

# [The Latest Trends in B2B Content](#)

More evidence that providing quality content is the name of the social media marketing game.

This is a great infographic available on a Hubspot blog, [How Does Your Company Stack Up? The Latest Trends in B2B Content](#). To check it out, click [here](#).

Here's the beginning of the blog:

One of my favorite things in grade school was that whole "gold star" system. Remember it? You do something well in the classroom and you get a shiny gold star next to your name on a chart of your whole classmates. So, at any given time, you can look around and see how you're stacking up against the rest of the class.

But once you get out of that grade-school classroom, the gold-star system often goes away. You can't see how you stack up against your competitors and peers because you don't have access to their data.

That's why benchmark studies, like one recently released by Content Marketing Institute, Marketing Profs, and Brightcove about [the current state of content marketing](#), are just so darn awesome.

Take a look at the latest trends to find out if your company deserves a gold star or not. Trust me — it'll be just as exciting as the time you got a gold star in the fourth grade.

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## [Insurers Must Beat the Customer Engagement Disconnect](#)



*Insurers must overcome the customer*

Insurance marketing professionals are striving to beat the customer engagement disconnect.

They know that customer engagement must go beyond internet and social media participation to meet customers where they are — at their cell phones. We live in a world where the mobile phone has become the center of people's lives. Insurers should be taking full advantage of this.

Sure, customers are using their smartphones to surf the net and participate in social media. However, the best way to reach customers personally is through voice mail, text messages and email.

My most recent [blog](#) for [SPLICE Software](#) covers the results of a recent [Marketo study](#) of marketers from many industries across four countries. The study reveals that marketers, in general, know they must overcome what I call the customer engagement disconnect. Not surprisingly, the study also reveals that customers are willing to be brand advocates for companies that demonstrate they care for them.

The study also reveals that customers are willing to be brand advocates for companies that demonstrate they care for them.

Insurance marketers need to find the tools to help engage more directly with potential and current customers. Usually, sales and customer service departments already have such tools. To ensure messaging and branding are consistent, marketers should be partnering with other departments that are contacting policyholders.

While my SPLICE blog centers on personal lines insurers, the study also offers insight for B2B communicators. If you market commercial insurance take note: B2B customers have even higher expectations on brands when it comes to engagement. And note this: they are more willing to be brand advocates compared to B2C customers.

I hope you'll check out the blog. It offers much more specific information to encourage marketers to start thinking about how to topple the customer engagement disconnect.

# THE PORTFOLIO

insurance companies, actuarial firms, brokers, vendors, publications, associations — for more than 15 years, Insurance Communicators LLC, has served virtually every type of insurance industry organization. The published work below demonstrates subject matter expertise. To see specific types of public relations and marketing materials, please contact [Annmarie](#).

**Below please find blog posts on our most requested topics and our published work samples.**

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## WORK SAMPLES

**Please note:** *The only work samples I can publish online are my articles. If you want to see samples of web text, advertisement copy, brochures...you get the idea, please contact me directly at [annmarie@insurancecommunicators.com](mailto:annmarie@insurancecommunicators.com). Just let me know what kind of help you need and I will send you samples germane to your project.*

*Otherwise, enjoy my electronic portfolio! From actuarial to cyber insurance to workers' compensation to legislation and technical advancements, my articles demonstrate my insurance expertise and commitment to providing unique and well-researched content. Enjoy!*

**Click on topic below to see our work**

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[Interview with David Satcher](#), former U.S. Surgeon General- Business & Health

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[Edgehttps://annmariecommunicatesinsurance.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/karen-farris-article-leaders-edge.pdf](https://annmariecommunicatesinsurance.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/karen-farris-article-leaders-edge.pdf)

[Modeling the Future](#)-Leader's Edge

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[The Mechanics of Absence Management](#)

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[Managing the Guy Who Isn't There](#)- Business & Health

[Integrated Benefits Movement Accelerates](#) - AM Comp Views

[Benefit Integration Boosts Productivity and Profits](#) - Workforce Magazine

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[Longshore Act Narrative](#) - National Association of Waterfront Employers

[The Gathering Storm in Workers' Comp](#) - Business & Health

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[The Soaring Costs of Workers' Comp](#) - Workforce Magazine

Workers Compensation Savings Strategies - Workforce Magazine

[Workers' Comp Options Bring Little Change](#) - In Business Las Vegas

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# **Marketing Is Like Making Chocolate Chip Cookies**



*Copyright Annmarie Geddes Baribeau*

I make the best chocolate chip cookies in the world, bar none! Doing so is a lot like marketing and communicating in the insurance industry — and there is more to it than key marketing ingredients!

Here's why:

**1) Products and services, like chocolate chip cookies, can seem the same.**

Chocolate chip cookies *can* seem the same before you taste them. Mine have a unique “yum” factor.

In business, the “yum” factor - known as the value proposition — describes what makes your company unique and *entices* customers to come back for more. That “yum” factor is the basis for messaging.



Think about your company's products and services. How do they look compared to your competitors? Can you identify your company's "yum" factor that truly stands out from the competition?

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***Can you identify your company's "yum" factor?***

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Insurance companies, along with firms that serve the industry, often struggle with the yum factor. From actuaries to brokers to third party administrators, the challenge is the same. All of them insist they are trustworthy, cost efficient and customer-focused service-oriented problem-solving experts.

The potential customer wants to know why they should choose your organization.

Personal auto insurers often compete by price and message through personas. Flo or a gecko, however, will not cut it for B2B marketing. Business customers are more sophisticated. They consider other factors, such as credibility and quality service, in their buying decisions.

**2) Marketing and communications strategies and tactics, like chocolate chip cookies, generally have the same or very similar ingredients.**

Chocolate chip cookie recipes vary. Of course, they include chocolate chips but also sugar, flour and leavening agents such as baking soda. Besides the mix of ingredients, choosing quality also affects the end product.

A successful communications strategy must include key marketing ingredients. These include detailed customer knowledge and their values and pain points; clear goals, messaging and appropriate channels.

**3) In both cases, key marketing ingredients are just as important as techniques.**

After identifying the proper ingredients, the skill lies in combining and delivering them cohesively so the intended market clamors for more. This should spur customer desire.

My chocolate chip cookie recipe comes from a cookbook more than 50 years old.

However, the reason why my cookies carry the guaranteed *yum* factor is not just because of what is in them. It's also how I bake them. I've shared my recipe many times but others don't achieve the same results. That's because I have my own baking technique.

Here's the takeaway: if your insurance communications, marketing or public relations approaches are not providing the desired results, it's time to figure out why. Could it be the ingredients, packaging or delivery?

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***The trick is determining the right balance of traditional and cutting edge approaches that will showcase your firm's "yum factor."***

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It always surprises me how little insurance industry clients understand their audiences and what

they really want. Failing to invest in market research is a key reason.

Further, I am seeing a lot of companies get so wrapped up in digital and online everything that they forget that some of the most traditional ways of selling products still work. The trick is determining the right balance of traditional and cutting edge approaches that will showcase your firm's "yum factor."

Locating key marketing ingredients means determining what current and potential customers like to hear from your company. Finding that out should be part of market research.

#### **4) Let them bake cake.**

While I am a chocolate chip cookie baking expert, when I need a nice looking cake, I go to the bakery.

Sure, I can make a reasonable rustic looking cake, but when it's party time, I let the experts do it. The same is true for insurance marketing and communications. When expertise and time limitations are interfering with results, it's time to seek outside help.

If you want that chocolate chip cookie recipe, just contact me at [annmarie@insurancecommunicators.com](mailto:annmarie@insurancecommunicators.com). Inbound marketing, after all, is about sharing!

***What's your company's yum factor?***

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## **About Insurance Communicators**

Insurance Communicators, LLC, led by president Annmarie Geddes Baribeau, is a marketing and public relations consulting network that offers a unique combination of ***insurance expertise*** and ***communications services***. We have a deep understanding of different insurance markets and the issues that concern them.






Unlike typical communications/marketing companies, we apply a journalistic approach that produces credibility building marketing approaches that build brand trust. While we focus on B2B insurance marketing and public relations, Insurance Communicators, LLC has provided consumer content as well.

For more than 15 years, Insurance Communicators LLC, formerly Lipold Communications LLC, has served virtually every type of insurance industry organization - including insurance companies, actuarial firms, brokers, vendors, publications, associations and a Washington, D.C.-based lobbying group. During that time, we have applied our extensive publishing background to provide results-oriented services that include marketing plans, media placement, and editorial and promotional materials in traditional media, new media and advertising.

Annmarie's articles demonstrate her deep knowledge of the insurance industry. To view client newsletters, brochures, web text, advertising copy, news releases and other public relations and marketing materials, please contact her directly using the form below.

[Learn more about Annmarie](#)

# HERE ARE FIVE (OF MANY) REASONS TO HIRE INSURANCE COMMUNICATORS:

-  **Strong Ethics.** We believe the best marketing is ethical. So we only promise what we can  deliver for clients who can back their claims.
-  **Time and money.** We offer cost saving insurance expertise. **Passion.** Insurance is fun and chock full of adventure, at least we think  so.
-  **Candor.** We'd rather tell you the truth than produce unsuccessful work. **Energy.** We get as excited about client success as much as our own.

## CONTACT US

Your Name (required)

Your Email (required)

Subject

Your Message

Submit

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[Blog](#)

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# Setting Your Blog on Fire

The dream of every blogger is to watch their blog catch viral fire.

I have enjoyed a week of the dream. Watching the hits climb was great fun.

I would love to say that the blog's success was due to my brilliant writing. But I am no fool. The blog's success was more due to the fact that the topic was interesting to those active in social media.

Great blogs cover topics that meet the needs of the reader, such as how to do something better or hot news. This blog's purpose was to introduce readers to a technology article I had just published. The article is about F# a programming language that could benefit insurers in the United States as it has in Europe. (To see it, please click [here](#).)

Sure, I promoted the blog to appropriate LinkedIn groups and periodically re-tweeted the blog post. But it was not until a handful of influential tweeters shared my tweet that the blog started catching fire. As they began to retweet, so did I, periodically, to keep the fire going. Since people are bombarded with constant tweets, you have to post periodically and hope someone will pick it up.

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***The blog's success was more due to the fact  
that the topic was interesting to those active in social media.***

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It's been a great week! The post is by far the most popular one I have ever posted. The hits continue as others from all over the world continue to share my blog.

But I am a realist. It will be difficult to achieve these results regularly. My typical audience is made up of those in the insurance industry. This is an industry not exactly known for being technological progressive. Demographically, many of its decision makers are of an older generation that had not wholly adopted social media.

This of course will change as the older generation retires, so in the meantime I continue to build a strong base of followers. B2B blogging is an investment that some feel do not get strong enough returns to justify the effort. Of course I disagree because my blog has brought me customers. There are many more benefits to blogging, but that is the topic of another blog!

So I need to give due credit. I thank everyone who shared my blog with others but there are two people I want to thank in particular. Vijesh Shah got the tweeter ball rolling on my blog. He is from London and leads a modeling systems team in the pension, life insurance and the banking industry. You can follow him at <https://twitter.com/vijesh>.

Sergey Tihon is a software developer who has participated in international programming competitions. His blog, [www.sergeytihon.wordpress.com](http://www.sergeytihon.wordpress.com), is responsible for more than 70 hits to my blog.

**Like what you see? Then follow me!**

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# Just for Fun: How Not To Do A Webinar

## 11 Steps to Make Sure Your Next Webinar Is a Total Flop

(From

Hubspot <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/34149/11-Steps-to-Make-Sure-Your-Next-Webinar-Is-a-Total-Flop.aspx#ixzz2KF8Exffl>)

So, you've decided to host a webinar. Great idea! Webinars are *fantastic* for [generating high quality leads](#), and they can also help you build stronger relationships with your current customers.

But hosting a successful webinar? That's a whole different ball game. If you want to host a kick-butt webinar, there are a ton of moving parts that you'll have to prepare for ... not to mention a host of things that could go wrong along the way.

Sound stressful? It can be, but you can alleviate a lot of that stress with advance preparation, and a checklist of sorts that will help you ensure you don't make any of the mistakes that make for a kind of, well, crappy webinar experience for attendees. So here you go, all of the things you absolutely should not do when preparing for and hosting a webinar. Unless, of course, you want to scare away leads and customer. Yeah, we didn't think so.

### **1) Pick a Lousy Topic**

People won't take time out of their day to listen to people drone on about a topic that stinks. If you choose a bland subject that your target audience has heard or read about hundreds of times, they're not going to spend time attending your webinar. Remember, a webinar is a serious time commitment (which is why it's a great indicator of high quality leads). But if they could just as easily learn about your topic via a blog post that takes five minutes to read, why would they dedicate 30, 45, or 60 minutes to listening to an explanation?

When thinking about a webinar topic, try to think of something that's best explained as a presentation — with the help of both visuals, and verbal explanation. Also consider the *point* of the webinar — are you trying to attract net new leads, or nurture existing leads? Your topic will have to align with the point in the sales cycle you're targeting; remember, existing leads might be able to handle something a little meatier and product- or service-specific than someone who is just starting their research.

### **2) Host Your Webinar at an Inconvenient Time**

Hosting your webinar at unsuitable time is a major no-no, but a detail that's so easily overlooked. Make the date and time convenient for the majority of your audience, keeping in mind that will differ based on who you are targeting. That means, for instance, that B2B marketers should consider when the slowest working hours are for their audience and probably want to host on a weekday, not a weekend. I mean, no matter how awesome your webinar, people aren't too keen on waking up at 7 a.m. on a Sunday to hear you talk about [long tail keyword research techniques](#), know what I mean? (Although if you'd like to hear us talk about [using Facebook for Business, like, right now](#), check out our [on demand webinar](#) with Facebook's own Chris Luo. We'd love to have you anytime. Even 7 a.m.

on a Sunday.)

It's also important to keep time zones in mind when picking your webinar time. If you're targeting an international, or even a nationwide audience, figure out the time when the most people will be able to attend your event — remember, East Coasters, your lunchtime is our West Coast brethren's coffee hour.

If you want to pick a specific time that works well for your audience and you're not sure how to figure that out, include a field in your signup form that asks people to confirm the best time slot, or even send a post-webinar feedback survey to see what days and times would work best for them in the future.

### 3) Choose an Unstable Webinar Platform

If people are encountering a ton of technical errors, it'll distract from the effectiveness of your webinar. Choosing a reliable webinar platform is well worth your time to research, especially if you're expecting a big turnout. If you're looking for a free platform and don't need a ton of bells and whistles, [Livestream](#) and [AnyMeeting.com](#) offer free versions of their product ... just remember they won't offer as much as paid versions. Other affordable and reliable systems are [GoToWebinar](#) and [WebEx](#), especially for larger webinars.

There's a chance that even with appropriate platform, you may run into a technical glitch. No technology is flawless, and hey, things happen. Anticipate problems that might occur and have some safeguards in case you run into a worst case scenario. Consider having the following handy:

- **Backup Computer** - Log in on two computers, this way, if the primary machine crashes or the session window is accidentally closed out, the presenter can continue from the second computer.
- **Backup Telephone** - Dial in on two telephones so if one disconnects, the presenter can continue from the second line without interruption.
- **Slide Printout** - Make sure there is a printout of the slide presentation so if your screen cuts out or a program starts updating unexpectedly, the presenter can continue talking off of the printed slides.
- **Separate Networks** - Moderators and presenters should be on separate networks so if one system drops, the other can continue to advance the slides for the audience and keep attendees up to date on any technical glitches occurring.

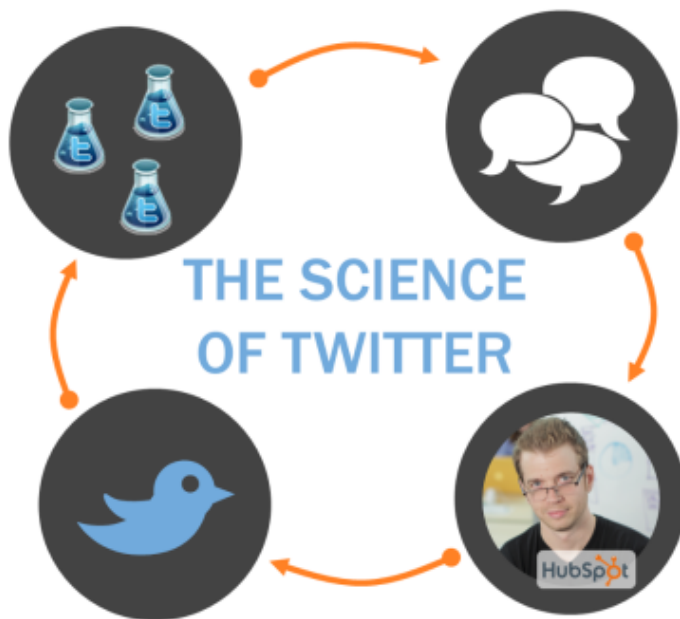
### 4) Don't Promote Your Event

Don't let all your hard content creation work go to waste by hosting a webinar that no one shows up to. To fill "seats," you need to get your promotion on. Leverage all your marketing channels to get the word out there.

- **Email Marketing** - Send an email invitation to those on your email list that would be interested in the topic about which you're presenting — in other words, do some segmentation, not a full-fledged database blast.
- **Social Media** - Let everyone know about your upcoming webinar via your social channels, particularly Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Do this more than once — social media moves fast, and it behooves you to remind your audience a handful of times. Be sure to include a link to the landing page on which they can register for the webinar in all of your updates; if you also have a compelling visualization or statistic from the webinar, even better!

Join us on Wednesday, January 23rd for the Science of Twitter webinar with Dan Zarrella!

Register here >> <http://hub.am/UZKdSk>



Like · Comment · Share

 31

 561 people like this.

- **Website** - Promote your webinar on your website by including [calls-to-action \(CTAs\)](#) on prominent, relevant pages on your website, particularly the ones trafficked by the audience you're looking to attract as attendees.
- **Blog** - Write a few blog articles that are related to the webinar topic, and include CTAs leading to your webinar landing page for those who want to learn more and register. A blog is a great place to tee up attendees by teaching them some basic principles about which you'll go into more depth on your webinar.
- **Paid Media**- If you have a budget, a little paid media can always add to your organic efforts. Try [running a PPC ad](#) for specific terms that relate to your webinar.

## 5) Create a Confusing Landing Page


People shouldn't be lost when they arrive on your landing page to register for your webinar. If they click on a CTA about attending an upcoming webinar and they're directed to a page that's unorganized or unclear, you better believe your conversion rates will seriously suffer. Make sure your landing page clearly states who the webinar presenter will be, what the topic is, when it will be hosted, and what people will learn from attending it. Here's an example of the information a landing page should include alongside the form, from our webinar [Facebook for Business: 4 Steps to](#)

Success:

**Workshop Details:**  
Duration: 30 minutes per session

**Free Workshop: Facebook for Business: 4 Steps to Success**

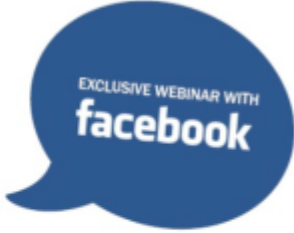
Chris Luo is the Head of Global SMB Marketing at Facebook. He is responsible for the scalable acquisition, growth, and retention of small and medium business advertisers on Facebook.



43% of B2B companies and 77% of B2C companies reported that they have acquired a customer through Facebook.

Clearly, Facebook has become a key marketing piece for business success. But how do you fit that piece in the bigger marketing picture?

Learn how from Facebook itself. Watch the four on-demand webinars with Chris Luo, Head of Global SMB Marketing at Facebook.




EXCLUSIVE WEBINAR WITH  
**facebook**

**Nearly 45,000 people signed up for this workshop - don't get left behind.**

The workshop covers Facebook's methodology and demonstrate how HubSpot puts it into practice. You will gain access to learning materials (both in video and slideshow format) on the following key steps:

Dan Slagen is Head of Advertising & Paid Lead Generation at HubSpot, leading the company's social media and content creation teams.



This page addresses the questions any webinar attendee will want to know: how long the workshop takes, who is hosting it, what the webinar actually *is*, and why it will be valuable. Since this webinar is on-demand, there's not date and time listed ... but you can bet your buttons it was there when the webinar was being recorded live!

## 6) Don't Practice Your Webinar Beforehand

Pshh, who needs practice?

Oh wait, everyone. It doesn't matter if you're a public speaking expert — everyone needs to practice before they host a live webinar, especially if they're presenting with a colleague or co-marketing partner. Practice will ensure you know the information like the back of your hand, you have your phrasing and transitions down, and you're familiar with the webinar platform you're using. In order to make sure your webinar will be a success, do a dry run a day or two before so you have time to correct any issues that may arise.

## 7) Don't Remind People About Your Webinar

They have nothing else going on, they'll totally remember on their own. Truth is, if you do early promotions for your webinar, some people will sign up and forget its approaching. I know, you're super organized and put everything on your calendar immediately, but we're not all that on the ball  
□

Send an email reminder at least one week before the webinar, reminding registrants when and where the webinar is and even including some teaser content to keep them excited about the event. One day before, and the day of your webinar, send out a very short email that reminds people when the event is. Be sure to include a direct link to the webinar on the day of the event so it's easy for them to log in, and write up a short reminder of the webinar's topic and the value it will provide.



## 8) Start Your Webinar Late. Or Early.

If you tell everyone you're going to start the webinar at 1PM EST, make sure it starts no later, and no earlier, than 1 PM EST. This is another one of those "duh" things that a lot of people screw up. Look, if it starts at 1:02, people aren't going to lose their minds, but being extremely prompt is a sign that you respect other people's busy schedules. If you are running into unpreventable technical errors that are forcing you to start a little behind schedule, be sure your webinar moderator is keeping attendees completely in-the-know about what's going on, and when your anticipated start time will be.

## 9) Write an Unedited Novel on Your Slide Deck

Your webinar has a presenter for a reason — so attendees don't have to read too much stuff, and a real live human can explain it to them instead! But when webinar slides are chock full of text, attendees spend all their time reading the text instead of listening and learning.

Instead, select images and a few words that are a good complement to what you're saying, and are easy to digest in just a couple seconds. Usually, using just a few images, simple charts, and a few bullet points are best for slides. Here's a good example from one of our webinars. These images act as props in the webinar, so the presenter can speak about a concept that these images help support.



Finally, have someone else take a look at your work to double check for mistakes, or anything that isn't totally clear. While stories and slides might make sense to you (heck, you created them, they better!), an outsider can help ground you in reality and let you know if something could be even more clear.

## 10) Don't Interact With Your Audience

A big benefit of attending (and hosting) webinars is the ability to have presenters and audience members interact. Be sure to support conversation between attendees and presenters, and provide time to answer any questions attendees may have. You might consider:

- Sending out polls and quizzes during and after the webinar
- Using your webinar platform's chat function to field questions during the webinar
- Keeping the conversation going on social media by using a webinar [hashtag](#)
- Writing a blog post after the event covering the main webinar points, and answering the most commonly asked questions within the post

Before the webinar begins, you should also prepare answers to any questions you can anticipate, and have a list of references and links. This way, you can quickly answer questions when they arise during the live presentation.

## 11) Don't Say Thank You

As Stephanie Tanner would say, "How rude!" Saying thank you for signing up, *and* for attending is incredibly important. After all, these people took significant time out of their lives to attend your webinar; showing some gratitude is definitely called for.

Read

more: <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/34149/11-Steps-to-Make-Sure-Your-Next-Webinar-Is-a-Total-Flop.aspx#ixzz2KF8ExffI>

[http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/34149/11-steps-to-make-sure-your-next-webinar-is-a-total-flop?source=Blog\\_Email\\_\[11%20Steps%20to%20Make%20Sur\]](http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/34149/11-steps-to-make-sure-your-next-webinar-is-a-total-flop?source=Blog_Email_[11%20Steps%20to%20Make%20Sur])

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## [What's More Effective, Direct or Email marketing letters?](#)

Good stuff, but not directly applicable to B2B marketing...

<http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/34032/An-Investigation-Into-the-ROI-of-Direct-Mail-vs-E-mail-Marketing-DATA.aspx>