



Manage Online Meetings

Level 4 Project



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Manage Online Meetings

About Manage Online Meetings

Technology evolves every day as new tools and forms of communication become available. These evolutions enable us to unite global communities. By taking advantage of advances in technology, you can share knowledge and dialogue with Toastmasters members, colleagues, or anyone across the world.

In this project, you will learn how to effectively conduct online meetings and webinars, prepare and organize necessary visual aids and other supplementary materials, and lead with confidence.

Resources

The following is a list of resources available in your digital project on Base Camp. Some of these resources, such as evaluations, are also available on the Resources section on Base Camp.

Project Checklist

Evaluation Resource

Online Meeting Agenda

Online Meeting Basics

Introduction and Assignment

Introduction

Using technology to communicate has a wide range of benefits, including cost savings and efficiency. With so many choices available, selecting the best means of bringing together a group—in person or through a wide variety of meeting and webinar applications—can be a challenge.

Your Assignment

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to practice facilitating an online meeting or leading a webinar.

Overview: Conduct a 20- to 25-minute online meeting with fellow Toastmasters or a 20- to 25-minute webinar with visual aids for fellow Toastmasters. You determine the topic of your meeting or webinar. Research and use an application that best fits your needs and geographic area. Invite your evaluator to participate in the online meeting or webinar. If you complete your assignment with non-Toastmasters, you must receive approval from the Vice President Education and invite your evaluator to attend.

Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.



Video: Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.



Interactive Activity: Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.



Resource: Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.



Weblink: Return to your digital project when you see this icon to link to a website or Base Camp location.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the [Project Checklist](#).

Learning in Manage Online Meetings

Assess and Reflect



To assess and track your knowledge, complete the activity below by listing what you already know and what you wonder about the topic today. Add up to five items to each list. After you complete your project, you will have an opportunity to review your answers and add what you have learned.

Know

For example: I know the difference between webinars and online meetings.

Wonder

For example: I wonder how to create and organize online meetings or webinars.

Competencies

The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.

- Facilitate a webinar or online meeting via appropriate application.
- Interact skillfully with participants attending a webinar or online meeting.
- Adapt to participants' feedback during your webinar or online meeting.

Online Communication

Online communication takes many forms and can include webinars, teleconferencing, and online meetings. The focus of this project is on webinars and online meetings, though many of the same suggestions and skills apply to other forms.

Webinars

A webinar is a lecture or seminar in an online format. A speaker—or speakers—presents material to an audience. There can be interaction with the audience, but information is primarily being delivered and not exchanged.

A webinar is appropriate for:

- Presenting online education, seminars, or lectures.
- Offering outreach or free learning.
- Informing the public about a new product or service.

Online Meetings

Online meetings are intended to be a more collaborative interaction than webinars. Organizations and groups often opt for online meetings when in-person meetings are not available due to preference, convenience, time, cost, geography, or other factors.

Base the choice of format, either webinar or online meeting, on the content and objectives of your communication.

Prior to Your Online Meeting or Webinar

Any kind of presentation or online meeting requires preparation. Begin planning your webinar or online meeting far enough in advance to accomplish all of the tasks necessary to facilitate a successful event.

A variety of powerful online communication applications are available. Draw from your experience as an attendee at webinars and online meetings to create a list of the features that are important to you. If your experience with online events is limited, talk to friends or colleagues, or do research to identify the features you want to include on your wish list.

Selecting the best application for your needs will help you run your online event smoothly. As a step in your research, be sure the application you select is compatible with the technology in your geographic area and that it is available to you where you live or work.

Some features to consider as you do your research include the ability to:

- Use chat or other interactive tools.
- Record your webinar for sharing and archiving.
- Share hosting responsibilities.

Most applications offer tutorials or hold webinars to outline the features and benefits of their products. Attending an online event is a great way to learn about product functionality and features from experienced users of the platform.

Clarify Your Goals and Objectives

Define goals and objectives for your meeting. Refer back to them during your planning to ensure you accomplish what you planned during your webinar or online meeting.

Pick a Date and Time

When setting a time, consider the needs of your participants (and speakers, if appropriate), and make a note of differing time zones. Ensure your selected date does not conflict with any holidays, work hours, or personal commitments.

Provide Agendas

Create an agenda (a list of items to be discussed) for the meeting. Share with any participants in advance so that they can be familiar with your agenda.

Arrange Resources

Ensure you have necessary downloads, links, application updates, or other technology needed for your presentation. Set up links to any additional resources to share with attendees, presenters, and co-hosts.

Create an Outline and an Agenda



Resource: Organizing your meeting or webinar will be easier once you develop an agenda or outline. An outline is a general description or plan of what you intend to include in your meeting and the order in which it will be covered. The outline is for the use of the moderator and any presenters; it is not intended to be participant-facing. An agenda is much the same, but it is developed for attendees at your event. You may use the Online Meeting Agenda resource to get started.

Your outline or agenda serve as a guide while you present. Using an outline helps you sound more natural and conversational. In contrast, reading your presentation word for word may bore your audience.

Invite Participants

Invite webinar participants via email, a formal online invitation application, or web service. You can also promote a webinar event to the public through social media sites.

Email a reminder to participants the day ahead of your event and again 15 to 30 minutes before the start time. Provide any links or prepared materials, notify participants if they will need to download or update an application, and advise them to test the application prior to the webinar or online meeting.

Set Up and Test

Technology can be unpredictable. Before your presentation, make sure the technology and equipment you need are functional.

Confirm Connections

When possible, use a hardwired connection. It can be more reliable than a wireless internet connection. As you are likely aware, a lost connection mid-meeting can seriously impact the success of your event. As you are likely aware, a lost connection mid-meeting can seriously impact the success of your event.

Assign a Cohost

Setting up a cohost can help in case of an emergency. If your internet is interrupted, the cohost can continue the meeting until you are able to return.

Rehearse

Whenever circumstances allow, set up a brief rehearsal with all participating presenters. Check for technical issues, review the agenda, and make certain all of the presenters are prepared.

Leading Online Communication

Facilitating online communication is more efficient with strong leadership. Planning, organizing, excellent time management, and facilitation skills are all required to keep the meeting on schedule.

Presenter

A presenter is responsible for creating and delivering engaging, compelling content. If multiple presenters will participate in the online meeting or webinar, select a facilitator to lead the meeting. A facilitator focuses on the logistical and administrative tasks, freeing the presenters to coordinate and deliver high-quality content.

Presenters need to be aware they are on camera at all times. This means their backgrounds and body language are visible. Nonverbal communication such as facial expressions and gestures will register with the audience even if the speaker is not actively presenting.

Nonverbal cues can be lost or difficult to decipher online. It is important for presenters to use clear, distinct, and consistent verbal communication to ensure their message is well-understood.

Presenters are responsible for answering questions and clarifying the information they present. Taking the time to anticipate possible questions or concerns before the webinar or meeting will help you to be prepared when questions arise.

Facilitator Responsibilities

A facilitator manages technical issues if they occur, answers written questions from attendees if the application chat or questions panes are active, and manages any other technical or connection issues that arise. The facilitator may also direct questions to speakers, clarify concerns, and keep the webinar or meeting on schedule. The facilitator needs to have an excellent understanding of the functionality of the application, the content of the webinar or meeting, and the agenda to keep the session moving forward in case it stalls on a single subject or question.

Conducting the Webinar/Meeting

Start your meeting or webinar by introducing yourself and the others present, including presenters. If it is necessary or required, mention your qualifications along with those of the other facilitators or presenters.

Smile as you speak. Even if you opt for an audio-only presentation, the “sound” of your smile will affect the tone of your voice, making you sound warmer and more welcoming.

Conduct the meeting according to the agenda you have shared with the participants. Refer to your outline as needed for additional personal notes and comments.



Video: Watch a video on Base Camp to learn more.

Create Visual Aids

You may choose to create visual aids, such as a slideshow, to augment a webinar experience and help your participants follow along.

Use Visual Aids

Let your visual aids enhance, embellish, or illustrate what you say. Be sure to give yourself time to practice your presentation with your visual aids.

Present Effectively

Spend three to four minutes per slide as you present. This amount of time will allow attendees time to view what you have posted and make notes if necessary before you move to the next slide or image.

Explain Content

Explain the purpose of complex graphs, charts, or visual elements before discussing the information they convey. You or your facilitator will need to pay close attention to chat and question panes to make sure you are giving enough context and that attendees have the time they need to digest new information.

Streamline Information

Use between three to five bullets on each slide. Streamlining information on your slides gives your attendees the needed information without drawing their attention away from the spoken portion of your webinar.

Make the Most of Your Time

When using slides as part of your presentation, 15 to 18 is effective for a standard webinar of 60 minutes.

Share Your Presentation

For many presentations, it is helpful to share a copy of your slides with attendees. How you share them is up to you. You can email them before your webinar as part of a larger handout, drop them into the chat directly at the beginning or end of your webinar, or include them as part of a larger handout you email when your webinar is complete.

Special Considerations for Meetings Online

One of the most important jobs for the facilitator is finding a balance between making time for all contributors and addressing the topics outlined in the agenda. It is easy to lose momentum if the conversation goes awry. When this happens, it can undermine the entire meeting. Be prepared to steer conversations back into a productive mode by adhering to the established agenda.

Before advancing to a new point, provide a summary of the group's opinions, findings, or decisions to bring the purpose of the meeting into focus. Keep it simple—a sentence or two—and then introduce the next steps or topic for discussion.

After Your Meeting

Follow up on your online meeting or webinar to solidify your message, ensure that any agreed-upon actions are clarified, and prompt the scheduling of another meeting, if required.

To follow up on your meeting:

- Provide any minutes, notes, or agreed-upon action items from the meeting to the participants.
- If appropriate, distribute a recording of the meeting to participants or invitees.
- Solicit feedback about the presenters, content, and application.
- For a more formal response from attendees, create and distribute a survey.



Resource: To help you organize and prepare for your online meeting or webinar, use the Online Meeting Basics resource to guide you through the different phases of planning and facilitating.

Review and Apply

Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- List some steps you need to take to prepare for your webinar or online meeting.
- What is the difference between a webinar and an online meeting?
- How can you identify the needs of your audience in an online format?
- What steps will you take to prepare visual aids, if you use them?
- If the application you are using or will use is new to you, how will you practice to ensure you are prepared to answer participant questions?
- What are some strategies for handling feedback during your webinar or online meeting?

Complete Your Assignment



Project Checklist

Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report. First, review your assignment.

This project includes:

- The Online Meeting Agenda resource
- The Online Meeting Basics resource
- Planning and conducting a 20- to 25-minute online meeting or webinar

The following list includes tasks for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You can use the checklist here or complete the digital version in your project on Base Camp.

Select a topic for your 20- to 25-minute webinar and determine your audience. With the Vice President Education's approval, you may conduct the online meeting or webinar with non-Toastmasters or with another club.

Create your webinar.

Design visual aids if you intend to use them.

Schedule your webinar or online meeting and invite your Vice President Education and evaluator to attend.

Facilitate your online meeting or webinar.

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Evaluation Criteria



Review the criteria for the evaluation in this project. Your evaluator will use the following scale:

5 – Exemplary 4 – Excels 3 – Accomplished 2 – Emerging 1 – Developing

Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

Eye Contact

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

Gestures

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

Audience Awareness

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

Comfort Level

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

Interest

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

Technology Management

- 5 – Conducts an exemplary meeting or webinar with no technical issues caused by the member
- 4 – Conducts an excellent meeting or webinar with no technical issues caused by the member
- 3 – Conducts an well-run meeting or webinar with limited technical issues caused by the member
- 2 – Meeting or webinar is occasionally interrupted by technical issues caused by the member
- 1 – Meeting or webinar is interrupted by several technical issues caused by the member

Organization

- 5 – Meeting or webinar is an exemplary example of the use of media and delivery of content
- 4 – Meeting or webinar is an excellent example of organization
- 3 – Meeting or webinar is well-organized
- 2 – Member made an attempt to organize a meeting or webinar, but the online event did not run well
- 1 – Meeting or webinar lacks organization

Complete Your Project



Once you have delivered your speech and received your evaluation, take a minute to review what you recorded under “Know” and “Wonder” in the Assess and Reflect section at the start of this project. Then add what you have learned while working through this project. Add up to five items.

Learned

For example: I learned how to successfully manage and mitigate unforeseen circumstances.

Before You Move On

Review Your Learning

Review all the material in this project.

Deliver Your Webinar or Online Meeting

Plan, practice, and deliver your webinar or online meeting.

Receive Your Evaluation

Receive your evaluation and complete any other tasks required by your club.

Assess and Reflect

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Congratulations!

If you have completed every task, CONGRATULATIONS! You have completed your Manage Online Meetings project and you are ready to move on to your next project.



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