

ON24 WEBINAR BENCHMARKS REPORT 2019



ASSOCIATION TRENDS



ON24

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EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

Whether you work for a professional, trade or charitable association, you know attracting and retaining members is critical to the sustainability of your organization.

You've probably already experimented with various tactics to drive new membership and retain existing members. Or maybe you've just started tackling the engagement and retention challenges. Wherever you are in your journey, we believe webinars are best placed to help you communicate a clear member value proposition and enhance your recruitment and retention strategies.

Webinars enable you to reinforce the value you provide, keep members informed and engaged, build meaningful relationships with your members, reinstate lapsed members, establish a reputation for delivering valuable content and even turn non-member attendees into potential members. And guess what? It won't break the bank. Webinars are a cost-effective solution to reach your membership, engagement and renewal goals.



To help you embark on the next stage of your webinar journey, we've analyzed all webinar benchmark data from events produced by associations on our platform in 2018 and looked at how practices used by associations differ from those employed by organizations in other sectors. So come on in, find out how your peers are doing, where you stack up and how you can get even better at your webinars.

Here at ON24®, we hope this report provides you with valuable insights and wish you success in your endeavors for the year ahead.

METHODOLOGY

ON24, the world's leading webinar platform, compiled the data in this report. The events included in this analysis were selected from a sample of ON24 webinars conducted globally by associations in 2018.

-  ON24 measured 3,587 webinars in this analysis
-  All webinars were held between January and December of 2018
-  Events represent a cross-section of nearly 80 associations

In addition, those working for associations were surveyed to find out more about how they are using webinars and their effectiveness.

This study examines statistics across a webinar's lifecycle, including webinar promotion and registration metrics,

interactivity metrics, audience viewing habits, and both live and always-on attendance and conversion metrics. Unless otherwise noted, this study uses the following definitions:

-  **Live webinars**—Audio or video-based events streamed on a specific day and time.
-  **Always-on webinars**—Audio or video-based events attendees can view always-on, including archived live webcasts.
-  **Registrants**—Prospects registered to view an event.
-  **Attendees**—Prospects who registered to view an event and attended that event.

PRE-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

PROMOTIONAL CYCLE

71% of those working at associations agree that webinars enable them to reach more leads

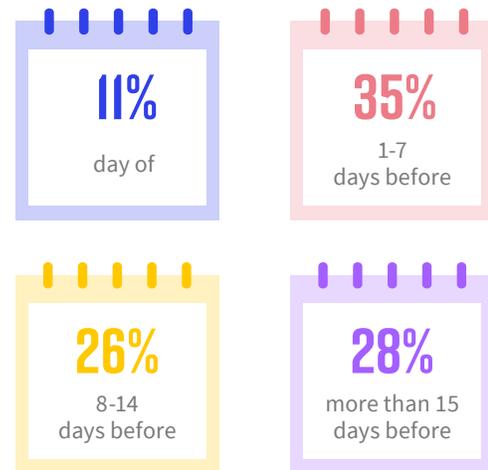
Regardless of how valuable or useful you think your webinar content is, it's not going to help support your broader marketing activities if few people interact with it.

One of the core components of a successful promotional campaign for your association's webinar program is email. Our research shows that email campaigns drive up to 80 percent of webinar registrations.

You might think that your email recipients are invested because they are already members, so you expect your open and click rates to be high. That is not necessarily true, as email marketing fatigue is real: the average email user sends and receives close to 100 emails a day.

With so much noise out there, it's important to devise a well-planned promotional campaign that starts at least two or three weeks before the webinar, with carefully crafted emails that make use of personalization and effective calls to action. If the webinar you're promoting is part of the membership benefits package, highlight it upfront.

Our data show more than half of registrants (54 percent) sign up for a webinar at least eight days before the event. Early registrants, who enroll at least 15 days before the event, account for an impressive 31 percent of our sample. At the other end of the spectrum, less than half of registrants (46 percent) register up to one week before.



ON24 TIP

USE PERSONALIZATION AND EFFECTIVE CTAS IN YOUR EMAILS TO BOOST WEBINAR REGISTRATION RATES.

Highlight the key benefits of attending the webinar and include a powerful call to action members can't ignore. Include specific information pertaining to each member, such as membership level, interests, content consumption patterns or past engagement, to give emails a more personal touch and get your members' attention. Read our [Webinar Registration Best Practices Guide](#) for more tips on boosting webinar registration rates.

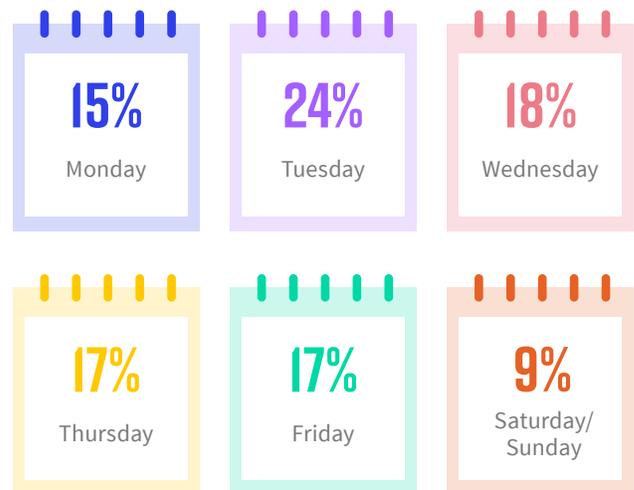
PRE-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

BEST DAYS TO SEND PROMOTIONAL EMAILS

79% of those working at associations agree that webinars enable them to extend their brand.

Previous annual reports, which looked at benchmark data across all sectors, revealed that mid-week promotional emails perform best.

In the case of associations, Tuesday is the stand out performer for sending promotional emails, accounting for almost one-quarter (24 percent) of registrations. This contrasts with the all-sector data, where Wednesday is typically the best day, while Monday and Friday have much-reduced performance.



ON24 TIP

TEST YOUR EMAIL PROMOTIONS TO FIND OUT WHAT DAY WORKS BEST FOR YOUR ASSOCIATION.

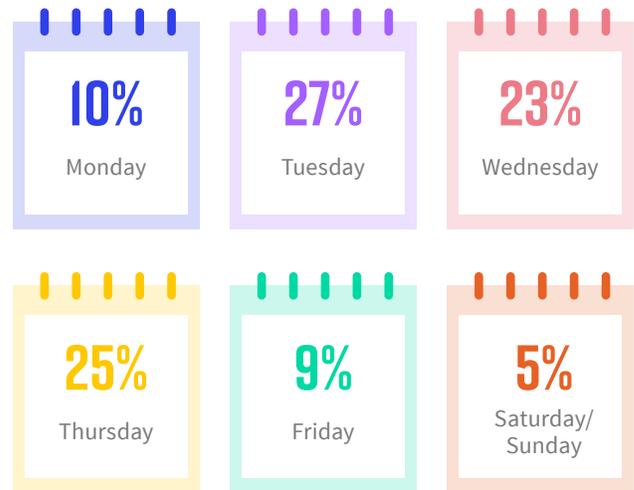
While the figures above show Tuesday is typically the best day to send out promotions, some industries might have different engagement. Email timing is a process of trial and error, so look at past email marketing metrics to determine the optimal day and time to reach your members. More advice is in our eBook on [Enhancing Webinar Promotions](#).

PRE-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

BEST DAYS FOR WEBINAR ATTENDANCE

Mid-week is also the best time to hold a webinar, with Tuesday and Thursday performing best.

In a similar pattern to promotional email timings, Tuesday is the most popular day for attendance (27 percent), with Wednesday performing slightly less well than for sectors as a whole. Monday and Friday should be avoided for live webinars, as engagement during these times will typically be lower.



ON24 TIP

RUN YOUR WEBINARS MID-WEEK. TUESDAY IS THE BEST DAY TO GET LIVE ATTENDEES.

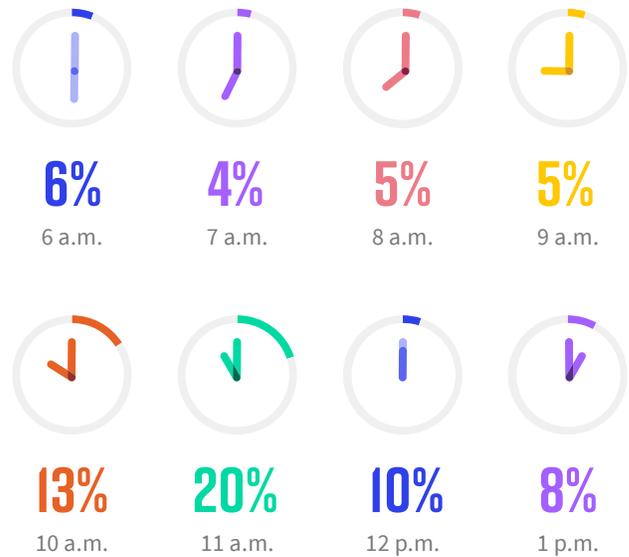
Attendees are most available during the middle of the week. However, what works for other audiences might not work for yours, so look at your members' past content consumption patterns and don't be afraid to experiment.

PRE-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

BEST TIME TO RUN WEBINARS

The best time to run a webinar is 11 a.m. PST (2 p.m. EST) as it avoids most conflicts on both coasts. Other times you should consider are 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. PST (1 p.m. and 3 p.m. EST), with 1 p.m. PST (4 p.m. EST) also being a close contender.

The optimal time to hold a webinar is very much dependent on where your members reside so test different times to find out what which one attracts most registrations and attendees.



ON24 TIP

RUN YOUR WEBINARS AROUND THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY.

The best time to run a webinar is one fitting in with your members' schedules, but as a rule, lunchtime to early afternoon works well. If in doubt and you're in the US, covering multiple time zones, opt for 11 a.m. PST (2 p.m. EST).

WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

AVERAGE VIEWING TIME

The optimal webinar length depends on the target audience, type of webinar and its content, and the specific goals you want the webinar to help you achieve.

As a rule of thumb, webinars last for around an hour but don't default to an hour just because it's typical. Whether it is an onboarding webinar for new members or a member appreciation webinar, you need to experiment to find your audience's sweet spot.

In 2018, the average viewing time for webinars produced by associations, including a ten to 15-minute Q&A session, was 56 minutes.

The vast majority (83 percent) of associations using webinars for their continuing education programs say their individual lessons last about an hour.

ON24 TIP

DETERMINE THE OPTIMAL WEBINAR LENGTH FOR YOUR MEMBERS INSTEAD OF USING AN ARBITRARY NUMBER.

Use the type of content you're planning to feature to help you determine the optimal length of your webinar. Test various webinar lengths to find the balance between keeping things brief to accommodate burdensome schedules and covering material in-depth to provide value for your members. Make sure you allow ample time for the Q&A.

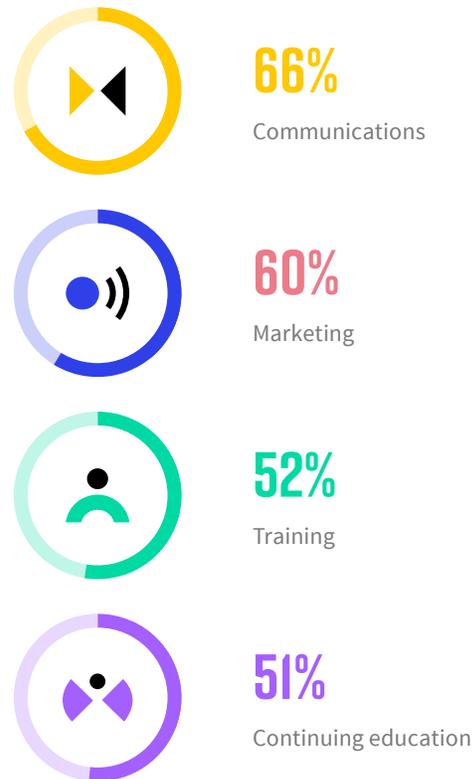
REGISTRANT TO ATTENDEE CONVERSION

The registration to attendee conversion rate is one of the most important metrics you need to consider when ascertaining the effectiveness of your promotional efforts and the performance of your webinar program. It's worth remembering that a 35 to 45 percent conversion rate is typically considered to be good.

In 2018, the average registrant to attendee conversion rate for associations was 55.4 percent (compared to 55.9 percent across all sectors). According to our data, webinars used for marketing and communications recorded the highest conversion rates (60 and 66 percent, respectively).

Professional development is one of the top reasons members join associations, so most organizations in this sector develop and maintain robust educational programs. Unsurprisingly, associations on our platform recorded a high registrant to attendee conversion rate for training and continuing education webinars compared to the all-sector average (over 51 percent, compared to 44.8 percent and 30.8 percent respectively).

Average webinar conversion rate for webinars with more than 100 attendees:



ON24 TIP

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF REMINDER EMAILS AND CALENDARS.

Reminder emails are very effective at improving registrant to attendee conversion rates. Send them one week and one day before the webinar, making sure they don't clash with other comms. Don't forget to include 'add to calendar' links in your confirmation and reminder emails. This will also enable you to send a targeted email to registrants who haven't added the webinar to their calendar yet.

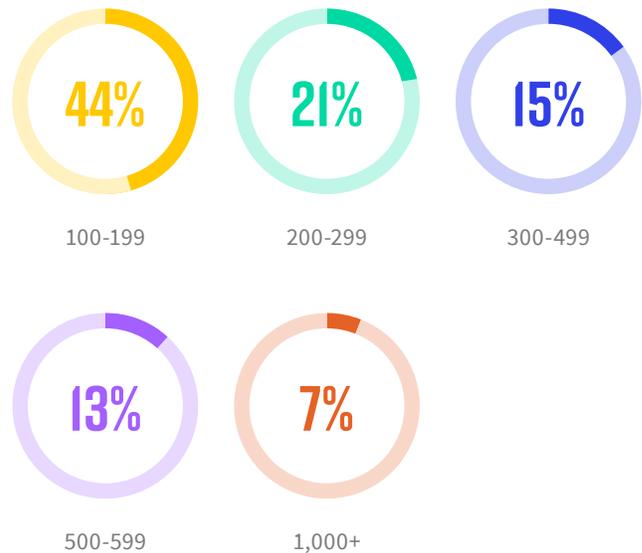
WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

AVERAGE ATTENDEE RATE

Our data shows that nearly two-fifths (38 percent) of webinars delivered by associations on our platform attract at least 100 attendees.

It's worth noting that webinars produced by associations are more likely to attract at least 200 attendees (56 percent compared to an all-sector average of 50 percent).

Distribution of webinar by size, as a percentage of webinars with more than 100 live attendees:



ON24 TIP

USE WEBINARS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND DELIVERY OF YOUR CONTENT.

Extend your audience reach by repurposing the content featured in your webinars across other channels. Blend webinars with face-to-face education and networking to help members keep pace with their peers. Check out our interview with the [Legal Marketing Association](#) on how they're using webinars to make sure that every member gets a uniform experience, access and support.

INTEGRATION OF ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

75% of those working at associations say that it is “extremely important” to have access to engagement insights.

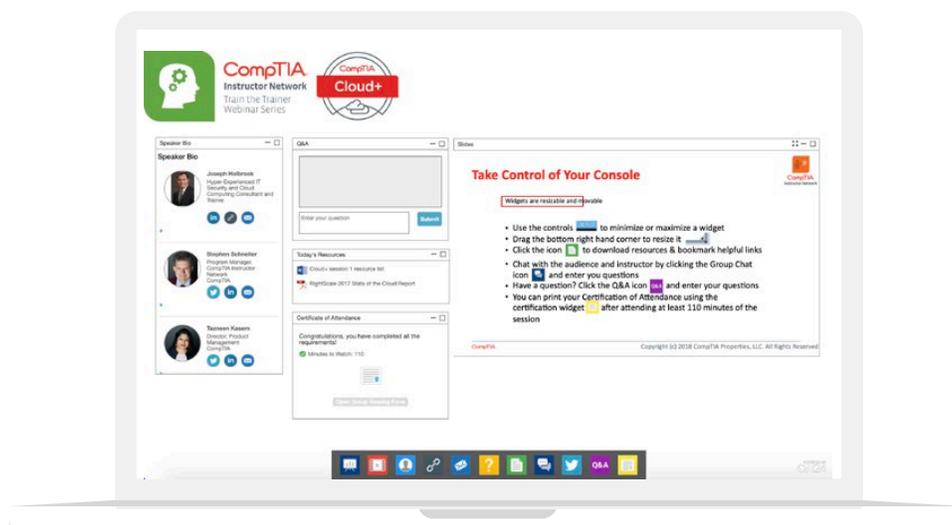
Achieving engagement goals without adequate tools is not an easy endeavor. This is where webinars can be extremely effective. By integrating engagement tools in their webinars, associations can increase the quality of member interactions while also making them more personal.

Encouragingly, three-quarters (75 percent) of respondents claim they build webinars with interactivity in mind, such as allowing for breaks for attendees to respond to polls or responding to chat questions. On average, respondents rate the interactivity of their webinars as a 4 on a five-point scale.

The questions and answers widget has emerged as the most popular tool to drive audience interaction, used in 73 percent of all webinars. On average, attendees asked an impressive 51 questions per webinar in 2018.

Resources for download (61 percent) is the next most frequently used widget, showing that associations are providing members and prospects with supplementary educational content. Providing access to a library of resources, brimming with timely and exclusive information, can inspire members to explore the other benefits associations offer. Additionally, establishing and then building on a reputation for delivering valuable content can help ignite interest in the association’s value proposition and increase retention rates.

It’s worth noting that group chat is used in 32 percent of association webinars, compared to an all-sector average of just 10 percent. This can help reinforce one of the key membership benefits: being part of a supportive network.



WEBINAR BENCHMARKS



73%

Q&A



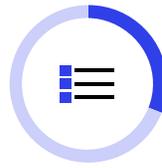
61%

Resources for
download



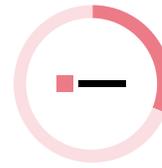
32%

Group chat



31%

Surveys



31%

Polling



23%

Social

ON24 TIP

**TAKE A MORE STRUCTURED
APPROACH TO ENGAGEMENT
BY USING A COMBINATION OF
WIDGETS INSTEAD OF FOCUSING
ON ONE OR TWO TYPES ONLY.**

If you are looking to highlight the value membership provides and optimize engagement, feature a combination of interactive elements, such as polls, live Q&As, group chat or using social media in your webinars. Extending the discussion beyond the webinar can pique attendee interest, encourage them to stay tuned in and help you tailor the session to their needs in real time.

INTEGRATION OF VIDEO

Approximately 33 percent of all webinars delivered by associations in 2018 featured some type of video. On average, respondents rate the importance of video integration as 7 on a ten-point scale.

This suggests associations are acknowledging the importance of integrating video into their webinars and using it as an effective tool to drive engagement and increase webinar viewing times.

ON24 webinars can leverage different types of video content:

-  Studio produced
-  Webcam presentations
-  Integrated video clips
-  Streaming and screen sharing

ON24 TIP

USE VIDEO IN YOUR WEBINARS TO DRIVE ENGAGEMENT.

Video is one of the most effective forms of content you can use to convey your message, and adding video to webinars has been proven to increase audience engagement and viewing times. Turn passive viewing into active engagement by integrating relevant video content into your webinars. For more tips, read our guide on [Five Ways to Integrate Video Into Your Webinars](#).

POST-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

ALWAYS-ON VIEWING

Recording and archiving all your webinars allows members to review them after the live session, whenever is most convenient for them. Giving members access to a knowledge center of always-on content can be a key differentiator in this competitive sector. It also enables you to monitor content performance and use those insights to optimize your future webinars.

Always-on webinars can be particularly useful for onboarding new members as they help reinforce your member value proposition and allow new joiners to revisit the content whenever they want.

Data for all webinar users (including industries other than professional associations) showed that 44 percent took advantage of always-on webinars. The good news is that associations are ahead of the pack, as 88 percent make sure their continuing education programs can be accessed on demand.

ALWAYS-ON VIEWING TIME

The average always-on viewing time for webinars produced by associations is 38 minutes, significantly lower than the all-sector average of 47 minutes.

Always-on content has increased in popularity in recent years as 24-hour access to learning has become the norm and members expect to have on-demand educational materials at their fingertips.

But, there's evidence that associations have been slow to react. The average number of always-on attendees is 107, 17 percent lower than the average number of live attendees. This might suggest that associations are either removing access to their webinars too soon or they're not extending their shelf life by promoting them and driving post-live registrations.

ON24 TIP

BUILD A COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE CENTER OF ALWAYS-ON CONTENT.

Always-on webinars should be accessible 24 to 48 hours after the live event. Easy retrieval is key, so make it easy for all registrants and attendees to find and access your content. Continue promoting your always-on content across various channels to expand the value of your webinar program. Read our Webinar's Guide to Always-On Engagement for more tips.

CONCLUSION

As seen below, engagement scores for webinars used for training and continuing education are particularly high in the associations sector.

While the average engagement score for all associations on our platform was higher than the all-sector average (5 vs. 4.7), your work is not finished.

Average ON24 Engagement Score per Channel Type

-  Marketing: 4
-  Training: 5.1
-  Continuing Education: 6.1
-  Internal Communications: 5.2

To stay relevant, associations should look to make sure that the experiences they offer members are engaging and provide such compelling value that they renew year after year. This is particularly true for younger professionals.

In a world where content of all types is abundant, associations will need to continue to strengthen their efforts to make sure that it is the information and training that they provide stands out from the rest. High-quality webinars can act as a method to achieve this, and support professionals for the length of their careers.