



**NUCLEUS
RESEARCH**

GUIDEBOOK

ON24

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THE BOTTOM LINE

As more companies look to Web conferences and Webcasts to broaden and deepen their sales and marketing pipeline, audience experience can have a significant impact on lead generation and prospect engagement. In analyzing ON24 customers' use of its Webcasting platform, Nucleus found that its support for professional branding, accessibility, and interactivity drove greater engagement and accelerated sales cycles, while analytics and integration improved lead management and increased sales and marketing productivity.

THE SITUATION

Web conferencing and Web casts have become an important part of many companies' sales, marketing, and customer support strategies because of their ability to reach a broad audience and keep prospects and customers engaged at a lower cost than alternatives. At the same time, Web and social presence have become a more important part of overall brand image. Users have also become accustomed to higher-quality online experiences through their use of consumer-grade applications such as Skype and Facetime. As a result, audiences expect nothing less than flawless virtual interactions with companies if they plan to buy from them.

As a result, many companies have found their legacy Web conferencing platforms limit their ability to maximize returns from their marketing efforts across the pipeline for a number of reasons:

- Barriers to participation. When prospects are required to install software or accept a plug-in to join a Web conference, voluntary participation rates drop by 30 to 40 percent. In many cases, organizations' IT policies prohibit the downloading and installation of software on company computers.
- Technical difficulties. Dropoff rates increase dramatically if technical issues such as latency, poor sound quality, or other presentation problems occur.
- Static broadcasting. Participants are much less likely to remain engaged or retain Webcase content if it is a one-way broadcast without interactivity or other content.

Web audiences increasingly demand high accessibility, interactivity, and quality simply to stay engaged.

Simply providing quality audio and slides for real-time or on-demand viewing have become table stakes. Audiences increasingly demand high accessibility, interactivity, and quality simply to stay engaged. This Guidebook explores the experiences of customers in moving to a professional-grade Webcasting platform such as ON24.

THE SOLUTION

ON24 provides a cloud-based Webcasting platform to enable companies to deliver Webcasts and other Web-based interactions with virtual audiences, from a few members to thousands. The platform combines integrated audio, video, and slides into a single online presentation that can be streamed over the Internet. Key capabilities of the platform include:

- Support for customization and branding including corporate colors, images, and top-line messaging.
- Support for interactive features such as question and answer, chat, polling, surveys, and social media.
- Widgets for standard features, communications, external content integration, collaboration, and training.
- Real-time analytics and reporting that include prebuilt reports and dashboards for participant and lead analysis.
- Download-free access to Web conferences from any Web browser, tablet, or mobile phone.
- Support for both real-time and rebroadcasting of Webcasts.

To understand the evolution of Web conferencing technologies and expectations and the impact of investing in a professional-grade Webcasting platform such as ON24, Nucleus conducted in-depth interviews with a number of ON24 customers. The customers ranged from small firms to Fortune 50 companies, and they used the platform to support a variety of business needs including lead generation and engagement, sales support, and ongoing customer education and support.

WHY ON24

Nucleus found most ON24 customers moved to the platform after outgrowing the capabilities of another online meeting tool. Key reasons customers cited for upgrading to ON24 included the professional-grade user interface, advanced capabilities such as analytics, and reliability. Customers said:

- *"Customer support and ease of use were really important to us, as well as customer experience. We used another tool before, and it had really limited support and I didn't want to take the risk."*
- *"We have a global contract with Adobe Connect, but we can't capture the things we can with ON24, like full registration capabilities and the ability to tie in CRM IDs."*
- *"We can easily tell when people come in, where they're coming from, how long they stay, and where they come from."*
- *"There's a separation between the presentation and what the attendees see; you have a lot more control."*

- *With GTM or GTW if the computer you're using has issues, the screen sharing can be a real problem."*
- *"The reporting is excellent. It saves us a lot of time, particularly on polls."*
- *"ON24 and its presentation interface is very easy to use and very easy to explain. Our clients feel more confident in our ability to produce Webcasts because of the presentation interface."*

KEY BENEFIT AREAS

In exploring the benefits of ON24, Nucleus found that specific capabilities of the platform delivered benefit across its use in the sales cycle, from lead generation to engagement and lead nurturing to closing the deal. Customers using ON24 beyond sales efforts found benefits for ongoing customer engagement as well.

LEAD GENERATION

In talking to customers, Nucleus found that the accessibility, scalability, branding support, and reliability of ON24 supported lead generation efforts more effectively than other meeting tool platforms:

- ON24 Webinars allow instant access to Webinars without forcing audiences to download software or force plug-ins. It also supports access from all mobile devices and tablets, increasing the likelihood that a participant can join without difficulty.
- ON24 can support thousands of simultaneous live attendees as well as provide on-demand attendees with the same presentation fidelity and quality.
- Customers can completely brand the ON24 platform as their own to reflect their corporate tone, style, and messaging, projecting a more consistent brand presence and professional image.
- ON24 has redundant data centers to support uptime above five-nine availability. It also has a global network of partners that provide local support and troubleshooting services on an ongoing basis.

Customers said:

- *"We started with Webex and the technology ran out of steam. It couldn't run very nicely on the iPad so if people weren't on Windows with a laptop they couldn't fully participate."*
- *"We're making it available so people can listen, it's easy to access and use, they can get the information, and it becomes on demand if they miss it. We get 25 to 30 percent of participants back on playback."*
- *"When you're looking for the numbers and the caliber of speakers that we have you want a platform you can trust. If you get people registered and they have a terrible experience they're not going to come back."*
- *"For us it's the top of the funnel. We measure success by the number of registrations and the number of net new leads, and the better user experience pays for itself."*

Key benefits customers achieved associated with using ON24 for lead generation included reduced cost per lead, increased marketing productivity, and reduced presenter preparation time.

ENGAGEMENT

Customers using ON24 for ongoing engagement and lead nurturing found its advanced interactive capabilities including polls, question and answer, social media integration, chat, and group collaboration tools provided a more engaging experience for audience members. These features also increased the likelihood that they would actively participate through the completion of the Webcast, revisit on-demand Webcasts, and share the content with others. Customers said:

- *"Most of it [use of ON24] is pipeline acceleration. We have impacted more than a billion in pipeline, and we [tie ON24 analytics to the pipeline] to understand if someone's actively participating in the listening end of a call."*
- *"When people come on for a 1-hour Webinar they stay for at least 50 minutes."*

The ON25 Marketing Edition provides additional capabilities for improving and streamlining engagement with customers, with lead scoring capabilities that enable marketers to triage leads based on their level of engagement.

Key benefits customers experience around engagement include increased marketing productivity, shorter time to close, and increased average deal size.

SALES CLOSE

Customers using ON24 as a tool at the final stages of the sales cycle found the platform's screen sharing, video, and "deminar" capabilities could be helpful for bringing new influencers or decision makers up to speed on their offering and accelerating the close. The flexibility of the platform, coupled with ON24's performance and accessibility, enabled sales people to accelerate deals by more rapidly addressing objections and educating influencers.

BEST PRACTICES

Nucleus found customers maximized their returns from ON24 by following a number of best practices including:

- Using ON24-provided training to get up to speed. ON24 provides complimentary training for customers to learn the capabilities of the platform and how to best configure it to meet their needs. Companies taking advantage of training were better able to leverage the engagement capabilities of the platform while reducing the time needed to effectively adopt the platform.
- Taking advantage of CRM integration. Taking advantage of integration support and the lead scoring capabilities in ON24 Marketing Edition enables marketers to

streamline the triage and handoff process for leads from marketing to sales to reduce friction and potential missed opportunities.

- Leveraging real-time and on-demand capabilities. Nucleus found customers were able to effectively expand their reach by 20 to 30 percent by offering Webcasts both in real time and on demand, and that enabling participants to easily invite their peers to view a Web cast was an effective means of extending engagement to a broader set of influencers.
- Taking advantage of ON24 managed services for support. Customers cited ON24 support and the “safety net” provided by ON24 for real-time troubleshooting during Webcasts enabled them to focus on presenters and attract a higher caliber of presenters by providing a lower risk, less “noisy” Webcasting environment.

CONCLUSION

Upgrading to a professional-grade Webcasting platform such as ON24 enables companies to deliver more engaging Webinars to customers and prospects. In our analysis of customers’ experiences, Nucleus found that ON24’s branding capabilities, accessibility, interactivity, analytics and reporting, and integration drove greater value across the pipeline through improved customer engagement and improved lead nurturing. We also found that smaller or less well-known firms were able to compete at a higher level by projecting a more professional and polished platform for real-time and replayed Webinars.

Companies planning to use Webcasts or Webinars as part of their lead generation and nurturing efforts are likely to find that, deployed properly, an investment in ON24 reduces the cost of lead nurturing and engagement, increases average deal size, and accelerates buying cycles by providing a more positive engagement experience across the phases of the marketing and sales funnel.