

Driving meaningful client engagement in the digital age

As the amount of time people spend working remotely has increased over the past decade, many financial advisors have had to start thinking of new and creative ways to engage with clients and prospective clients.

Financial advisors see this challenge as an opportunity to showcase their value in a world where it is increasingly critical to deliver a holistic financial strategy in any setting — in person or virtually. Through virtual webinars, financial advisors can meet clients and prospective clients where they want, when they want, and provide the content they need.

Conducting virtual meetings helps grow and preserve practice value by increasing the number of engagements with current households, demonstrating an innovative approach to prospective relationships, and increasing appeal to the next generation. The following checklist outlines key steps to executing meaningful investor webinar engagements:

- **Define your goal:** Determine the success you want for your event, whether that be to deepen existing relationships, attract new households, or a combination of both. Even a virtual setting like a webinar can be a great way to drive organic growth from new sources or gain more wallet share from current sources.
- **Curate your content:** Select a topic or theme that will most resonate with your identified audience. Partner with product partners with relevant content. *Run the event through compliance before scheduling.*
- **Pre-call with speakers:** Run through your thoughts on the goal of the presentation, who the audience will be, etc., so that the speakers can align their comments. Determine the software that will be used for the webinar.
- **Schedule the event:** During the pre-call, select a date and time for the event. Financial advisors find 20- to 30-minute webinars to be most impactful.
- **Promote the event:** Send the first round of invites out via email. Post event information to LinkedIn via compliance posting software. Call attendees who you would like to invite more personally.
- **Conduct a dry run:** Make sure all speakers are comfortable using the technology for the webinar. Discuss the agenda and flow.
- **Send out reminders:** A reminder email should go out the day before and on the day of the webinar. Phone calls can be made to ensure you have an accurate RSVP list.
- **Log in early:** It is recommended you log in 15–20 minutes before the start of the webinar to make sure all speakers are on and able to share screens, etc.
- **Follow up:** Let the audience know during the webinar when they should expect you to follow up. Have a follow-up email already drafted before the webinar. Even in the digital age, handwritten notes are a great complement to email.

Key considerations

In addition to the checklist, there are other key considerations that should be taken into account when hosting a virtual meeting. These include:

1. **Different times work for different audiences.** Clients still working may prefer lunchtime or evening webinars, whereas retirees may have more flexibility in their day. Webinars held midweek (Tuesday through Thursday) tend to have higher attendance rates. Keep in mind outside of work events that may impact a client's schedule, e.g., first day of school, Halloween, spring break.
2. **Dress professionally.** Clients should see you exactly as they would if they were to come into your office.
3. **Have a professional background.** To the best of your ability, ensure that the view attendees will see behind you is professional. Avoid windows behind the speaker as that can create bad lighting and make it difficult to see the speaker. Consider using a ring light on your computer as good lighting can really make the entire webinar look more professional.
4. **Eliminate distractions.** While working from home, distractions are often out of our control, but we can try to minimize them as much as possible. Find a quiet place with good internet connection and cell phone reception. Close windows, even distant noises can be picked up during calls. Let others in the house know you will be hosting a webinar to avoid them walking in the background or having conversations that can be picked up by your audio.
5. **Audio clarity is crucial.** It is important that all speakers join webinars a few minutes prior to start time to allow for any audio issues to be resolved. Technologies such as Zoom, WebEx, and Skype have multiple ways to connect to audio, so if a speaker has background noise, they can try joining another option to minimize audio issues.
6. **Don't assume that all audience members are familiar with the technology.** Have very clear step-by-step instructions on how to log in to the software. If the dial-in is separate from the webinar, make sure that is highlighted in the invitation. Provide a phone number for them to call should they have any issues logging in. Welcome guests as they join and have the screen share going so that they know they have joined the correct meeting.
7. **Ensure that audience members are muted to avoid disruptions.** Technologies such as Zoom, WebEx, and Skype all give the host the ability to mute and unmute attendees. Make sure you are familiar with how to use that functionality before the webinar, or ideally have a co-host on with you that can handle that while you speak.
8. **Instruct the audience on how to ask questions.** If you will be taking live Q&A, let the audience know at the start and conclusion of your comments how they can pose a question. Be very descriptive on exactly where they need to click to access the Q&A box, raise their hand, or mute and unmute themselves.

For Investment Professional Use Only. Not for Public Distribution.
For Informational Purposes Only. Not an Investment Recommendation.