ON24 WEBINAR BENCHMARKS REPORT
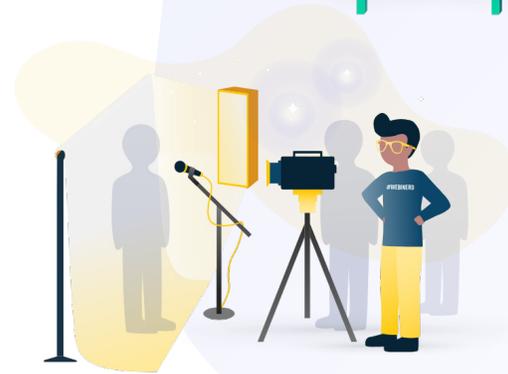
2020

ON24

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EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

Whether you are working in marketing, communications, training, or any other line of business, you have access to a number of technologies and tools that would have been unthinkable just a decade ago. Almost any channel offers the potential to reach an audience anywhere and at any time.

But with all of this at our disposal, are we actually providing experiences worth engaging with?

We believe that, while technology has provided so much potential, the standards we need to live up to are now much higher. When inboxes are filled with spam and Netflix becomes a benchmark for everyone, winning the attention of audiences only becomes harder.

We believe that great webinars provide an answer. When you can offer real conversation and two-way interaction, your webinars will stand out. When you provide context and reasons for your audience to engage, your content will gain more traction. When you can personalize the experience and make it worthwhile, your audience will crave everything you give them. And when you offer

webinars whenever and wherever your audience happens to be, you provide your audience with the opportunity to engage on their own terms, rather than switching them off under an avalanche of outreach.

This creates a virtuous cycle. When audiences engage, they provide a rich stream of data that you can tap to improve the experience time and time again.

By analyzing thousands of webinars with millions of attendees, our annual Webinar Benchmarks report aims to provide a foundation for what good looks like.

So whether you're a Webinewbie or a Webinerd, come on in and find out how your peers are doing—and how you can engage your audiences everywhere in 2020.

METHODOLOGY

ON24®, the world's leading webinar platform, compiled the data in this report. The events included in this analysis were selected from a random number of ON24 webinars conducted globally in 2019.

ON24 measured 35,477 webinars in this analysis

All webinars were held between January and December of 2019

All webinars had at least 100 attendees

Events represent a cross-section of more than 2,000 organizations

Companies range in size from Enterprise to SMB

To complement the analysis, around 100 ON24 customers were surveyed to add further insight to data emerging from the platform. In addition, key findings from ON24's Experiences Everywhere report have been incorporated, based on a wider survey of professionals that includes those not using ON24.

This study examines statistics across a webinar's lifecycle, including webinar promotion and registration metrics, interactivity metrics, audience viewing habits, and both live and on-demand 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 webinars attendees can view at any time, including archived live webcasts.

Registrants—Prospects registered to view an event.

Attendees—Prospects who registered to view an event and attended that event.

WEBINAR SUCCESS

WEBINAR VOLUME

55%
of survey respondents plan to increase the number of webinars they produce in 2020.

Webinars lend themselves to all kinds of communication activity. At ON24, we see three use cases that come up the most frequently—marketing, training and continuing education—and many organizations carry out all three.

The number of webinars a company delivers per year varies according to its audience, resources and business goals. There is no right answer—it's the quality of the content, rather than the number of webinars you produce, that determines whether your webinar program is successful.

Around **one-quarter (23%) of surveyed ON24 customers run between 50 and 150 webinars in a given year**, with six in ten (60%) running up to 50. Of the respondents, more than half (55%) say they plan to increase the number of webinars they produce in 2020.

Average Number of Webinars in 2019

60%	**23%**	**9%**
1-50	50-150	150-300
4%	**1%**	
300-500	500+	
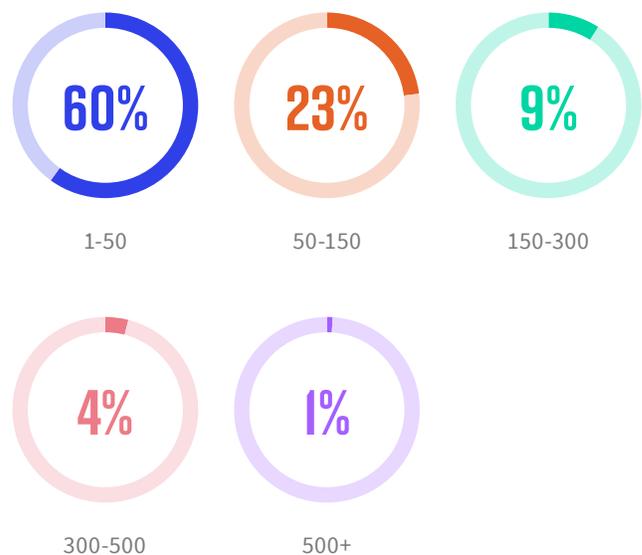
ON24 TIP

PRODUCE A REGULAR STREAM OF WEBINAR CONTENT.

Don't fall into the trap of seeing webinars as just a tactic to add on to the end of your marketing campaigns or education and training efforts. Instead, make them a regular and frequent part of your marketing activity. As you run more sessions, you'll find out what works for your audience—allowing you to continuously improve performance.

PRE-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

PROMOTIONAL CYCLE

69% of marketers say they plan their webinars at least three months in advance.

Webinars are a highly effective way of building an audience and reaching it at scale. The content of your webinar is a key element, but so is the way it's promoted. Getting people to be aware, if not excited, about webinars, should be a concerted effort that starts at least two weeks before launch, or even earlier.

The majority of registrants (56%) sign up for a webinar at least eight days before the event. Early registrants, those who enroll at least 15 days before the event, account for 28% of our sample— the same figure as in 2018, but a four-point increase over 2017.

Less than half of registrants (43%) register up to one week before. It's worth noting that **the proportion of late registrants, i.e. those signing up on the day of the event, has more than**

halved since 2017, falling from 23% then to 10% in 2019. This might indicate that organizations now use longer promotional cycles, supported by strong email campaigns. Indeed, a strong majority (69%) of ON24 customers who were surveyed said they planned their webinars at least three months in advance.

Another contributing factor could be the increase in on-demand viewing, as registrants sign up for webinars earlier with the confidence that they can watch the recording later if they cannot attend live.

10% Day of

33% 1-7 days before

29% 8-14 days before

**28%** More than 15 days before

ON24 TIP

**LONGER PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS TRANSLATE TO MORE REGISTRANTS.**

Pursuing a longer promotion cycle can boost registration rates and increase the likelihood of converting registrants into attendees. Promotional emails shouldn't just be reminders though. Hit the ground running by including supporting content and building up excitement ahead of your webinar. Read more in our Webinar Registration Best Practices Guide.

BEST DAYS TO SEND PROMOTIONAL EMAILS

56% of those personalizing webinars for account-based marketing promote them by email.

There's no denying that email is the most effective channel for promoting webinars and driving registrants, so it's an area that requires careful consideration. As shown in previous benchmark reports, mid-week promotional emails perform best. **Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are the strongest performers**, accounting for around two-thirds (65%) of registrations.

17%
Monday

22%
Tuesday

21%
Wednesday

22%
Thursday

13%
Friday

5%
Saturday/
Sunday
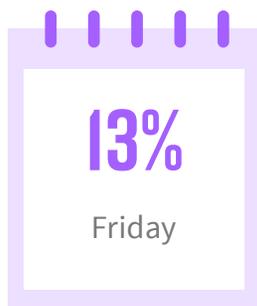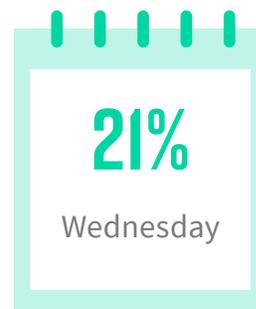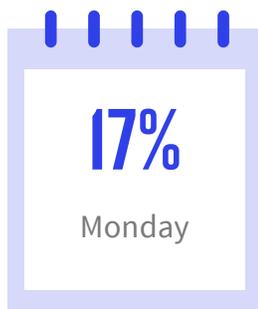
BEST DAYS FOR WEBINAR ATTENDANCE

48% of ON24 customers say they have a designated host (or hosts) for their webinars.

Mid-week is also the best time to hold a webinar, with **Wednesday and Thursday again emerging as strong performers**. Monday is typically a catch-up day, while Friday is reserved for last-minute emergencies.

9% Monday	**25%** Tuesday	**26%** Wednesday
28% Thursday	**9%** Friday	**4%** Saturday/ Sunday
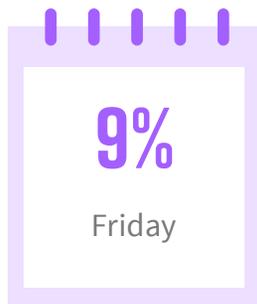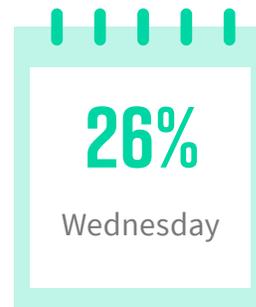
BEST TIME TO RUN WEBINARS

39%

of ON24 webinars are broadcast between 10am and 12pm PT.

The best time to run a webinar is 11 a.m. PST (2 p.m. EST) as it avoids most conflicts on both American coasts. Other times to consider are 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. PST (1 p.m. and 3 p.m. EST). Remember that the optimal time to run webinars depends on where your audience resides so don't be afraid to experiment.
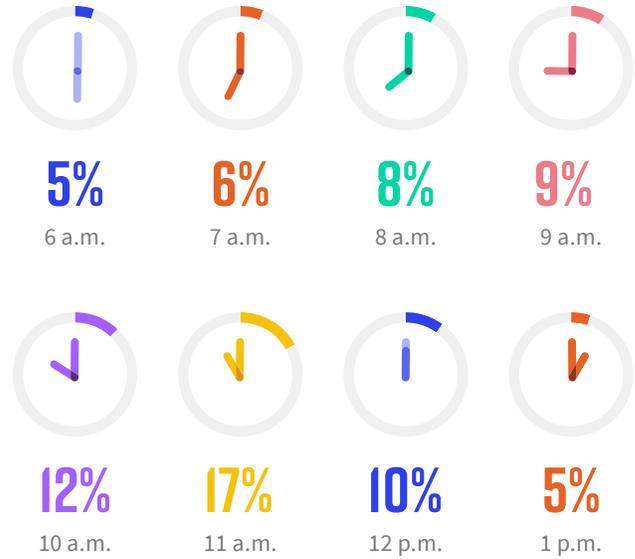
5%
6 a.m.

6%
7 a.m.

8%
8 a.m.

9%
9 a.m.

12%
10 a.m.

17%
11 a.m.

10%
12 p.m.

5%
1 p.m.

ON24 TIP

RUN YOUR WEBINARS AROUND THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY.

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

BRANDING YOUR WEBINARS

There are other ways of making sure your webinars stand out. **More than eight in ten ON24 customers (83%) say they added custom design elements** such as imagery, icons and backgrounds to their webinars in 2019. Many went even further in terms of making experiences stand out, as almost half (46%) say designers helped to brand webinars.

ON24 TIP

CUSTOMIZE YOUR WEBINAR CONSOLE TO DRIVE ENGAGEMENT.

Take advantage of the webinar environment to build a connection between the attendee and your brand. A fully branded, customized webinar console helps you set your program apart from the get-go. Read our Webinar Console Branding Guide to learn how you can achieve this.

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LIVE WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

AVERAGE VIEWING TIME

83% of ON24 customers added custom design elements to their webinars in 2019.

The optimal webinar length depends on the topic, content, audience and program's goals. The majority of webinars last for around an hour but can easily exceed that if they cover a particularly complex issue.

In 2019, **the average viewing time for webinars, including a ten to 15 minute Q&A session, was 56 minutes**.

This slight downward trend could be explained by the increase in viewers using smartphones to attend webinars. In the last quarter of 2019, some 9.4% of attendees tuned in on a mobile device, up from 8.3% for the same period in 2018.

Average viewing time for webinar attendees:

56'	58'	56'	55'
2020	2019	2018	2017

REGISTRANT TO ATTENDEE CONVERSION

55%

of registrants convert to attendees on average.

Achieving a high number of registrations is the first step in a successful webinar program, but the attendance rate is one of the key performance indicators you need to look at to gauge its true effectiveness. A conversion rate between 35% and 45% is typically considered to be good.

In 2019, the average registrant to attendee conversion rate overall was 55%. **For events with more than 100 attendees, the average conversion rate was 43%**. According to our data, training and communications see the highest conversion rates (44% and 69%, respectively).

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

68.78%
Communications

43.52%
Training

39.29%
Marketing

36.82%
Continuing education
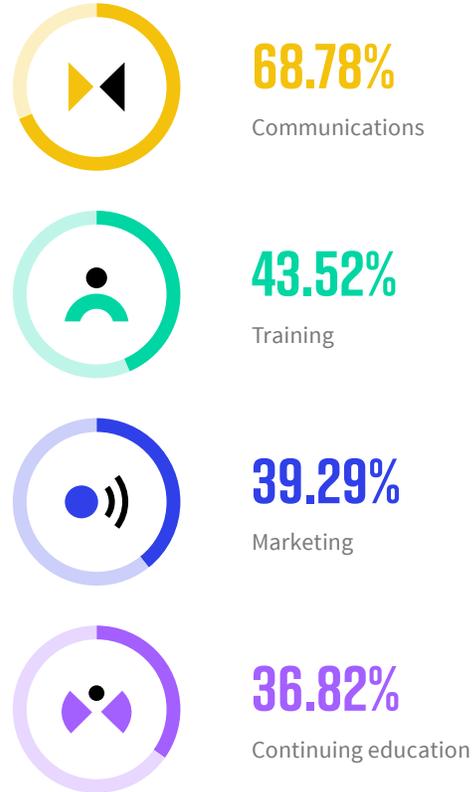
AVERAGE ATTENDEE RATE

38% of all webinars in 2019 featured some type of video.

According to our data, 41% of ON24 webinars in 2019 attracted at least 100 attendees—up from 34% in 2018.

The attendance rate for webinars with 100 to 199 attendees jumped to 51%, a one-point increase since our last report.

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

51%	**18%**	**15%**
100-199	200-299	300-499

9%	**6%**
500-599	1,000+
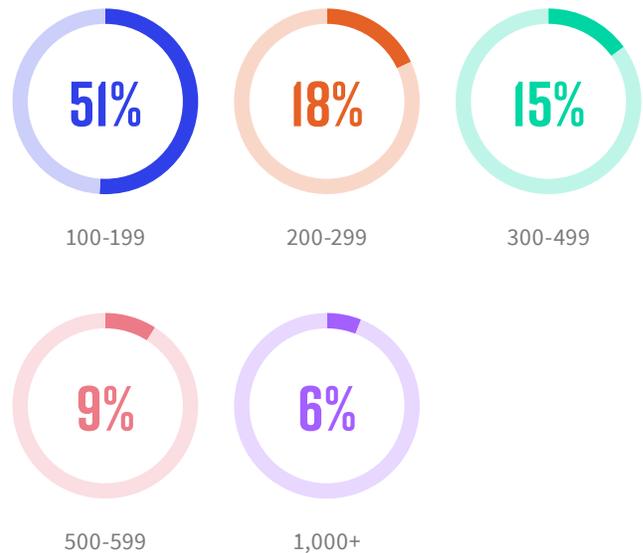
ON24 TIP

USE WEBINARS TO BROADCAST YOUR IN-PERSON EVENTS FOR MAXIMUM REACH.

Reach a larger audience and create a more tailored experience by combining the impact of in-person events with the scale provided by webinars. Whether it is a hybrid event or a fully virtual conference, you can meet the needs of different personas and provide always-on content they can access on their terms. Check out our webinar on How Box Uses Digital to Boost the Impact of In-Person Events.

INTEGRATION OF ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

70%
of all webinars in 2019 offered resources for attendees to download or engage with.

Two-way engagement is one of the key benefits of webinars, so encouraging engagement throughout each session is essential.

Data from the Experiences Everywhere study shows that top-performers incorporate a larger number of elements into their webinars, from surveys and polls, to embedded assets and personalized content.

A majority also incorporates a number of multimedia elements into their webinars. These include PowerPoint slides (91%), Q&A sessions (88%), polls (78%) and surveys (73%). Around one in five (22%) also offer training certificates.

The use of these interactive elements appears to have had an impact, as **more than eight in ten ON24 customers (81%) say their audiences are engaged with their webinar content**, with 15% "strongly agreeing" this is the case.

But a fair share of these respondents also feel there is room for improvement, as 30% believe webinars are less interactive than average, while 73% say they use no more than three interactive tools in their webinars. Overall, respondents rate the interactivity of their webinars as 3.0 on a five-point scale.

In terms of engaging with viewers, ON24 customers use webinars for a variety of purposes, including educating audiences about product updates (79%), facilitating Q&A sessions (53%) and highlighting customer stories (35%).

As was the case last year, **the Q&A tool is the most popular engagement choice to drive audience interaction**, used in 81% of all analyzed webinars.

Resource lists (70%) and surveys (37%) are the next most frequently used engagement tools. Compared to last year's report, these two tools have seen increased usage (both up one percentage point).
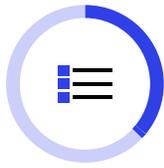
Engagement Tool Usage:

81%	**70%**	**37%**	**22%**	**21%**	**11%**
Q&A	Resources for download	Surveys	Polling	Social	Group chat
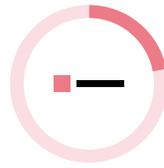
ON24 TIP

MEASURE YOUR MARKETING WEBINARS BEYOND NUMBERS OF LEADS.

Define what engagement means for your organization, as this will help you identify the goals you need to measure progress against over time. Always keep track of conversion rates but don't forget about looking at drop-off points and attendee feedback. Download the B2B Marketer's Guide to Optimization to find out more.

INTEGRATION OF VIDEO

50%
simply use a webcam to record video—so don't be put off by a perceived need to use expensive cameras or equipment.

Roughly 38% of all webinars in 2019 featured some type of video—the same figure as in 2018, but a significant 16-points higher than in 2017. This suggests practitioners are becoming increasingly comfortable with the use of video technologies and are acknowledging the importance of incorporating video into webinars.

For ON24 webinars, videos include:

- Studio produced

- Webcam presentations

- Integrated video clips

- Streaming and screen sharing

Among those ON24 customers surveyed, **nearly seven in ten (68%) said they used video in webinars**. Of this group, around one-third used video clips (34%) or webcam video (32%), with smaller percentages using broadcast video (17%) or screen sharing (15%).

These video users also report a largely seamless experience with video, as 80% claim that adding video to their webinars is easy.

Many video users are largely taking a scrappy approach, as half (50%) just use a webcam to record video, while 7% using their phone and 2% use a hand-held video recorder. This should reassure the small fraction that say they "don't have the appropriate equipment" to use video in their webinars.

That being said, a healthy proportion of marketers are looking to professionalize their production values, as **39% of those incorporating video use a studio**. A similar share (40%) also reuse videos they record in other webinars, helping them to save time.

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.

PERSONALIZING WEBINAR EXPERIENCES

68% of top-performing marketers are "very confident" at creating relevant, personalized and timely content.

It's been long known that creating personalized experiences is critical to a modern marketer's success. With webinars, organizations can add a higher level of personal engagement, whether for specific accounts, industries, use cases or general account-based marketing activity.

Indeed, ON24's Experiences Everywhere study highlights the value of personalization and ABM. More than three-quarters (78%) of B2B marketers surveyed agreed "account-based marketing is more effective than traditional marketing

approaches." Personalization is also correlated with success, as **top-performing marketers were more than three times as likely (68% vs. 22%) to be "very confident" in their ability to create relevant, personalized and timely content** for audiences.

Our survey of ON24 customers shows a healthy proportion are taking action, as around one in three (29%) use personalized webinars as part of their account-based marketing efforts. Of this group, the most common method to promote these webinars is through email, with 56% doing so.

In addition, **just over two-thirds (67%) say they have created a segment-specific webinar series**, while 38% direct target audiences towards segment-specific landing pages for their webinars.

ON24 TIP

CUSTOMIZE YOUR WEBINAR CONSOLE TO DRIVE ENGAGEMENT.

Take advantage of the webinar environment to build a connection between the attendee and your brand. A fully branded, customized webinar console helps you set your program apart from the get-go. Read our Webinar Console Branding Guide to learn how you can achieve this.

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POST-WEBINAR BENCHMARKS

ON-DEMAND VIEWING
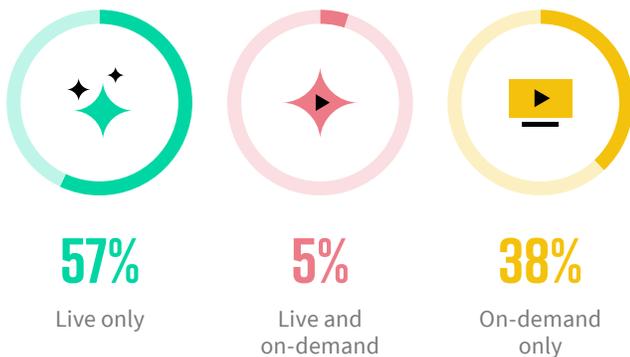
50% of top-performing marketers use simulive features—allowing them to record first, but interact live.

While live broadcasts remain the main type of webinar delivery because they encourage real-time engagement, on-demand webinars have increased in popularity as registrants can access them when it's most convenient for them. Doing a live webinar and then making the recording available on-demand can offer you the best of both worlds.

Attendee data shows an increasing move towards registrants choosing to watch webinars at a time that suits them. As live only attendance has seen a 2-point fall in the past year, on-demand viewing has risen by the same amount.

To balance the benefits of a live webinar experience with the ease of on-demand promotion, those planning webinars should consider running simulive sessions. Figures from the Experiences Everywhere study shows that **50% of top-performers have taken advantage of simulive webinars**, compared to just 33% of less-successful professionals.

Alternatively, webinar practitioners can simply curate their on-demand content into relevant content hubs. For example, in the last quarter of 2019, ON24 Engagement Hubs drove more than 330,000 unique users to engage to engage with on-demand content.

57%
Live only

5%
Live and on-demand

38%
On-demand only

ON-DEMAND VIEWING TIME

35% of respondents say they highlight customer success stories in their webinars.

On-demand webinars are a prime opportunity to give your content long term viability. With always on, evergreen webinars you can continue to engage, educate and accommodate audiences you normally wouldn't be able to live. So, what's a good on-demand viewing benchmark? **In 2019, the on-demand viewing time averaged 38 minutes**.

38'
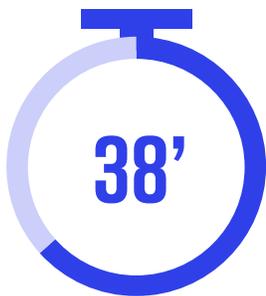
2020

POST-LIVE REGISTRATIONS

40% of respondents reuse video for their webinar programs.

A significant **38% of all attendees only watch on-demand webinars**, a three-point increase since 2017. Of these on-demand attendees, the majority register a week after a live event.

To facilitate the increasing demand for on-demand viewing, those creating and promoting webinars should consider placing their webinars and other content within a content hub. On average, **organizations using the ON24 Engagement Hub hosted 36 pieces of content within these platforms**, providing multiple opportunities to drive engagement.

Post-live Registrants:
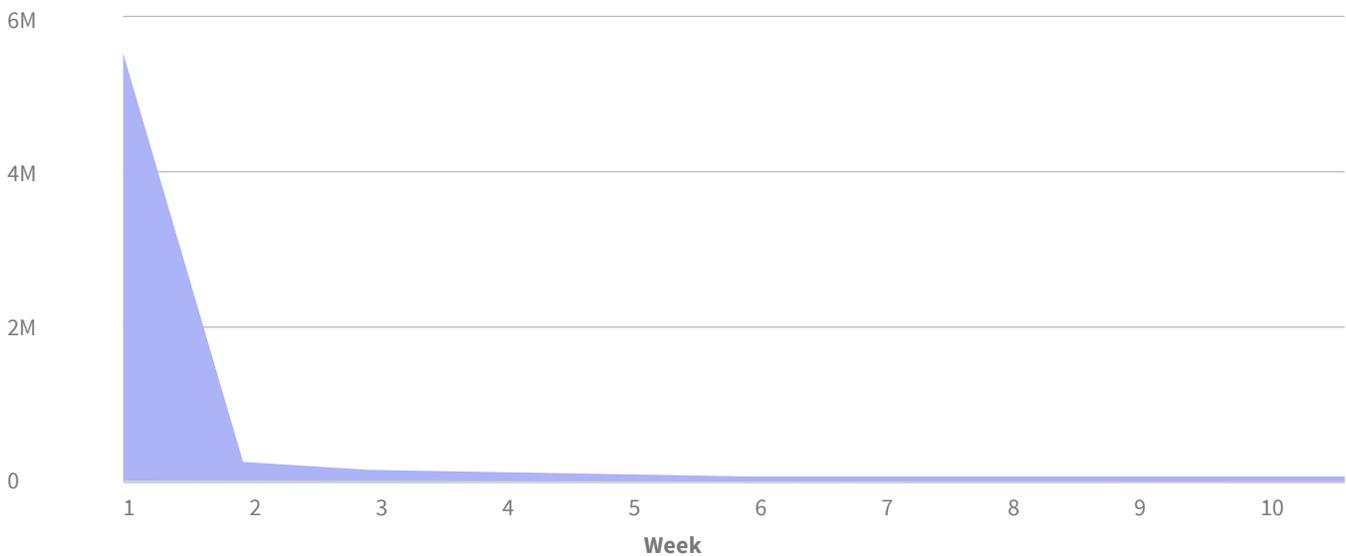
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POST-WEBINAR DATA

USE OF POST-WEBINAR DATA

56% of ON24 customers integrate webinar data with their tech stack.

Ensuring your webinar platform, along with the channels used to promote your webinar program, are integrated with your technology stack is essential. For example, integrating webinar data with a CRM system means sales teams have immediate access to insights about their accounts, enabling them to provide more targeted follow-up.

Webinars, along with the engagement data they create, are valuable. In fact, **at least half (56%) of ON24 customers integrate webinar data with the rest of their marketing technology**. Coincidentally, this percentage almost mirrors the share of survey respondents (55%) which say that sales prioritize leads from webinars.

Similarly, top-performing marketers say the use of engagement metrics is critical. As seen in ON24's Experiences Everywhere report, some 45% list prospect engagement metrics among their most important forms of data, compared to just 29% of less-successful marketers. Engagement data is so powerful that more than four in ten (41%) top performers use account engagement metrics, a figure some 11-points higher than other marketers.

This engagement data can also be used to find out ways of improving the webinar experience. By testing the impact of new approaches against the uplift in engagement score, those running webinars can continually optimize the performance of their programs.

MARKETING AND SALES CYCLE

WEBINARS IN THE MARKETING AND SALES CYCLE

68% say that webinars help tie their marketing activity to revenue.

The role of webinars in driving engagement and increasing the pipeline is widely acknowledged. As our survey of ON24 customers shows, the vast majority of respondents (86%) agree that webinars represent a key part of their marketing efforts. One-quarter (25%) consider webinars to be 'critical' to digital communications, while on average, respondents rate the importance of webinars to digital communications as 3.9 on a five-point scale.

When it comes to the impact on the bottom line, the same survey results also point to the fact that webinars are better placed than marketing overall.

While 58% said they could tie marketing activity overall to revenue, close to seven in ten (68%) said webinars specifically help them to do so.

Many also report a positive impact on their marketing spend, as three-quarters (75%) agreed that webinars help to lower their cost-per-lead.

Some **38% of these respondents also consider the quality of leads generated through webinars to be above average** (4 or 5 on a five-point scale). Overall, respondents rate the quality of leads generated through webinars as 3.3 on a five-point scale.

Marketers are also using a wide range of formats to market their products and services across the funnel. These include creating educational webinar courses (60%), providing demos (53%) and giving technical deep dives (50%).

ON24 TIP

USE WEBINAR DATA TO CLOSE THE LOOP AND IMPROVE PERFORMANCE.

Make sure to collect and use data from your webinars to find out what works well—and what doesn't. Also look to integrate your webinar platform with your CRM, marketing automation or e-learning systems—this will help those not directly involved with webinars to be able to see how each one of your customers interacts and engages. Find out how ON24 Connect can help you with this.

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CONCLUSION

The data from our report shows that 2019 was yet another excellent year for webinars. Moving into 2020, we now see almost 43,000 hours of webinar content being watched every day. Someone enters an ON24 webinar approximately every two seconds, and every 11 seconds someone is asking a question.

Over the past few years, we've seen not only an increase in webinar volume but also great webinar experiences. There's been a significant increase in the use of video, on-demand viewing is up, and technology is providing even more ways to engage with audiences.

The ON24 Engagement Score is a 10-point scale that assesses an individual attendee's engagement with your webinar and content based on their average webinar viewing minutes, questions submitted, polls answered, surveys completed and more. As an aggregate across our four major webinar concentrations the ON24 Engagement Score remains near all-time highs:

Average ON24 Engagement Score per Channel Type

- Marketing: 4.1
- Training: 4.1
- Continuing Education: 4.9
- Internal Communications: 4.2

Our survey data also shows that the worldwide community of Webinerds is brimming with enthusiasm for what webinars can offer, helping them to extend their brand, scale their marketing efforts and look more professional.

But we also see that there is work to be done to convince others about the benefits of webinars. According to our survey of ON24 customers, some 24% say that getting buy-in from stakeholders is the most difficult challenge they face. We need to make the case that webinars are the ideal channel for reaching our audiences and engaging them in real human ways.

In a noisy world, webinars are how we deliver human engagement at digital scale.

ABOUT ON24

ON24® is on a mission to redefine how organizations engage with their audiences, powering interactive, data-rich webinars and content experiences that help people connect on a more human level and make smarter business decisions.

Through the ON24 Platform, marketers can create live, always-on and personalized digital experiences, understand audience behavior and turn that intelligence into action. Informed by more than a billion engagement minutes — including 12 million polls, 1.3 million surveys, 1.5 million conversations, and conversion of over 17 million resources — marketers drive more revenue from ON24 webinars than any other digital channel. Headquartered in San Francisco, ON24 has a wide global footprint with eight offices in key regions, including London, Munich, Singapore, Stockholm and Sydney.

See what an engaging platform can do for you with our daily demo.

Want to take ON24 for a spin? Sign up for our free 30-day trial.

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