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The Lawyer's Guide to Profitable Virtual Presentations, Part 2

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THE LAWYER'S GUIDE TO PROFITABLE VIRTUAL PRESENTATIONS, PART 2

By Cynthia Sharp, The Sharper Lawyer

ABA GPSolo eReport February 2017

[Part 1 of this article](#), published in the January 2017 edition of the *eReport*, addressed the challenges of choosing topics and finding audiences when offering a virtual presentation. Part 2 focuses on strategies designed to engage viewers/listeners who will ultimately either refer or become a client.

While many attorney presenters share strong content, the message may be weakened because of undeveloped presentation skills. Furthermore, a speaker who does not put her best foot forward may not earn the trust of those she seeks to impress.

While the suggestions outlined below are geared to those offering virtual presentations, many of the ideas can be applied when speaking at a live event.

Preparation

“Before anything else, preparation is the key to success.”

—Alexander Graham Bell

It is presumed that you have already taken the action steps outlined in Part 1 of this article and have chosen a topic and found an audience. When giving an online presentation, however, you must not only include excellent content but must also have a mastery of the technology and other unique aspects of the platform. Investing time in preparing for the virtual session will increase the chances of smooth delivery.

Create a visually stimulating slide deck. Slides with relevant images are significantly more appealing than slides loaded with text. When using text, fonts should be large enough to be legible to mobile attendees. Roger Courville, author of *The Virtual Presenter's Playbook*, observes that many “use a sans serif font for the main/body text and a serif font for headlines.”

Practice the speech to make sure that your prepared remarks fit within the scheduled time frame, taking into account questions that may be posed by audience members. Planning ahead will prevent the frustrating situation of being able to cover only a portion of the material because of misallocation of time.

Actively participate in a test run scheduled at least 24 hours before the session. This gives you an opportunity to test your microphone well ahead of time so that it can be replaced if the sound is not top quality. Be sure to test moving the slides both forwards and backwards. Also, take advantage of the opportunity to pick up on some of the advanced features of the platform. For example, learning how to draw on a slide is a simple way to emphasize an important point.

Delivery

Although it can be difficult to engage with an invisible audience, a few “tricks of the trade” may prove useful in overcoming this challenge.

When you are speaking on the virtual platform of a third party such as a bar association, the technical support and the moderator are generally provided. Weeks before the scheduled presentation, forward your brief bio to the moderator along with a list of questions to ask you throughout the course of the session, designating the precise point at which the question is to be posed. People get weary when hearing just one voice for an hour, and having another active participant breaks up the sameness.

Although most agree that the visual impact of a video presentation is more attractive to audiences, many defer to audio as it requires far less bandwidth and there is less room for error. Besides, the presenters don't need to be concerned about hair style, wardrobe, or make-up. Some organizations have even gone retro and produce tele-seminars.

Make sure that your voice projects and that you are full of energy. Many find it helpful to stand while delivering a virtual presentation. To keep your vocal chords open, drink a beverage that is either warm or at room temperature.

Begin the session by informing the participants that since this is a collaborative session, you encourage questions and will be seeking their opinions through a polling mechanism. If the program is being offered for CE credits, polling is one method accepted by regulators to prove attendance in the distance learning context.

Follow Up

Incorporating the following actions will help initiate and deepen relationships with some of the participants.

- Encourage the audience to connect with you on social media while displaying a slide with icons of your preferred platforms.
- Extend an invitation to sign up for your newsletter by sending an email to you.
- Offer to send an article, checklist, or other valuable content upon request.
- Mention future live or virtual educational sessions in which you are a featured expert.
- Ask audience members to complete an evaluation form and then review all feedback with an open mind. (Please send an email to cindy@thesharperlady.com for a sample evaluation form as well as a self-critique template.)

Conclusion

Incorporating even a few of these suggestions into the presentation process will help any virtual expert become more confident and engaging.

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Business development leader and veteran attorney Cynthia Sharp, Esq., works with motivated lawyers seeking to generate additional revenue for their law firms. The business development strategies and skill sets that she shares were developed and tested over a period of 30 years in practice and are constantly refined to reflect modern marketing techniques. For additional information about business development issues, check out thesharperlady.com.