17 WAYS TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT
WITH ZOOM

The Zoom platform has grown in popularity over the last few years and for good reason. It provides individuals and businesses the tools that they need to conduct meetings over the Internet for collaboration, lead generation and customer acquisition, webinars and more.

If you want to use Zoom to grow your business, and you should, then it is essential that all of your Zoom meetings and webinars are engaging for your audiences. A lot of people get this wrong and end up losing their audience on Zoom calls.

The methods, tips and tricks in this powerful guide will show you how you can significantly improve your engagement levels when you are using Zoom. So be sure to read all of this short report and put these ideas into action.

This is where it all starts. The best Zoom events are always planned. Just turning up and "winging it" is not a good idea. You need to think about what you want to achieve from your Zoom event first. Do you want a higher level of commitment from your team? Do you want to sell potential customers on your latest product offering?

Your preparation for the Zoom event will go a lot more smoothly the more you understand your audience. If you are going to use the event to pitch your offer to potential customers then understand what problems they have and how your offer will solve these problems for them.

If you want to use your Zoom event to provide details of a new project to your team then think about the issues that they are likely to have and any roadblocks that they might identify. The more that you predict these things beforehand the better your Zoom event will go.

Have all of your resources setup before the event. If you are going to share your screen and use websites and applications for demonstrations etc then have all of these open before the meeting. Your audience do not want to see websites and applications loading up.

If you intend to share files then have these ready too in one place so that you can easily access them during the meeting. Nobody wants to see you fumbling around trying to find the relevant files on your computer.

When you are preparing slides for your Zoom event always think about interaction. Nobody wants to sit through a one hour Zoom event just listening to you reading from slides. Test for understanding and allow your audience to answer questions. Use examples and case studies to demonstrate concepts.

If you have not used Zoom before or not used it that much then we recommend that you setup and run a test event before you go for the real meeting. You may think that you are a great presenter and host but there is nothing like a recording of your performance to provide you with a reality check.

The other advantage of running test sessions is that you can familiarize yourself with the Zoom features and controls. Practice sharing your screen, using the whiteboard facility, using the annotation tools, adding a virtual background and so on. If you don't do this it is unlikely to be "alright on the night".

3 USE HIGH QUALITY EQUIPMENT

You will impress nobody if you have a poor quality webcam or microphone. If you are appearing grainy and blurry on video then your audience is going to switch off. The same goes for poor quality audio. If it is not clear what you are saying then you are going to lose people.

A lot of laptops have inferior built in webcams and microphones. As tempting as it may be to use these to save money, just don't do it. You can get a high quality webcam for less than $100 and a good USB microphone for even less.

Then there is the subject of lighting. You need to ensure that your face is lit from the front. If you look like a shadow of yourself on camera then this will put a lot of people off. You can get fairly inexpensive ring lights from Amazon and elsewhere that will enhance your lighting.

Finally on the subject of equipment, use the fastest Internet connection that you can. If you have to contend with fairly low Internet bandwidth where you are then use an Ethernet connection rather than WiFi. There are losses associated with wireless connections that you don't get with a wired connection.

This is a mistake that a lot of Zoom newbies make. They do not position the webcam or camera correctly and as a result they end up looking down or up into the camera. Neither of these provides a flattering look for you. Your audience does not want to see just the top of your head either.

The best camera position is where you look straight forward into it. So test this out to find the best position. You want your head to be in the top third of the screen. Avoid anything below this as you will be showing too much of the background.

5 LOOK DIRECTLY INTO THE CAMERA

Here is another classic mistake that newcomers to Zoom make. Instead of looking directly into the camera they look at their computer screen. If you do this then your head will be down and it will appear like you do not want to face your audience.

You have to see beyond your computer and camera here. Always bear in mind that when you look directly into the camera your audience will see you in the best light. You will appear to be focusing on them which they will really appreciate. Again practice this until you can do it automatically.

Sometimes you will need to glance at your screen or your notes. This is OK, but make it a very short glance and then get straight back to looking into the camera. Even the best presenters need to look away from their audiences for short periods of time. Just don't have prolonged periods where you are not looking directly at the camera.

6 BE HAPPY AND SMILE

This one may take a bit of practice for you but it will certainly be worth it. You are right to be serious about your business but if you approach your Zoom event with a serious face all of the time then your audience are not going to like that. People are naturally attracted to happy, smiling faces. So give this to them.

You can practice this in the mirror. When you have a smile on your face you will talk with a smile as well which is infectious. It is impossible to smile all of the time and there will be times when a more serious face is appropriate. But a general happy and smiley demeanor will do wonders for your Zoom engagement rates.

Something that you may like to try in your Zoom events is standing up when you are presenting. This can often help you to feel happier and more likely to smile rather than frown. You can use a standing desk to help with this. It may seem a bit weird standing up at first but it does work.

Nobody wants to see evidence of your cluttered life in a Zoom meeting. If the room that you intend to use for your events is full of stuff then get rid of it. You can use virtual backgrounds for a more professional experience.

If you want to use a natural background then check to see that there is nothing that will distract your audience. Large clocks and pictures in the background can divert attention so move these out of sight.

Do everything that you can to minimize distractions. Put your phone on silent. If you have messaging apps on your computer then disable the sound notifications. Little kids and pets are cute but they can ruin a good Zoom event. Keep them out of the way when you are running your business event.

Choose a room that is the quietest in your home or office. It will be distracting for your audience to hear noises outside such as traffic, people raising their voices in the street, workers digging up the road and so on.

Setup a one to one meeting with a friend or family member that you know will critique your background and environment and tell you the truth about how distracting it is. This is great feedback that will help you to make the necessary changes.

8 DRESS FOR THE OCCASION

If you are having a Zoom call with friends or family then it doesn't matter if you look like a slob. That "just got out of bed" look is not OK for your business Zoom events. Wear good looking clothes and be sure to groom yourself so that you look your best.

Forget the tatty t-shirt and the stuff that you normally wear when you are relaxing at home. Wear a nice shirt and a jacket – something that is appropriate for a business meeting. Put in the effort here and don't give your audience the impression that you just couldn't be bothered.

9 KEEP IT SHORT AND TO THE POINT

You need to be respectful of the time that your event is taking. There have been a number of studies in the area of human attention spans and they have concluded that people respond best to new information in 7 minute chunks. So you need to prepare your Zoom events with this in mind.

When you are passionate about your subject it is very easy to ramble on far too long. You need to be disciplined about the timing of your event. Keep everything as short and to the point as you can.

A Zoom event needs to be interactive and it is a good idea to check regularly with your audience that what you are saying is making sense to them. Let them ask questions if they are not sure about anything. This is a good way to break up long sessions as well.

10 LET YOUR AUDIENCE KNOW WHO YOU ARE

This is especially important with webinar events. It is good to give your audience some background about who you are and what you stand for. Don't make this too long or you will bore your audience. Most people could care less what school or college you attended. But they will be interested in why you started your business for example.

You want to give the impression that you are qualified to be hosting the event. Your audience will expect you to provide value and want to perceive you as an expert in your field. So tell them what makes you the right person for them to pay attention to.

People like stories. This is something that successful copywriters know and have been using for decades. When you are presenting in your Zoom event use as many stories and anecdotes as you can. You want your audience to be able to relate to what you are discussing and stories are the best way to do that.

If your event is for lead generation then provide examples of how other customers have used your products and services to good effect. Tell your audience why you created your products and why you are so passionate about them. Tell your audience about how you failed initially if this is appropriate. Just add the human touch to your Zoom events.

Have you been on a Zoom meeting where the host wore a large headset? Or perhaps you have seen videos where the presenter has some monstrosity on their head? Headsets just look awful and are very distracting for your audience.

If you need to listen to prompts or an organizer in your Zoom meeting then go for a small "in ear" monitor instead of a headset. These are very small and almost invisible and it is likely that your audience will be unaware that you are wearing this.

Sharing your screen is a great thing to do but it can be a disaster if you are not careful. If you have prepared some presentation slides then you will need to share your screen to show these to your audience. A good tip with slides is not to show all of the points at once. Introduce them one at a time to keep the attention of your audience.

Over the shoulder type of training is a good thing to do with Zoom. You can demonstrate things or teach people how to achieve something by sharing a web page or an application. Make sure that you have the relevant pages and applications open prior to your event. Waiting for web pages to load and applications to open is as dull as it gets for your audience.

If something has gone wrong then pause your screen so that your audience cannot see you frantically trying to rectify the situation. Try not to leave long pauses while you are fixing things. Keep talking and apologize that something has gone wrong.

The annotation tools in Zoom are great for making points and clarifying things for your audience so you need to learn how to use them properly and use them liberally in your Zoom events. A presentation slide is a pretty boring thing on its own, but once you start to make annotations it becomes a lot more interesting. The same applies to a web page.

The Zoom whiteboard is another great tool that you should use to increase engagement. It is particularly useful if you want to explain a complex concept. You can also use it to jot down ideas that your audience has. Just use it in the same way that you would if you were in a face to face meeting.

If you are teaching a group of people on your Zoom event then you can let them use the whiteboard as well to confirm their understanding of the points that you want them to learn. Using the whiteboard is a great interactive way to drive up your engagement levels.

If you have a large group of people on your Zoom event then you can get them to put into practice what you have taught them by breaking them up into smaller groups and assigning them to "breakout" rooms so that they can brainstorm ideas, work on mini assignments and so on.

You will need to enable breakout rooms in your host settings to do this. Also it is a good idea to setup the breakout rooms prior to running your live Zoom event. If you don't do this beforehand you can end up with a logistical nightmare to deal with during the event.

Create different breakout rooms and assign them different names if you want. As the administrator you can hover around between the rooms and check to see what is happening. You can answer questions while you are in specific rooms as well. It is a good idea to post a time limit on the breakout rooms otherwise things can get out of control.

When you are visiting the breakout rooms you can post announcements in them. You are in control of when your audience finish up in the breakout rooms and rejoin the main event. Once you make this announcement the groups will have a minute to finish their sessions and rejoin the main event.

Tell your audience at the start of your Zoom event that you want them to participate as much as possible. Explain to them that they will get a lot more from the event if they ask and answer questions. Make it clear when they can ask questions and when they need to just pay attention to the presentation.

Should you have a question and answer session for your Zoom events? In most cases we recommend that you should. It is particularly important for webinar events and large meetings where you are explaining the details of a new project for example.

Interactivity is very important for your Zoom events. It is a good idea to plan your question and answer strategy for each event. Do you want participants to be able to ask their questions out loud? Or do you want all of the questions typed into the chat?

As the host of the event you can ask your audience questions throughout your event. You can ask them questions to check that they understand what you have presented so far. You can run a competition by asking a question and rewarding the person that provides the first correct answer and so on.

If you have a small number of participants on your Zoom event you can allow them to ask questions at the end of specific sessions. When people ask you questions you need to answer all of them that you can. You are going to get duplicate questions at times so make sure that you make this clear when you are providing the answers.

With large numbers of participants on a webinar for example it may not be practical to allow people to ask questions at any time. Managing loads of questions at once is not an easy thing to do. You may want to get some help with the management of questions in webinars.

Tell your webinar attendees that you will hold a question and answer session at the end and that you will do all that you can to answer all of the questions raised. With large audiences it is best to use the chat facility as the questions are stored there and you can go through them later on.

Sometimes you are going to receive an irrelevant question or something that doesn't make sense. You need to handle these carefully so that the person asking the question does not feel embarrassed or left out.

You can include other interactive elements to your Zoom event such as surveys and polls. Do everything that you can to keep your participants focused on your event. Get them interacting with you as much as you can.

You can use the Zoom platform in a number of ways to grow your business and reach a larger audience. Preparation is essential for a good Zoom event. Pay close attention to your image, camera setup, lighting, and keep distractions out of your Zoom events. Use interactivity as much as possible to keep engagement levels high.