



## Webinar Technologies: A Sirius Perspective

SiriusDecisions research shows that webinars continue to be the highest rated human touchpoint throughout the buyer's journey

As a result, webinars are a critical component of any demand marketer's toolkit

Marketers can use webinar technology as an engagement tool for prospect and customer marketing programs and communications activities

Webinar technology, which allows demand marketers to stage and control a range of online events and meetings, is foundational to support campaigns. It can also be used to support channel marketing and channel sales, content strategy and operations, corporate communications, marketing operations and sales enablement. Webinar technology can provide a combination of audio, video and screen sharing, along with other features that enhance audience engagement (e.g. annotation, polling, content access). Many systems provide the ability to set up invitations and send reminders, and offer a wide range of reports and statistical analysis of attendee engagement and drop-off rates. Options for recording sessions for future viewing offer many advantages for marketers (e.g. including a call to action). Webinar technologies are often leveraged for use cases outside of marketing, such as supporting trainers who use the technology to host educational presentations for employees and customers, or providing a venue for corporate communications for press and analyst announcements. In this SiriusDecisions Technology Perspective, we outline the benefits, evolution and capabilities of webinar technology, along with the business priorities supported by this technology.

### Webinar Technology Benefits

The benefits of using webinar technology include:

- **Audience engagement.** Demand marketers can engage the audience via surveys, social media widgets and polls. Information procured from polls or online question forums can be stored and used as input for future activities (e.g. nurture stream selection, sales followup).
- **Content reuse.** Content can be recorded and edited for on-demand viewing or repurposed into new content assets. This reuse provides a source of demand creation and educational material that can be segmented, promoted and consumed by viewers at a time of their choosing.
- **Audience scale.** Webinar technologies can deliver the same experience to an audience of 10 participants or more than 1,000 participants. This flexibility far exceeds that of in-person events – as events with a small audience might not be cost-effective, and large events can be impersonal and cost-prohibitive.
- **Time savings.** Webinar technologies enable inexpensive, easy-to-facilitate and real-time interaction via the Web. They also remove the need for presenters to travel to conduct a live event.



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- **Product demonstration.** Webinars allow sales and marketing teams to show a live product demonstration during the session, which helps potential buyers understand and evaluate the product.

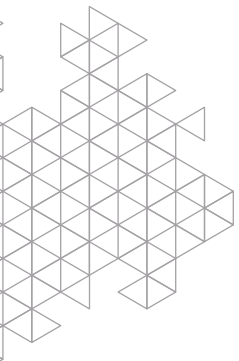
## Webinar Technology Evolution

While webinar technologies have become an essential component of the demand marketer's toolkit, the category continues to grow. As b-to-b organizations have moved away from unidirectional webinars and strive for greater engagement, webinar technologies have evolved to include polling, content access and chat features. Additionally, many marketers use webinar content beyond its initial viewing for subsequent on-demand viewing, or use portions of it on Web sites and landing pages. Now that advancements (e.g. via mobile devices) have made video production cheaper and content easier to stream (e.g. via HTML5), webinar providers are also expanding their range of video delivery options. This can include fully online events or hybrid models that allow an organization to stream content from a physical event.

## Core Capability Groups

The core capabilities of webinar technology include:

- **Online event hosting.** The technology empowers users to host various types of online events.
- **Interactivity.** The technology includes tools for increasing audience engagement during a webinar (e.g. polling, Q&A).
- **Integrations.** The technology has native integrations with other marketing technologies, including marketing automation platforms (MAPs) and sales force automation systems.
- **Recording.** The technology enables sessions to be recorded and made available for viewing later. Many systems also allow content to be edited after it is recorded.
- **Registration.** The technology allows an administrator to manage registration for upcoming events, including sending reminders and making changes to the event.
- **Reporting.** The technology has measurement and analytics capabilities for measuring attendance and engagement, including pre-built report templates and customization features.
- **Online event scheduling.** The technology enables users to schedule webinars and set up landing pages for registration. However, some marketers may wish to use landing pages set up through their MAPs.





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- **Measurement and analytics.** The technology's measurement and analytics capabilities include both pre-built and customizable report templates. Relevant metrics include registration, attendees, time of attendance and participation/interaction.

## Extended Capability Groups

Extended capabilities of webinar technologies can include:

- **Video content library.** The technology supports the curation of webinars that can be used in creating online content experiences. A user can retire or delete assets from this content repository if the piece becomes outdated or replaced with a new version.
- **Services.** Some vendors offer various professional services to supplement their technologies, including technical support for integrations, live hosts and webinar content strategy.
- **Online events.** Webinar providers may offer the capability to do online event streaming for virtual events (fully online trade shows) or hybrid events (those with a virtual and in-person presence).
- **Webinar editing.** The technology provides robust editing capabilities within the system. This can include editing the introduction and ending of webinars, but can be extended to include the editing of presentation slides shared during the initial recording.
- **Social integrations.** Some webinar technologies allow for social registration, the ability to register with a social profile and/or share registration confirmation to social media channels.

## Supported Priorities

Webinar technology supports the following role-based priorities:

### *Channel Marketing*

Channel Demand Creation  
Partner Enablement and Engagement

### *Channel Sales*

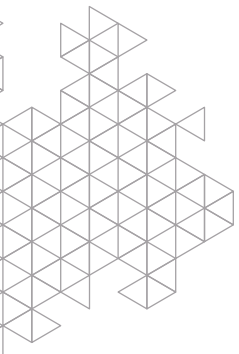
Channel Sales Execution

### *Demand Creation*

Demand Program Delivery Mechanisms

## The Sirius Decision

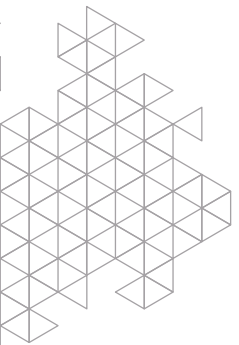
As vendors continue to develop and deploy new functionality for engagement and tracking, webinars will remain a vital component of the b-to-b demand





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marketer's toolkit. Users of webinar technologies should partner with teams in other functional areas to leverage the webinar content created for additional purposes (e.g. partner and sales enablement). When selecting a webinar technology vendor, evaluate candidates on the basis of available features and the offering's ability to integrate with and add value to other marketing technologies.



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