CONSIDERATIONS FOR ORGANIZING A WEBINAR

A&WMA needs to add more virtual programming to serve the membership. Below are the webinar committees' recommendations for organizing a successful webinar. A key component is identifying a webinar champion. This person coordinates between presenters and moderators to build the agenda and then assists with the entire planning process. They may or may not be a presenter or moderator. The webinar committee welcomes topic brainstorming prior to any planning to help the champion plan.

I. SCOPING OUT A WEBINAR

1. The best attended webinars are timely, relevant, and of immediate use to the practitioner. Practical emphasis over theoretical is best. Foundational topics/Core Programs (EX: Permitting, Modeling, NSR, GHG) can be just as successful as hot topics and emerging issues.

2. Optimally, if coordinating a panel presentation, it is encouraged to represent varied views including those from different organizations.

3. What makes this a compelling topic? It is difficult to successfully cover multiple "Topics" well during a short webinar. Overview/summary style webinars work, sometimes, but usually our audience knows the basics already. This might leave many asking why they signed up. The description of the webinar is critical to ensure the audience knows what they are going to get.

4. Consider what segments of the A&WMA membership make up the potential audience so that the best title and description can be crafted:
    a. Federal and State/Local Government
    b. International Organization
    c. Industry/Business and their Consultants
    d. Academic
    e. Environmental NGOs

5. Is this material worthy of the cost and attendee time? The cost for most webinars is over $100 (set by A&WMA) and thus fewer purchases are expected from Academic and Government sectors due to budget constraints. Strong and hot topics still require a "hook" with well worded descriptions for marketing purposes.

6. Timing – are there any specific events that could influence when such a webinar should be held? Most importantly, the longer a webinar lags a specific key event, the more interest in the webinar may diminish.

7. Series – if there is a lot of information, multiple webinars are possible through a series (2 or 3 sessions). However, each individual webinar must be able to stand alone, i.e. not require series attendance to close out specific topics.

II. PARTICIPANTS

Often the main obstacle is finding the presenters (two to three) and a moderator. The target audience for the current webinar program is North America. English language with consideration for speaking clarity in a virtual environment.

A. **Considerations for Presenters**:
1. Expertise and experience.

2. Represent a variety of perspectives (A&WMA is a neutral forum).

3. Consider the same categories of attendees in item 4 above as your varying slate of Presenters.

4. Discuss ideas for specific potential presenters?
   a. Who would be a "home run" or superstar presenter(s) (who would draw more attendees)?
   b. An expert speaking solely on the topic will simplify the planning effort but only if there is no strong opposing view that needs to be represented.
   c. Presenters that know each other or are colleagues usually do the best job in a webinar format. However, depending on the topic must be careful using all presenters from one organization.

5. Finding presenters:
   a. Champions usually have a good idea who will do a good job but the superstar presenters can be challenging to schedule. Cold calling does work if A&WMA does not already have an existing relationship. In general, most people will participate if asked or will help identify another option if they are unable.

6. How long to wait for presenters, especially the home run presenter? Again, interest in the webinar can diminish over time if we wait too long to set the program.

B. Considerations for Moderator:
1. The Moderator's role:
   a. Provide a short overview of the webinar to the attendees. Frame the webinar at the beginning.
   b. Introduce the presenters.
   c. Be neutral throughout the webinar.
   d. Allow the presenters to be the main attraction.
   e. Be knowledgeable enough to review questions coming in via chat (the Question and Answer section) and present them to the presenters, in some cases revising, combining, or ignoring (inappropriate or irrelevant or duplicative) questions. In addition, have 3-5 seed questions prepared in case the audience is slow to ask questions (ask your Presenters for these).
   f. Spur on discussion among the presenters.

III. <u>NEXT STEPS</u>

1. Completing the proposal form:
   a. Title and description for the committee to review, can be updated later as needed.
   b. Before submission ensure all speakers understand their contribution.
      Acceptable for organizations to provide actual speaker info after date selected.
   c. The person submitting the proposal form is requested to be the primary contact to assist with coordination going forward with A&WMA; i.e., the "Champion".
   d. The Webinar committee may ask additional questions, suggest tweaks to improve viability, or discuss combining with other ongoing work.

Once the proposal form is received and approved by the webinar committee there is a planning meeting (~1 hour) with the champion, all of the presenters, moderator, A&WMA coordinator, and the webinar committee. This is scheduled by the A&WMA coordinator. A webinar date and time is typically chosen during this meeting (typically on a Tues/Wed/Thurs and between 1 and 3 pm ET). Instructions for the participants are sent after the planning meeting. There are specific deadlines for the final information to be sent to the A&WMA coordinator, so that the agreed upon date of the webinar is met. To be the most effective in promoting the webinar, it is best to have at least 4 weeks.

A practice session (30min-1hr) is scheduled around 2 weeks prior to the webinar date, led by the Freestone's technical moderator, to review the webinar platform and view draft presentations in the system. On the date of the live webinar, presenters and the moderator(s) log in about 30 mins prior to the live event.

Thank you for participating in the A&WMA webinar program.

The Webinar Committee