

Introduction

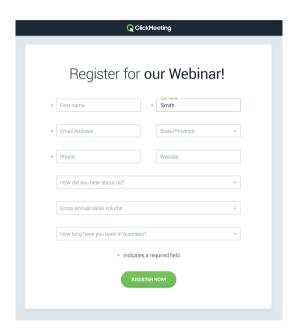
Lead scoring is most common for larger organizations and higher priced products or services that require a multi-contact sales approach. Some of the things covered in this eBook may well be useful if you are a smaller organization; these techniques can be applied in direct sales webinars, but we're not concentrating on those use cases.

If your webinars typically attract only a small number of registrants, you may have the luxury to personally contact them all, in which case lead scoring is less of a necessity. When you have a long list of people to work with, it becomes more critical to focus your efforts on the ones with the greatest chance of becoming customers in the short term.



"A Better Way..." Better Than What?

When we say we're going to introduce a "better" way to score webinar leads, the question arises: Better than what? We need some kind of baseline. It's possible you are not overly familiar with the concept of lead scoring, so we'll quickly introduce the typical approach. If you are an old hand at this, pay attention because we're going to try to shatter some preconceptions about theeffectiveness of this traditional method!



The typical view of lead scoring as applied to webinars involves placing some self-identification questions on the registration form: what is the size of your organization, what is your annual revenue, what is your timeframe for making a purchase, and so on.

Each possible answer choice has a point value associated with it (these can be positive or negative... Or an answer can have no points, indicating that it doesn't tell you much about their sales attractiveness).

By adding up the points associated with all answers, you get a "lead score". Higher scores get priority with the sales force.

Yes, this approach is better than nothing. If the alternative is having sales indiscriminately contact every registrant, this is obviously better. Unfortunately, there are several problems with this approach to lead scoring. The first one is a concept that makes many executives uncomfortable.





Problem #1:

Registrants Are Not Sales Leads

A person registering for a marketing webinar is NOT a sales lead. She/he is a marketing contact. That's all. Hopefully after hearing your message, they will be ready to enter your sales cycle and become a lead. But before hearing your message, all your qualification questions can measure is THEIR attractiveness to YOU. It can't yet go the other way... YOUR attractiveness to THEM. How can you turn over a supposed lead to a salesperson when the target has not yet expressed any interest in your offering?

If you don't make the distinction, you can easily fall prey to what we call "The Sales Funnel Fallacy." The classic view of the sales funnel is that all you need to do is sweep more and more names into the wide mouth of the funnel at the top and the magic of a constant proportional funnel ratio will filter them down into more sales.

But if you treat the wide mouth of the funnel like a bottom trawler net, you'll pick up a lot of unwanted discards along with your target catch. You may be doing nothing more than adding distractions and time sinks pulling you away from your sales goals.

Don't get us wrong. Contacts are good! They have fantastic value for marketing. Webinar registrations are useful for building contact lists for nurturing. But they aren't a part of the sales process. Not yet.

The second problem is one of psychology.

Problem #2:

You Violate The Appearance of Altruism

By asking those sales qualification questions up front as part of the initial contact with your company, you set yourself up as selfish and intrusive.

You must at least give the appearance of offering something of benefit for the attendee. The ideal marketing webinar is presented as an altruistic gesture on your part to deliver information of value to your attendees.

Anyone looking at those qualification questions immediately knows that you are only interested in them as a "mark" to be pursued and that the webinar is for your benefit rather than theirs. That's no way to start a relationship.

Problem number three may be the one that shocks you the most. Not at the concept, but at its prevalence.

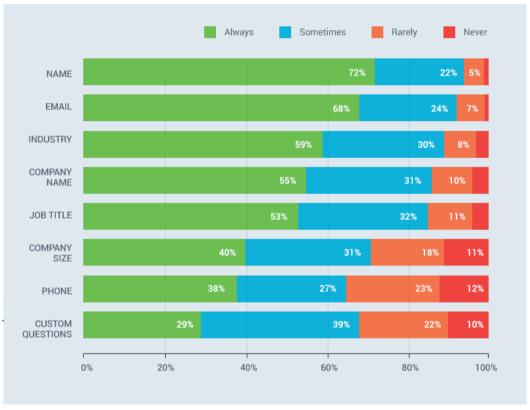


Problem #3:

Registrants Lie

People don't respond truthfully on registration forms. You can carefully go through all the proper steps to perform lead scoring based on registration data only to waste company resources, time, and effort on false data.





source: http://www.brainrider.com/attract-and-acquire/how-accurate-is-information-input-from-registration-forms-benchmarks-from-marketingsherpa/

The above chart is taken from a study performed by MarketingSherpa and KnowledgeStorm. Almost 3,000 technology professionals were asked about how they fill in registration forms. Not even $\frac{3}{4}$ of them said they even give their real name all the time! By the time you get down to the "Custom Questions" that we use for qualification scoring, the accuracy of the data makes it almost worthless.

The fourth problem is of greatest concern to you as a marketer.



Problem #4:

Lead Scoring Reduces Contacts

Every additional question you ask on a registration form reduces the total number of marketing contacts you get. In this study by Marketo, they compared forms with 5, 7, and 9 questions. The more you demand from people up front, the fewer people hear your message and enter your marketing nurturing list. Which means they will NEVER become a sales lead. Exactly the opposite of what you were trying to achieve.



source: http://pages 2.marketo.com/rs/marketob2/images/Marketo-Secret-Sauce-for-Revenue-2011-May-Jon.pdf]

So we need a way to get more reliable data... Preferably including some observed behavioral measures that don't depend on the user's self-reported answers.



Vendors Tried To Help With Attention Scores

Some webinar software providers have attempted to address this need by adding "attention meters" or "interest ratios" in their software to look at how engaged your attendees were with the live webinar. It's a valiant try, but we remain cynical about the usefulness of the data.

These figures are based primarily on window focus, which can be very misleading. An interested attendee can simply click her mouse outside the active window and have a low attention score. Or they can keep focus on the webinar window while taking a phone call or going off to the break room.

Can We Better Predict Sales Interest?

So we know we need to find a better set of predictors of interest and willingness to enter the sales cycle. Here is what we want to accomplish (or at least accomplish better than the traditional qualification questions on a registration page):

- 1 Encourage more registrations Don't sabotage our marketing house-contact lists
- 2 Make use of accurate and realistic data that can be trusted
- 3 Concentrate analysis efforts on those most likely to feed the sales funnel... not the marketing funnel
- 4 Don't prejudice prospects into feeling "used and abused"

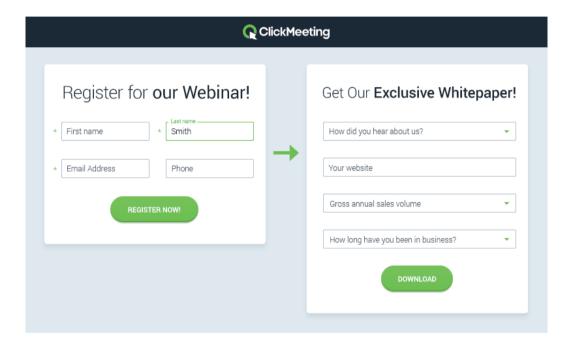
Warning: Better Takes Effort

The alternative tactics take more work than basic registration form scoring. If you want to be better than the average, you need to be willing to put in more effort than the average person. There is a reason the best stars of the football world throw, catch, run, or block better than others. They put in countless hours of hard practice. Same for violinists, jugglers, body builders, and surgeons. If you want to dazzle with out of the ordinary results you have to be willing to put in the unseen effort ahead of time.



Use Incremental Offers, Incremental Profiling

Let's start with the easiest tactic and the one that is the closest to what we are doing now. We'll cut down the number of fields on the initial webinar registration form to collect as many marketing contacts as we can. Then we will dangle additional carrots as a reward for giving us a little more information. Offer an infographic, white paper, eBook, or even a consulting session in return for additional information. Now you can add those classic scored demographic questions.



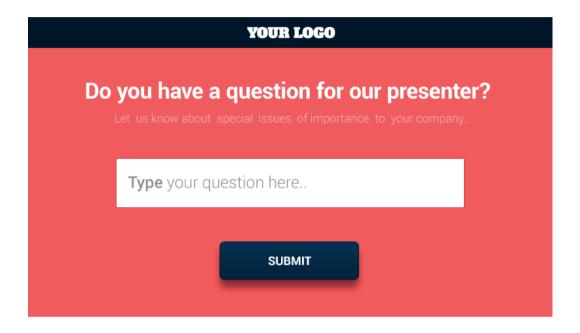
This can be done before or after the webinar. Start with a personal greeting. Use that first name you collected. Make it sound like you are building the relationship ("We'd love to know a little more about you so we can better serve your unique needs.")

If you phrase the request for qualification data as a way to better deliver value to the registrant, you have a higher likelihood of getting what you need.

Ask For Input

Between the registration step and the live webinar, ask registrants for their interests and priorities. You can create a web form or online survey. Try to keep the number of questions small... One or two is ideal.

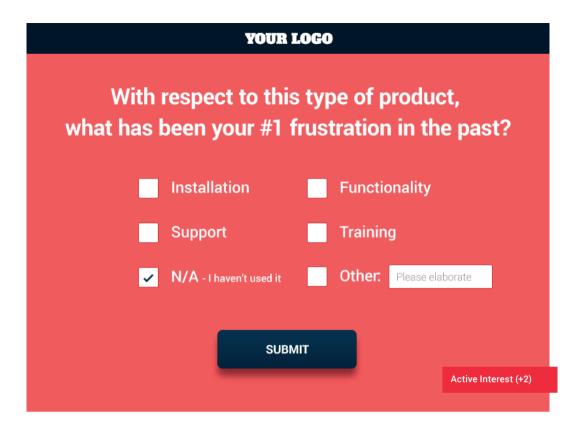
Remember to couch your request as a way to give value to THEM. Don't make them think they are giving YOU the value.



Sample ways to get insights into potential leads involve questions such as:

- ✓ What do you want us to talk about?
- ✓ What have you tried in the past?
- ✓ What is your number one question?
- ✓ What has been your biggest problem area?





Multiple choice questions are fine and are easier to score on a consistent, automated basis. But always give people the ability to add freeform text. Add a space for "Other" or "Comments" or "Elaboration."

Just answering at all is a positive score indicator. It indicates engagement and involvement with your topic area. But each person's answers give fantastic insight into their sales pressure points, interests, and priorities. Turn these over to your sales team when they get the lead's contact information.

Separate Educational And Sales Content

Another tactic may work for many organizations, particularly if you are offering a software product, application, or online service. You offer educational value as a standalone benefit for attendees, taking up the entire scheduled length of the session. There is no product pitch or sales solicitation.

Then attendees who are interested in learning more about your product are a ble to immediately transition into a separate content session focusing purely on product details. Anybody making the jump into the second session has strongly identified themselves as a potential sales lead.



Follow-on Visits Are Also A Lead Identifier

Setting up a series of webinars lets you drive attendees to register for another one once they have attended your first topic. Coming back for more information is a good indicator of interest and engagement. They should get a positive score to signal their increased involvement with your story.

Phrase Polls Carefully

In-session polls during your webinar should always be presented as a way to help the presenter provide better value for the attendees. Typical attendee-value framing concepts are:

- ✓ "Tell me what you want me to talk about"
- ✓ "Tell me what level of detail you want"
- ✓ "Find out how you compare to your peers"

This lets you ask polls that give you excellent lead scoring opportunities without being obvious as a sales targeting tool.

Do you have experience using this kind of software?
a) We use your right now
b) We use another vendor's
c) We are thinking about using it
d) We have used one in the past
e) No experience
f) Not applicable



You need to figure out the appropriate plus or minus scores based on the answer choices and their significance to sales attractiveness. If you are discovering information about a potential lead, make sure to pass it along to the responsible sales rep so they can utilize the information in crafting a pitch that addresses the target's own interests and priorities.

Is this a priority problem in your organization?		
a) Yes		
b) No		
c) Don't know		
d) Doesn't apply	Poll Response (+2 to	-2)



Attendee Reports Contain Valuable Information

Most webinar products give you reports showing attendee statistics. These offer a great deal of analytic power if you are willing to take the time to sort through them. Unfortunately this is one area where few companies make the extra effort to glean insights from the data.

We have created a fake attendance report. At first glance, it's just an overwhelming collection of numbers. But we'll go through it in detail to see what we can surmise about these attendees.

Name	Email	Time In	Time Out	Duration
Andy A.	andy@a.com	9:33 am	11:00 am	87 min
Barbara B.	barbara@b.com	10:02 am	11:02 am	60 min
Candace C.	candace@c.com	10:21 am	11:15 am	55 min
Darryl D.	darryl@d.com	9:59 am	10:00 am	1 min
Eulalie E.	eulalie@e.com	9:47 am	10:58 am	71 min
Franklyn F.	franklyn@f.com	10:00 am	10:59 am	59 min
Gitta G.	gitta@g.com	10:01 am	11:01 am	60 min
Hollie H.	hollie@h.com	10:07 am	11:15 am	68 min
Imogene I.	imogene@i.com	9:58 am	10:50 am	52 min
Javier J.	javier@j.com	9:40 am	10:15 am	45 min
Kyle K.	kyle@k.com	10:58 am	11:00 am	2 min
Llewyn L.	llewyn@l.com	9:59 am	11:01 am	62 min



Look At Entry Time

We expect the majority of our audience to arrive around the scheduled start time (10:00 am in this example). Five minutes early or late is insignificant as a behavioral indicator. There is no adjustment to their lead value.

Name	Email	Time In	Time Out	Duration
Andy A.	andy@a.com	9:33 am	11:00 am	87 min
Barbara B.	barbara@b.com	10:02 am	11:02 am	60 min
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Franklyn F.	franklyn@f.com	10:00 am	10:59 am	59 min
Gitta G.	gitta@g.com	10:01 am	11:01 am	60 min
Hollie H.	hollie@h.com	10:07 am	11:15 am	68 min
Imogene I.	imogene@i.com	9:58 am	10:50 am	52 min
Javier J.	javier@j.com	9:40 am	10:15 am	45 min
Kyle K.	kyle@k.com	10:58 am	11:00 am	2 min
Llewyn L.	llewyn@l.com	9:59 am	11:01 am	62 min

Here we see somebody who entered 60 minutes late. It almost always means they got the time conversion wrong for their location.

Name	Email	Time In	Time Out	Duration
Franklyn F.	franklyn@f.com	10:00 am	10:59 am	59 min
Gitta G.	gitta@g.com	10:01 am	11:01 am	60 min
Hollie H.	hollie@h.com	10:07 am	11:15 am	68 min
Imogene I.	imogene@i.com	9:58 am	10:50 am	52 min
Javier J.	javier@j.com	9:40 am	10:15 am	45 min
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Marketing Response Needed (+1000)



We use an "accounting trick" here. We add 1000 to the lead score. Anybody with a score over 1000 tells me that it requires marketing follow up rather than a sales call.

In this case we would make sure to contact the person to say we are sorry there was a mix-up on the time and that you would like to help them get the valuable content. Provide them with the recording link or tell them about another live webinar coming up soon. The personal touch is a very effective nurturing tactic.

How about someone who enters the session part-way through the scheduled time? You can't really discern anything from this behavior. Maybe another call or meeting ran long. Maybe they were having computer problems. We prefer to leave these cases without a score adjustment.

Name	Email	Time In	Time Out	Duration
Andy A.	andy@a.com	9:33 am	11:00 am	87 min
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Candace C.	candace@c.com	10:21 am	11:15 am	55 min
Darryl D.	darryl@d.com	9:59 am	10:00 am	1 min

Ah, but these people we like! Logging in more than 10-12 minutes in advance of the scheduled start time often indicates extra interest in the topic. We bump the score up a little based on this behavior. It's not enough to make them a hot candidate on its own, but it can have a cumulative effect.

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Franklyn F.	franklyn@f.com	10:00 am	10:59 am	59 min
Gitta G.	gitta@g.com	10:01 am	11:01 am	60 min
Hollie H.	hollie@h.com	10:07 am	11:15 am	68 min
Imogene I.	imogene@i.com	9:58 am	10:50 am	52 min
Javier J.	javier@j.com	9:40 am	10:15 am	45 min
Kyle K.	kyle@k.com	10:58 am	11:00 am	2 min
Llewyn L.	llewyn@l.com	9:59 am	11:0 Potenti	al Interest (+1)



Look At Exit Time

Now let's move our attention to looking at exit times. For our example, we'll assume we gave a one-hour webinar that ended at 11:00 am.

As with entry times, we expect the majority of the audience to leave some time near the end of the presentation. We don't add or subtract points for this. Even up to 10 minutes early is common enough to ignore as an indicator. People sometimes leave during a Q&A section or may have another meeting they need to move on to.

Name	Email	Time In	Time Out	Duration
Andy A.	andy@a.com	9:33 am	11:00 am	87 min
Barbara B.	barbara@b.com	10:02 am	11:02 am	60 min
Candace C.	candace@c.com	10:21 am	11:15 am	55 min
Darryl D.	darryl@d.com	9:59 am	10:00 am	1 min
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Llewyn L.	llewyn@l.com	9:59 am	11:01 am	62 min

An exit well past the end time indicates someone who was logged in but not paying attention. They never log out because they weren't involved. Maybe they left to go to another meeting, took a phone call, or were working in another window on their computer.



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Andy A.	andy@a.com	9:33 am	11:00 am	87 min
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Kyle K.	kyle@k.com	10:58 am	11:00 am	2 min
Llewyn L.	llewyn@l.com	9:59 am	11:01 am	Inactive (-1)

For this to work, we like to keep the conference room open for 15 minutes after we finish presenting and give the audience explicit instructions for closing the window or logging out. It lets you "test" the attendees to see if they leave. Anybody left at physical shutdown get s a small minus score for inattention and inactivity.

Anybody signing out between the 15 and 45-minute mark gets a lower score. It MIGHT have been caused by some external factor, but for whatever reason, they did not stay and hear the full story or the call to action. They need more nurturing before getting flagged as a sales lead.

Name	Email	Time In	Time Out	Duration
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Imogene I.	imogene@i.com	9:58 am	10:50 am	52 min
Javier J.	javier@j.com	9:40 am	10:15 am	45 min
Kyle K.	kyle@k.com	10:58 am	11:00 am	2 min
Llewyn L.	llewyn@l.com	9:59 am	11:01 am	Left Early (-1)



Use Time In Session To Spot Technical Problems

Durations of only 1 or 2 minutes indicate technical problems and tells you to do a marketing follow up giving the person an offer of the content for review.

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Llewyn L.	llewyn@l.com	9:59 am Ma	arketing Response Need	ded (+1000)

Other than short durations, you should use the scoring guidelines for entry and exit time rather than total duration because duration does not tell you enough. Barbara in this example is a perfect candidate. She heard the entire pitch and logged out when instructed. Candace has almost the same total duration time reported, but arrived late and did not log out on her own. Probably not very attentive or interested.

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Darryl D.	darryl@d.com	9:59 am	10:00 am	1 min

Now we move on to the even harder task of scoring typed interactions. We split this into two areas... Questions and Comments.



Sales Specific Questions Get Highest Score

Although there are some very sophisticated natural language parsing programs available on the market, they are only likely to be cost-justified by the largest corporate concerns handling huge numbers of electronic communications. For the rest of us, the job of poring through the webinar chat log is a tedious manual task.

Still, it can give us valuable clues as to attendee motivations, attitudes, and sales readiness and should not be overlooked.

The first and most obvious thing we are looking for are questions about pricing, availability, and other keys that indicate the attendee is thinking about the practicalities of purchasing. That is the job of the sales closer, and needs to be identified and farmed out to sales quickly.

- ✓ Is this available now?
- How much does it cost?
- ✓ Is there a discount for nonprofits?

Sales Interest (+5)

Product-Related Questions Demonstrate Interest

Next highest priority (and score) are direct questions about functionality, implementation specifics, and other issues regarding practical use. These are indications that the attendee has assimilated the need/solution part of the story and is moving on to potential sales objections and opportunities. Bump up some points on the score!

- Does it work on a Mac?
- Can it handle non-English languages?
- ✓ What is the maximum number of entries allowed?

Product Interest (+3)



Other Requests Indicate Interest/Attention

Other questions can cover a wide range of interests and may sound very innocuous and unpromising. Still, the attendee at least was interested and engaged enough to w ant an answer to a question. We usually give these "non-sales" questions a one-point bump.

- ✓ Will you be talking about the EMEA market today?
- Can you repeat the name of that book again?
- ✓ I have to leave early. Will there be a recording?

Interactive Participation (+1)

Look For Positive Comments

Comments need interpretation. A simple "thanks" may not warrant any score bump. But someone who takes the time to write out a particular positive impression may be more receptive to entering the sales process. You may wish to give a one-point bump for these comments.

- Great stuff!
- This is just what I was looking for.
- ✓ Very informative. Thank you!

Satisfaction (+1)

Negative Comments Are A Bad Sign

Negative comments also need thought. Someone dissatisfied with the webinar is unlikely to be immediately receptive to a sales call, so they get points removed from their score. Of course if the comment is one that can be addressed or acknowledged by Marketing, the special "Marketing follow up" point addition should be given as a flag for action.

- This was a waste of time.
- ✓ Vendor X does the same thing for less. Bah!
- ✓ Your webinar audio was terrible and I couldn't understand the presenter.

Dissatisfaction (-2 or +1000)

Lack Of Interaction Is Tricky

How do you feel about an attendee who does not provide any questions or comments in the chat? Some marketing departments might take a point off the total score because of the inactivity and passive participation. Other scoring models ignore this segment as not giving any additional insight as to sales readiness.

Webinar Feedback Survey Is Critical

The post-webinar survey is where you can do some serious lead qualification. If you have delivered solid value and demonstrated a "giving" attitude, your attendees are more likely to be open to giving you reciprocal value from their opinions. Don't waste it by relying on a generic "Overall satisfaction" question.

Ask them how they felt about the value of the information they received and how applicable it was to their business. You can score these types of questions very simply on a ranked scale of negative to positive.

We like asking some open-ended questions such as "What did you hope would be covered that was missed?" or "Were there any areas where you were hoping for more detail?". These give you an opening for a sales call to fill in the gaps in their knowledge and address their interests and priorities.

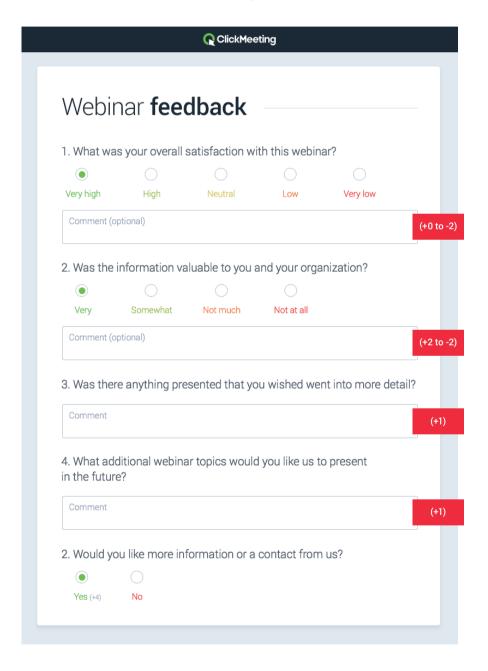
Asking "Would you like a contact from us?" is a great way to identify hot leads who welcome further communications, but you don't want to ask it if you plan on calling everyone anyway.



You can also choose to ask an attitude question:

"Is your opinion of our product/service/company higher, lower, or unchanged after this webinar?"

Answers certainly deserve a lead score modification higher or lower.



Result: A Behaviorally-Biased Scoring Model

Taking all of those areas together creates a more robust scoring model that incorporates both self-reported and behavioral indicators. You have more opportunities at more places in the webinar lifecycle to learn about your participants.

Remember, the specific variables, keywords, and points we list in this chart are for example purposes only. You must find the data and the scoring specifics that give you the best results and highest percentage of qualified leads for Sales to pursue.

Demographic questions for supplemental materials	As appropriate
Pre-webinar interaction	+2
Attend product breakout	+5
Register for 2nd webinar	+2
In-session poll responses	As appropriate
Entry time one hour late	+1000
Entry time > 15 min. early	+1
Exit time > 10 min. late	-1
Duration < 3 min.	+1000
Price/availability question	+5
Product question	+3
Other request	+1
Positive comment	+1
Negative comment	-2 or +1000
Lack of interaction	0 or -1
Feedback survey comment	As appropriate



Test And Refine Your Scoring Model Over Time

Scoring models needs to be tuned over time. Try different questions and different point values until you get something that corresponds to real lead success as reported from the sales force. You can check your model accuracy in two ways. You can compare lead scores to actual sales made, but in big complex sales the final order can be a long way down the road. You have to wait and it gets harder to link the data. We prefer asking the salespeople to give you a quick qualitative ranking of the lead value after their initial call. Was the person responsive and interested or not? That way you are closer to the data and get corroboration more quickly.

Triage And Score Quickly

Make sure your analysis work is part of your scheduled duties as soon as possible after the webinar. Getting the event done is a huge relief and it is easy to let post-webinar analysis slide while you catch up on other things. But this step is where you convert your efforts into actionable insights. Of particular importance is an immediate scan through the webinar chat log. Anybody asking for pricing, availability, or a sales contact should be pushed out to a sales representative right away.

Prep Your Team For Rapid Response

High lead score opportunities need to be sent out to your responding crew quickly.

One thing that can really help your response speed is to have your sales team primed and ready to act. As part of your planning and preparation ahead of time, tell your sales team the topic of the webinar. Ask them to block out an hour on their calendars the same afternoon for follow up with high priority attendees.

Then as soon as the webinar is over, look through the chat logs for people who expressed interest, asked serious questions, or wanted more information. Don't just dump their names into your sales management system. Dole them out for immediate contact.

Your sales people will be astonished at how receptive the contacts are when they find out they are getting a rapid response based on questions they just asked. And what's the worst thing that can happen if there are no hot leads to follow up on in their territory? A sales person ends up with a free hour on their calendar to do uninterrupted work. They won't complain.



About the author



Ken Molay is president of Webinar Success and a former director of product marketing for a major software manufacturer.

About ClickMeeting



ClickMeeting was founded in 2011 by GetResponse, the leading email marketing platform. The idea was to provide a complete webinar solution for businesses, large and small. Over the next five years, ClickMeeting grew so much that, in 2016, it spun off as a separate company.

Our mission is to be the premier provider of flexible, self-service webinar solutions that help you reach, engage, educate, and convert your audience. ClickMeeting is rich in features that help you before, during, and after your webinar.

