



# WEBINAR MARKETING

**It's a valuable tool that generates solid leads and reaches out to those not ready to come back in person.**

BY WELTON HONG

Two-thirds of businesses have increased the time and money they have invested in webinar marketing since the COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020. It makes sense – in a time during which people have a reduced ability and/or desire to come to your business for knowledge, you can show up for them in virtual environments.

But webinars can be valuable marketing tools for funeral homes and other deathcare service providers even outside a pandemic situation, primarily because *they generate high-quality leads*. On average, webinars convert up to 20% of people, which means up to 1 in 5 participants might eventually decide to contract for preplanning services or call your firm during a time of need.

One reason webinars are so effective is that *the*

*leads effectively select themselves*. Most people don't go around signing up for webinars just for the heck of it; they have some interest in the subject or a related problem they think you may be able to help them solve. They're primed, and all you have to do is impress them with strong, helpful content that cements the deal. Here's how to do that.

## **DECIDE ON A TOPIC**

Choose a topic you can reasonably discuss for 30 to 45 minutes, providing actionable, expert information without giving away everything you know. The goal of webinar marketing is to *provide value to viewers while leaving them with the understanding that there's more you can do for them*.

The topic also must support future conversions.

Sure, it might be fun for everyone, including you, to do a webinar on the weirdest funerals in history, but is it helpful for your business? People who might be curious about that topic wouldn't necessarily be in the market for preplanning or anticipating near-future at-need services. You might consider topics such as preplanning, planning for veterans' funeral benefits and how to plan a memorial service.

### CHOOSE A PLATFORM

You'll likely have to pay for a webinar service, although prices range from free to hundreds a month. (By the way, please note that I have no promotional relationship with any service or product I mention in any article; they're just solid options to consider.)

GoToWebinar is one choice. Try it free for seven days to test its features; prices range from \$49 to \$399 per month, depending on the plan.

Another option is Crowdcast, which you can also try for free. After that, prices run from \$29 to \$195 per month, depending on how many hours of webinars you want to run each month and how many live attendees you'll have.

You can find dozens of other options (no surprise there, with webinars becoming ever more popular), so do a bit of research and find one that fits your budget and needs. Tip: Find a platform that lets you show slides as well as your face as this helps people better connect with you.

### SET A DATE, CREATE AN OUTLINE

Once you choose the webinar subject and the location, set a date or dates. You might want to present the same webinar a couple of times so more people can attend live.

You usually also have the option to host the recorded webinar online, so future viewers can watch the replay. That turns your webinar into content you can reuse, increasing the return on your marketing investment.

After setting the dates, create a thorough outline of what you'll cover in the webinar. You'll use this to create the content later, but it's also helpful for writing the landing page and marketing the webinar.

### CREATE A LANDING PAGE, START MARKETING

The landing page is where you'll send people who are interested in learning more about or signing up for the webinar. It should include:

- ◆ All live webinar hosting dates and times

- ◆ Information on how people can join
- ◆ A well-written, enticing summary of what attendees will learn in the webinar and how it will help them; this is marketing copy meant to "sell" the webinar. And while I say "sell" the webinar, let's be clear – you're not charging anything. You're providing a free and valuable service as a way to generate leads and help convert consumers to clientele.
- ◆ Sign-up links or forms
- ◆ Options for sharing information about the webinar on social media in case people who sign up want to encourage friends and family to do so as well.

Once the landing page is ready, promote it on social media, your Google My Business page, your firm's blog and anywhere else you can.

### CREATE CONTENT

Between the marketing launch and the date of the first webinar, you have work to do. Most webinars include spoken elements as well as visuals in slide-show or video format. Put together slide decks that contain visuals and text, such as:

- ◆ Charts/graphs showing points you want to make
- ◆ Visuals, including photographs, GIFs and even memes that help demonstrate your points and entertain your audience
- ◆ Informative summaries and bullet points of the major talking points for those who might learn better by reading.

Create speaker notes to go with each slide so you know what information to cover (and who is covering each point, if you're using multiple presenters). You needn't write out the speaking parts completely. In fact, if possible, try to avoid doing this or you may end up reading to your audience, which will reduce how engaging your presentation is. The point is to show off your expertise and authenticity, and that happens when you're speaking naturally about a topic you know.

Aim for between 20 and 40 minutes of content. Leave 10 minutes or so for Q&A and other things that come up. You might want to test 30-minute and 50-minute webinars to see what works best for your topic and audience.

### WRITE, PUBLISH THE LANDING PAGE

Don't forget to create a funnel through which past webinar participants can travel. You might point

people from the webinar to a landing page from which they can download an e-book to find out even more, click to contact someone or set up an appointment.

This funnel is required to expand on the reach and performance of the webinar. First, not everyone who attends your live webinar will take immediate action. You need to leave them with a place to go when they're ready to act later. Second, *most* of your webinar views will be replays – people watching the recorded webinar at a later date. You must offer an invitation to learn more that works for anyone at any time.

### BE PREPARED

Make sure you're prepared; you only have one chance to impress live participants. It's a good idea to prepare the content early enough that you can do an entire dry run with the webinar software and

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some co-workers to ensure that everything works.

You'll also want to make sure you're 100% focused on presenting and interacting with participants. Turn off email, close chat windows and shut down any unrelated tabs on your computer.

Let everyone else in the funeral home know that you are not available during this time, and turn off your phone. You might consider having a co-worker on hand who can handle any problems that might arise in the background, so you can stay present with the audience.

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### PUBLISH FOR FUTURE VIEWERS

Finally, publish the webinar replay for future viewers and continue to include it in your marketing. For example, you might link to the replay in future blog posts on relevant topics or post it on social media occasionally. As long as all the information in the webinar is current, it can be a powerful piece of marketing content on which to lean.

If you find success with the first presentation, consider doing it again in the future. You might host an annual or quarterly webinar series, depending on your marketing resources and how well this tactic converts for you.

Another benefit of webinar marketing arises when making sure that the language on the webinar sign-up page helps you gather subscribers for your firm's email newsletters. It's as simple as including a box to check to opt out of email; anyone who doesn't check the box is giving permission to send them email marketing messages.

Email might convert some people even when the webinar didn't, or your message or newsletter could remind the person about your helpful webinar and bring them back to find out more about preplanning or other services. ☰

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