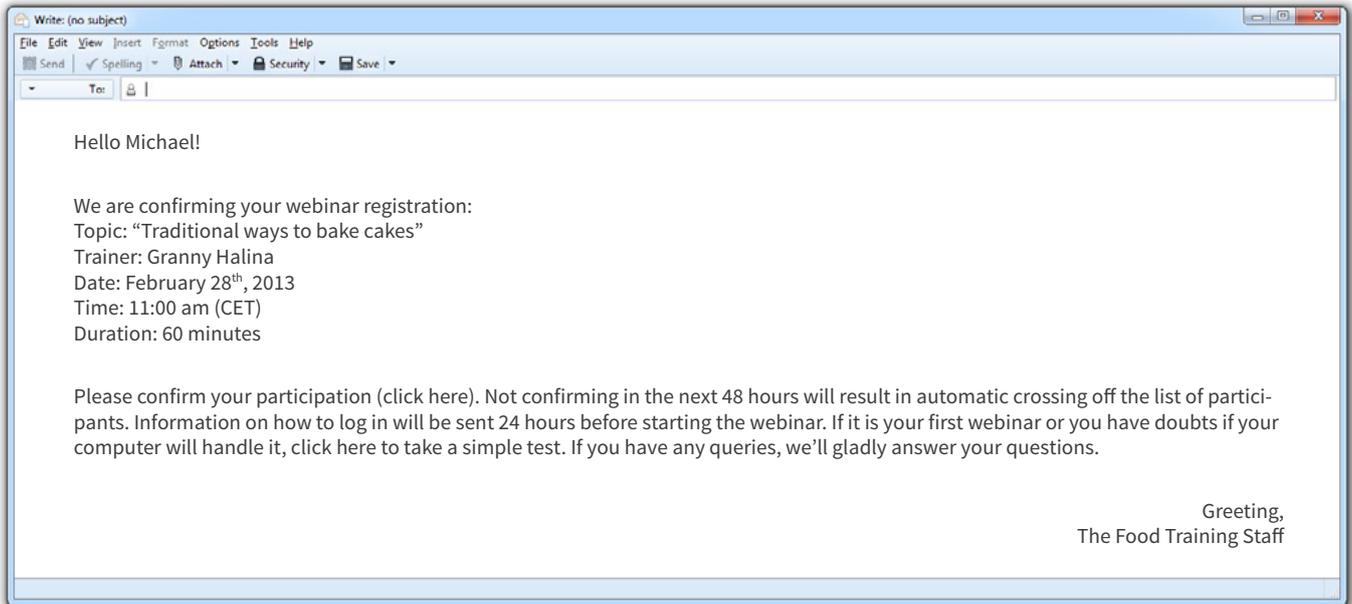
- Advise learners of the goals and objectives of the webinar;
- Conduct an audience survey to identify who will attend and what they are interested in;
- Publish the biography of the teacher and guest speakers;
- Tell learners how to set up their computers;
- Publish standards of behavior.

Communication with trainees should start at least 1 week before the webinar<sup>12</sup>. It will provide trainees with the possibility to put it to their agenda and book time for the webinar.

11 William Horton, E-Learning by Design (2 ed.), Pfeiffer 2012.

12 According to ON24 Webinar Benchmarks Report ([http://www.on24.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ON24\\_Benchmark\\_V8.pdf](http://www.on24.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ON24_Benchmark_V8.pdf)) people register most likely a week before the event.

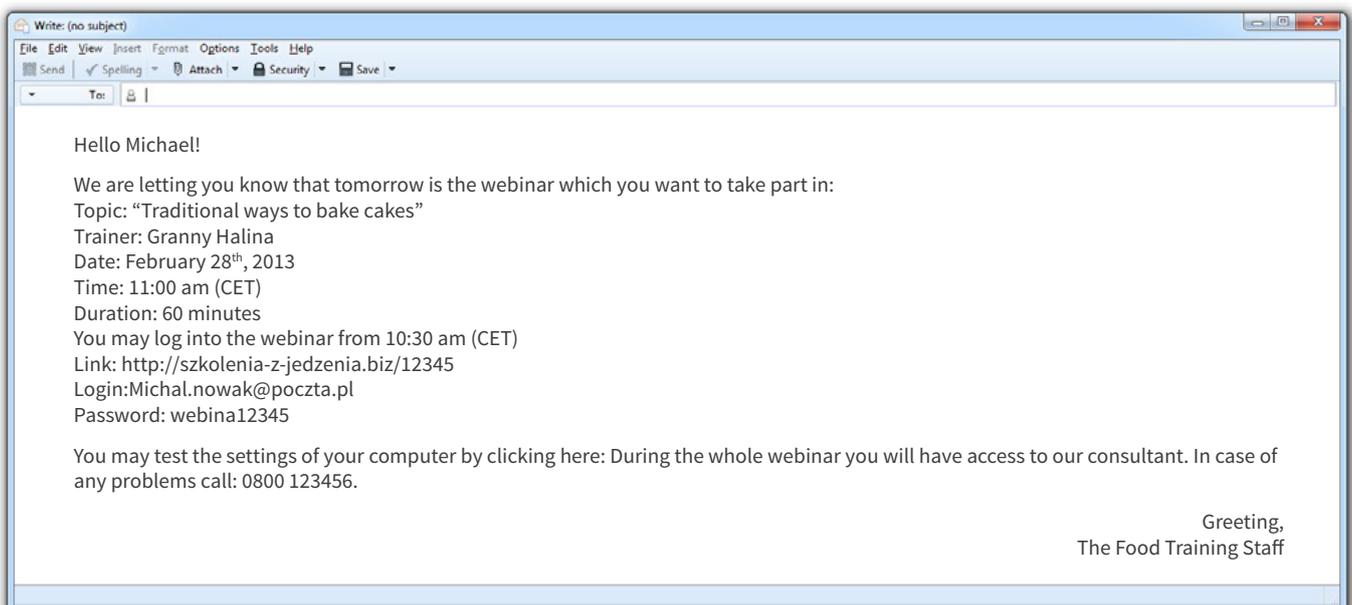
Opening enrollment 7 days prior to the session, we should inform the participant about registering and give them some useful information:



The author of this e-mail incorporated all the crucial information for the participant in a couple of paragraphs. He clearly stated the basic data and made the compatibility tests possible. Webinar software often has the ability to automatically generate such messages according to the model. However, it may also be done with the help of e-mail software.

It is essential to also (if we often are organising webinars) turn on the versatile calendar folder in the \*.ics format. It works with multiple applications for time management, such as Microsoft Calendar or Mozilla Sunbird and automatically starts the reminder of an upcoming webinar, adding itself to a list of meetings or tasks planned by the participant. It is also good to avoid too many graphics in the e-mail since most of the programs will block them automatically, and in some cases our correspondence may be treated like spam.

Two days before the webinar, participants should be informed about it again, especially if the enrolment process lasted longer than one week. For this purpose we may use the template model again:



This time the person typing the e-mail sent the login information. The organizer also left the phone number of the tech-support line. There are many ways to help participants build relationships. Some companies experiment with using SMS, thinking that it is easier to check a text message than the e-mail. There are different opinions on the set time and frequency of the messages. It is important to keep in mind two rules of what this information should be:

**Clear** – one can quickly find important information: topic, date, time, login information, etc. Set for the right time and set in time – as the receiver wants to make sure that his enrolment was accepted, and that he will not forget about the webinar either.

**Non-invasive** – one does not want to be attacked with the messages several times a week just because he agreed to take part in the webinar.

The webinar organiser has many promotional opportunities available – correspondence lets a good e-mail database build up: knowing who wants to take part in the webinar and what kind of things are of interest to them. It is also good to use this knowledge in the practical sense and keep building a strong community, which should follow the third rule as mentioned above.

#### 4.4. The overall timing plan

An important issue to consider before the webinar starts is the timing plan. The trainer has to set up clear rules and a time-line that will explain how the webinar will be conducted. It is important not only for the trainer, but also for other people participating (trainees, as well as the moderator, expert, technical expert). It is essential to present the time-line to participants, giving them notice of the pace of the webinar.

**Example:**

Introduction (5 min)  
Presentation (25 min)  
Questions & Answers (20 min)  
Summary (5 min)  
Evaluation (5 min)

# 5. Running the webinar

Some learners are naturally enthusiastic about learning, but many require to be inspired and stimulated by their trainers. There are no simple answers to questions regarding trainee motivation. Many factors influence learners' motivation, such as: interest in a particular topic, its usefulness, self-confidence, patience and determination. Literature of this subject<sup>13</sup> suggests that instructors use the following strategies to encourage trainees to become self-motivated learners:

Trainer's strategies	Suggestions/comments
Give frequent, early, positive feedback that supports learners' beliefs that they can do well.	Don't leave any activity without feedback.
Use teaching strategies that engage and actively involve learners.	Make your presentation dynamic; use various media to maintain learners' attention.  Interact frequently. Make good use of interactivity tools like chat or whiteboard.
Help trainees find personal meaning and value in material.	Prepare up-to-date, real world based training content.  Use case studies relevant to participants' lives. Encourage sharing of knowledge and experiences.
Communicate personal interest in trainees.	Call on learners by name.  Answer all questions (or state that you will do so in a proper moment – and keep your promise).  Ask questions and make sure that your answer was understood.
Ensure that even the quietest trainee has a role in webinar training.	Monitor learners' activity and encourage those who are quiet. If they feel uncomfortable with voice communication, give them a role that doesn't involve speaking.
Help trainees feel that they are valued members of a community of responsible learners.	Don't cut backchannel discussions.  Show respect and appreciation.  Thank the learners for sharing their points of view, even if you disagree with them.

*Strategies to encourage trainees to participate in the webinar.*

13 Caladine Richard, Enhancing E-Learning with Media-Rich Content and Interactions, 2008 Idea Group Inc.

In a webinar event, contact and communication have a special meaning. It is important both to trainer and learners to enhance the sense of presence. When answering a question, there is a trick about how to appear to give eye contact to the trainees as in a classroom setting. While it is natural to look at the image of the trainees on the screen, if trainer looks into the camera, it will appear to them that he or she is looking into their eyes<sup>14</sup>.

## 5.1. Building social interaction

Learning is a social process, therefore, social aspects of learning such as: communication, collaboration and emotion have a great influence on the effectiveness of learning and teaching. Learner-based teaching focuses on encouraging trainees to express their ideas freely. That is why a webinar session should be structured with many opportunities for learners to talk formally and informally. For example, if there is a break in the training, the trainer should leave the webinar link connected and suggest to trainees that they can use it.

As mentioned earlier, the trainer should build a learner friendly environment that encourages trainees and lets them feel valued members of a learning community. The trainer can involve learners in creating webinar session rules and agreements.

### **In the beginning of the training session the trainer should be able to:**

- Plan the beginning of the training in a manner allowing the trainees to be informed of all the important training aspects for the organization or individual;
- Make arrangements relating to the training itself. Discuss them with the trainees at the beginning of the session, insuring a swift method of carrying out the training and maximizing the comfort of the educator and trainees.

### **Communication aspects with trainees at the beginning of training should include such matters as:**

- The time frame of the session;
- A training program schedule;
- Information concerning the use of didactic materials;
- Information regarding efficiency assessment of trainings and possible requirements to trainings ending with formal examination.

### **To address potentially important domains that need to be discussed with trainees before are:**

- Agreements concerning forms of addressing each other or a preferred tone, atmosphere of the training;
- Rules concerning breaks during the training;
- Terms of asking questions and leading discussions in the training;
- Principles of comfort and concentration during training (e.g. turning o. all mobile devices, using breaks to give trainees a chance to stretch and get fresh air, off-topic mingling opportunities);
- Content-related trainee expectations.

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14 Camerius James W., The Case System of Instruction: Developing an Effective Teaching Strategy, Northern Michigan University.

Once you've followed the above rules it's good practice to leave some time for questions from trainees in the end. Before the trainer starts to present a subject they can involve trainees in an ice-breaking activity. This can serve to create the feeling of inclusion, particularly for a remote audience. If the number of remote trainees is not too great ask the trainees to introduce themselves. While they do this, draw a simple map, including the trainees' names. The resulting map can be used later during the training to direct questions and seek comments from particular trainees.

Ice breaking activity	Outcomes
<b>Map with names</b>	Ask trainees to introduce themselves and say a few words about their expectations regarding the webinar. It will help them to feel more comfortable with the situation and will provide you with valuable information.
<b>Short questionnaire</b>	Ask trainees a few simple questions. When showing results you may speak directly to people who answered in a similar way. Give them permission to speak and let them explain their idea.
<b>Riddles and puzzles</b>	Questions should be planned beforehand and they don't have to be connected with the topic of the presentation. Search for topics possibly interesting for your group and add some humorous elements.
<b>On one line</b>	<p>People group themselves with respect to different topic, for example , where they work or live (north, south, east, west from the capital or the place the webinar is transmitted, years of experience in their occupation, their names in alphabetical order, etc.</p> <p>One could create a survey with answer options or (if not too many participants) use the whiteboard to draw lines or bubbles and make dots or other symbols for each person. So in the end you also would have a map or a line and know a bit more about each other.</p>

*Ice-breaking activities.*

## 5.2. Voice of the trainer

Just like any other part of a webinar, the voice of the trainer plays an important role in the process of delivering a webinar. In a face to face meeting, a trainer has many other tools to make his speech entertaining, including gestures – the way he/she looks, speaks, etc has its influence on the way people react and remember the content. Unfortunately, during a webinar, a trainer doesn't have such a wide range of options to choose from – he's got his voice, and software tools which may support it.

It is very important for the trainer, especially if he/she doesn't have much experience with webinars, to practice before the training and to record his/her voice in order to listen to it together with the presentation. Very often it helps to realize how important it is to use your voice properly.

First of all, the webinar should be well planned, resulting in a more confident sounding trainer. A self-confident and focused trainer motivates trainees and gains their trust. Small errors and short pauses will very often be recognised by trainees as a mistake, lack of preparedness or a technical problem.

The second thing is to remember that the voice timbre may be used also to emphasize some issues and

help to address more complicated topics. It is important to speak slowly enough to make everything clear, but not to delay the training.

Each trainer, even the most experienced one has to practice his/her speech for webinar trainings, to make sure it sounds interesting and engaging. Also, a good idea would be to watch other people's webinars and search some inspirations for your own webinars.

### 5.3. Engagement activities

Each webinar (course, training, lecture) has a specific set of features which influence the effectiveness of teaching. Probably the most important feature is the degree of interaction (learning activities). The trainer cannot expect that trainees will focus on the webinar lecture if there is only one-way communication. A live lecture broadcast on the web is like a television program. It is a one-way message received by a passive audience. However, television productions will rely on an editor to perfect their message. Webinar lectures or trainings usually have lower production values. In fact a webinar session, if viewed as a one-way technology, can be seen as very low quality television<sup>15</sup>. This could be one reason why trainees disengage in one-way presentations. We can be sure that interaction between trainer and learners, communication and activities will change these trainees reactions.

As stated above, the productive elements of a webinar require planning a number of activities:

- Interaction with the trainer;
- Interaction between learners;
- Interaction with training materials.

#### **Interaction with a trainer**

Interaction with a trainer can be provided in the form of questions, comments and answers. Activities defined as a 50 minute presentation and 10 minute questions/ answers session would not be effective. However, there are educational events where time is limited and the presenter is a special guest who's availability is limited. In these circumstances limited activities are justifiable. Special guests, such as experts or celebrities can make an impact on learning and motivate trainees.

Webinars, therefore, need to be delivered and presented in a way that will be interesting, relevant and practical to the audience. A number of webinar ideas are available that can turn an otherwise boring presentation into a dynamic one:

- Audio,
- Video,
- Chat,
- Whiteboard,
- Hands-up button,
- Polls and quizzes,
- Case studies,
- Riddles and puzzles,

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15 Caladine Richard, Enhancing E-Learning with Media-Rich Content and Interactions, 2008 Idea Group Inc.

- Live Demos<sup>16</sup>.

A chat feature can be used for posting questions of trainer or answering trainer's questions. It works best with questions requiring brief, open-ended answers. It encourages interactions by participants who are shy and reluctant to speak through a microphone. It can also serve to indicate technical or other issues. You can use chat for group activities or working in pairs, as most of the systems allow to post direct messages to individual participants.

For questions or discussions requiring longer answers it is best to use voice communication. However, you should avoid everyone speaking at once. Have your participants use hands-up button to signify when they want to speak.

A whiteboard can be used for a variety of activities, like warm-ups, collaborative editing, brainstorming, listing ideas or pasting evidence of individuals tasks. Quizzes and surveys are useful for gathering information on participants, as short engaging activities, to post close-ended questions, evaluate learning during or on closing the webinar, etc.

Other activities that are suitable for webinar training which include interactions between trainees are listed below:

### **Discussion**

The discussion method uses two-way communication between the trainer and the trainees to increase learning opportunities. Discussions allow the trainees to be actively engaged in the content of the webinar session, which improves recall and use in the future. Trainees' questions demonstrate the level of understanding about the lesson issue. Trainer questions stimulate thinking about the key learning points. Discussion can be provided via audio-video channel, or/and text chat. The important thing is to manage the discussion by engaging a moderator. With a small group of trainees, the trainers can moderate discussions themselves or they can ask a trainee to play the role of moderator.

### **Brainstorming (only workshop)**

Brainstorming allows trainees to create new ideas, solve problems, answer questions, introduce a new subject, raise interest, motivate and develop teams. It is a great motivational tool because it involves members of a team in bigger management issues, and it gets a team working together. During the random collection of ideas, the trainer must record every suggestion on the flip-chart or blackboard. In webinar brainstorming exercises, a camera can be pointed at a blackboard or a flipchart can serve the same purpose. Tools available in webinar software (sharable electronic whiteboard, forums, text chat) can be used to record the ideas generated.

### **Presenting (workshops allow trainees to present)**

Workshops are useful when someone in the group is an expert. We may ask them during the webinar to say few words about the topic, or ask them to prepare a presentation beforehand, and present it during the webinar. Involving others in the webinar makes it more interesting.

### **Assignment to create sth.**

This is possible in small, as well as in large groups. Giving the assignment to create something together or individually help to make participants more involved in the webinar and more focused on the subject.

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16 For a more insightful treatment of the subject, visit the website:  
[http://www.ehow.com/info\\_8173559\\_webinar-ideas.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_8173559_webinar-ideas.html).

## Role playing (workshop)

This activity is very helpful when you are conducting a workshop. When there are only a few people participating in the webinar it is very helpful to engage people into role playing activity. You have time and possibility to react and comment on the presented content.

## Interaction between learners

- Audio,
- Chat.

Chat allows the learner to interact with others and creates a “back channel” for discussions parallel to the main course of the webinar. It can be a distraction, but often constitutes an alternative space for social learning (sharing opinions, information, links, and experiences). As noted above, it can be also used for activities requiring communication and collaboration between participants. The use of audio as a tool of interaction between learners is more limited and should be moderated.

## Interaction with training materials

In general terms, the training materials available for your webinar can be internally produced (by you or your company or the client’s company), external (mainly internet resources) or trainee-generated.

- Internal content:
  - ♦ Slides/presentations;
  - ♦ Video;
  - ♦ Audio (e.g., previously recorded interview with a subject matter expert);
  - ♦ Documents (handouts, checklists, etc.).
- External content:

The potential of new media presentations has increased enormously in the past few years. The speed of internet connections and quality of hardware/software throughout grows constantly. The richness of new media allows the trainer to plan interesting and varied trainee-content interaction. This is a list of popular Internet sources:

- Public video resources/channels (e.g. YouTube, Trainer Tube);
- Google Books, Google Academics (proved documents – mostly in English only);
- TED Talks<sup>17</sup>;
- Number of new publicly accessible Internet services:
  - ♦ vocabularies,
  - ♦ knowledge basis,
  - ♦ digital libraries,
  - ♦ free online courses materials;
  - ♦ Web 2.0 pages (web-based communities e.g.: wikis, blogs, social-networking sites).

## Trainee-generated content:

Webinar software functionalities allows trainers to build a collaborative webinar program based on trainee-generated content:

- **Document/screen sharing** (it allows users to see the content of each other’s screen and even to take

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17 <http://www.ted.com/>.

control of it). It is very useful for collaborative document creation/revision etc. It allows updating of documents in real time (for example, as part of a group activity). It also allows one to share presentations without having to upload them previously. This is particularly useful when one wants to use a presentation format that is not supported by the system (like Keynote or Prezi) or when one wants the participants to show their presentations. This works best with small groups;

- **Application sharing:** especially useful for software training. The trainer can demonstrate how to use a particular application and then cede control to the participants who can take turns to practice the new knowledge;
- **Co-browsing (sharing of web pages** – everyone sees the same page and content). It allows you to perform web tours, include activities like games and quizzes, or content formats that are not available on uploaded presentation (like animation or video);
- **Video sharing** (simultaneous broadcasting of video);
- **Screencast** (this option allows the trainer or any of the trainees, to project a video stream of what is happening on their computer desktop). This allows for practically unlimited flexibility, as the trainer can show, work on and comment on any application or materials that he has on his computer. This can be particularly useful when teaching how to use software;
- **Programmable APIs** to public internet services including services like YouTube, Google Maps and many others. This technique enables broad usage of publicly accessible resources in one's webinar; As we can see, if the communication and cooperation between trainees is not an issue, the trainer can actively involve trainees in learning; Concerning moderating trainee interaction trainer should be able to:
- **Plan an adequate timeframe** to complete all of the elements of training, including efficiency assessment in a way that will allow achieving the objectives set up for the training session with the use of available resources, along with time; Arrange all the planned breaks to ensure a smooth, dynamic and comfortable course for trainees;
- **Create time elasticity** of the training prepared to react to most possible training session situations. When planning the timeframe for the training session keep in mind that concentration is higher in the early daytime hours which gives a possibility to increase the amount of learning activities in this part of the day. The later the session will be conducted during the day the shorter the length of the learning activity should be. Important elements influencing the general length of each activity carried out in the training session are obviously the types of activities for trainees (lectures and presentations should be short units of time and exercises should be longer units).

The time of year also influences the length of a training session, especially in the winter time and summer. It is commonly known that the optimal length of a didactic training unit is between 45 minutes and 90 minutes. This rule is made of course for timeframe planning purposes mainly and regardless of its educators should react to the level of trainee concentration during the training session and adequately adjust the length of each particular unit.

# 6. Closing the webinar

## 6.1. Evaluating Learning Progress and Training Delivery

Using evaluation is a method of ensuring a high quality training experience. This method is widely used and respected in many fields of scientific research. It is a preferred tool for collecting information on the training process realised in a special environment and its outcome. It also allows trainers to give and receive feedback and to analyse their own didactic methods and skills. In this way evaluation can help to develop oneself as a trainer in the long run.

In accord with Donald Kirkpatrick, 'reaction', 'knowledge/skills', 'behaviour', and 'results' are the four levels of evaluation. The analytical structure is very helpful to identify aims, to develop questionnaires and finally to analyse the results of the evaluations.

The table below gives an overview<sup>18</sup>.

Level of Evaluation	What does the level describe?	Examples of measuring tools	Relevance & practicability
<b>Reaction</b>	Level of the participants' satisfaction with the training or learning experience;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• right after the training;</li><li>• "happy sheets", feedback forms;</li><li>• online-survey or questionnaires;</li><li>• verbal reaction;</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quick and easy to obtain;</li><li>• Not expensive to gather or to analyse;</li></ul>
<b>Education</b>	How did the level of knowledge and skills change/increase?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Typically assessments or tests before and after the training ► comparison;</li><li>• Interview or observation can also be used;</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relatively simple to set up; clear-cut for quantifiable skills;</li><li>• Less easy for complex learning;</li></ul>
<b>Behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How did the new knowledge affect the behaviour?</li><li>• Extent of applied learning back on the job ► Implementation;</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After some time has passed after the training (few weeks);</li><li>• Self-evaluation surveys, interviews, observation;</li><li>• to assess change, relevance of change and sustainability of change;</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Measurement of behaviour change typically requires cooperation and skill;</li></ul>

18 Based on <http://www.businessballs.com/kirkpatricklearningevaluationmodel.htm> (access 12.6.2012).

<b>Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effect on the business or environment by the trainee;</li> <li>• Comparison of the effects of the training with its costs;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparison of practical effects on work effectiveness, money result, quality of work, stability of staff etc.;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individually not difficult, unlike a whole organisation;</li> <li>• Process must attribute clear accountabilities.</li> </ul>
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*Four Levels of evaluation following Donald Kirkpatrick's definition.*

### 6.1.1. Assessment of the Learning Effect

The trainer has defined learning goals or has been provided with goals by his/ her client that should be reached by the end of the webinar. This enables an assessment of the learning effect, which is not only important to see for the trainer but very often also for the client who initiated his/her employees to participate in the webinar for further educational reasons. The best way to assess learning effects is to have a quick test at the beginning of the webinar and finally one at the end which allows for a comparison. However, even conducting an assessment only at the end of the webinar is quite useful. The questions should be designed according to this.

The pre-test is also useful to the trainer, especially in the case of small audience because he/she can consider the specific state of knowledge. A short questionnaire with about 3-4 open questions can be held up to 10 persons<sup>19</sup>. For a bigger audience, up to 100 persons, it makes sense to formulate closed questions in a survey that can be answered, for example, with “yes”, “no” or “I don’t know”. An open question can be added as needed. The result can be evaluated quickly and offer the opportunity to have an overall impression of previous knowledge (needs assessment) and expectations of the participants.

Also, during the webinar, trainers/moderators can use a questionnaire to get an overview of the participants understanding and progress thus far. In this way the trainer can easily see if he/she can continue with the lecture or whether a clarification is necessary. Beyond this, a little intermediate test is a useful tool to keep people on track, to wake them up, and to restore their attention and concentration.

Depending on the context, purpose and size of the webinar the final assessment, i.e. evaluation, will be held similar to the pre-assessment. In smaller groups, a structured discussion provides a popular tool among trainers to get a picture of the learning effects. Also the participants this way can reproduce and reflect their newly gained knowledge.

If the participation in the webinar is related to a certificate of qualification, the assessment should appear in form of questionnaire to be passed in order to receive a certificate. In this case, open questions, closed questions and/or multiple-choice-questionnaires are the most common tools.

### 6.1.2. Assessment Methods and Tools

For assessing the learning outcome of a webinar session, mostly direct measurable factors are favoured for measuring the acquired knowledge or skills. This is an objective assessment of the trainee’s knowledge, skills and perspectives demonstrated at the time of measurement. A presentation of the learning goals in the beginning of the webinar provides a transparent and clear reference frame. By this participants can be tested and demonstrate their new knowledge or skills respectively. These include, for instance, grades for group assignments, evaluation of observed behaviour, grades for presentations etc.

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<sup>19</sup> For examples please see “Assessment Methods”, section 6.1.2, p. 51.

The trainer can prepare computer-based tests, quizzes or any other exercises using free assessment software available on the World Wide Web resources, for instance:

- **Easy Test Maker** (<http://www.easytestmaker.com/default.aspx>) – free online test generator;
- **Hot Potatoes** (<http://hotpot.uvic.ca/>) – the Hot Potatoes’s site includes six applications, enabling users to create interactive multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching/ordering and gap-fill exercises for the World Wide Web;
- **QuizMaker JavaScript Wizard** (<http://www.attotron.com/pub/Quizmake.htm>) – tests and quiz tool;
- **Personal Educational Press** (<http://www.educationalpress.org>) – allows the creation of free educational worksheets such as flashcards, game boards and quizzes to print directly from your browser as well as make tracing sheets, quizzes, study sheets, word lists, bingo cards, word scrambles, word searches and more.

## 6.2. Evaluating the Training

The evaluation of the training, whether it be during (evaluating learning of key concepts) and/or afterwards (feedback on delivery methods and other aspects of the training experience), can be obtained using qualitative and/or quantitative methods. Evaluation can be formative, summative and impact oriented. These types may be conducted in the following ways:

- **Formative evaluation:** e.g. by discussion or interview - this is useful at an early point of a training to get the trainees’ feedback on the course up until that time. It can be either formal or informal.
- **Summative evaluation:** End-of-session questionnaires or interviews.
- **Impact evaluation:** After the session has finished - this can be an interview or questionnaire with trainees.

Thanks to the possibility of webinar recording, evaluation of trainings gets considerably facilitated. Above all, the webinar recording helps re-evaluating the training. This way it is easier to grade the process and personal work, especially when some time has passed.

Tools such as automatic statistical registration or electronic surveys speed up the process of evaluation. By this, the trainer has the possibility to analyse every participant of the webinar even though he cannot see them. A feature of the application includes detailed report generation (on participants) during the webinar. The data that is collected:

- Length of participation;
- Answers to questions;
- Engagement in teamwork;
- Time spent outside of the webinar program;

The trainer’s grading and his/her methods of teaching also can be based on classic tools, i.e. evaluation surveys. For performing this you can use webinar software. However in case of more complicated surveys, it is better to use more advanced internet software like SurveyMonkey<sup>20</sup> or LimeSurvey<sup>21</sup>.

In the example below, there are two examples of how such a survey could look like:

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.surveymonkey.com/>.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.limesurvey.com/>.

### Example 1: Use of Webinars

You make a webinar about – How to do a good webinar. So you want to know for what purpose participants of your training plan to use webinars in order to give appropriate examples or to adapt the content of your training a little, for example. So the question could look like this:

*“For what purpose or in what context do you use webinars? (multiple answers possible)”*

*“A – Education / Further Education”*

*“B – Advertising and promotion”*

*“C – Conferences”*

*“D – Other”* → Here you can decide whether to put the option (or to put a subsequent question) asking to specify “other” purposes or not.

You can also ask only for the main purpose and restrict the answer options to one.

0%  100%

English

**Purpose and context of webinars**

\* For what purpose or in what context do you use webinars? (Multiple answers are possible)  
Check any that apply

Education / Further education

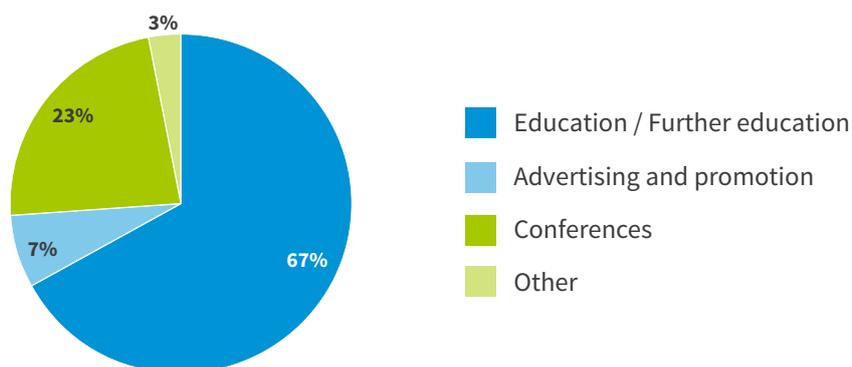
Advertising and promotion

Conferences

Other:

After performing your analysis of the survey results, you can plot them in colourful chart.

### Purpose of webinars



The example was generated in a LimeSurvey. However, you can use the more simple tools of the webinar software to create your survey.

## Example 2: Asking for learning effects

If you want to know what people think they learned or improved during your lesson, you might ask a question like the following:

*“In what way could you benefit from the Webinar Methodology and Trainer’s Manual presented in the workshop?”*

*“A - I got new ideas for how to design webinars”.*

*“B - I could increase my knowledge about how to use functions / tools of webinar software”.*

*“C - I could increase my knowledge about teaching methods in webinars”.*

*“D - I could improve my skills in moderating a webinar”.*

0%  100%

English

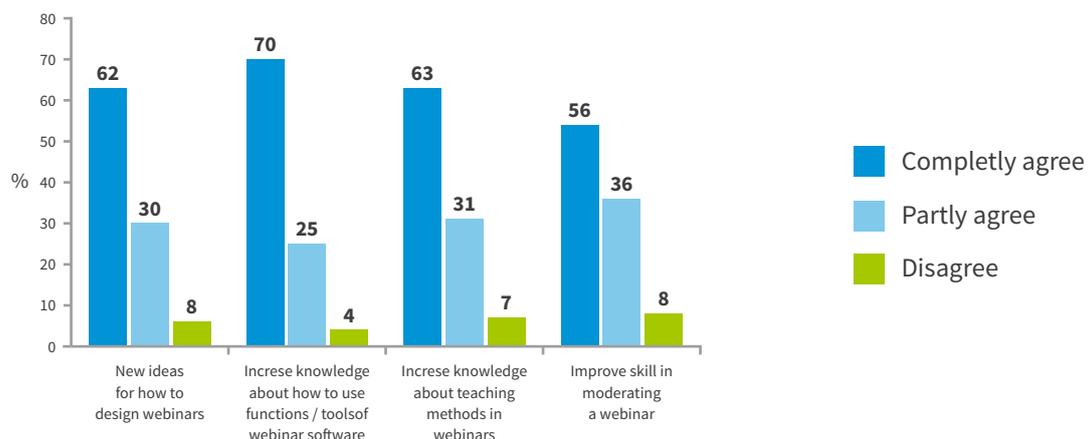
### Learning effects

\* In what way could you benefit from the Webinar Methodology and Trainer’s Manual presented in the workshop? (Multiple answers are possible)

	Completely agree	Partly agree	Disagree
I got new ideas for how to design webinars.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I could increase my knowledge about how to use functions / tools of webinar software.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I could increase my knowledge about teaching methods in webinars.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I could improve my skills in moderating a webinar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Again, for plotting the results you can show them in a diagram. It makes it easier to see at one glance what’s important.

## In what way could you benefit from the Webinar Methodology and Trainer’s Manual presented in the workshop?



Elements like recording analysis (particularly when it comes to chat), webinar statistics and evaluation surveys allow for a quick analysis of training. For the analysis the previously introduced Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model may be recommended.

## Survey Methods

Quantitative methods involve gathering information that can be tabulated in the form of statistics. A common quantitative method is surveying by using a rating scale. Here statements are rated along a three or five point scale. Three or five points are needed to ensure that the data you are collecting is meaningful and meets research protocols, i.e. you need to have extreme ends and a neutral middle rating to give trainees enough options to choose accurately.

### Examples of Scales

3 point scale	5 point scale
Good – average – poor	Excellent – good – average – below average – poor
Agree – partly – disagree	Strongly agree – agree – partly – disagree – strongly disagree

*Evaluation – rating scale.*

Sometimes a 4 point scale is used. It is a question of approach and context whether one should use a scale with or without a middle. Urging people to decide sometimes is useful if it is essential to be aware of their prevailing tendencies. On the other hand, scales without a middle position can lead people to refuse any answer at all. Also, it bears the risk of a bias which may not serve the purpose.

However, an example for a usual 4 point scale would include the following:

### ***Agree – rather agree – rather disagree – disagree***

Other examples of quantitative measurements are:

- Multiple choice questions;
- “True or false” statements;
- “Yes or no” questions.

The advantage of using quantitative measuring methods is that you can provide statistics to stakeholders such as 89% of trainees strongly agreed that the material covered will help them improve their productivity.

While quantitative survey questions are closed, qualitative methods involve asking open-ended questions to gather thoughts, opinions and suggestions. This level of detail enables the trainer a more precise understanding of why certain elements need improvement and if suggestions are made, how they can be used to improve the webinar.

### **Some examples of open-ended questions are:**

- What exercise or activity did you enjoy the most? Why?
- On what subject would you like to receive additional training?

The number of open-ended questions is usually limited to a few questions. The more persons are surveyed, the more probable open-ended questions are reduced to one or two. Half-open questions are therefore a medium between open and closed questions. Those are questions with given answers, but contrary to closed questions, the answering options are descriptions.

**In reference to the example above, a half-open question would include the following points:**

On what subject would you like to receive additional training?

1. On data privacy protection;
2. On data storage;
3. On data control;
4. Other (What?);

Example of training course feedback on-line:

<http://www.bre.com/training/courses/training-feedback.aspx>

### 6.3. Follow-up and After-Training Materials

Post-webinar training is an integral part of the overall learning experience. It gives trainees an additional resource for ensuring their understanding of the topic at hand. Your post-webinar package should include:

- The Presentation in PDF format;
- Answers to questions which the trainer was not able to answer during the webinar session;
- Other attachments, reports, research documents – if the trainer mentioned them during the webinar;
- Links to other online sources used in the webinar, such as YouTube or SlideShare links.

Please send the above via e-mail no later than 48 hours after webinar closure. The sooner trainees receive your post-webinar package, the more effective and useful the material will be to them.

The attached documents should be in PDF format since it is open to most of the programs. The full size of the e-mail should not exceed 5 MB (with attachments). If it does, it should be put on the company server by sharing links to certain folders/ documents. If you are putting up a large number of interesting links, the ones used in the webinar should be on top of the list. Follow those with links that are interesting or even add to the topic but do not appear in the presentation. Every link should be described with some words, so that the participant knows right away what it is about without having to click on it.

Developing and presenting the post-webinar materials to the trainees has its own value for business. It is a perfect tool for marketing, i.e. promoting the company through knowledge and quality service. It is common for participants to return for additional training as well as recruit their co-workers and friends.

## Recommendations:

- Adapt the type of survey to your needs, i.e. keep it as simple as possible, as detailed as necessary.
- Consider for what purpose you need the information gained from your questionnaire before creating it.
- Be sure to formulate questions that are easy to understand and unambiguous.
- Be sure to use a consistent scale for answering options.
- Keep in mind: Nobody likes endless questionnaires, so keep it short.
- If you don't make the survey anonymous, ask the participants beforehand if they are okay with this.
- Don't forget to adapt the questionnaires to the current training.
- Make a test run to check if everything works the way you wish.
- If you declare that you will publish the results during or after the training to the participants, remember to keep your promise.

# 7. Recording from the webinar

Webinar training's advantage over traditional training is recording. Audio and video can be recorded as well as chat sessions and other tools used. Recording can take place both automatically or by pressing REC button and requires little or no effort on the part of the trainer or moderator. A recorded seminar can also fulfil several roles apart from the webinar.

Recording a webinar allows for it to be replayed and experienced by a variety of people turning a live seminar into an educational resource. This feature of webinars is not present in other traditional trainings, and this is why it is worth informing the participants about it. In many cases, people taking part in meetings think about webinars only as a live transmission.

Recording of the statements will also cause a psychological effect in terms of the trainer's stronger motivation to answer the questions or comments of the trainees. Registered statements are visible and kept, thus the trainer must sooner or later comment on them. From the point of view in which we care about the participant's satisfaction, none of the questions should be ignored.

In addition to the points discussed previously for simplifying follow-up, the recording also has another valuable commercial side. It can be shared on demand as an additional option, bringing profit as long as the topic and method are up to date. These recordings are perfect for the promotion of the company as large numbers of people may watch it over a period of time, in contrast to a live seminar. What's more, it is very simple to share recordings – all you have to do is send a link to a person. They don't have to download anything or install any additional software.

The trainer or organiser may also set the way to access recorded material. It may be accessed on the basis of free internet database, accessible publicly or strictly by the participants of the training who have to log in to access it. Some models of software make registration possible using a flash form, where elements of the program stay active even though it is a recording (for example the chat window can be scrolled), and others let the content be seen only after downloading a certain player. This specification should be considered when choosing webinar software.

Feedback is very useful to trainers, organisers and learners even if it is not always complimentary. Trainees can provide excellent feedback for reflection when they evaluate the trainer's expertise, evaluate how they increased their knowledge and skills, anticipate practice changes, strengths and weaknesses of the presentation, and ideas for course improvements.

# 8. Glossary

**Electronic questionnaires** – online form with a set of prepared questions. It gives the possibility to express an opinion by answering closed, half open and open questions. The answers are being aggregated and published as statistics.

**Evaluation** – an analysis of the values/features of a particular programme or action (e.g. curriculum, project) which uses criteria against set of standards in order of development, improvement and efficiency. It consists of the systematically collected and analysed information about the goals established criteria.

**Instant messaging (chat)** – a tool enabling an exchange of text messages in real time. The conversation may be public (accessible for everyone) or private (accessible only for selected participants).

**Interactive whiteboard** – a tool used to underline key parts of the presentations and documents. It is particularly important during collaboration in small groups of trainees.

**Knowledge bases** – libraries of educational materials with documents, presentations, e-learning courses, audio and video files, which may be used to broaden the knowledge gained during the webinar (e.g. videlectures.net, docstoc.com, slideshare).

**Online games** – online activities which help to engage trainees with the subject material and can aid keeping attention to the session.

**Quiz** – exercise prepared by the trainer. It consists of questions based on the information collected during the training. Its complex form requires high level of concentration and involvement.

**Screen sharing** – a tool which enables the transmission of computer screen contents to one or more viewers. Participants may see all changes in real time. It facilitates technical support and work in groups on documents.

**Webcam video** – interactive communication, which allows interaction using video and audio transmissions simultaneously. People using specific equipment may talk and see each other on the same time.

**Webinar** – an audio and video transmission on the web (World Wide Web) from one specific source to large group of participants. Transmission may be conducted ‘on-line’ or ‘on-demand’.

**Webinar software** – all computer programmes that give the possibility to communicate via the Internet. It helps to transmit the view of a presentation, sound, video and chat. It may be additionally equipped with interactive whiteboards, questionnaires, screen sharing. Exemplary software programmes: Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro, YUGMA, Dim Dim, ONIF.

**Webinar training scenario** – plan of a training which involves key information (like goals, topics, tools etc.) and has its own framework. It is particularly important during webinars with large groups of people, where effective time planning is crucial for training completion.

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