ClickMeeting

How To Look & Sound
Professional In Your Webinar

Contents

Introduction

Professionals in all industries - from IT to healthcare to marketing - are embracing webinar technology as a central means of reaching bigger audiences. The ubiquity and accessibility of webinars can save time and money across the spectrum of business processes.
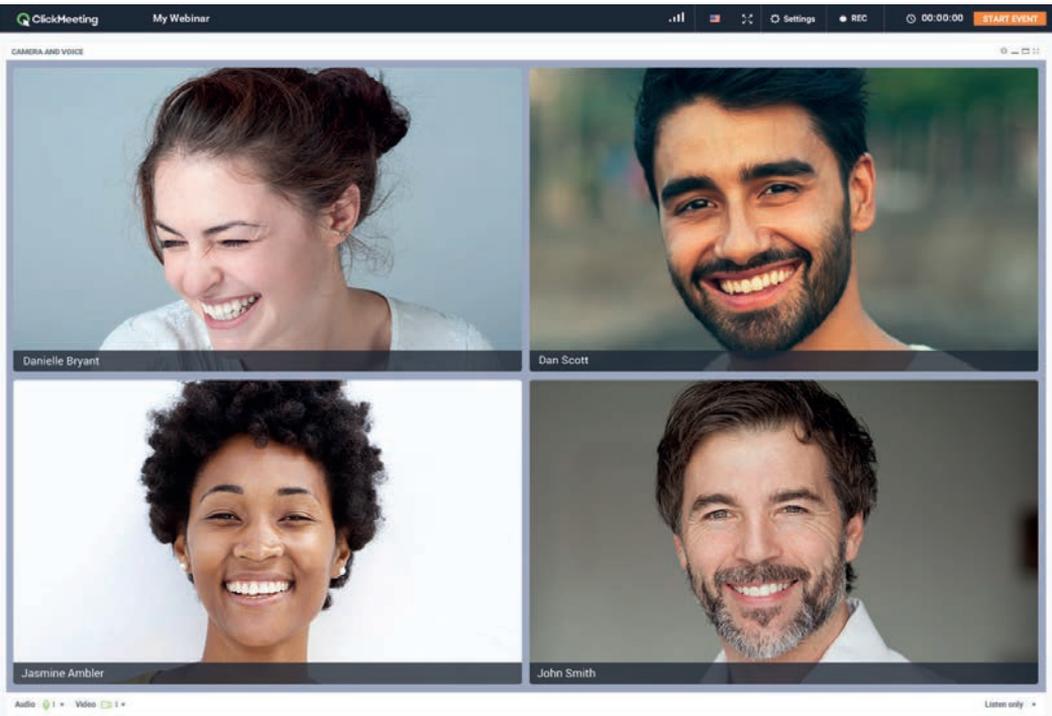
But when you incorporate webinars into your communication strategy, pay attention to certain crucial technical aspects. Ignoring them can spoil your webinar experience. In this short guide, we explain five elements that make your webinars look professional.

Webcam

One of the main points of having a webinar is to be seen by the audience. A high-quality picture gives your presentation more eye appeal and projects a professional image. Of course, each webinar platform has certain limitations on image quality. But you can take steps to make things look good.

Place your webcam at eye level on the same screen you use to view the webinar. Don't put the camera angle too high or too low; you want to look directly at it. If you're running your webinar on a laptop using the built-in webcam, place your device on a laptop stand or box at eye level.

Consider investing in a moderately priced, high-quality webcam that will present you clearly to your audience. And of course, make sure it's turned on and connected to your webinar software.

If you're running big events and want to stream them in impressive quality using a professional stand-alone camera, you also need to buy an on-demand feature: live streaming. So make sure your webinar provider offers this option.

Lighting

Proper face lighting is the key to making a good impression. If too dark, you'll look menacing; too bright, and you'll look goofy.

An on-screen appearance that's too dark or too light usually happens in one of the two situations. One: there aren't enough light sources pointed at your face, which makes your webcam's sensitivity auto-adjustment goup, increasing the visual noise to outrageous levels. Two: a light source - natural through a window or artificial from a lamp - in the webcam frame. This makes your webcam's sensitivity auto-adjustment go down, making your face dark and colorless.

To avoid this, keep windows and other light sources outside your webcam frame. Second, rather than relying on outside natural light or overhead lights, use several desk lamps. You'll get the best results by closing the blinds and pointing two lamps at you from behind your webcam. Place one lamp slightly to the left and the other slightly to the right. Your face will be clearly visible and in the right colors, making it more pleasant to watch.

Remember that your face will also be lit by the laptop or monitor, so make sure the main light sources is stronger than your monitor light. White lighting is usually better than yellow, unless you want to create a special mood.

Microphone

A clear picture is only a half of success. The other half is the sound quality. Poor sound settings can ruin even the best webinar presentation.

Before you start your webinar, make sure your microphone picks up the right amount of sound. If it picks up too much, it may cause squeaks, echo, and distortions. If it doesn't pick up enough, your audience won't hear you. Configure your audio settings in advance on your laptop (or another device) and the webinar room. Check that the microphone you want to use is selected in the audio setting of your webinar software. And make sure it's turned on.

Consider investing in an external microphone to improve the quality of sound you broadcast. If the microphone is on a tripod, place the tripod on a soft surface, such as a piece of sponge foam, to suppress vibrations the microphone might pick up. Cover the microphone with a sponge cover to avoid a rumbling sound.

Keep the distance between your mouth and the microphone consistent throughout your event. If you get feedback, make sure your mic andspeakers aren't too close together. If you still can't get rid of the feedback, use headphones instead of speakers.

Background Noise and Clutter

To keep your audience's attention, look for possible distractions in your presentation environment.

Excess noise is an obvious one. Conduct your webinar in a quiet space and inform others of your presence, so no one will interrupt.

Close windows and doors and turn off air conditioners to avoid distracting sounds picked up by your microphone. In a home office, take the dog outside, put the baby to bed, and finish your laundry before your live webinar. Silence your devices, including applications you may be running on the device you use for your event.

Attendees will see everything behind you. So before you start your event, remove anything you wouldn't want others to see. A clean background helps you appear competent, organized, and put-together. Horizontal and repeating patterns don't register well on-screen and could create the illusion of movement and distract your audience. Go for a bright, solid background to keep their attention on you.

The same applies to your desktop. If you plan to share your desktop during your webinar, make sure it's clear of unnecessary icons and open windows that are unrelated to your discussion. A messy desktop looks bad and is distracting.

Internet Connection
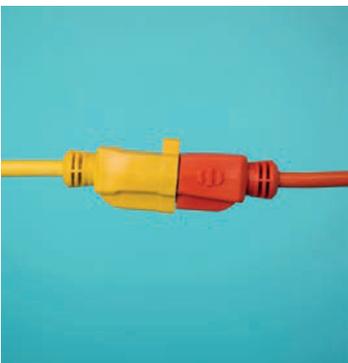
Connectivity problems are among the most frustrating technical problems experienced by webinar hosts. Too many users on a network or poor-quality Internet at remote locations can cause problems ranging from disconnection to time delay between picture and words.

Check with your webinar provider to and out the required bandwidth for an audio/video event including screen sharing (if planned) and make sure your network meets those requirements. To measure your bandwidth, visit testmyspeed.com.

At the time of your webinar, make sure you have a strong Internet connection and that there are no broadband-consuming activities in progress on your device, such as video streaming or file downloads. Bear in mind that an Ethernet cable connection is more reliable than Wi-Fi. To be safe, plug yourself in.

Testing

To reduce the chance of technology failure halfway through your webinar, test everything in advance. Use the same equipment, from laptop to cables, that you plan to use for the real thing.

Equally important, go through the features of your software and webinar room and make sure you know how to use them.

You absolutely must practice the entire presentation all the way through. The best way to find out what you'll look like on camera - and what your presentation will sound like - is to watch it for yourself. Make a recording of you giving your presentation. Then play it back and take notes on what to improve. Recording your webinars and actively watching them to see your mistakes and strengths can help you improve your art until it's effortless.

Image and Sound Checklist

To remember all the elements described above, go through this checklist before you start your webinar:

- Webcam:
  - ☐ Placed at eye level
  - ☐ Turned on and connected

- Lighting:
  - ☐ No light sources within webcam frame
  - ☐ Adequate front lighting behind webcam

- Microphone:
  - ☐ Volume adjusted
  - ☐ Audio settings configured in device and webinar software

- Background:
  - ☐ Quiet environment
  - ☐ Devices silenced, non-essential software disabled
  - ☐ Clean, solid-color background
  - ☐ Clear desktop

- Internet connection:
  - ☐ Required bandwidth
  - ☐ Non-essential broadband-consuming software disabled

- Dry run:
  - ☐ Equipment and webinar software features tested
  - ☐ Mock presentation done

Conclusion

If you're new to webinars, know that the results depend on small things. So don't ignore them. Go through the above list before your event and make necessary arrangements.

If this is your first webinar and you don't feel quite comfortable with technology, ask an IT-savvy colleague for help with your initial setup. Alternatively, ask for training from your webinar software provider. It's well worth your time. Looking and sounding great help turn your webinar into a success.

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.