

How to Host an Effective Web Conference

A TelSpan Worldwide Conferencing White Paper

Introduction

A web conference is an excellent visual and collaborative tool that enhances audio conference presentations. When introducing this technology into your organization, it is important to remember that the use of web conferencing is only effective when the proper planning has been performed. By following some simple steps before your event takes place, you can help to ensure that you have utilized the web conferencing platform for the maximum benefit of all who participate. As you will see below, much of your time is invested in pre-conference preparation. Once you follow these steps just once, you will be prepared to duplicate effective and efficient web conferences in the future.

Pre-Conference Planning – One to Two Weeks Prior to Event

1. Determine Your Objectives & Create Your Agenda

Set Your Objectives: Ask yourself some of the following questions: What are my goals for the conference? Do I want to simply present my information, or would I like to have audience participation and feedback? Should my participants be able to access information after the conference? How long should the conference last?

Create an Agenda and Schedule: The most effective conferences stick to a set structure and schedule.

Contact TelSpan Client Services: After determining what your objectives are, make sure to utilize the features that will accomplish these. Contact **TelSpan** Client Services at 1-800-937-7726 with any feature questions or to set up any features that require reservations (recording/playback, etc).

2. Create a List of Desired Attendees & Review Audience Composition

Consider Key Participants: Make sure that all key players are included, along with at least one other stakeholder from the same organization to ensure a greater likelihood that a representative from that entity will be able to attend.

Audience Size: If you desire a high level of collaboration, keep your audience size small. Smaller groups foster more interaction and are easier to manage. For web conferences that are more of an informational presentation with less interaction, a larger group can be easily accommodated.

Consider the Medium: Compress and edit your in-person presentations, being aware that some don't translate well from the live event to the virtual. Think about online meetings as you would a radio or TV program and consider content and flow.

Set Time Restrictions: The webinar should be concise and kept on course. Try to stick to your time schedule. Use a moderator-driven agenda, with topics and speakers announced in advance. To keep things moving forward in an online meeting, consider using the chat feature to collect questions throughout the presentation, and then address them at the end of the session.

3. Prepare Your Presentation

Simple Formatting/Font/Style Tips:

► **Use a plain or solid background color on your slides.** This creates a smaller file transmission size. For example, marbled backgrounds increase transmission time.

- ▶ **Use solid color text on a solid background to increase legibility.** (Use color for emphasis.)
- ▶ **For graphics and/or charts.** If you are incorporating graphs and/or charts, increase the legend size and data-point labels for better viewing.
- ▶ **Make text and headings as large as possible.** This creates a clear and distinct output and is clearly legible.
- ▶ **Design each visual to make one major point or theme.** The dominant concept should jump out at the audience immediately.
- ▶ **Keep visuals simple, neat and uncluttered, and not complex or busy.** Spread your elements out and make everything as large as possible for quick and easy viewing.
- ▶ **Write titles that read like headlines and grab audience attention.**
- ▶ **Highlight key words and graphics.** Use different color, size, and effect (italic, arrows, asterisks, geometric shapes).
- ▶ **Do not mix horizontal and vertical formats.** Stay with one or the other. A horizontal format is preferred since it appears larger and conforms better to television, slide and movie images.
- ▶ **Avoid stark contrasts.** Do not give your audience mixed messages. Focus on being consistent in all areas of your presentation.
- ▶ **Use colors sparingly.** Never use more than 3 colors on one slide, and consider using the same three colors throughout the entire presentation. Use colors to contrast, highlight, or differentiate categories or groups, or to call attention to an important point. In general, light-colored text on dark backgrounds is easier to read from a distance.
- ▶ **Do not "over-design."** Remember that elegant and simple designs are more effective than jarring and flashy visuals.
- ▶ **For best internet transmission speeds:** A Stable Internet connection of DSL or above is recommended. The preferred connection to the Internet is via hard wired connection, not wireless, in order to achieve the target rate of 450kbps+ upload speed. Additionally, graphically intense photographs in sizes greater than 30 Kb take longer to transmit and risk greater internet degradation and delay. Keep individual slide sizes to no more than 30Kb in order to optimize upload speed.

4. Test Computer/Browser Compatibility

Browser Test: One week prior to your event, test the compatibility of the machine you wish to utilize during the actual event. **TelSpan's** Client Service personnel will provide you with the exact instructions on how to do this simple test. If you need assistance, contact **TelSpan** Client Services at 1-800-937-7726.

5. Prepare and Send Out Participant Instructions

Participant Invitations: The initial invitation should be sent out at least one week prior to the event time. Email invitations are the most effective means of notifying and inviting your prospective attendees. Include the date, time and login information. Your instructions will also include the steps the participants need to take to test their own web browsers. Be sure that you do NOT give out any host/moderator information.

6. Rehearse Your Presentation

Rehearse Using the Web Conferencing Platform: Practice uploading presentations, creating images on the whiteboard and any other feature you plan to use.

For Assistance During Your Rehearsal: Contact **TelSpan** Client Services at: 1-800-937-7726 with any questions.

Pre-Conference Planning – One Day Prior to Event

1. Send Conference Reminders

Send out email reminders to those who confirmed their intended participation. Remind all participants that they need to test their web browsers. If they need assistance, they can call **TelSpan** Client Services at: 1-800-937-7726.

2. Test Browser Compatibility

Test compatibility again if you are planning to use a different machine than the one that you had originally tested.

During the Event

Quick Tips

- ▶ Open with a quick introduction and explain your agenda. Instruct participants on how to use the tools and let them know that, if they're having trouble, there is help available by pressing *0.
- ▶ During the presentation, use the pointer and basic whiteboard tools to draw the participant's attention to each point you wish to discuss or to emphasize.
- ▶ Have a good moderator: Trained moderators will help to keep a meeting on track.
- ▶ Use the features available: For those who can't attend the full meeting, consider having your event recorded and post it on your organization's website for review by those who missed it live. Utilize polling, voting and whiteboard features to keep your participants involved.
- ▶ Conclude the session on time and by thanking the audience for their time and participation. If you plan to disseminate materials you presented, or to post them to a particular website, make sure you tell the audience where to find these materials.

After the Event

Quick Tip

Send an email to all those you invited initially. Thank those who participated live and give directions to all as to where they can locate any archived materials. Reiterate any highlights and solicit any feedback or questions from attendees.

Call 1-800-800-1729 or [contact us](#) to learn more about **TelSpan's** Web conferencing platform, **TelSpan Venue** and **TelSpan's** online registration tool **RegistrationPlus**. Let one of our sales professionals demonstrate how to utilize these services to facilitate your web conferences and save you time and money.