

General Webcast Tips

Conducting live meetings over the web is still a relatively recent communication method. The web offers an interactivity that on-site live events do not normally include. On the other hand, online viewers contend with other stimulants at their workstation. So, techniques should be used to consistently involve them. Here at *Netbriefings* we are always prepared to assist you in designing and executing a truly productive and enjoyable online event.

Tips, Tricks and Techniques to Conducting a Web Meeting

Generally, it's easier to conduct a live event when it's just over the web and not live on-site, as well. When that is the case, one only needs to concentrate on what the web viewer will see. But, even then, there are challenges. These will be taken up later.

When presenting a live combined on-site and online event,

- Acknowledge the online audience periodically. Online viewers may not feel they are part of the event if you do not include them.
 - So, presenters should look into the camera and speak into the microphones, not the podium. Asides, while effective with the on-site audience, leave the online viewers out of the presentation, unless the speakers have wireless microphones. On the other hand, wireless microphones allow speakers to roam about the stage, which may take them out of the field of view for online viewers.
 - Techniques such as polling and private response messaging help to bring the online viewers into your presentation community. We recommend that polling be used on an irregular basis every 8 to 10 minutes. This timing, though, depends more on the activity of the presentation. For example, if there are video clips on a regular basis, these take the place of polling in one respect. Other benefits of polling are to create an online community feeling and to provide you, the presenter, with more intelligence as to the composition and preferences of the online audience. Be careful when using polls not to make them too long. This can distract the audience from the presentation. You are working to involve them, not distract them. Frequently, people really are asking survey questions, and not taking a poll. Pretend that you are reading in front of a live audience. Is the poll too long? Normally you ask for a quick show of hands rather than a three-sentence question with four complete sentence answers.
 - Q & A sessions can be most productive. Encourage the speaker to state throughout the presentation that viewers are encouraged to send in questions and comments at any time, not just at the end. This is a distinct advantage of online meetings over on-site ones, where the audience must generally wait till the end to pose their questions. The online viewer gets to pose these questions whenever the question comes to mind! Make sure if you have on-site Q & A that a portable microphone is available. You can't rely on presenters to repeat the questions. Make sure a person is visible at the front of the room with the microphone. Do not ignore the web portion of the event. Smaller meetings typically have a larger issue with ignoring the Internet audience in this respect.
 - At the end of a presentation, online surveys are a quick and easy way to determine whether you are accomplishing your presentation objectives. The speaker needs instruct the online

viewers that the questionnaire will stay up as long as the viewer wants it to. There is generally no time limit to answering surveys. Keep your questions to simple multiple choices. As with any survey, questions should be relatively quick to answer, proceeding from the relatively easy to more difficult topics.

- Present clear graphics. Here you may be more detailed in your slides than with your on-site audience, since the viewer is less than 2 feet away from the monitor and can see slides often more easily than your on-site audience. Avoid merely reading the slides; but expound on your points. The bullet points on slides should be as short as possible.
 - Avoid detailed graphics for the online slides. This will only interfere with those who have slower connections. "Build" slides can be dramatic, provided the speaker takes enough time on each build point for all the online viewers to see and read that bullet point. For Proclaim Enterprise events, note that "builds" must be on successive slides. We recommend a minimum of 20 seconds between builds, preferably 30 to 45 seconds. Remember those viewers who have low bandwidth!
- Keep the online presentation interesting. If there are slow times in the on-site presentation, use fillers for the online viewers. Film clips, polling and short surveys can fill the gaps.
- When possible always have the on-site slide show to the left of the presenter. Often presenters look at the projection while giving the presentation. This will make it look as if they are looking at the same presentation to the web audience, as that is the side the slides will be displayed on.
- When ever possible have the presenter stand behind a podium. This will keep their movement to a minimum. If you do not have a podium make sure you have an experienced camera operator and a high quality tripod to follow their movement and keep the "talking head" in the picture.
- Ensure good lighting. Make sure your presenter is not standing in front of the projected image or in front of a backlit source such as a window. Wherever possible it is recommended to have supplemental light on the presenter.
- Expect that not all your desired viewers will attend. In a B2B environment, *Netbriefings* is practiced in driving your intended viewers to the online event. Driving viewers to your site takes persistence and a sense of humor. After all, there's a reason the viewer is not part of your on-site audience. They are generally very busy. For them to take an hour or more out of their business day to view your event is a feat. We recommend we undertake this as part of our normal service. In fact, we guarantee that these names will only be used for this event and that the lists will be destroyed as soon as the total event is over. We have several pre- and post- messaging schedules set up. So, if you expect 1,000 viewers to attend online for your first such event, we would estimate between one-third to one-half will actually attend. Our post-messaging feature notifies all registrants when the archive of the live event becomes available.
- Determine whether the event is to be "public" or "private." If it's private, *Netbriefings* provides several alternative methods to ensure its privacy. If it were a public event, we would also offer to expand your list of desired online attendees.

The key to an enjoyable and productive online event is sufficient preparation.