

insider secrets

transitioning to remote speaking -
tips for non-professional speakers.



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events that engage and inspire

It's taken a pandemic for the industry to really embrace new technologies and innovative ways of keeping the power of events going. So as we enter this new phase of delivering virtual and hybrid events it's important that we don't let standards slip.

While professional speakers might already be experienced in presenting online, there are many content matter experts who have great stories to tell and are vital to continuing education and knowledge sharing in their own industries but may be needing some guidance and support as they navigate the online / remote speaking environment.

If that sounds like you - read on!

This guide is designed to assist non-professional speakers make the transition to virtual events with ease. It contains practical tips and strategies to ensure you deliver a presentation that all attendees will benefit from (and dare we say it - LOVE!).



"Before anything else, preparation is the key to success."

Alexander Graham Bell

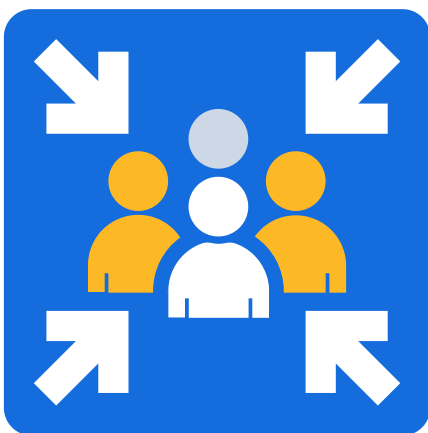
Presentation / content

To absolutely nail your presentation you need to spend time preparing. Presenting from home is not the same as presenting in front of a live audience, so don't just roll out the same presentation. We are not suggesting you let all your hard work go to waste, you can definitely repurpose existing content, but take some time to adapt it for online viewing.



know your audience

Think about your audience and provide content they actually want. Now more than ever the content needs to be clear and concise. Ask yourself the following questions:



- In what way is your topic relevant to your audience?
- In relation to your topic, what is your audience most interested in?
- How will your audience benefit by listening to you?
- What will your audience find new, surprising or intriguing?

Being clear about the purpose, desired outcomes and potential benefits of your presentation is vital. And as a rule of thumb it is better for online presentations to be shorter than live presentations, because people are more likely to switch or get distracted.

Knowing your purpose will enable you to decide the best format for your online session. Put simply will it be 'presentation' or 'collaboration'. This is not to say one is less engaging or interactive than the other, but the outcomes will be different.

determine the presentation format

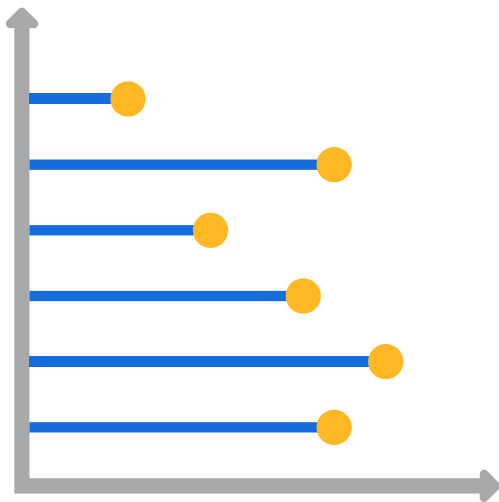
Presentation: Presenters (one or more) are addressing the virtual attendees - primarily in a one-way dialogue - opening to two-way for questions. Most webinars are run this way.



Collaboration: This is more of a facilitated meeting with collaboration among all the attendees and presenters.

The above decision will influence the technology and your content preparation. Of course your session could be a combination of both formats - for example a workshop style presentation.

create your presentation



Once you are clear on your content and format, you'll need to prepare your visuals (if you are using them). If you are presenting a webinar or keynote then we would definitely recommend supporting your presentation with some visuals. Think about what the audience will be seeing when you are presenting - this is one of the big differences between virtual and live presentations. When you are on stage, you can walk around and use your presence to engage the audience - this is not as easy in a virtual environment.

You still need to consider all the different learning styles (visual, aural, verbal, physical, logical, social and solitary) when creating your presentation. Use simple slides, clearly laid out with plenty of space. For online you can use more slides than you would for a live presentation to assist keeping people's attention (too much time on one image can cause their mind to wander) - keep things moving, trying to provide a new visual every 30 - 60 seconds. On the flip side though, remember that there is a slight time lag when delivering online, so avoid fast transitions or only having slides up for a very short time period as some attendees may miss them.



Although you can actually get away with having more text on a slide for virtual than you would in a live situation (because people can read it on their own screens) we would still recommend a high quality image over lots of text. When choosing images, remember emotions have a substantial influence on attention, learning and memory - it also is what can lead to behaviour change.

checklist

Other ideas to ensure you are engaging your entire audience include:

- limit each slide to one clear idea or point so the audience can stay focussed
- incorporating some polls into the presentation - a great way to gauge the audience's knowledge, experience and opinion on particular topics.
- break for Q&A midway through the presentation - giving people the opportunity to ask questions and steer the direction of the presentation.
- use a video or even an audio track to break up the presentation (so it's not just your voice they are listening to the entire time)
- if the audience can't see you at all during the presentation make sure you have a photo of yourself upfront - this creates a connection so they know who they are listening to.
- have a visual for when you are taking questions - it's a visual prompt and also ensures that there is no irrelevant information on screen while you are providing answers
- don't rely on long dramatic pauses in your presentation - these don't work online! Instead when there is even a few seconds silence people think they have lost sound.
- be authentic. Think of it as a conversation with a friend, a smile can go a long way in making people feel comfortable and connected.

Delivery / technology

Now you have your content sorted, the next consideration with remote speaking is the delivery. Your environment and the delivery technology are both very important to capturing and maintaining that connection with your virtual audience. Set yourself up to succeed. Studies have shown that virtual audiences decide whether they will watch a session or not within the first minute and then they'll give you a couple more minutes before they click away either physically or mentally.

Give yourself some time to set up properly. Firstly decide if you are more comfortable sitting or standing when you present. Some speakers find they have more energy when they are standing, but remember as you are presenting to a stationary camera (most likely your webcam) you need to remain stationary throughout the presentation.

your
environment



"Begin with the end in mind."

Stephen Covey

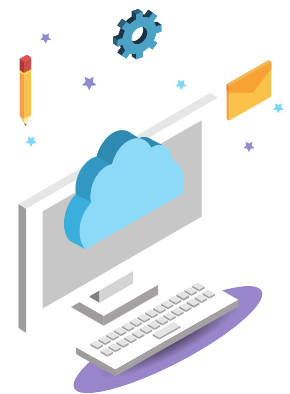


When determining where you are going to present from consider the following:

- Have the primary source of lighting (eg. window) in front of you lighting your face. (Not behind creating a silhouette).
- Have your webcam at eye level so you are not looking down at the audience, and the audience is not looking up your nose.
- If you have more than one speaker in your session, try to maintain the same distance from the camera so that there is consistency in how you fill the frame. (approx 50cm in front of your webcam is a good distance).
- If you need it, have your script printed out in front of you to glance at - but do not look down and read from it during the presentation.
- Check your surroundings and make sure there won't be any loud noises interfering with your presentation (perhaps close the door to keep the dog out).

the technology

Some technical considerations in advance of 'event day' to elevate your presentation to a more professional level are:



Lighting - invest in a ring light - they are not too expensive (available on amazon) and will provide an even, diffused light.

Audio - if you are going to do a number of presentations, it is worth investing in a headset with microphone. These minimise the amount of ambient noise and echo that using the laptop mic can cause. If you don't want to present with headphones on, then consider a lapel microphone.

There are numerous different platforms that you might be asked to present on, so the most important tip here is to double check that **everything** works before your event goes live. Request a 'technical rehearsal' in advance to check the following:



- **Internet** - check your bandwidth in advance to make sure you have good connectivity. Then on the day of your presentation consider hotspotting anyone else at home to your mobile data so that you are the only one using the internet during your session. It would be devastating if you did all this preparation to lose connection right when it counts!
- **Audio** - check your microphone is working, test any audio files you may have in your presentation. Know how to mute yourself and importantly unmute yourself!
- **Presentation** - test the screen sharing option and check any links or video to ensure they are clear and running smoothly.
- **Polls / Q&A** - understand how the polls are going to work, and how the Q&A is going to be monitored. If this is all up to you, make sure you have a clear plan on how you are going to manage these elements, because they are how your audience is going to communicate to you!

You are now ready to present, so the rest of our tips are the same as you would be doing regardless of being online or live in front of an audience.

- Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.
- Keep track of time
- Maintain energy and focus
- Enjoy yourself, smile!

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At Nectar Creative Communications we are connection experts across live, hybrid and virtual events. If you would like further information or assistance in content strategy, creation and delivery please get in touch.

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