

informs[®] SPEAKERS PROGRAM

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

REQUEST A VIRTUAL SPEAKER FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT

THINK OUTSIDE OF THE WEBINAR BOX

There's more to virtual events than the typical webinar. Consider different formats:



- Focus the entire event around Q&A vs. limiting interaction to a few minutes at the end.
- Host a virtual happy hour with one or more speakers leading and facilitating an informal discussion.
- Organize a panel discussion around a single topic featuring academics and practitioners.
- Ask a speaker to share their personal professional journey, or their research or business expertise.
- Schedule small group or individual appointments with the speaker after their presentation.
- Host an "Ask Me Anything" live event in your INFORMS Connect community. This is a text-based session during which community members can post questions and the facilitator(s) or speaker(s) reply in real time.

EXPAND ON WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Consider doing what you can't always accomplish at in-person events:



- Invite a speaker who's located in another country. No cost-prohibitive flight and travel time necessary.
- Invite multiple speakers to give different perspectives on a topic or participate in a panel discussion.
- Grow the audience and facilitate networking by co-hosting the event with another regional chapter, student chapter, or university.
- Use data from evaluations and the event platform to improve the attendee experience. Zoom captures valuable metrics including how many people register vs. attend your event, how long participants stay online, and when they log off.
- Share the recording and slides with participants and those who could not attend live.
- Add recordings to INFORMS YouTube Channel to expand reach of topic and group.

KEEP YOUR AUDIENCE ENGAGED

Try these ideas to replicate the experience of engaging with the speaker in person:



- Have the speaker record their presentation rather than giving it live. During the presentation, the speaker can monitor the chat box and/or Q&A function, engage in discussion, and answer audience questions in real time.
- Designate "chat box and/or Q&A facilitators" to prompt participation or ask questions during the presentation. Encourage audience to introduce themselves and provide their social media handles so other participants can connect offline, react to what's being said, or continue dialogue.
- If the audience is small enough, have attendees turn on their webcams for introductions.
- Create audience polls and report the results in real time.
- Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.