



Add Impact When You Present Through Webinars

By Patricia Fripp, CSP, CPAE



Whenever you open your mouth, whether your audience is one person or a thousand, you usually want to get a specific message across. Anyone who sets out to present, persuade, and propel with the spoken word faces pitfalls.

As technology and travel budgets play more of an important part of our lives, we have another challenge. What do you do when you are communicating through a Webinar? What is different about a Webinar presentation?

BEFORE IT STARTS

Once your audience tunes in, make sure they are entertained and feel involved even before the event starts. The best way to do that is with a series of Looping Slides. Looping Slides are a great way to convey important information and keep attendees entertained while waiting for the presentation to begin.

WHAT ARE ON THE SLIDES?

These slides need to communicate: when the session will begin; the Conference Dial-In Number; a photo, name, and title of the presenter; what the audience is going to learn; and in case of problems, what they do. You may have quotes about the content they will learn.

HAVE FUN

Be creative - Think Hollywood! As you build your PowerPoint®, add visuals wherever possible. Use more slides than with an in-person presentation. In your Webinar, more visuals are needed to help engage the audience. Tell stories and give examples as you go through the program, as you would in person.

Bullet points need to be added as a “build,” not all the points introduced before discussed. Keep it simple, keep it moving, and interact often.

HAVE A GRABBER

Your grabber opening can be a fact, statistic, or challenge and is meant to get the attention of the audience. Then it is up to you to keep it. I have grabber examples later in this article.

YOU NEVER KNOW!

Here is a practical suggestion that has paid off for me. Have two computers tuned into the Webinar. My Fripp Associate Tom Drews is very experienced with presenting through Webinars. He recommended this technique to Jim Prost and me when we were presenting through Webinar for the American Payroll Association. Suddenly, Jim, who was taking lead, mentioned his computer had frozen. I immediately jumped in and delivered my portion earlier than planned. This gave Jim time to get his second laptop to the place his other had frozen. As it was tuned into the Webinars, it only took a few moments. With technology...you never know!

HAVE A STRONG OPENING.

After your grabber slide, it is up to you to engage your audience immediately with a powerful, relevant opening that includes the word “you.”

Don't say, "Good morning" but rather "Welcome! You are in for a treat! You are about to learn how to..."

Do the introduction and SELL the session on how the listeners can benefit from the knowledge. Remember, since they can't see you in person, it is too easy to answer their email or go get a cup of coffee.

YOUR INTRODUCTION

Once you have sold the session, you can introduce yourself if someone else is not doing it.

Do NOT do it first. Just as with an in-person session, say something the listeners care about, and then they will care about who you are.

STRUCTURE

Build your presentation on paper or a flip chart, and then build the PowerPoint®. You have to get "messy" before you get tidy! It is better to have fewer points and illustrate them well.

Introduce the Objective and what the benefits are, then the Agenda and timing of your session, then any logistics and how your listeners will interact with you.

INTERACTION

Depending on the technology you are using, make sure you interact whenever it is logical.

Ask, "Based on what you have heard so far, what are your questions?"

MEMORABLE STORIES

People rarely remember your exact words. Instead, they remember the mental images that your words inspire. Support your key points with vivid, relevant stories. Help them "make the movie" in their heads by using memorable characters, exciting situations, dialogue, and humor. With a combination of your examples and visuals, it will be a memorable presentation.

REVIEW

As with an in-person presentation, always review your key ideas.

Ask, "Before my closing remarks, what are your questions?"

Based on what they have heard, be clear what the next logical steps are for them and close on a high. Your last words linger...make sure they are yours.

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

The most powerful communication combines both intellectual and emotional connections. Intellectual means appealing to educated self-interest with data and reasoned arguments. Emotion comes from engaging the listeners' imaginations, involving them in your illustrative stories by frequent use of the word "you," and from answering their unspoken question, "What's in this for me?" Use a high I/You ratio.

For example: Don't say, "I'm going to talk to you about Webinars" but rather "In the next 56 minutes, you will learn the 6 secrets of making a Webinar work; the 4 benefits of using Webinars as part of your client interaction; and the 3 mistakes our competitors are making using them."

PAUSES

Good music and good communication both contain changes of pace, pauses, and full rests. This lets your listeners think about what they have just heard. If you rush on at full speed to crowd in

as much information as possible, chances are you've left your listeners back at the station. It's okay to talk quickly, but whenever you say something profound or proactive or ask a rhetorical question, pause.

IRRITATING NON-WORDS

Hmm--ah--er--you know what I mean--. On a Webinar, this habit will only be emphasized. Are you doing it? Why not have a run through and record yourself. As with in-person presentations, as Michael Caine says, "Rehearsal is the work, performance is the relaxation."

GRABBER EXAMPLES

Your grabber opening is meant to get the attention of the audience.

Your grabber opening can be a fact.

"It may interest you to know...Ferraris hold their value...more than polo ponies! I first learned this lesson when..."

"Did you know, if you spent a million dollars a day, every day since Jesus was born, you would not have spent a trillion dollars. Please keep that in mind as we strategize how to increase sales by only 5%..."

Your grabber opening can be a statistic.

"465 times in the Bible is says, 'It came to pass.' It does not say, 'It came to stay.' In the next 60 minutes, we will discuss strategies on how to design a sales message that will stay with our prospects..."

Your grabber opening can be a challenge.

"10 years ago we were the market leaders. This year we are 13th. My challenge to you...if that was your situation...what would you do? Welcome to a Webinar where you will learn the formula to..."

**Patricia Fripp and Fripp Associates are experts in business communications.
They improve meeting quality through effective presentation skills.
Fripp Associates are experts in Webinar Training.**

If you are interested in presentation skills, public speaking or sales presentation skills, check out one of Patricia's Webinars on Business Expert Webinars or her two-day Speaking and Presentation Skills School.

Patricia Fripp, CSP, CPAE is an in-demand executive speech coach, award-winning keynote speaker, and sales presentation skills trainer. *Meetings and Conventions* magazine calls Patricia Fripp, "One of the 10 most electrifying speakers in North America." Patricia is a Past President of the National Speakers Association, author or coauthor of 5 books including *Speakers' EDGE: Secrets and Strategies for Connecting with Any Audience*.

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