INFORMS CHAPTERS & FORUMS

Webinar Timeline

Planning a community webinar, from first idea to follow-up

Prepared by INFORMS Community Relations • 2026 Edition

What INFORMS Needs Before Creating Your Webinar

Send the following to INFORMS staff before we build your webinar. This is the information used to create your landing page.

Webinar Landing Page Template

- Title
- Topic / abstract
- Speakers / panelist names
- Speaker / panelist email addresses
- Speaker / panelist pictures
- Registration link (INFORMS will fill in)
- Date
- Time
- Duration

The Timeline

8 weeks prior to your event

- Determine the goals for the event (Community)

  What is the goal of the webinar? Having a clear goal will help determine the theme and design of the event.
- Select the webinar topic (Community)

  Determine webinar objectives and desired outcomes.
- Determine a theme for your event (Community)

  Will it be educational, entertaining, informational, formal, or light? Single expert, dual presenters, panel, Q&A webinar, interview webinar? The answers set the format of the presentation and how to market the event.
- Select a presenter or panel (Community)
- Identify the target audience (Community)

  A broad target market can be detrimental to registration, because one event cannot be everything to everyone. Choose a narrow topic for a segmented audience and prepare the presentation with them in mind.

- Document your webinar experience (Community and INFORMS)

  Doing so will streamline webinar production in the future.
- Reach out to INFORMS staff about your webinar plan (Community)

7 weeks prior to your event

- Select a date and time for the event (Community with the assist of INFORMS)

  Always consider when the audience is available to attend. Create a webinar promotional plan, and remember visual branding when creating content for Connect posts, social media sharing, and email blasts.
- Determine the length of the program (Community with the assist of INFORMS)

  Compile everything you want to deliver and determine how long it will take. 30 minutes? 60? 90? Create an outline of the content, find places to engage the audience with polls and surveys, and leave room for Q&A.
- Delegate tasks between the presenters, hosts, and webinar team (Community)
- Determine if and how you will repurpose this event (Community)

  With a recording you can replay the event later and have the presenter rejoin for a live Q&A, or place the recording in an on-demand environment for viewing at any time.

6 weeks prior to your event

- Set up the event in the webinar tool (INFORMS)

  Registration, email settings, webinar options, credentials, branding, session title and description.
- Create a webinar landing page (INFORMS)

  Built from the landing page information above: registration link, topic, speaker information, date and time, and what attendees will learn.
- Compile a list of prospective attendees (Community with the assist of INFORMS)

  If the event targets a segmented group, do not email the invitation to people it is not meant for.
- Get the word out (Community and INFORMS)

  Promote the webinar on social media, use hashtags, and email the invitation to the targeted audience.
- Craft your content, presenter tips (Community)

  Create the session outline and a first draft of the slide deck. If it is a panel, host a speaker intro call. Write a good script, but do not be afraid to go off it. Practice. Develop visual slides and use different media formats. Plan for interaction. Have questions ready for Q&A in case the audience is less engaged than you expected.

2 weeks prior to your event

- Monitor and analyze the webinar promotional plan (Community and INFORMS)
- Become familiar with the webinar platform (Community, presenters, webinar team)

  Schedule a dry run of the technology, upload the slide deck to check how the slides look, and test different audio methods. If you plan to run polls or surveys, populate them in the webroom.
- Presenter shares the final presentation with the team (Presenters)

1 week prior to your event

- Rehearse (Community, presenters, webinar team, INFORMS)
- Send the first reminder to registrants (INFORMS)
- Write an introduction script for your presenter (Community)

  Whether you have a live moderator or someone from your team introducing the presenter, gather the facts attendees should know about the presenter and the event.
- Prepare your follow-up messaging (Community)

Create an email summarizing what was presented, and consider providing a link to view the event on demand.

- Prepare your post-event evaluation (Community)

  Analyzing your event is as important as preparing for it. Create a brief survey. Questions can cover the presenter and what future events attendees would be interested in.

1 day prior to your event

- Send the second reminder to registrants (INFORMS)
- Thoroughly test the webinar setup (Community, presenters, webinar team, INFORMS)

Day of your event

- Send a final email invitation 4 hours before the event (INFORMS)

  Most attendees register within 24 hours of the live production. Take advantage of this with a final email that says "today" in the subject line.

- Accept that things may go wrong (Everyone)

  No matter how prepared you are, some things are out of your hands.

- Eliminate any potential sources of noise (Everyone)

  Mute every device that is not necessary for the webinar.

- Join the webroom (Everyone)

  Presenters, hosts, and the webinar team should join 20 minutes before the scheduled time. That allows a last sound and slide check and time to organize multiple presenters.

- Check the recording status (Webinar team and INFORMS)

  If you plan to repurpose the event for on-demand viewing, make sure it is recording in the proper format.

- Start on time (Everyone)

  Your attendees are busy. Do not waste their time.

24 hours after your event

- Presenters review the Q&A report (Presenters)

  If a question was asked during Q&A, more than one person was probably wondering. Transcribe and expand on the answers given. This can feed the blog or email follow-up.

- Follow up in a blog post or email (Community)

  Answer questions raised during Q&A and provide links to learn more. Share the slide deck and the on-demand recording. Send it to three groups: registrants who attended, registrants who did not show up, and registrants who left early.

48 hours after your event

- Analyze your webinar statistics (Community with the assist of INFORMS)

  Most platforms provide detailed event reports. Look at how many registrants attended, what questions were asked, the top sources of registrations, and how long attendees watched.

- Post-event evaluation (Community with the assist of INFORMS)

  Want to know whether attendees loved or hated the webinar? Ask them. A brief survey gives you feedback to improve on.

- Repurpose (Community with the assist of INFORMS)

  Large pieces of content take large amounts of time. Increase the return on that effort with on-demand viewings and replays.

Questions? Contact Chelsea Teimoori at cteimoori@informs.org.