



THE
OPERATIONAL
RESEARCH
SOCIETY



Webinars

Hints and Tips for Presenters

Thank you very much for taking part in our new **Webinar Wednesdays** programme, designed to help our members to continue their personal development and network with the OR community from the comfort and convenience of their homes or offices.

These tips are to help support you in delivering an engaging and quality experience and are based on our learnings so far and best practice in the market. We would gratefully welcome any extra tips from your experience to share with future presenters.

The OR Society uses Zoom to deliver its webinar programme, and the marketing team will set up a test session with you before your webinar to check that you are comfortable with everything and answer any questions you have.

1. Make sure the audience can see you throughout

We recommend you feature on the screen throughout, alongside your slides, to make the experience more personal. Within Zoom, the audience will be able to see you within a small square on the screen. We recommend you, or your co-chair (see point 2) tell the audience to position the square at the top right of their screens, and that you make allowance for it in your slides. If you have a green screen, you can present with the slides behind you which can be impactful.

2. Have a co-chair

Ideally, giving a webinar should not be a solo affair. If possible, have a colleague to act as a co-chair who can support as follows:

- Introduce you (if you want to, however, it's ok if you'd prefer to introduce yourself).
- Explain the housekeeping for the webinar at the start. We can give guidance regarding this.
- Let you know (via the chat panel that only you can see) if anything goes wrong from an attendee's point of view.
- Monitor and answer any queries in the chat and direct questions to the Q&A function.
- Facilitate the Q&A, which includes identifying irrelevant ones and identifying which questions for you to answer at the end of the presentation. Zoom has a feature for voting for questions, which helps identify the most popular ones if there are too many to cover in the time allocated. We can talk to you about in the test to see if you would like to utilise this function.

3. Don't be silent at the start

We recommend you start the session on time; however, it can sometimes take a couple of minutes for all attendees to join. Have a conversation ready to go with your co-chair to fill the time (literally talk about people joining, the weather etc.)

4. Use more visuals

This is the significant difference between a face to face presentation and a webinar. In a presentation, the audience can see you, and if there is no visual slide, their attention will be focused on you. In a webinar, if there is no visual or you have the same visual for an extended length of time, their visual attention will wander. We recommend you keep things moving visually.

5. Highlight what you want people to look at on the slides

In a face to face presentation you may usually point or use a laser pointer, which is not possible with most webinar software; you may want to consider building highlights or animations into your slides to help bring attention to the key points.

6. Avoid slides that you only want to show for a few seconds

If there is a slight time lag between you clicking on the slide and attendees seeing the slide, some attendees may only see it for a microsecond.

7. Use a remote control

If you have one to move slides forward as it may be easier for you.

8. Have a clock visible

To help you keep track of time.

9. Show a slide while you are taking questions

Otherwise, the audience will be left looking at your last slide. We recommend your organisations logo; please note we will provide a background template for you which will include the ORS and your organisations/company.

10. Rehearsal

An extra rehearsal is required for webinars compared to face to face presentations. There are two layers of technology involved: your slideware and the webinar software. So, once you have got your basic presentation well-rehearsed, then rehearse using the webinar software. Also, we strongly recommend you stay within the time advertised as this will be in line with the audience's expectations, rehearsing can help sense check this and make sure you leave time for questions.

11. Let people know when you are going to be silent

In webinar, your voice conveys your presence. If you are going to be silent, for example, you are going to take a sip of water; you let your audience know. If you want the audience to read the slide themselves (e.g., quotes), we recommend you introduce a slide, click onto it, and then stay silent while the audience reads it.

12. Questions

In face to face presentations you may prefer to take questions throughout which is not possible with webinars. With Zoom, attendees can type in their question at the time that it occurred to them. As explained in point 2, Zoom has a feature for voting for questions, so that you can focus on answering the most popular ones. We will explain this in the test session. It is also an idea to have questions prepared which can help prompt other questions, please can you send us these in advance or discuss during the test session.

13. Have a Plan B

We recommend you have another computer ready should your primary computer crash, a back-up mic and back-up web cam if you can. Send us your slides also if anything goes wrong with your pc.

14. Share Personal Experiences

Webinar presenters are selected for their real-world experience in the chosen topic so it is great if you can try and share some of your personal experiences with the audience. For example, you may want to share how you applied the theory you are discussing to the workplace and this results this drove. This is information attendees cannot just learn in a textbook or blog post, which will lead to increased interaction, as it will likely prompt questions from the audience.

15. Encourage Audience Engagement

Audiences make judgements about you and your message in the first minute, so it's important that you grab your audience's attention in the first 60 seconds and encourage engagement to ensure they stick around. If you are running a webinar for 30 minutes or longer, you need to make the most of every second to keep your audience engaged throughout. You can do this by utilising various interactive features such as live polls, live chat and a live Q&A at the end (all available through Zoom), so your audience can interact with you in real-time.

- Live polls – these can be used to ask questions and gain feedback from the audience at any time during the presentation. If you let us know your questions before the webinar, and when you'd like them to be shown, we can have them pre-loaded for you. We can also download the results and send them to you following the webinar.
- Live chat - this is a two-way feature and can be used to update the audience, eg. Explain that the webinar is just about to start, and for the audience to send messages. We recommend that the Q&A function is used for the management of questions.
- Q&A – a great feature to help facilitate the management of questions after your talk. The audience simply type their questions into the Q&A panel and there is a feature to vote for/upweight questions so that the most popular questions get to the top.

This two-way interaction will help to break down the barriers between the audience and presenter, increase viewing time and improve attendee satisfaction. We can discuss some of these with you during the test session. As 90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual, the old saying goes: "a picture is worth a thousand words" when it comes to online webinars this is especially important.

16. Meet Audience Expectations

Integral to the success of your webinar. You want your audience to leave your webinar feeling as though they have invested 30-60 minutes of their life wisely - taking away some newfound knowledge, solutions, or inspiration. Gathering feedback is a great way to ensure that you have delivered a satisfactory webinar and met your attendees' expectations. This can be done by simply sending a follow-up email asking: "How did we do?".

17. Turn off all your phones (and dogs)

We recommend you sign out of your email to avoid distracting 'pings' throughout your presentation.

18. Driving engagement

You can continue to drive engagement with the audience during and after the webinar with the use of social media and having a download on your webpage.

19. Inside OR

If you are happy to, we would like to include a feature in our member magazine about the webinar. This is a great way to continue to help the OR community and also gives your company more exposure. We would need up to 500 words from you, after the webinar, and recommended images for inclusion in the feature.

The OR Society will send follow up communication to webinar attendees which will include an email to say thank you for attending, sharing a video of the webinar and asking that they complete a survey to gain feedback re the overall experience. We can look to include any questions you may have and share the feedback with you.

Once again thank you so much for taking part in the Webinar Wednesday programme. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any further questions.

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Webinar Wednesdays

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