



# The Power of Episodic Content

How Webinar Series Create Connections and Community with Buyers



BrightTALK



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# Executive Summary

The binge-watching phenomenon has taken our world by storm. Bite-sized TikTok videos reign supreme, there's an always-growing supply of streaming content, and influencers are churning out more videos and live streams than ever before. It's clear that consumers today crave video - and lots of it.

But, you may be wondering, how does that translate to the B2B buyer landscape? What do professionals crave as they research topics, new vendors, and emerging technologies? How can you as a marketer cut through the clutter and use the right content to reinforce your leadership positioning?



Over the past 10 years, B2B marketers have increasingly leveraged video-based channels to drive deep engagement with buyers and customers. This trend was only amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. You'd be hard pressed to find a marketing team today that doesn't have some sort of webinar, video, and virtual event strategy in their go-to-market plan.

*[BrightTALK](#), the leading webinar and virtual event technology provider, has a front row seat to observe buyer content consumption trends.*

*Our audience of 12M professionals turn to [BrightTALK.com](#) to view hundreds of thousands of pieces of free webinar and video content on the topics that matter most to their careers and purchase decisions.*

However, the real challenge lies in cultivating community at scale while also cutting through a fiercely competitive and cluttered digital environment.

This eBook will break down how episodic content can ignite any demand generation or ABM strategy for long-term results. We'll cover:

- Why episodic content is so powerful
- The 4 steps for launching a webinar series
- How to overcome common barriers to producing webinar series





# Introduction: The Audience Engagement Puzzle

Any marketer knows that long-term engagement is the key to building fruitful buyer relationships that create ongoing revenue opportunities. How to actually generate that deep engagement is a different story. As we consider the best tactics in the B2B marketing toolbox, we must start with three key factors influencing the buyer-vendor relationship today.



**1**

## Digital Competition Is Fierce

Increasingly popular digital marketing channels provide more flexibility and scale than traditional, outdated methods of engagement. However, this digital shift also presents a dark side for marketers and buyers alike. Today's professionals are inundated with emails and content, making it more difficult for marketers to thwart competition and create connections with their audience.

**2**

## Purchase Behavior is Evolving

On the bright side, we know that buyers are dedicating considerable time to research industry topics and vendors. In fact, a recent survey from BrightTALK's Benchmarks Report found that 86% of professionals dedicate at least 2 hours a week to industry-specific learning and growth<sup>1</sup>. Plus, when these professionals enter a buying cycle, 70% of them are viewing at least 3 pieces of content before making a purchasing decision<sup>1</sup>.

**3**

## Video Is a Preferred Format

Lastly, when researching pre-purchase, professionals are turning in droves to video-based content like webinars and virtual events to self-educate on topics and vendors. BrightTALK Benchmarks data shows that 81% of professionals value webinars as their preferred format for learning and growth<sup>1</sup>.

**These three audience insights present an engagement puzzle for today's marketers. There's both challenge and opportunity. We know there's an appetite for credible, quality content. And it's clear that there's a strong preference for video content that guides learning and research. Yet, marketers struggle to effectively appeal to their audiences and gain digital mindshare. What's the answer?**

# The Power of Episodic Content

Episodic content, or any sequential content that is part of a series, helps you build credibility and familiarity with your audience and position your business as a market leader. While ad hoc content can be effective at drawing in leads, it may fail to engage audiences in progressive learning. Recent BrightTALK data shows that 68% of viewers prefer episodic content<sup>2</sup>. An episodic approach organically builds community around the very challenge you are trying to solve for customers while also driving re-engagement in the months to come.

Webinar series, in particular, offer an always-on approach for engaging buyers and driving deep connections on the topics that matter most to your audience. Not only do these programs cater to professionals' preferred content consumption habits, but they are also the ideal medium for in-depth storytelling on complex topics.

In short, webinar series are a powerful, episodic tactic for solving the engagement puzzle and using audience preferences to your advantage.

## What Are Webinar Series?

A webinar series is a collection of live or on-demand episodes focused on a specific topic for a distinct audience. They're created and delivered with a cadence that develops the learning of your audience and accounts. By engaging new people more deeply over time, marketers can identify and develop active buyers that pave the way to future opportunities.

# Why You Should Create Webinar Series

## Build Brand Connections

Generating broad brand recognition is the foundation of effective demand generation. Although not everyone is in an active buying cycle when they view your webinar series, the highly visual format builds powerful connections between buyer and vendor. The consistent cadence keeps prospects coming back for more insights time and time again.

## Nurture a Community

Webinar series build a community of professionals who are eager to learn. The format encourages engagement through live Q&A, downloadable attachments, and poll discussions with audience members and speakers. Rather than offering a one-and-done content experience, webinar series open an always-evolving dialogue with buyers that can be continued over time and in future sales conversations.







## Foster Re-Engagement

Successful episodic content re-engages audiences over time. This helps keep prospects engaged throughout their buying cycle so you can tee up better conversations for sales. BrightTALK data shows that series-based content drives a 71% higher re-engagement rate compared to ad hoc content<sup>3</sup>. This recurring engagement provides repeated exposure to key buying groups and draws them back for more.

## Break Down Complex Topics

It's incredibly difficult to position every product and solution your business offers in a single webinar. That's certainly not the way professionals want to learn and absorb information either. A webinar series allows you to break down complex topics into digestible chunks. You also can tap into a range of speakers to add more diversity and richness to the subject matter.

## **Streamline Content Development**

A webinar series naturally helps marketers build momentum for a specific content theme over time. You can also repurpose the story into other formats like eBooks, blog posts, and videos for social media. Many BrightTALK clients create blog posts after their webinars air to get additional mileage out of the content. This method is also SEO-friendly and can make your website more easily found by new audiences who are searching for relevant topics.

## **Gain Valuable Buyer Insights**

Webinar series allow marketers to better understand their audience. You can gain insights into your ideal customer's pain points, concerns, and preferences and refine your buyer personas. You can also test different topics, presentation styles, and frequencies to inform your marketing strategy and improve your ROI.



# Getting Started: 4 Steps to Building a Successful Webinar Series

Today, many marketing teams are using webinars in an on-again, off-again, ad hoc and tactical fashion. They are missing out on the value that webinar series offer as a deep engagement vehicle.

The idea of creating just one webinar program may feel intimidating, let alone an entire series set with a theme, speakers, episode story arc, and promotional cycle. As a result, many marketers shy away from using webinars even though the medium can attract a highly targeted audience, deliver tremendous value to the viewers, and maximize marketing outcomes. To tap into the power of webinar series, marketing teams must find a way to plan and deliver the content with relative ease.

Luckily, with a little bit of advanced planning, marketers can experience the flywheel-effect by deploying webinar series at scale. The framework below is a compilation of 20+ years of BrightTALK best practices. Follow these simple steps and you'll reap the benefits of webinar series in no time at all.

**Plan**

**Execute**

**Measure**

**Scale**

# 1. Plan

The planning phase sets the stage for your whole webinar series. Work through this simple checklist to make sure you're appropriately planning for an always-on webinar series.

## Find Your Platform

Locking in a sound technology partner, like [BrightTALK](#), is a logical first step when launching a new webinar series. You'll want to be mindful of your end goals when vetting platforms. Consider the volume of content you'll need to produce, necessary functionality and features, and value-adds like a built-in audience when distributing your content. An embeddable platform allows you to easily group episodes on your website by topic or series [like this](#).

## Focus on Your Audience

Each webinar series should be specifically focused on a key persona or selection of buying groups within your ideal customer profile. Be very specific about what types of accounts and individuals you want to engage, influence, and convert with this series.

## Identify Topics

With your audience in mind, flesh out the key topic(s) you will address with the series. Aim to own at least one topic and become the go-to authority on it. If you have a series based on micro-segmentation of a broader subject, structure the content to position your brand as a credible source of information for each subtopic to increase your share of audience and share of voice.

## Build the Series Concept

Building a detailed series concept in the early phase of ideation will save you time and effort down the line. Strive to establish [a game plan for all core details of the series](#) including title ideas, a series description, talent options, episode topics, cadence, and inspiration for the visual identity and branding. Start with a series overview and consider your business objectives. Then, map out episode ideas to connect them with a consistent narrative. Host an initial series kickoff call with all content stakeholders to review and discuss this draft series concept.



## Choose Your Talent

Anchor the content and build brand recognition by using a series host with whom the audience is familiar to accelerate the “like, know, and trust” factor. The host should connect with the audience, bring the content to life, and become the constant presence that connects the content from one episode to the next. Be sure to also identify guest speakers, clients, and subject matter experts who can add to the series.

## Find Your Cadence

Once your talent is locked in, you should align on the cadence of the overall series. Take into account talent bandwidth as well as your team’s capacity for execution. Some BrightTALK clients start with a quarterly cadence and eventually build up to a monthly cadence. The episode frequency should clearly be communicated to the audience as well. Lastly, always highlight the next episode in the series during a live webinar to build momentum.

## Craft the Initial Episodes

A well-developed episode story arc extends the life of the content and reinforces your expertise on the subject matter. Creating an evergreen narrative allows you to keep the series on your website to align with your annual planning so you can maximize ROI. Meanwhile, the story should evoke emotions and connect with your audience to deepen relationships.

We recommend taking your episode ideas and testing the first three episodes of a series. Create a written outline for each episode flow and discuss it in-depth with all talent, speakers and stakeholders. Once you’re aligned on the initial episodes, you can begin executing your pilot.

## 2. Execute

With a detailed webinar series plan in place, executing on the first episode will come together quite quickly. For BrightTALK's full framework on executing a webinar episode, check out our [BrightTALK Blueprint Course](#). In the meantime, here are our top tips for nailing the logistics of a live webinar.

### Finalize the Episode Plan

Take your draft episode plan and flesh it out to create a complete webinar episode flow. We recommend that you use a shared document so all stakeholders can contribute. Help your webinar host draft a snappy introduction, shape the key sections of the presentation and add in helpful cues for when the host should share their screen or launch a poll. You'll also want to lay out key deadlines for when the slides should be finalized and when you'll host a dry run.

### Lock in All Key Players

Calendar invitations are your best friend during this stage. Whoever is managing the webinar program should send through calendar holds for all prep calls and deadlines, as well as the timeslot of the webinar. Be sure to include presenter login information in the calendar invite to avoid any technical issues or delays.

### Think About Duration

The ideal duration for an episode varies depending on the topic, the industry, and the subject matter. Most webinars work best with a length of 30 to 40 minutes, which allows for audience attention while giving you enough time to engage with them (e.g., with live Q&A).

### Balance Breadth vs. Depth

One of the key benefits to webinar series is that you can break down a broad, complex topic into timely chunks. Be sure to balance specificity and breadth when shaping your initial episodes. Also, if you find that the audience is interested in a niche topic, you can always create spin-off webinars or direct the viewers to your other existing content.

## Consider the Format

Live webinars allow you to interact with viewers in real-time and even adjust your content on the fly, based on audience input, to deliver an interactive experience. Meanwhile, pre-recording the episodes gives you the opportunity to create highly-polished content. Pre-recording is also a great option when speaker schedules conflict or a particular presenter is camera shy.

## Build the Promotional Plan

The sweet spot for scheduling webinar content is at least 4-6 weeks out from the air date. This offers ample promotional time for you to lock in a strategy across email, social media, and any other distribution methods. You'll also want to enable your internal sales development and sales teams so they can generate interest with prospects and clients. Additionally, BrightTALK clients tap into our AI-driven promotional engine to help drive buyer engagement with their content.



## Layer in Audience Engagement

There's a range of live audience engagement tools at your fingertips that can drive further value for viewers. Leverage polls to capture real-time data that can be used to shape the rest of your presentation. Those insights are also excellent fodder for SDR follow-up post-event. Live Q&A opens up a dialogue between the presenter and audience - an essential step in building trust and authentic connections with buyers.

## Host a Prep Call

Confident speakers lead to successful webinars. One of the best ways to set your presenters up for success is by hosting ample prep calls and dry runs before the live day. You want to ensure that the talent feels comfortable with the webinar platform itself. They should practice logging in and using the different features. Everyone should also be aligned on the episode flow, as well as roles and responsibilities during the presentation.

## Gather Feedback

Most platforms have a rating and response system built in so you can generate real-time feedback on your webinar. Monitor this data so you can learn what's working and what needs improvement. Use these insights to refine future episodes in your webinar series.





### 3. Measure

Any marketer knows the cycle of create, measure, and optimize when running campaigns and programs. With a new webinar series, you'll want to balance both short-term and long-term goals to assess the success of your current webinar and shape future results.

With content goals, we recommend focusing on key engagement metrics that demonstrate the success of engaging your core audience with the episode. These metrics include registrations, attendees, interactions, viewing time, and attachment downloads.

It's helpful to establish program benchmarks for each webinar so your team knows what success looks like. You can do a historical campaign analysis to find a baseline and set goals for future webinar episodes. Or, if you're just starting out with a webinar strategy, you can use industry stats like those listed in our [BrightTALK Benchmarks Report](#) to gauge performance.

Content Metrics	Demand Metrics
# of registrations	% of target accounts engaged
# of live and on-demand attendees	# and type (role and function) of individuals engaged per account
Average viewing time	# of buying centers identified/engaged across an account
# of interactions (polls and questions)	# opportunities created
# of attachment downloads	# of opportunities accelerated
# of Qualified Campaign Responses and MQLs	# of won deals and (\$) amount influenced



While early on you'll need to depend on the content measures on the previous page as guidance for course correction, your overarching efforts should align to fueling and accelerating pipeline creation and revenue.

If you don't yet have a framework in place for measuring the long-term impact of programs on opportunities and revenue, we highly encourage checking out our [Marketing Measurement Lab series](#). We walk you through the basic steps of aligning your tech stack and programs to commercial priorities. You'll come away with a framework for measuring content programs at scale and effectively proving your team's contribution to revenue across your organization.

## 4. Scale

Once you've launched your first episode in a webinar series, you'll begin to see how the momentum can steadily build over time. You'll likely work out some kinks in the planning and speaker coordination process early on, and then you can start to scale up production as you generate results.

As with all tactics, the goal is to maximize your marketing team's efforts while driving more demand and building your pipeline. Here are some ideas for scaling up your strategy.

### Build Up to Multiple Series

Once you become comfortable running one webinar series, you can layer on additional series that run concurrently.

Start by analyzing your data to generate insights about your audience and understand how your current topics perform.

Use these findings to shape future series and episodes.

### Play With Frequency

You may want to consider increasing the frequency of your webinar series depending on demand and your team's capacity. Instead of planning one episode at a time, you may feel confident enough to execute multiple episodes at once on varying cadences.

### Expand Your Talent Lineup

Experiment with new topics to reach different audiences and start recruiting thought leaders from outside your industry. Introducing a new perspective on a familiar subject matter can help spark conversations and drive engagement.

### Try a Virtual Event

[Virtual events](#), one or multi-day events featuring a collection of webinars, are the cousins to webinar series. At this point, you are already a pro at planning episodic content that ladders up to a given theme. Why not expand the reach and urgency around your given topic by shaping the content into a virtual event program?

### Up Your Production Quality

In this highly digital age, creativity in content marketing is at an all time high. Boost engagement with your programs by experimenting with the format and segments in your webinar series. You can try your hand at innovative events like virtual game shows or celebrity chef Q&As to lure in new audiences. Or, tap into BrightTALK's team of [in-house production experts](#) to make your content vision come to life.

# Need Help? Overcoming Common Barriers to Webinar Series

There are multiple ways to get up and running with a new webinar series. If you aren't quite ready to put the above framework in place, or if you simply want to outsource the content development process, we can help. BrightTALK has the platform, expertise and technologies to help B2B brands overcome the challenges of creating a webinar series.

## BrightTALK Originals

If you are just starting to dip your toe in the webinar series waters, slotting your talent into an existing series is a great option for quick, quality results. BrightTALK Originals are industry-specific series created to engage high-value audiences with original content at a regular cadence. We recruit the movers and shakers in each industry to speak on cutting-edge topics like IT security, enterprise architecture, business intelligence and fintech. We handle the entire process, from production and shooting to editing and streaming, and promote the webinar to our audience of 12M professionals.



[Learn more about Originals here](#)

## Customer Originals

Some teams may have the resources to develop webinar series but could use some help taking the content from ideation to production and distribution. With Customer Originals, BrightTALK helps develop an editorial and branded limited series of content that stands out in a crowded space. We support the customer-led editorial with data-driven research and our content experts' extensive knowledge.

## Analyst Originals

There may be a topic or theme that you'd like to discuss with your audience, but you don't have the internal expert to cover it in your webinar series. Analyst Originals pair your organization with an analyst from TechTarget's [Enterprise Strategy Group \(ESG\)](#) – an IT analyst, research, validation, and strategy firm. Your ESG analyst creates the webinar content based on their extensive industry knowledge and insights to elevate your brand and promote your solution.



# Conclusion: Content That Keeps on Giving

Today's marketing teams are facing a constantly-evolving digital marketplace. Buyer behavior is subject to change and can be highly unpredictable. Each year dozens of new technologies emerge promising a magic bullet - the next surefire tactic to help marketers hit their demand generation goals.

In reality, the most successful marketers are staying the course by investing in always-on channels that drive the highest quality engagement with their audience. Instead of a quick fix, they deploy good content through the right format at the right time in a prospect's buying cycle.

As we measure content consumption and consider the key engagement challenges facing marketers, it's clear that webinar series offer a strong path to consistent revenue growth. They can become a powerful layer of your GTM to build brand awareness, nurture relationships, and accelerate sales conversations. As you scale up and produce more episodes and series, your library of visually-engaging, topic-driven content will expand. And you'll be able to tap into real-time data on the depth, frequency, and volume of an account's engagement.

BrightTALK has been at the forefront of webinar and virtual event technology for 20+ years. Our time-tested framework for ideating and launching webinar series has helped thousands of clients reach and convert their core buyers. Our technology can serve as the backbone to your demand strategy, providing a flexible format for content programs with a built-in audience of 12M professionals. If more content support is needed, our Originals team can help you craft an episodic approach that targets the right audience and drive results.

# Ready to Get Started?

## Schedule a Demo With BrightTALK

to see how our experts can help launch your next webinar series.



[BrightTALK](#) brings professionals and businesses together to learn and grow. More than 12 million professionals engage with hundreds of thousands of free talks and 1,000 online summits to discover new technologies, learn from trusted experts, and enhance their careers. Thousands of businesses use BrightTALK's AI-powered content and demand marketing platform to grow revenue. Clients include Symantec, SafeBreach, JP Morgan, BNY Mellon, Scality, Cisco, and Amazon Web Services. BrightTALK is a subsidiary of [TechTarget](#), Inc., the global leader in purchase intent-driven marketing and sales services.