

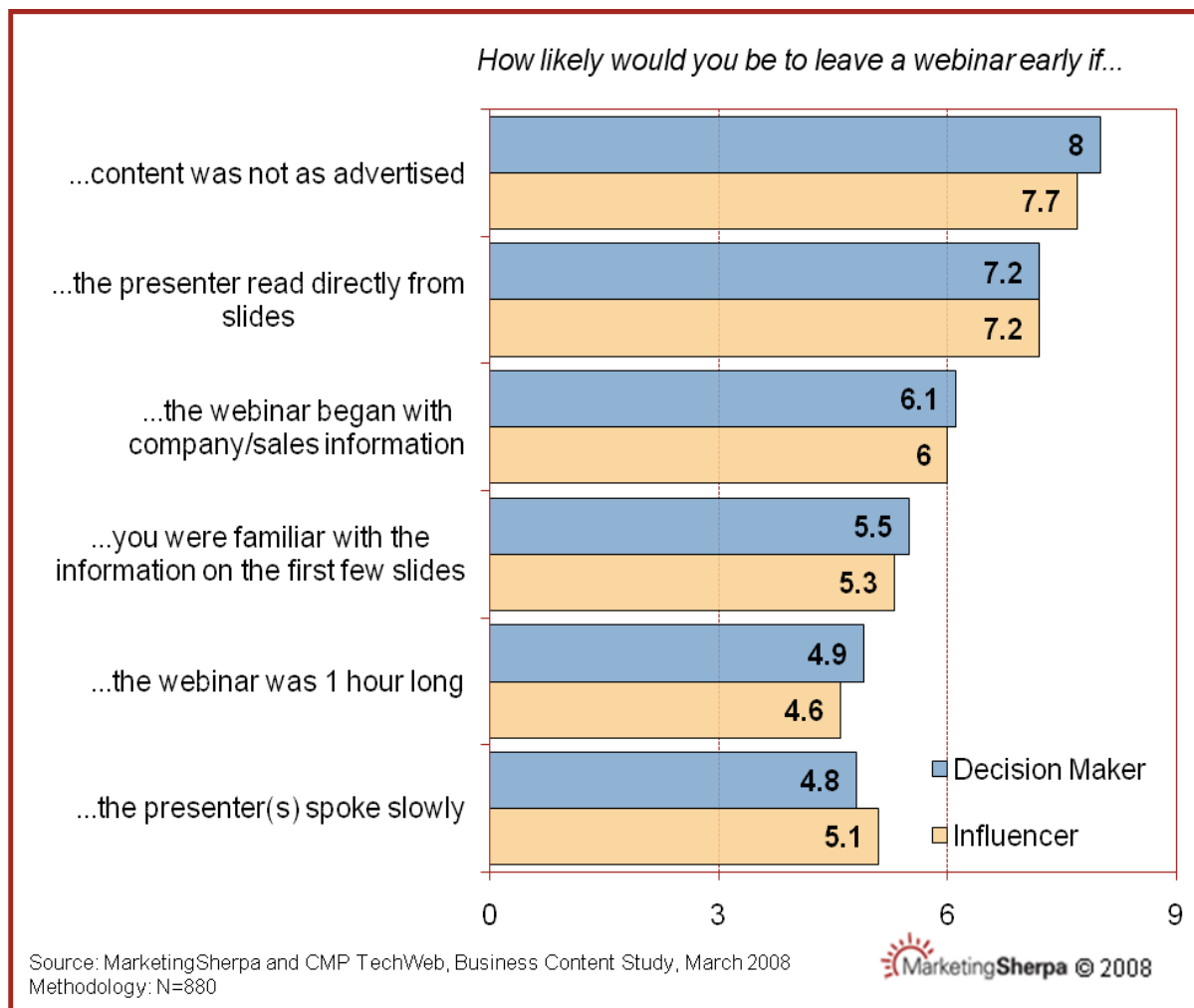
What Causes Webinar Attendees to Bail?

Summary

Webinars are a mainstay of many marketing programs. The dynamic platform can explain your offerings, establish thought leadership and grow house lists. Companies that see visitors return to their webinars, despite increased competition, do a good job of addressing the needs of their attendees.

The chart below shows the top webinar turnoffs for marketers. Lack of honesty about content heads the list, followed closely by less-than-dynamic presenters who need better communication skills.

Chart: What Causes Webinar Attendees to Bail?



Key takeaway #1

Misleading visitors is often an innocent mistake - marketers write copy about webinars given by internal or external experts, and the true topic gets lost in translation. Sometimes, the marketer manipulates the topic by including what he thinks the audience wants to hear. Presenters should always get a look at and sign off on the main topics being pitched by marketing. Opt to under-sell and over-deliver.

Key takeaway #2

People like presenters who grab their attention, even if they're not funny (although being entertaining doesn't hurt). But they do need to be sufficiently dynamic. Unskilled presenters who read from slides will bore attendees and see headcounts drop steadily throughout the session.

Webinar speakers also feel stress, although they are under less pressure than those at live events. Often, in technology sales, talented scientists and programmers don't turn out to be dynamic speakers. What you gain in authority at a webinar, you will lose in boredom. Consider sending such folks to speaker training or use a two-presenter approach. Adding a team member with great communication skills can offset a dry presenter.

Shorter webinars are in vogue now - despite no evidence that says shorter presentations garner more opt-ins or more enthusiastic reviews. At the same time, respondents don't seem too worried about webinars that run a full hour. Let the content dictate length, and leave plenty of time for questions. If you expect certain questions, consider saving some relevant content for Q&A. The change in format can enliven the audience.

Methodology

MarketingSherpa and CMP TechWeb, Business Content Survey. The Business Content Survey was targeted to specific CMP lists on April 16, 2008, and kept open until May 1, 2008, collecting 880 responses. Respondents were screened for role in the buying decision.



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Contact Information:

www.marketingsherpa.com

(877) 895-1717 (US)

(401) 247-7655 (outside US)