



Five Fast Ways to Ruin a Webinar

Here are five foolproof ways to do it (or, if you prefer, five mistakes to avoid when planning your next webinar).

I can't remember exactly when I attended my first webinar, but I clearly recall my initial reaction to this wondrous new technology. "Wow," I thought to myself, "somebody actually found a way to make conference calls more unbearable!" As the technology has proliferated and become less expensive, webinars have become a regular fixture in the workplace, but one thing hasn't changed: most of them are still glorified conference calls, and almost all of them are boring.



But let's be honest: you're busy, and even if you do have a webinar to run sometime soon, who needs to expend all that extra energy trying to raise the bar? Running a webinar that's just as mind numbing as all the others is easy. Just follow these five simple steps:

Keep 'em guessing right from the start.

When people log into your webinar, they need to know exactly how to participate to the fullest. The most popular services (e.g., GoToWebinar, ReadyTalk, Webex) offer different tools, and organizations often have their own rules when conducting webinars. Participants - even seasoned veterans - don't always know what's expected of them, so if you want to keep them sitting quietly on the sidelines, skip past any kind of orientation and get right to your first incomprehensible slide.

Assume your audience is paying close attention.

Webinars are a great way to get work done - *other* work, that is. While you, the webinar host, drone on, your audience is catching up on email, firing off a few memos, and making those crucial updates to their

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It's easier than you think!

The Three Things Your Audience Wants

Does your presentation deliver them?



About Us

free-range thinking is written by Andy Goodman and edited by Lori Matsumoto. To read back issues, download free publications, and to learn more about our work, please visit www.agoodmanonline.com and www.thegoodmancenter.com.

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Facebook pages. If you *don't* assume they're paying attention and start doing unconventional things like calling on them by name, or giving them exercises to work out and report back on, you can disrupt this very productive time. So be respectful of the fact that they took all that time to dial in and log on, and just leave them alone!

More text, fewer images, and no video!

Most webinars are basically PowerPoint slides with voiceover narration. If you cram your slides with text, data, and complicated graphs and charts, they'll practically scream, "Don't look at me!" Stay away from interesting photographs or those fancy new forms of data visualization that actually make people look more closely at their screens. And by no means use video, even though most webinar platforms now accommodate it with relative ease.

Leave the same slide on screen as long as you like.

Every time you show a new slide, you pull your audience's attention back to the screen (and, as noted above, distract them from more important activities.) If you leave the same slide on-screen for more than a minute or two, however, your audience will get bored and will start looking elsewhere for entertainment. So keep those slide changes to a minimum, and let every slide have its day. Literally.

Speak in a monotone.

Or better yet, dominate the conversation and don't let anyone else speak. Just as changing slides rekindles visual interest, speaking with enthusiasm - or introducing new speakers - can stimulate aural interest. This puts you in dangerous territory, because if people start listening, they may actually start to think and, even worse, participate. Droning in a monotone (a la Ben Stein in "Ferris Bueller's Day Off") is the surest way to send them back to Facebook, Twitter, or sleep.

The Fastest Way to Improve Your Webinars

If you'd rather not ruin your next webinar, join us on March 20th (11a-12n Pacific) for The Webinar on Webinars. In this one-hour class, you'll learn:

- How to keep participants engaged from beginning to end
- The fine details of creating a good online experience
- How to use your two assets (voices and visuals) to maximum advantage
- What we've learned from talk radio that makes webinars even better



You can learn more and register online at [The Goodman Center](#).

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The 3 Things Your Audience Wants

Do your presentations deliver them? Join us in March for our webinar "Why Bad Presentations Happen to Good Causes" and make sure they do!

Based on unprecedented research and incorporating the advice of twenty highly regarded public-speaking experts, ***Why Bad Presentations Happens to Good Causes*** is a two-hour online class designed to help presenters at all levels, from newbies to seasoned veterans. Curriculum in this two-hour course includes:

- The three most common characteristics of excellent presentations
- The five most frequent mistakes (and how to avoid them)
- How to structure presentations to ensure your audience learns more
- Why PowerPoint should never be used as a presentation and a handout
- Techniques to help you deliver talks with greater confidence



Classes will be held on March 5th and 6th from 11a-12n Pacific each day (2-3p Eastern), and tuition is \$250 per student. (Group discounts are available.) You can learn more and register online at [The Goodman Center](#).

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