Common Pitfalls

Audio Descriptive Text

Title: Professional Development 201: From Basic to Dynamic. During the Webinar; Common Pitfalls. Image of PD practices: Sustain, Design, Promote, Deliver, Follow Up, and Evaluate. CDC logo. Images of checklists for facilitators and producers summarized in narration.

Video Summary

Facilitators and producers can avoid common pitfalls in webinar delivery by following some effective guidelines.

Audio Script

We've talked a lot about some of the best practices for the design and delivery of a webinar. However, sometimes you can learn a lot by talking about what **not** to do.

To avoid common pitfalls, **facilitators** should remember to:

- **Start and end on time**. Log into the room early and reward punctuality by starting on time. Waiting for others only gives those who arrived on time the opportunity to become distracted.

- **Include a soft opener**. Use these to break distractions. A soft opener gets participants to think about the content and use the platform tools.

- **Have an agenda**. Give participants an agenda so they have an overview of topics to be covered and get a sense of how the webinar will progress.

- **Include participant interaction**. Plan interactivities throughout the event, not just in the beginning, middle, and end. Think about the pace of the event. Stick to the schedule to avoid rushing through certain sections.

- **Remind participants to speak one at a time**. Too many people talking at once can cause a lot of distraction and turn the webinar into a garbled session. Don't be afraid to interrupt side conversations or the group as a whole to remind participants to speak one at a time so that the entire group can hear.

- **Handle questions properly**. Spending an inordinate amount of time on a single person's question will lose the rest of the audience. Gauge the length of the anticipated response before answering. Table it for the end of the section if it appears it will run long. Use a "parking lot" to store questions and discussions that might distract from your main content.

- **Limit text on the screen**. Best practices for slides were covered in the Before the Webinar section, but it is worth repeating.

- **Limit the use of tools**. Some webinar platforms have amazing features. Several were mentioned in the Webinar Preparations section. Don't feel pressured to utilize all features in a single event. Participants can get confused and frustrated if they are bounced from tool to tool.

- **Be organized**. This can lead to erosion of confidence and loss of credibility. Keep the work space clean; have guidance tools at hand and organized.

Producers can also hit some snags during a webinar. Producers should always remember to:

- **Test the media in advance**. Log in well ahead of time to make sure everything in the platform is working properly. This activity allows time for troubleshooting in case something is amiss.

- **Know how to use the platform**. All platforms are somewhat similar, but they are all somewhat different as well. The producer may operate Adobe® Connect™ effectively but be less comfortable with Skype®. He or she may need a practice session so as not to fumble the launch of the webinar. Technical glitches put the technology—not the content—on center stage.

- **Remember to record**. This oversight happens frequently. The easiest way to avoid this mistake is to start recording before the participants arrive. Audio and video files can be edited to trim dead air—but only if they are recorded first!

- **Stay focused**. Ignoring text chat questions or requests for help make participants feel slighted. Eliminate distractions and pay close attention.

Now, let's review what we have covered in this section.