

Explore



Develop



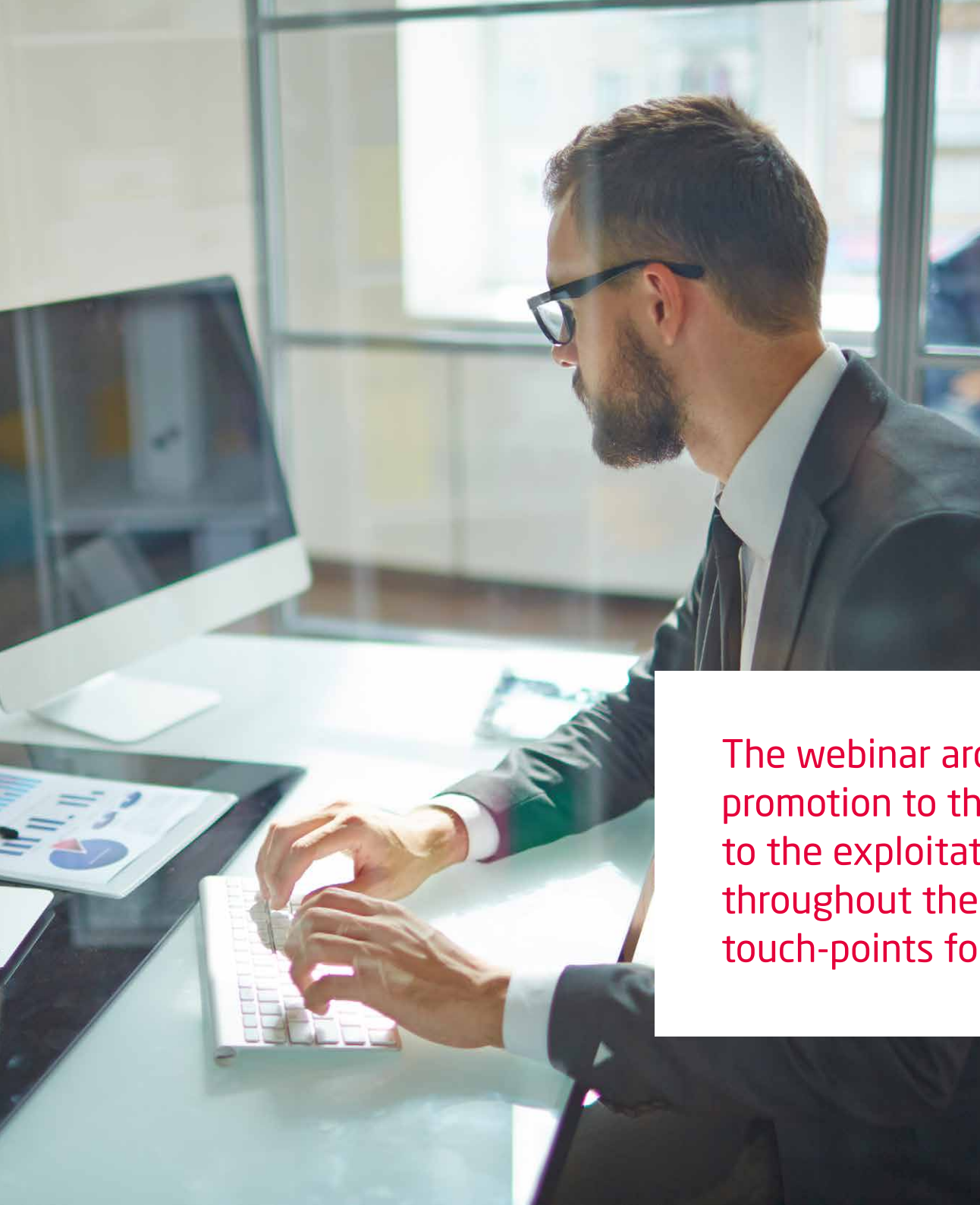
Transform



Webinars & lead gen in 2016 - an in-depth guide for marketers



an NTT Communications Company



There's a good reason why webinars and lead generation are a natural fit (in fact webinars top of the leader board for lead generation methods). If the topic is well-conceived and promoted, and nails the pain points of its target audience the webinar provides an interactive platform to engage an audience.

The key word, of course, is 'if'. Today's inboxes and social media feeds are flooded with invitations to join webinars - a word only invented as recently as 2008.

The webinar arc, from implementation and promotion to the web conference itself and on to the exploitation of the analytics gathered throughout the cycle, provides numerous touch-points for lead generation.

How to compete for attention

But it's vital to beat the competition for your existing and potential customers' attention by addressing their needs and anticipating their questions more effectively than all of the other propositions jostling for their attention.

Get it right and the rewards are there for the taking. An Aberdeen Group survey discovered that an effective Enterprise Social Collaboration (ESC) strategy delivers some striking benefits:



70%
higher operational efficiency



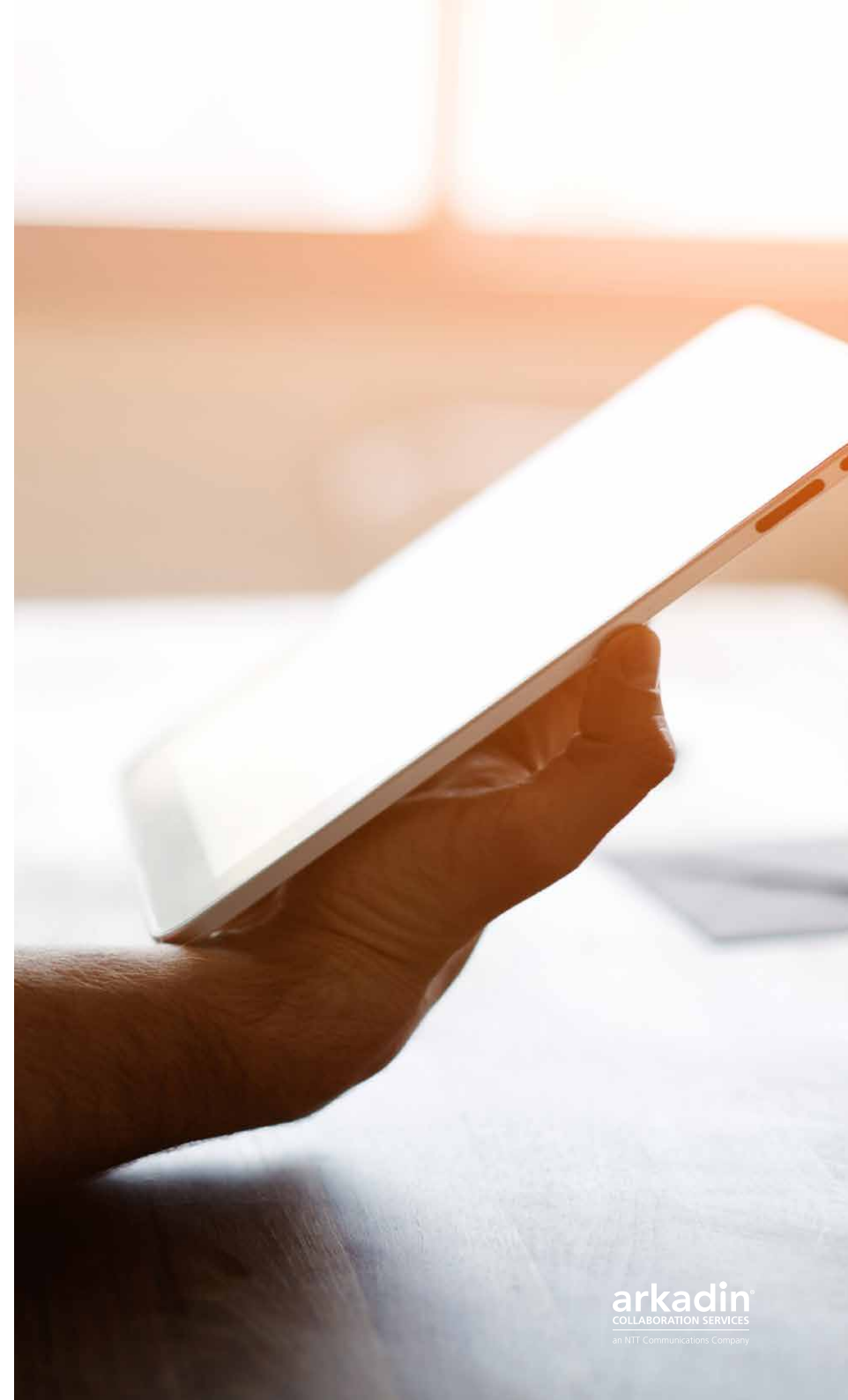
51%
greater on-time project delivery



30%
greater customer retention



28%
greater success in accessing
business information within the
required timeframe



Get it wrong and your invitations - and webinars - will fall into the great morass of unfulfilled lead generation opportunities

According to the Content Marketing Institute,



62%
of B2B marketers used webinars
and webcasts for content
marketing in 2014.

If you choose the right topic for engagement, the potential for lead generation is limitless. But you also need to choose the right framework for managing the lifecycle of the webinar - and that comes down to a straightforward choice between doing it yourself, and enlisting the services of a managed webinar provider.

DIY vs managed events

The DIY approach has its merits. You can use an online event management application, often for an attractive price or even taking advantage of a free trial offer. And if you are starting with a relatively small event, that might be good enough - for the time being.

The downside is that you will almost certainly get what you paid for: minimal levels of support; an un-edited recording of your event which won't lend itself so well to on-demand viewing. Plus you will need the expertise and resource to build the assets in-house.



If you choose a managed webinar provider they can build, design and manage the process for you leaving you to get on with what you do best - content and promotion!

In addition they provide dedicated project management, co-ordinated messaging and event access from any device without the need of downloads or apps are guaranteed. Interactions can be encouraged throughout the cycle, including polls and surveys which deliver real-time responses and reactions. What's more they can even help you design and manage the polls, build the right widgets and manage the Q&A - after all, there's a lot going on!

In addition, they can provide detailed reporting, seamless integration with your existing CRM and social media tools, and provide an on-demand library of webcast-related resources.

Topicality rules

Once you've decided which approach will work best, you can focus on the event itself.

Salesforce recommends allowing an event lead time of at least five weeks, and choosing a start time that fits your target demographic - usually mid-week and in the morning.

In a useful post, Turn Your Webinar Program into a Lead Generation Machine, webinar lead Lauren Callopy says you should "keep promotion momentum on fire until the minute you go live".

Typically, up to 20% of attendees will register during the last 48 hours, and up to 15% on the day of the event itself.

She also advises matching e-mail promotion with your go-live timings: stagger your drops, starting around a fortnight before the event, following up with a second a week later and a third 48 hours before you broadcast. Follow-ups should include a secondary offer so your prospects don't feel bombarded with identical messages.

Don't forget sales

And involve your sales team! Give them an email template which they can use to invite their prospects - essential for building lead quality ahead of the event.

Don't forget mobile interactions, either.








Up to 30%
of webinar audiences open
promotional emails on their
mobile devices

and if they can't complete your call to action by signing up then and there, you'll lose vital momentum amidst the competition of all those other marketing communications that are flooding their in-trays.



Integrated promotion

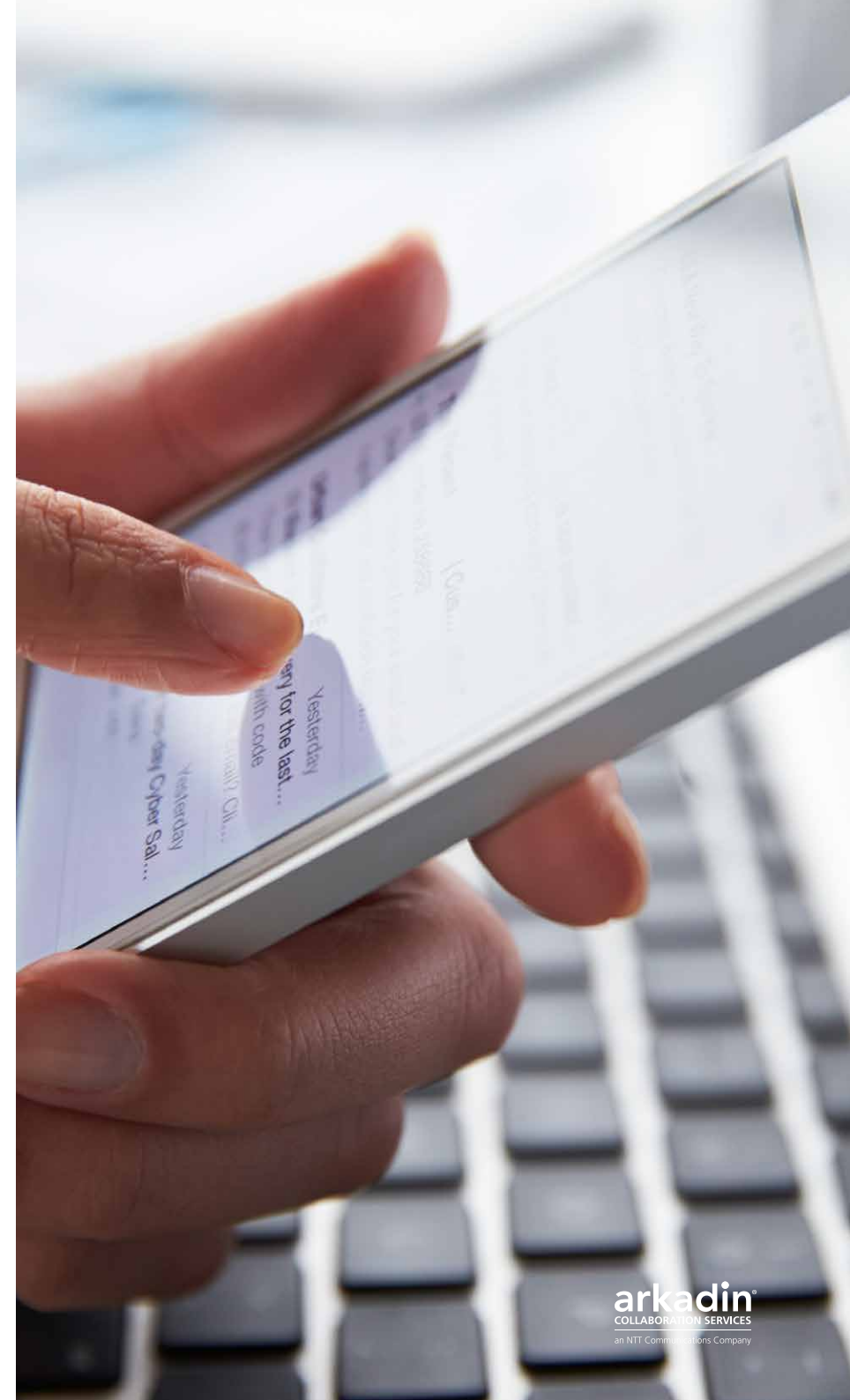
Lewis Howes also offers a timely reminder about the value of an integrated approach to promotion in his post, [5 Ways to Generate Leads for Webinars](#). "People happily part with their information because webinars are high-value, hands-on training, that they can experience from the comfort of their own home," he says. To that end, he suggests, your promotional strategy should combine the forces of:

-  Blogging and guest-posting
-  Twitter
-  Affiliates and strategic partnerships
-  Facebook events and ads
-  Linked-in groups and events




And perhaps most important of all, don't forget to make a landing page for your event - structured to showcase the content and what your audience will get out of it.

Plan your content




Planning the content of your webinar is not something you should leave to the last minute. A well-written script, and a combination of tools that will maximize audience engagement and encourage interaction to maximize lead generation opportunities, is the perfect recipe for a successful web conference.



He has created a nice [infographic](#) which offers a simple comparison between a conventional presentation structure:

-  About the company
-  About the offer
-  How the offer works for you

And a webinar structure:

-  The main benefit (followed by a Q&A)
-  Additional information (followed by a Q&A)
-  About the company and the offer (followed by a Q&A)

Note the emphasis on interaction points at each stage.

Balancing the length of the webinar with your content is also important. According to Gardner, the average webinar has two presenters, 28 participants and lasts 65 minutes. That is quite resource intensive. Every second counts if you are going to give value for time and realise a decent ROI in terms of leads.

Unbounce co-founder Oli Gardner reports that 77% of businesses are now using webinars specifically for [lead generation](#).

A two-way affair

Salesforce's Callopy recommends treating your webinar as a two-way dialogue between you and the audience. Build in a transition point every 10-15 minutes - between speakers, slides, demos or using a poll. Avoid Powerpoint fatigue and wordy bullet points. Every element of the webinar should enhance your topic, not simply present it.

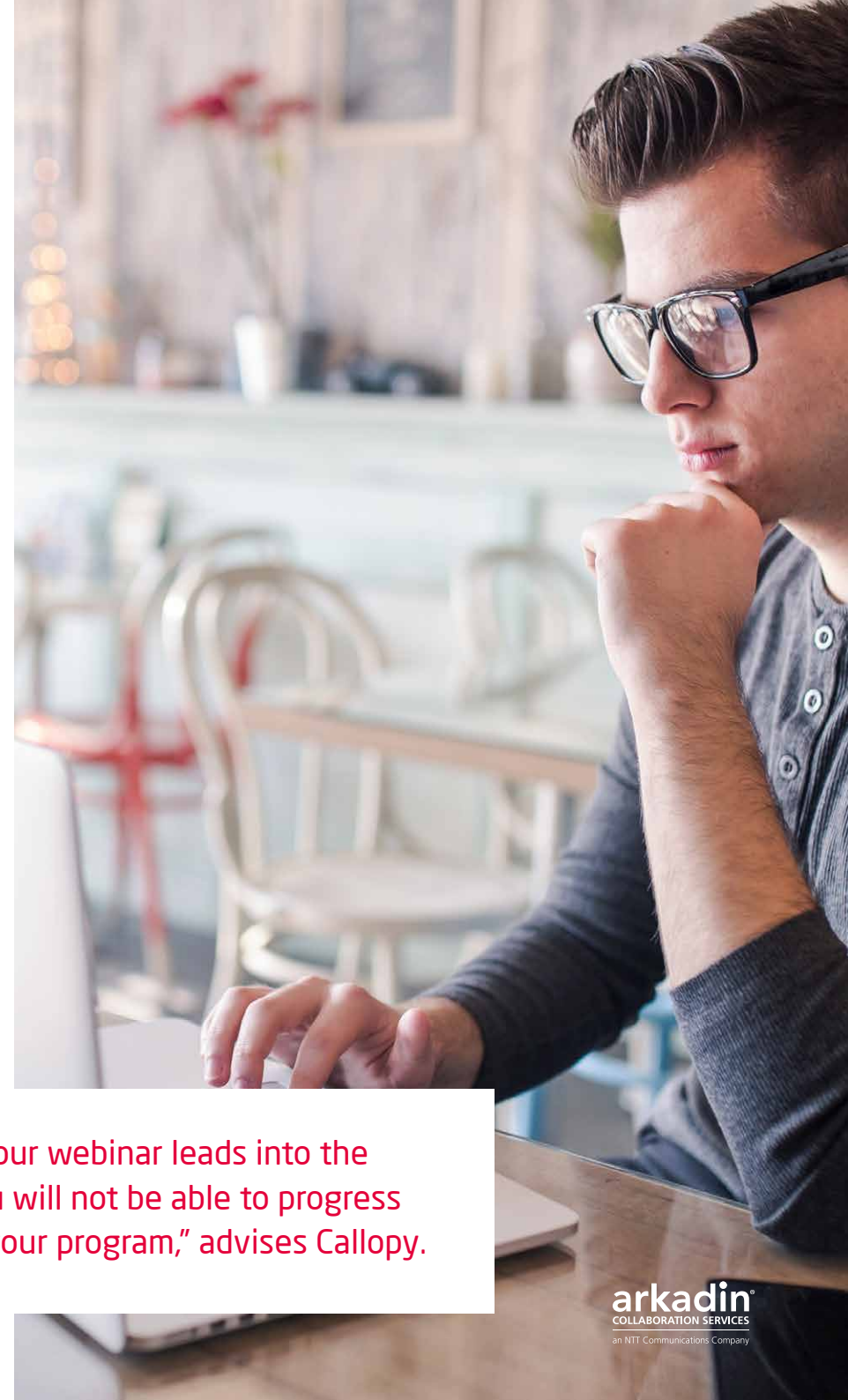
Using a managed webinar service will also ease the pressure to exploit one of the webinar's most valuable benefits: post-event analysis of interactions at every stage throughout the event cycle, giving you deeper insight into the quality and potential of lead generation.

Analyse everything

Analytics will tell you which aspects of the webinar gained the most traction with your audience - allowing you to repurpose them into secondary assets, which your sales team can use to build compelling success stories.

But it is also important to integrate the transition of leads from the webinar platform with your CRM and marketing automation systems, capturing them from on-demand assets as well as during the live broadcast.

"Without an automated way to deliver your webinar leads into the right hands for immediate follow-up, you will not be able to progress your pipeline nor scale the potential of your program," advises Callopy.



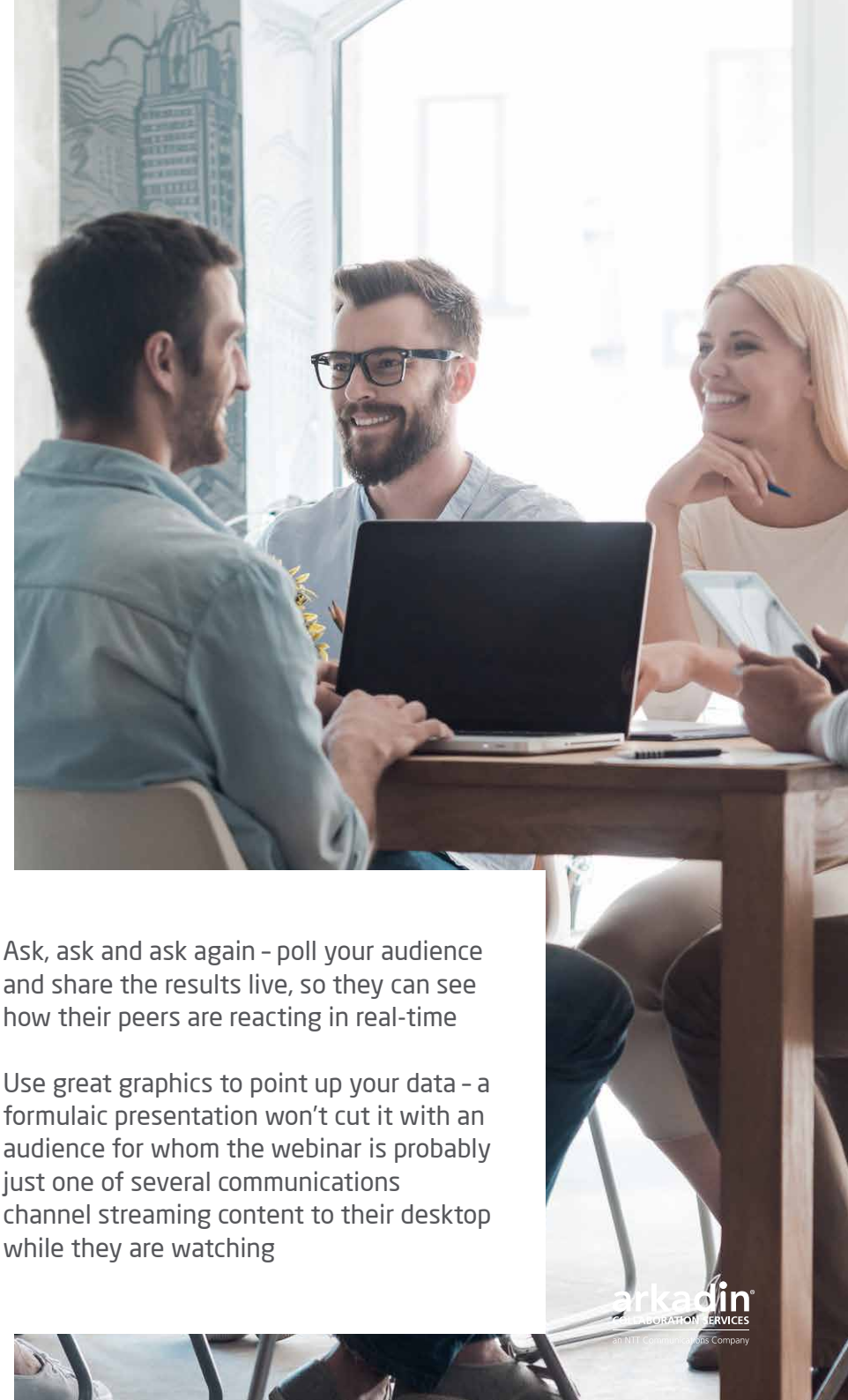
Promoting the value of the webinar internally, and demonstrating how it has generated new leads as well as maturing existing prospects, is probably the most neglected aspect of an organisation's webinar strategy - but it is where the evidence provided by good analytics really counts, driving those benefits to the bottom line and helping to unite sales and marketing on a new level of customer interaction.

And don't forget to follow up with your audience - and subscribers who didn't actually show up for the event. This is more than just a courtesy. It allows you to maximize the webinar as a resource, reminding attendees about its value and directing absentees to the archived broadcast on your website - offering yet more possibilities for interaction and lead generation.

This is the final point in Jeff Perkins' handy five-point summary of the webinar cycle for Biznology, [Are you doing webinars for lead gen?](#)

He also recommends:

- ✔ Promote your event early and often, and via as many routes as possible
- ✔ Use a webcam to make the viewer's experience as engaging as possible, rather than relying on presentation slides and a voiceover. Let them see the personalities delivering the message
- ✔ Ask, ask and ask again - poll your audience and share the results live, so they can see how their peers are reacting in real-time
- ✔ Use great graphics to point up your data - a formulaic presentation won't cut it with an audience for whom the webinar is probably just one of several communications channel streaming content to their desktop while they are watching



Compelling propositions

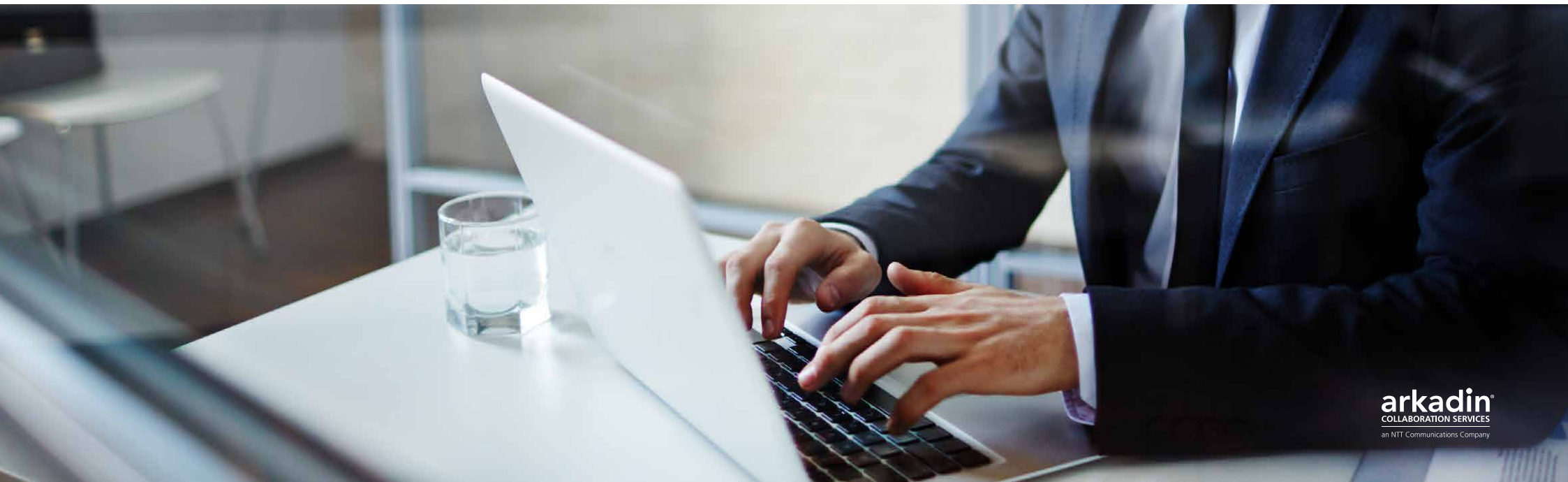
And it's that ability for audience engagement which make webinars such a compelling lead generation proposition for today's marketer.

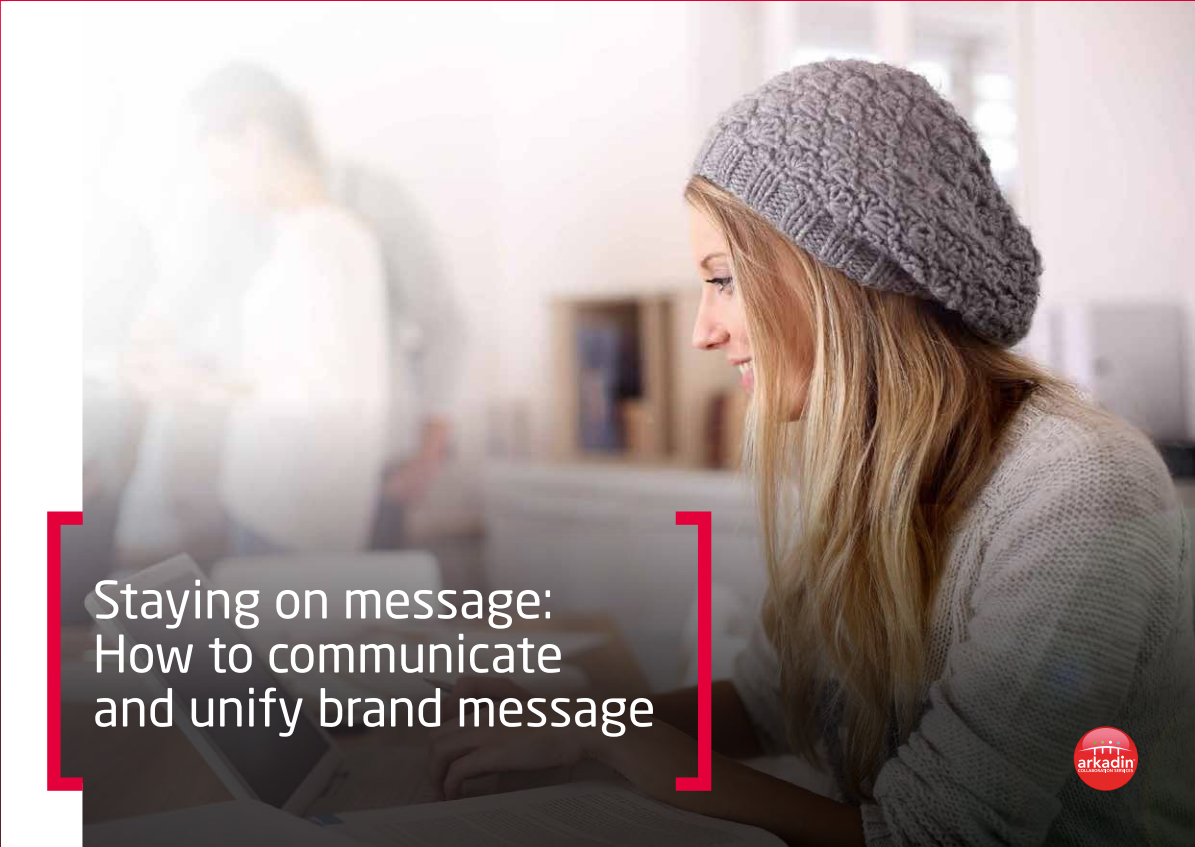
As Perkins says, it allows you to engage your prospects for a sustained period - if you can hold their interest:

"You're able to mash up audio, video, slides and more to keep the attention of your audience. That's why you see webinars rated as one of the top lead-gen tactics today."

Takeaways

- 1 | If 77% of businesses now use webinars for lead generation, your priority should be to maximise outcomes by using the best practices and supporting services available.
- 2 | While a DIY event might seem like the quickest and most economic option, letting a managed webinar take the strain could free you to focus on lead generation at every touchpoint from conception to post-conference follow-up
- 3 | Engage your sales team throughout the webinar cycle - their key prospects are a prime segment for your promotional comms





Staying on message:
How to communicate
and unify brand message

Discover how to keep your messaging on target and smash those lead gen targets, download:

Staying on message: How to communicate and unify brand message

Download now



[Enjoy work, enjoy life, enjoy sharing]

Arkadin is the world's fastest growing Collaboration Services Provider. We offer a range of Unified Communications and audio, web and video collaboration solutions, as well as virtual events. These are delivered in the Cloud for fast, scalable deployment. Our mission is to lead companies to increased growth and success by delivering positive collaboration experiences.



Countries and cultures that are part of our growing corporate infrastructure



Languages covered by our global customer service teams and end user communications



Offices in strategic locations to give a global perspective with local understanding