



# How to Run Your First Webinar with GoToWebinar

[A step-by-step guide for webinar producers](#)

The thought of running your first virtual event can be quite overwhelming. There is a huge amount of responsibility on your shoulders, and of course you want to make sure that everything runs smoothly and nothing goes wrong. Here are some useful tips to help you plan ahead and gain the confidence you need to deliver your very first webinar — brought to you by GoToWebinar host Gemma Falconer.

### The pre-webinar checklist

Preparation is key:

1. Confirm your webinar title and content.
2. Make your speakers are available and confirmed for the big day.
3. Arrange a rehearsal with the speakers.
4. Figure out whether your speakers are going to show their presentations from their computer or yours.
5. Set up any poll questions you will use during the webinar.
6. Set up your exit survey questions.
7. Check that your email notifications are ready (that's the confirmation email, the reminder email and the follow-up email with the recording, should you decide to distribute it).
8. Upload your speaker photos into GoToWebinar.
9. Add the speakers as "panelists" within GoToWebinar so that they receive a link to join the live webinar.
10. Promote your webinar — you'll need attendees! Remember that it's highly unlikely that everyone who registers for the webinar will attend — particularly if it's free. If you get between 30-40% of your registrants to attend, you're doing well!

11. Ensure you have two computers available for the webinar itself. Not only does one act as a back-up in case the other suddenly dies — but that way you can have the presentation on one screen, and your question/chat pane, the polls and dashboard open on another.

### Running the live webinar

Everything closed down?

Before you even log in to GoToWebinar, make sure that your email, instant messenger and any other program that produces pop notifications is closed down. You definitely don't want your entire audience seeing that message about Friday-night drinks!

### Give yourself time

When you're rushing to get something done, the chances of forgetting something are pretty high.

Make sure that you've opened up the webinar nice and early — say 30-45 minutes before you're due to go live. This way you can make sure everything is set up, the speakers are logged in, audio sounds good and the slides are in position.

Launch GoToWebinar in practice mode. This way your speakers can join, but your audience cannot. You can then speak with your presenters before you go live.

## Who's in control?

Decide who is going to be in control of the presentation during your rehearsal. Perhaps your speaker is going to show their screen. Or perhaps you're going to host the presentation and give your speaker keyboard and mouse control so they can move the slides along themselves.

## Panelist or organizer?

Your speaker will join the webinar as a panelist. This gives them the ability to speak with the audience, show their screen or have keyboard and mouse control. If you would like them to be able to see the questions that have come in from the audience and record, then you will need to upgrade them to an organizer. To do this, go into the GoToWebinar control panel once you have launched the webinar in practice mode, go to the Attendee List and right-click on the speaker's name and select **Make organizer**. Be aware that being an organizer also gives them the ability to start and end the webinar. Make sure you tell them not to press **Start broadcast** or exit the webinar prematurely.

## The essential webinar tools

The GoToWebinar control panel is made up of several panes. These panes can be dragged out of the control panel so you can expand them. You'll definitely want to do this with the questions pane so you can clearly see all those questions coming in from the audience. You may also want to take out the poll pane if you're going to be asking the audience a poll question, and the chat pane as well if you intend to use it to communicate directly with the audience (for example — you may want to chat out a Twitter hashtag or a link to a book mentioned by one of the speakers).

Then there is my favorite part, the dashboard. The dashboard gives you an instant snapshot of your audience — you can see how many people have joined, and what percentage of them are actually viewing the GoToWebinar screen. This will instantly tell you how

engaged your audience is in the content. You want to aim for over 60% attentiveness. If that's not happening, perhaps interrupt the speaker with a question, or ask the audience a question and get them to respond via the questions pane.

## The mute button

Before the webinar begins, remind your speakers how they can click to mute themselves. If they suddenly have a coughing fit, they'll want to mute themselves quickly. And remember to mute yourself if you have a non-speaking role. Your audience doesn't want to hear you typing away in the background as you respond to people's questions.

## Time for the audience to arrive

It's possible to open up the webinar so your audience can arrive in the waiting room. Many people will want to join early — we tend to open up our webinars 10-15 minutes before we go live. That gives your audience time to get used to their surroundings, find the questions pane and select their listening mode (telephone or mic and speakers via VoIP). To open up the waiting room, press **Start** in the top right-hand corner of the control panel. At this point, the audience cannot hear you, but they will be able to see your screen if you have decided to start sharing it. So make sure the presentation is in slide-show mode if this is the case.

## Ready? Set? Go!

The moment you've been waiting for! Do one final check with the speakers, then mute yourself if you're not speaking on the live webinar. Click the **Record** button if you want to record the webinar. Now click **Start Broadcast** at the top right-hand corner of your control panel. You and your audience will hear an automated voice say "The webinar is now starting, all attendees are in listen-only mode," and from this moment on you are live! Your audience will be able to hear the speakers.

## Wrap up

When the speaker has finished and it's time to end the webinar, the first thing you will want to do is click the **Stop Recording** button. Now mute your speakers in case they forget they're still live. Leave the presentation on the final slide — the audience can still see what is being shown. Now click **File** and **End webinar for all**.

## After the webinar has ended

You've made it through your first webinar! Congratulations. Now to archive the recording — this will convert the webinar into a link that you can use for the next 12 months to send out a copy, post it on your website or promote it via social media.

Log in to your GoToWebinar account. From the options on the left-hand side, select **Webinar history**. Select the name of the webinar you have just run. Then click **Manage** and **Archive recording**. Select the recording you wish to archive. (It's typically saved to your desktop, but you can change this in your settings.)

You will also want to look at the attendee report so you can see how people have responded to your exit survey. To download the report, select **Generate Reports** from the menu options, then select **Attendee Report**. This will also give you an overview of who attended the webinar.

There are a lot of things to think about when running a webinar. But, as they say, practice makes perfect. Make sure you familiarize yourself with GoToWebinar before the live event — set up dummy webinars and ask a colleague to attend. Test out the tools that are available to you and make sure you are comfortable with how everything works.

Webinars are a great vehicle for delivering your message to potentially hundreds and thousands of people, and they are cheap to run — always a winner!

I wish you every bit of success with your webinar program. Be brave, be bold and enjoy!

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## About the Author

Gemma Falconer is responsible for hosting the UK webinars for GoToWebinar. She lives and breathes these virtual events every single day! You'll often find her moderating and providing behind-the-scenes support to our attendees and various speakers.



## About GoToWebinar

GoToWebinar is the do-it-yourself webinar tool that projects your message — including HD video conferencing — to up to 2,000 online attendees for one low flat fee.

To learn more about GoToWebinar or to sign up for a free trial, visit [www.gotowebinar.com](http://www.gotowebinar.com)