



BrightTALK

MARKETING IMPACT REPORT

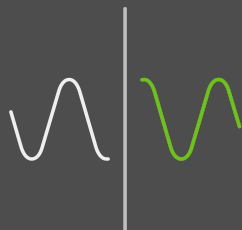
*Covid-19's  
Effect on  
Marketing  
Priorities*





**Marketers had to quickly adapt to the “new normal” or risk losing to the competition.**

Pre-pandemic, many marketers leveraged in-person events to drive demand consistently and at scale. As COVID-19 struck, most had to completely pivot from tried and true in-person conferences and reinvent their strategies - entirely online. Others ramped up existing investments in webinars and virtual events to maximize lead volume and quality with minimal impact on their pipeline.



**As more turn to all-digital strategies, marketers face increased competition and more pressure to stand out from the digital noise.**

To stand out, marketers need to rethink how they go to market and nurture their buyers through content and digital interactions. Talks and virtual events offer an opportunity for marketers to redefine how they interact with their audience. To thrive in today’s environment they must provide a value-forward, engaging experience that guides, instead of pushes, buyers through the journey.

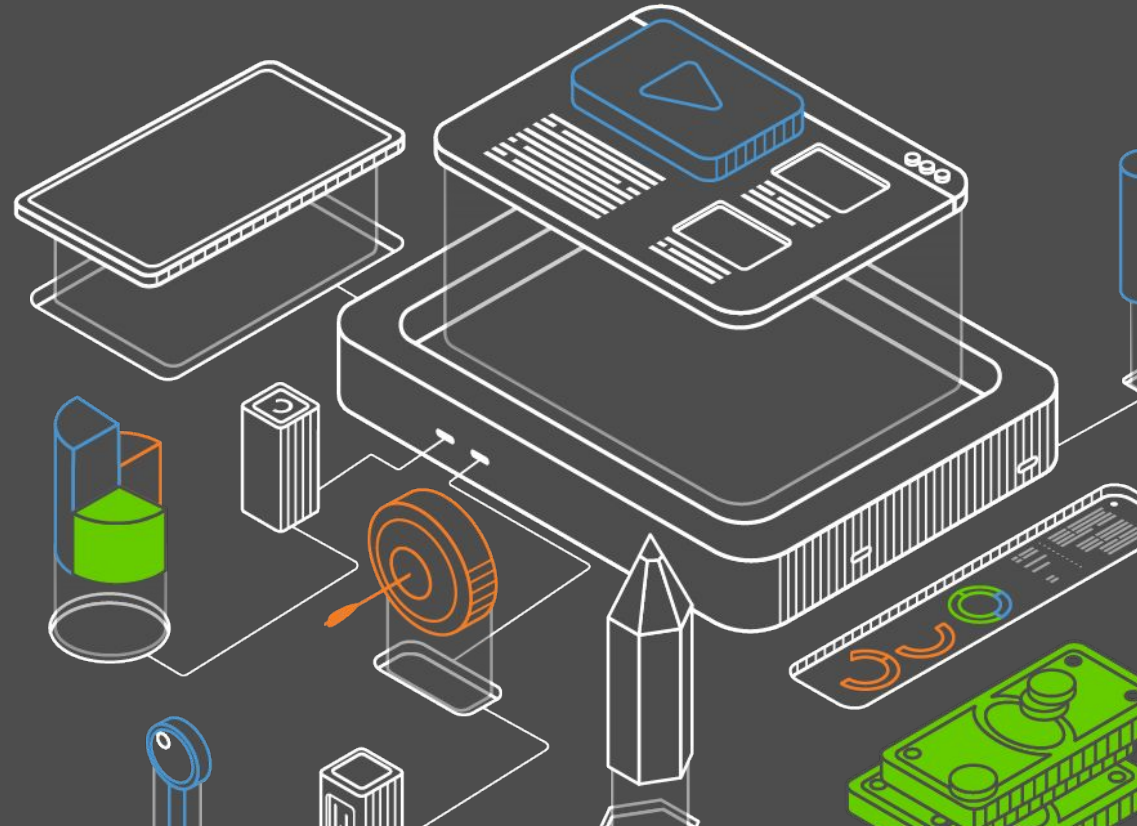


**COVID-19 has changed marketing forever.**

The future isn’t all physical or all digital, but a hybrid strategy that seamlessly marries the two. As we look ahead at what the future will bring, BrightTALK surveyed over 1,000 marketers on how COVID-19 has impacted marketing strategies. This report dives into the results to understand how COVID-19 has impacted tactics, shifted strategies, and influenced plans for 2021 and beyond.

## COVID-19's Impact on BrightTALK

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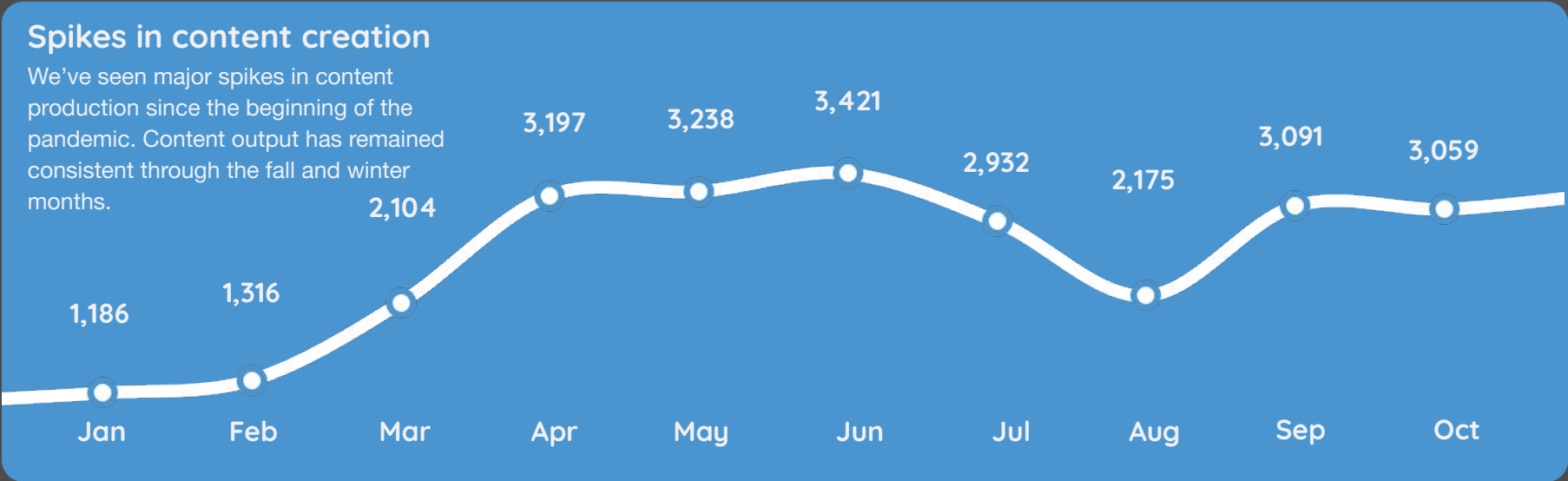


# BrightTALK has experienced an explosion of content production and spikes in user activity

Marketers invest significant time, energy, and resources into developing video-based content. On BrightTALK, we've seen an 83% increase year-over-year as content creators leverage webinar, video, and virtual events to engage and convert their audiences.

BrightTALK saw a **390%** spike in new users in April 2020.

Professionals continue to turn to webinar, video, and virtual event content to learn and grow.



# Demand for virtual events has reached an all-time high as marketers look to engage buyers entirely online

In the absence of in-person events, marketers have quickly embraced entirely digital strategies to hit their KPIs. Eager to create authentic connections at scale, virtual events have become the clear solution. From large-scale user conferences to intimate customer events, BrightTALK has engaged over 248K virtual event attendees in 2020 alone.

## Surging virtual event demand.

248K	Virtual event attendees YTD
300%	Increase in demand for customer-owned virtual events
40%	Volume of clients BrightTALK has helped pivot to virtual events
7.16M	Minutes of content viewed in virtual events YTD



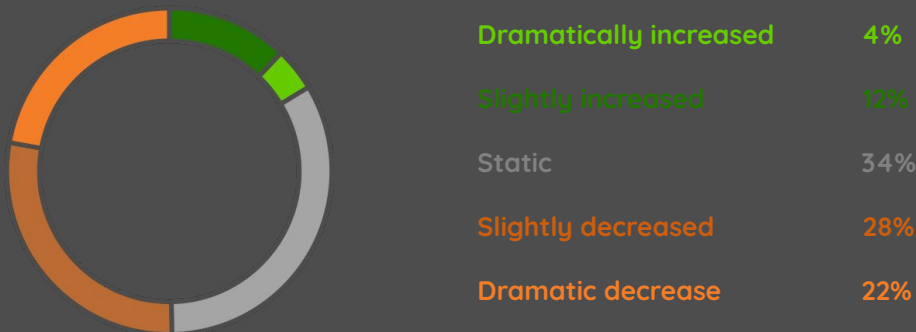
# Marketers hustle to drive demand in 2020 despite global pandemic and looming economic challenges

Based on a survey of 1,000 marketers, BrightTALK found that weathering the storm while continuing to acquire, retain and upsell customers is the top focus.

Although embracing new marketing channels often indicates a need for budget and resources, the majority of marketing budgets either decreased or remained static in light of the pandemic.

This budget trend indicates a need for enhanced creativity and efficiency. Most marketers are focusing on optimizing and refining their existing channels and tactics.

## How has COVID-19 impacted your marketing budget?



***We're doing a lot more virtual and digital marketing. There's a greater focus on quality content.***

## What are your marketing team's key priorities for the second half of 2020?

63% Convert leads into customers

47% Strengthen position within competitive market

42% Increase revenue from existing customers

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## Webinar Strategy

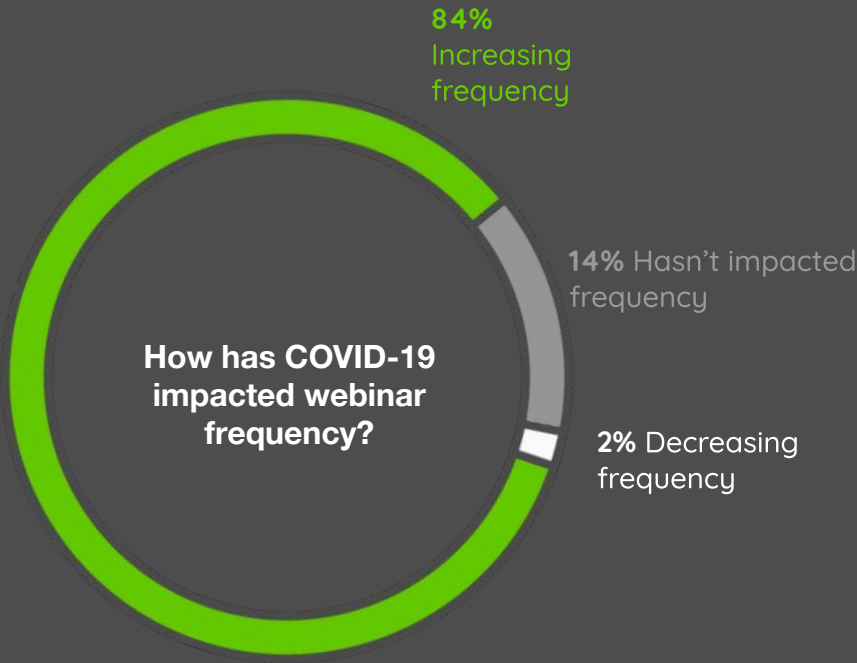


# As digital channels increase in importance during the pandemic, marketers double down on webinars to engage and convert buyers at scale

COVID-19 signaled an unprecedented shift in marketing strategies, especially for those focused on demand generation. While webinars have been in the B2B marketer’s toolbox for more than a decade, video-based digital channels have skyrocketed in importance over the past couple of months.

The wake of COVID-19 left many marketing and sales teams fearful of a gap in lead flow, especially with in-person events off the table and increased competition for paid media. Webinar and video programs are a logical and scalable vehicle to drive consistent engagement with buyers and customers. In fact, 79% of marketers are currently leveraging webinars and 84% increased their frequency due to the pandemic.

As a result, professionals have access to far more free thought leadership, product, and how-to content than ever before. Engagement continues to increase as many seek to self-educate and level up their skills during this uncertain time. Savvy marketers should seek to continuously innovate their webinar content to keep audiences captivated and coming back for more.



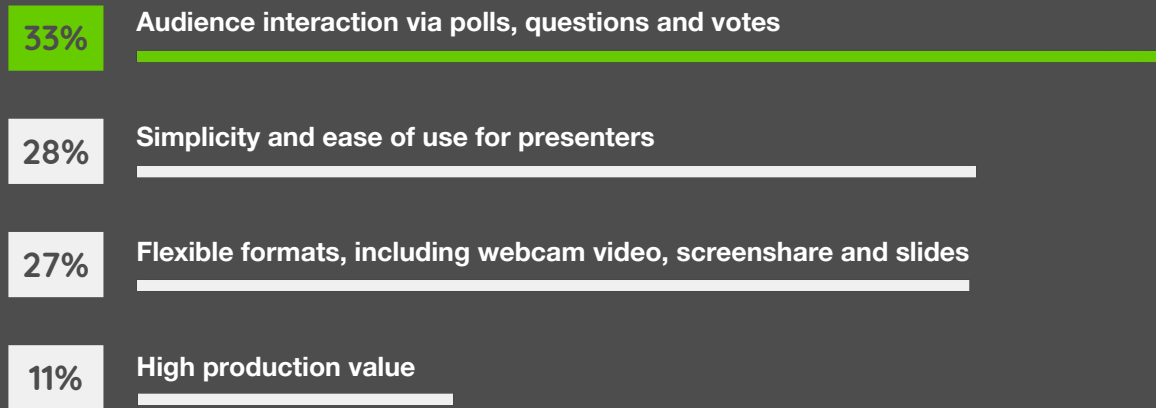


# Content creators innovate the webinar attendee experience in light of increased digital noise

While some marketers are exploring webinars for the first time, many are working to enhance their approach to this tried and true channel. With competition for mindshare fiercer than ever, survey respondents reported a focus on enhancing content quality, driving more interactivity, and improving the overall viewer experience.

When it comes to webinar technology, marketers value the flexibility to tailor-make their content for their audience’s unique needs.

## Webinar feature priorities



How has COVID-19 changed webinar strategies?

1. More content
2. Creativity in format
3. New types of speakers
4. Innovative features

From private customer events to large-scale thought leadership panels, the most successful webinars create a meaningful dialogue between the audience and presenters.

In 2020, BrightTALK has observed a new level of innovation and sophistication in webinar content. 2021 is guaranteed to continue to push marketers to new heights of creativity, especially in the types of presenters, content formats, and engagement tactics.

## No smoking gun: marketers turn to both content and demand metrics when evaluating the success of webinar programs

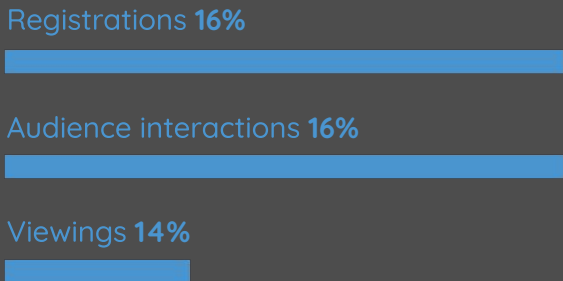
The automatic and seamless collection of engagement data is one of the core differentiators between webinar and in-person programs. Metrics like viewing time, completion rate, and interactions provide a deep level of insight into a prospect’s needs and intent to buy, while tying campaign success to revenue goals demonstrates overall marketing impact on business growth.

Over 80% of marketers rate webinars as an effective channel to create pipeline for sales, but there is great variety in the types of metrics used to determine program success. BrightTALK recommends building short-term content goals for registrations, engagement and interactions, as well as long-term demand goals that link the content to revenue.

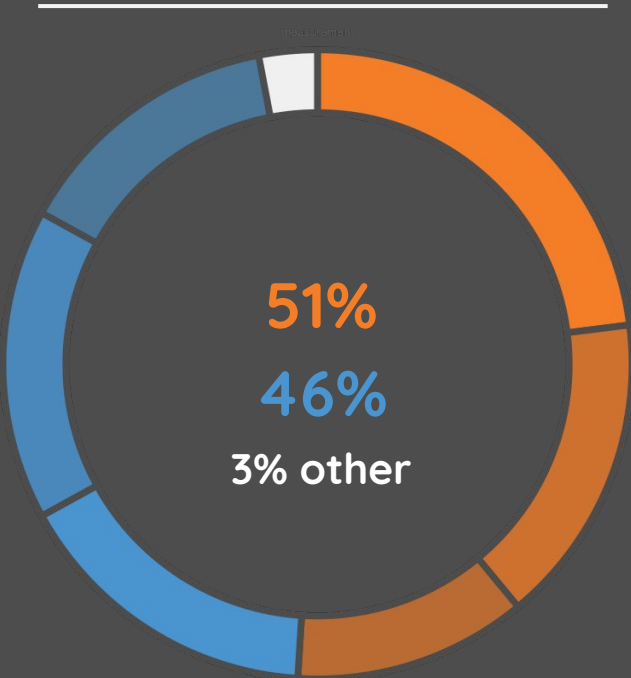
### Demand Metrics



### Content Metrics



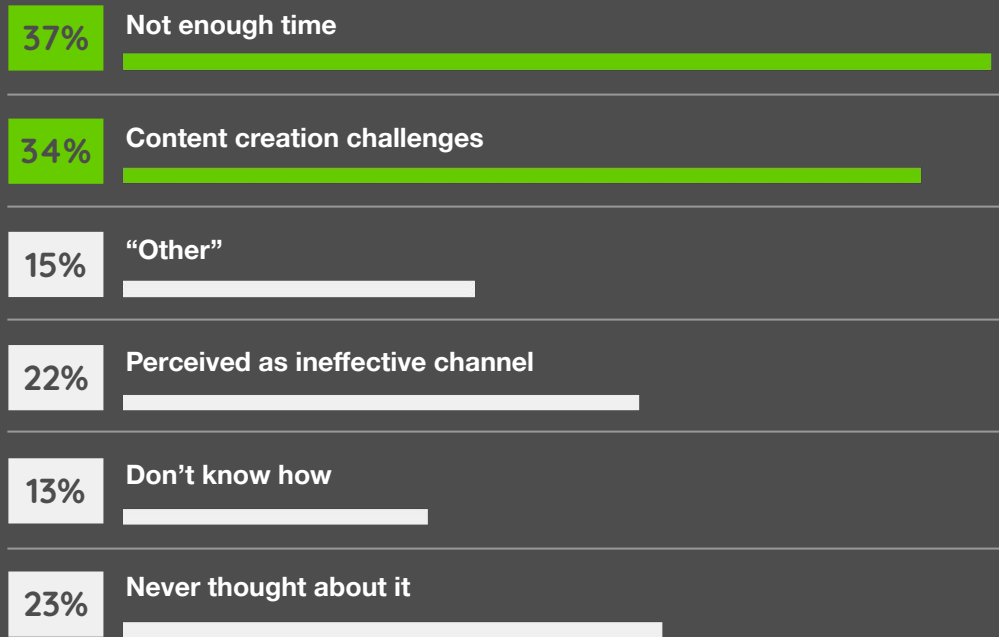
## What’s your primary measurement for webinar success?



## Concern over time and resources prevent a small percentage of marketers from pursuing webinar programs

The majority of survey respondents expressed an affinity for webinar-based demand generation. However, some marketers worry that they lack the time and resources to create a robust webinar program that drives results. There’s a common misconception that only large teams with unlimited budgets see results with webinar strategies. Rely on existing content programs like paid advertising and website engagement to identify in-demand topics for your audience. Pool internal resources and thought leaders to launch a webinar without breaking the bank.

### Reasons for not running webinar programs

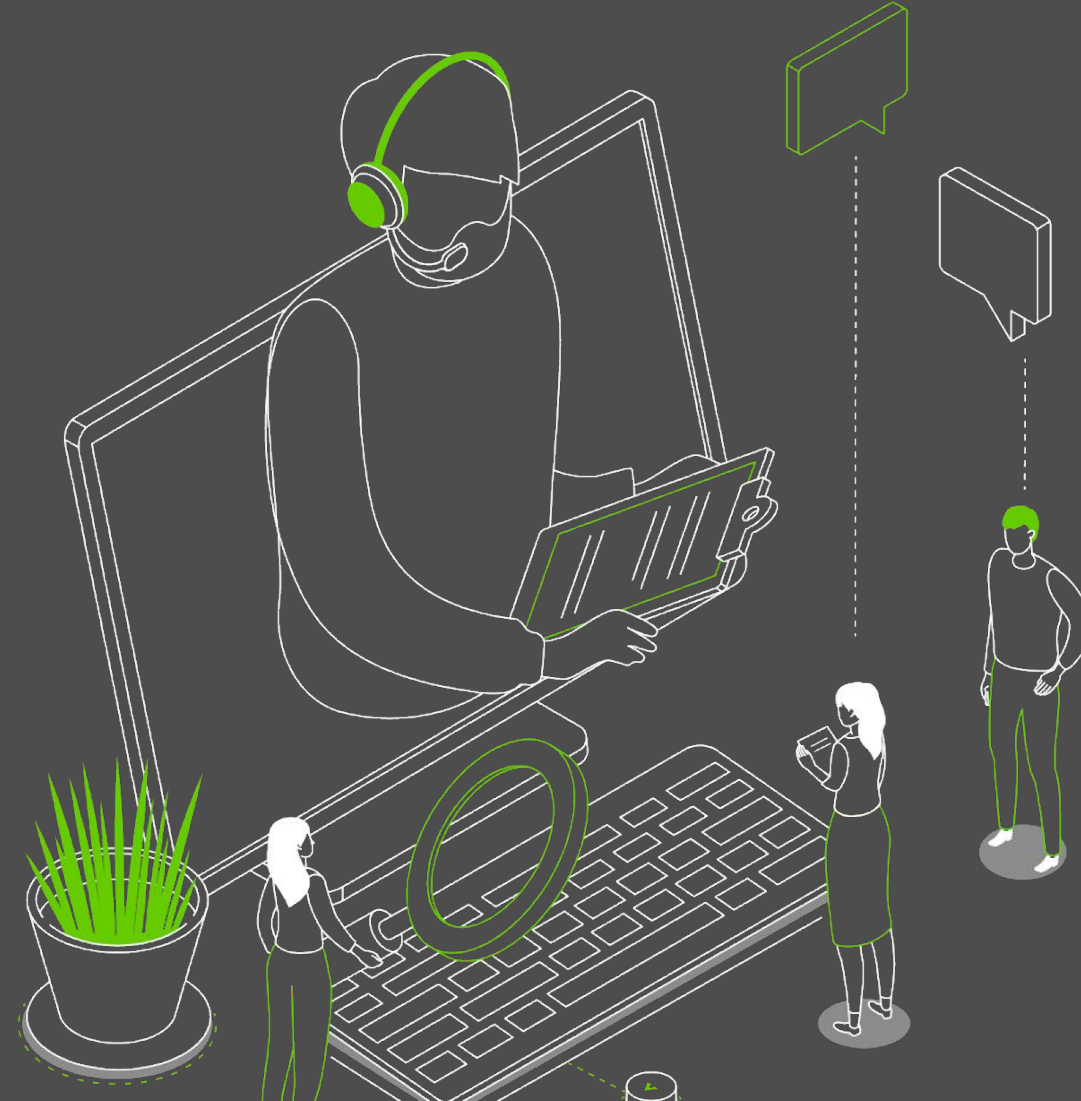


### Tips for launching a webinar program

1. Speaker(s) - Tap a customer or in-house expert for a webcam panel
2. Content - Flip an existing whitepaper or blog post into a presentation
3. Consistency - Commit to one webinar a month to build a community
4. Engagement - Leverage polls and Q&A to sustain engagement and inform future content
5. Collaborate - Team up with strategic partners to help with editorial and promotions

## Virtual Events Strategy

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# The lasting effects of a pandemic: from in-person to virtual

Based on our survey, 65% of marketers say virtual events are currently a part of their marketing strategy. Of that percentage, only 34% host them regularly. Content heavy and historically considered a massive lift, virtual events were often seen as a big production - but that misconception is quickly changing.

With virtual events taking the limelight this year, marketers are finding more ways to streamline how teams can get an event up and running with ease. As more companies adopt a virtual event strategy, we're also seeing an increase in audience engagement when compared with a typical in-person event.

## March 2020

How have virtual event strategies been impacted?



## Sept 2020

Are virtual events a part of your strategy?



## Prioritizing top-notch speakers will boost the overall quality and experience of a virtual event

When it comes to hosting virtual events, one of the top priorities for marketers is speaker quality. Incorporating knowledgeable speakers who can can effectively communicate the subject matter at hand will elevate content. Not only does this ensure a positive audience experience, but it will also ultimately boost the overall success rate of your event.

**Dramatically increased** 63.7%

Strategy has remained the same 19.0%

**No current plans** 17.3%



Marketers leaned heavily on virtual events to replace in-person events in their strategy

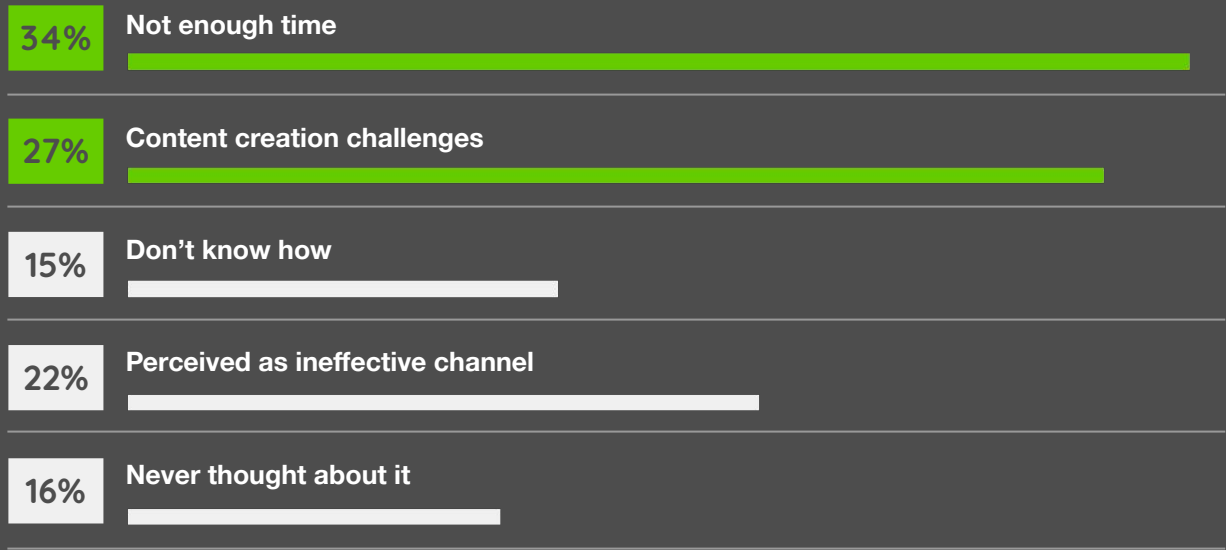
### Successful virtual event checklist:

1. Knowledgeable speakers
2. Interactive platform
3. Enhanced sessions with higher production value
4. Virtual event landing page

## Time and content creation prove to be the biggest barriers for marketers

Many marketers are either hosting their own virtual events and meetups or are sponsoring industry-specific virtual events and conferences. The small percentage of marketers not leveraging this channel are concerned with time restraints and content creation challenges.

### Reasons for not running virtual event programs



### In the past 4 months...



## Adapting to a new normal

With the rise of virtual events, there comes a learning curve to understand what success looks like.

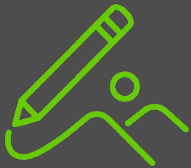
While audience engagement is the top challenge and focus for marketers, familiarizing yourself the tools at hand and how you can create a uniquely interactive event will help to expand the the value of your content.

Functionality within your event such as polling and the ability to ask questions or download attachments are a few small but effective nuances that will give you a leg up on competitors.





# COVID-19: 5 Predictions for 2021 and Beyond



## New frontier

Buyers' behaviors have changed due to remote working. Many believe these behaviors will stick as digital experiences become the norm.



## New approach

Many will continue to refine their product offering, sales enablement and marketing systems to improve conversions and scale content to meet demand.



## Cut through the noise

Webinars and virtual events will continue to be an important channel for many, but marketers will need to be creative and original to cut through the increased digital noise.



## Increasing complexity

Analytics and attribution will play an increased role as the buyer's journey becomes more complex with higher volumes of digital interactions.



## Hybrid approach

In-person events aren't gone forever, but they are changed. Hybrid events will be the future as digital and in-person integrate into complementary experiences.

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## *Covid-19's Effect on Marketing Priorities*

Thanks for digging into this data  
with us.

For more step-by-step guidance  
on how to best react and adapt to  
these trends, check out these  
resources.

### BrightTALK Blueprint Course

With a little bit of advanced planning and creativity, you can Plan, Execute, Measure and Scale an effective webinar program.



View the course

### Blueprint Generator Tool

Create your own custom webinar plan, and reverse waterfall wireframe with our interactive blueprint generator tool.



Create your plan

