

Professional Speaker

Congratulations!

From left: Dewitt Jones, CPAE; Kathleen Passanisi, PT, CSP, CPAE; Desi Williamson, CSP, CPAE; Terry Paulson, PhD, CSP, CPAE; Eric Chester, CSP, CPAE; and Steve Rizzo, CPAE



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Online Seminars Offer Greater Income Opportunities

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Over the past couple of years, I've met people from around the country who have been interested in attending my public-relations seminars. However, distance kept them from participating. I had thought about organizing a speaking tour, but I didn't want to spend the money or time that such an effort would entail. I knew there was a market for my services, but I needed to find a cost-effective way to connect to it.

After talking to a few speakers, I started to look into doing a Webinar to reach distant prospects. Over the years, I have attended several virtual training sessions and product launches but had yet to host my own.

Participating in a Webinar

Participating in a Webinar is simple. After registering, participants receive instructions on how to access the Web site hosting the seminar. Once they log onto the Webinar, they call a toll-free number to hear the audio component. Participants can just sit back and watch the seminar unfold on their computer screens while listening over their telephone without having to do anything else.

When I first thought about hosting my own Webinar, I had many concerns about how successful it would be. But, after having succeeded with my first seminar, "How to Put Your Web site into the Media Spotlight," I realized that my fears were unfounded. Webinars allow me to reach a broader market and create new revenue opportunities. Since those initial concerns nearly prevented me from

doing a Webinar, it is interesting to compare them to what I know now.

Are people ready to embrace Webinars?

Webinars have been popular for corporate training and lead generation for more than five years, so many people have been exposed to them in the workplace. The cost benefits have made Webinars a standard part of product launches, internal updates and company meetings. Additionally, high-speed Internet connections have significantly increased in small businesses and home offices nationwide. This higher bandwidth makes applications such as Webinars run smoothly, although attendees are only required to have a 56K dial-up connection to join. Even better, as people broaden their bandwidth, they are more open to new Internet uses such as Webinars that leverage their enhanced technology.

Is the technology for running the Webinar difficult to master?

The last thing I want to worry about when I'm presenting is whether the technology will work or whether I am

clicking the right buttons. I don't want to be so distracted operating my computer that I lose focus on what I'm presenting.

Fortunately, Webinars have a long track record of success in the corporate world, and Webinar service providers have fine-tuned the technology and user interface to a point that they have become very reliable and quite easy to use. With just a little practice beforehand, an average computer user familiar with Microsoft Windows and a computer mouse will find a Webinar service easy to understand and run.

Advantages Over a Tele-Seminar

A Webinar offers a rich multimedia experience compared to a traditional tele-seminar. In a Webinar, it is easy to use PowerPoint, recorded media and live video to illustrate key points and create an engaging experience. Since the slides stream over your Webinar provider's special interface, it's not even necessary that the people watching the presentation have PowerPoint loaded on their computers.

One nice feature of some Webinar service providers is the ability for the speaker to give attendees a tour of any



Web site, because you can give up-to-date examples of interactive Web sites reinforcing points from a presentation. Even better, attendees don't have to do anything more than just watch their computer since the presenter controls everybody's Web-browsing experience from his or her computer in a Wizard-of-Oz-like fashion.

Traditionally, Webinar services are expensive and require speakers to commit substantial upfront costs. There are providers, however, whose pricing is more competitive. For example, you can get service at just \$9 per attendee for a 60-minute seminar without having to guarantee a minimum number of participants. You can collect registration fees directly from the attendees and only be billed for those who enroll in the seminar. Develop the content and invitation list, and your service provider will do the rest.

At no additional charge, you may also be able to ask your Webinar service provider to record the entire presentation—both the audio component and graphics. You can edit this recording and then sell it on your Web site for a continual stream of residual income, while paying your Webinar service provider only a small usage charge each time you sell the rights to view the recording. By recording and posting Webinars, you can create a valuable resource library and a new, scalable revenue stream.

Interaction Capability Over Tele-Seminars

Lastly, Webinars offer some interactive control capabilities that far exceed anything you can do with a tele-seminar. For instance, participants can type in questions while you're presenting, so you can address them as you go along. Or, they can click on a raise-hand symbol, and you can call on them whenever it's appropriate. Likewise, while conducting the Webinars, it's easy to administer a real-time online poll of participants to gauge their opinion or understanding of what you are presenting.

To succeed with a Webinar, I suggest you follow some simple rules:

1. At the beginning, offer to e-mail the PowerPoint slides to your audience following the presentation. This way, they are more likely to focus on what you're saying, rather than worrying about taking notes as you speak.
2. Speak slowly and clearly. Since your audience cannot read your body language, it's important that you enunciate your words and speak in an organized fashion. Don't use a speakerphone since it makes you hard to understand. Instead, use a telephone headset so your hands are free to use your keyboard.
3. Mute all participants during the Webinar to avoid disruptive background noises and allocate at least 10 to 15 minutes at the end for Q & A. A good Webinar provider should integrate telephony control in its user interface, so it's easy to selectively take participants off "mute" who ask to speak using the raise-hand icon.
4. Use PowerPoint to illustrate your presentation. Keep bullet points short and strive for creativity.

Use cartoons, photos, animations, streaming media and charts to break up the monotony of text-based information. Consider 30-45 slides for a 45-minute presentation.

5. Take advantage of the Internet as a source of information during your presentation. A Web tour, for example, provides great content and a nice break from PowerPoint slides.
6. Polling and voting should be incorporated during an online seminar when possible. These activities are easy to administer and keep the audience involved. You might start the session with a poll to get some information about your attendees and then pepper other polls and voting throughout the event.
7. Send all participants a personalized thank-you e-mail following your Webinar. This is also a good time to get feedback on the presentation using an online poll. Two good services that have free online polling are www.zoomerang.com and www.surveymonkey.com.

If you're interested in conducting a Webinar, I would encourage you to

check out the options and prices of the three largest providers: WebEx Live! (www.webexlive.com), Microsoft Live Meeting (www.office.microsoft.com/livemeeting) and ECP Connect's iMeeting (www.interwise.com).

Webinars are here to stay as a great way for speakers who want to expand their reach without having to spend money or take time to travel. After hosting Webinars successfully, I can't believe I waited this long to begin. See you online.

Patrick Galvin is the owner of Galvin Communications, a public relations firm in Albany, Calif. He is also a speaker who makes presentations on how individuals and companies can use public relations and revolutionary marketing techniques to grow sales. Sign up for his free newsletter with stories, tips and bright ideas to promote your business without advertising at

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Registration Fees

Member Cost:

BEFORE September 24 - \$295

September 24 through October 8 - \$325

AFTER October 8 - \$355

Non-members: \$425

Registration: Call NSA at (480) 968-2552
or visit www.nsaspeaker.org