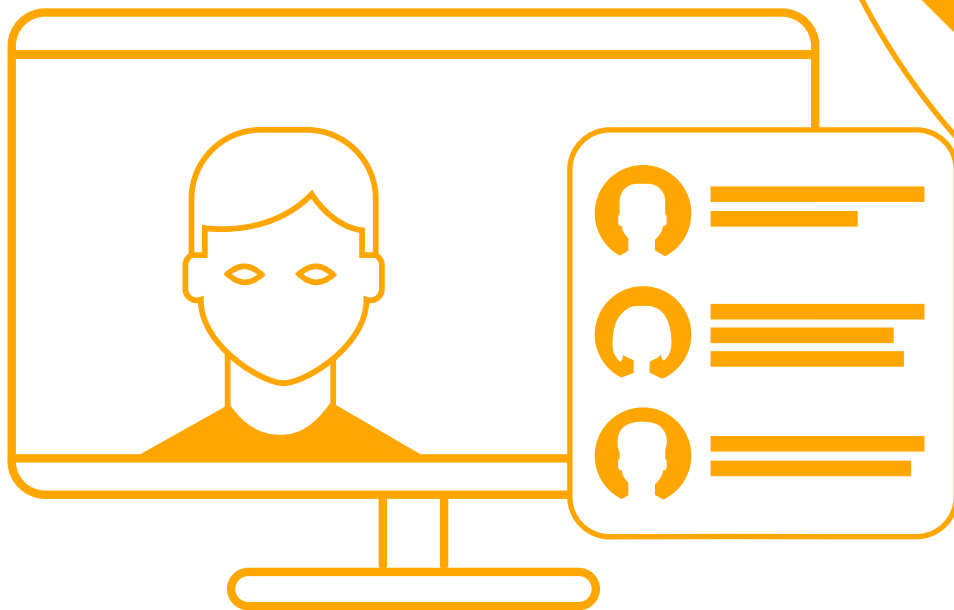




YOUR LIVESTREAMING HANDBOOK



mediafirst
specialists in communication training

INTRODUCTION

Live video has taken the world by storm.

Livestreaming now accounts for 17 per cent of all internet traffic and 23 per cent of total viewing time.

And businesses are playing a crucial role in this boom.

Check your inbox, and you'll probably notice invites from numerous organisations and individuals willing to share their talents, advice and expertise – you've probably received a few from us.

Why?

Because it is a cost-effective way of building brand awareness, establishing credibility, growing reach, and developing human connections.

You could use it to demonstrate your products and services, show what goes on behind the scenes, broadcast an event or solve a problem your customers are experiencing.

But with the boom in livestreaming activity, competition for viewers can be fierce.

So, how can you ensure your livestreams stand out?

WHAT IS LIVESTREAMING?

Livestreaming is one of those words we hear and see a lot.

And it is vital we are clear on what it means.

Livestreaming means transmitting live video over the internet. It's a bit like live TV.

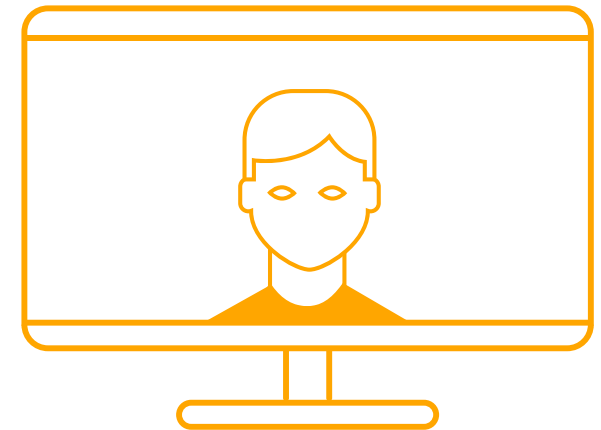
Initially, the video was streamed through dedicated livestreaming software.

But now many social media channels also offer streaming features. Check your phone, and you may have a notification that an organisation you follow has 'gone live'.

But here's where it gets a little confusing. Sometimes these live videos are called livestreams. On other occasions, they are referred to as webinars. And you may also hear them called masterclasses.

Although the terms are often used interchangeably, there are crucial differences.

So, let's explore them in more detail.



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LIVESTREAM, MASTERCLASS, AND WEBINAR?

Webinar

A webinar is typically a private streaming event requiring attendees to register.

It should explore something relevant and niche, a timely issue impacting your sector, or offer advice on how to do something better.

But a webinar could also be set up for sales purposes, such as to launch a new product.

Masterclasses

These have more of an educational feel.

The name means you've got to know your stuff, or people will leave disappointed.

We use 'masterclasses' to describe the livestream sessions in [The Media Team Academy](#) – our learning and development programme - because we know

people watching have good background knowledge of the subject and want to learn more.

Livestreaming

Livestreaming tends to refer to events accessible to everyone through the internet and channels like Facebook Live or YouTube. Access is free and doesn't need registration.

To be successful, you need a strong social media presence or the ability to drive traffic to where the video is streamed. The promise of expert advice helps get people to watch.

And as a livestream is accessible to the world, viewing figures can be larger.

WHY HAVE THESE LIVE VIDEO FORMATS BECOME SO POPULAR?

Well, the clue is probably in the word 'live'.

We all love video.

But it seems we love watching live video more.

Figures from Facebook show users watch Facebook Live video three times longer than pre-recorded ones.

Although it was a popular format before the pandemic, covid saw it rise to prominence. It enabled businesses to continue to connect with customers when we couldn't meet face-to-face.

But its popularity has remained when restrictions eased.

Here are seven reasons why:

1 **Authenticity**

It's often true that a live broadcast feels more genuine and unscripted than a pre-recorded broadcast. This is partly due to the chance to interact with the hosts and ask questions.

2 **Engaging**

Live broadcasts enable attendees to chat, ask questions and probe the knowledge of your experts in real time. They can also share their thoughts in polls. It can create a personal viewing experience where people – your customers - feel valued.

3 **Depth**

Live broadcasts allow a topic to be covered in more depth than other forms of content. Let's say your livestream lasts an hour – that would be the equivalent of a blog consisting of thousands and thousands of words. It would be a daunting read. And it is doubtful many of your customers would have the time to read something so long.

WHY HAVE THESE LIVE VIDEO FORMATS BECOME SO POPULAR?

4 *Value for money*

Live broadcasts are cheaper and more convenient than in-person events. You don't need to worry about hiring a venue or travel costs. And you can invite as many people as you like.

5 *Long-term value*

Live video offers plenty of other content options. It can be turned into a series of blogs. You can share quotes and video clips on social media. You could add a recording of your livestream or webinar to your website, YouTube channel and social feeds, and customers and staff can download them long after the event. Many of our clients choose to gate these recordings - a great way of gaining customer data, like email addresses, for future marketing opportunities.

6 *Keeps a remote workforce connected*

Live broadcasts are not just for reaching customers. They are also a brilliant way to get information to your workforce regardless of whether they are in the office, working at home or on a business trip. And if they can't watch live, they can also catch up on the recording.

7 *Measuring success*

You will need to see a return on the investment in your time and effort. And live broadcasts offer several ways you can measure success. Depending on your aims, participation statistics, engagement scores, social media promotion, brand awareness data and attendees who take the next steps and close deals can all give you an idea of what people think about your live video and where you may need to improve.

GOING LIVE: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MAKING A LIVE BROADCAST?

So, you want to add live broadcasts to your content strategy.

How can you create something that stands out amid such fierce competition for viewers?

Whether you want to host a webinar, masterclass or livestream, you need something that informs, educates and offers quality.

Otherwise, people will quickly switch off. And they won't come back.

Let's guide you through what you need to know about making a successful live broadcast.

PRE-PRODUCTION

Plan and prepare

Like other forms of content, planning and preparation play a huge part in the success of live broadcasts.

Start by thinking about your audience.

What would they want from you? What are the problems and issues they face? How can you help them solve those issues or learn more about the challenges they might face?

And, what do you want to achieve? Are you looking to get more followers? Build your email marketing list? Establish your authority? Generate more leads?

If the last aim resonates with you, it's worth stressing your content should not be too salesy. The general rule is 80 per cent content and 20 per cent sales and promotional material. But at Media First, we'd say that 20 per cent is still too salesy.

So, let your expertise and knowledge shine through to generate those leads.

Once you've answered those questions, you can consider the best format for your live video.

Live interviews

These can create hugely informative content. And they are a brilliant way to showcase insight and expertise.

It is a format that can feel daunting. Inexperienced hosts worry about running out of questions.

And interviewees fear being asked unexpected questions.

Interviewing people 'on air' is not something that everyone can do well. It takes training and practice. But good communication training can ensure presenters and guests appear confident, natural and relaxed.

PRE-PRODUCTION

Q&A sessions

Q&A sessions can bring a live broadcast to life. Enabling your audience to ask questions is a great way to build connections and develop feelings of closeness.

The key is to carefully consider what you could be asked and plan how you might respond. It eliminates the potential for questions to catch your experts off guard.

Live tutorials

These are an opportunity to showcase the benefits of a product or service and show your audience how it will help them.

Research has shown around 65 per cent of the population are visual learners, so they may not fully understand the benefits of your product from a blog post or article.

This can be a fantastic means of reducing the number of support or customer service calls that your business receives.

Live tutorials are also a great way of building trust.

PRE-PRODUCTION

Behind the scenes

Give your audience a glimpse into what goes on behind the scenes.

Guide them through what goes into making a product or delivering a service.

Introduce them to your workforce.

Take them backstage at a live event.

This live broadcast format is typically shorter. But it taps into the curiosity we all have, and is a brilliant way for your audience to get to know you a little better.

Live events

Take your live event to a wider audience.

Livestreaming them means more people can take part. And it can build hype.

Use your livestream to show them what's happening. Take them behind the scenes. Interview the speakers.

You could even ask the audience what they want you to cover.

PRESENTERS

Part of your preparation also needs to focus on who will present and appear in your live broadcast.

Many of us get a bit anxious about appearing in front of a camera. So, this needs careful consideration in advance. Would your people benefit from some training before you start to go live?

It may also be worth bringing in a journalist to host your livestream, particularly for interviews, where their experience can ensure you get the most from your guests.

And having a host from outside of your business will instantly add credibility to your production.

Also, think about what other details you will include in your broadcast.

Are you going to include slides? Maybe you want to show video clips or play some audio to support your message. What questions do you want to ask the audience? Are you going to use polls? How are you going to make your broadcast interactive?



TOP TIPS FOR LIVE BROADCAST PRESENTERS:

1 *Bring the passion*

Hopefully, your presenters are enthusiastic about the subject. But they need to show it. Enthusiasm and passion help to maintain the interest of the audience. It makes people take note, builds trust and helps turn doubters into believers.

2 *Share stories*

People want to hear stories about other people. Stories stimulate emotions and help persuade people of an idea or the benefits of a product. The best stories are those that are personal to the presenter. So, share your experiences.

3 *Conversational*

Aim to create a relaxed, conversational tone. Stick to the language you normally use. The audience is more likely to engage with presenters who seem informal and chatty than those who appear guarded and scripted.

4 *The power of the pause*

What you say is crucial. But, sometimes, brief silence can be just as impactful. It is a brilliant way of building anticipation for what you are about to say and adding emphasis to your message. In a world of constant chatter, audiences do not always expect brief moments of silence – we are typically talking about just a few seconds – and they are fascinated to find out what will happen next.

5 *Take a break*

Let's say your webinar is over an hour. That's a long time for presenters to keep those energy levels high. Equally, it is a long time for the audience to maintain concentration. Building in little breaks – with polls, video clips, audience questions – allows everyone to take a breath.

TOP TIPS FOR LIVE BROADCAST PRESENTERS:

6 ***Make it interactive***

Without audience participation, your session could become a little boring. Make sure you get them involved. Ask questions, use polls, create live Q&As. We use Mentimeter during our webinars and masterclasses to boost audience engagement.

7 ***Start strongly***

Just like with an in-person presentation, your audience will make judgements about you early and decide whether the session is worth their time and focus.

8 ***Plan for the worst*** (and hope for the best).

If things go wrong, you need to stay composed. The key to doing this is to work through what could go wrong in advance and prepare what you would do in each situation.

9 ***Relax***

Enjoy presenting your webinars - it can be great fun. Remember, you are the expert. They are tuning in to hear what you have to say.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PLATFORM

There are lots of options to consider here.

Dedicated software is likely to be the best option if you are targeting a specific audience with a webinar or masterclass.

It can feel daunting as there are lots of platforms to choose from. And they all have pros and cons. We've used BigMarker, Webex and Zoom.

A good way of finding the right platform for you is to think about your webinar essentials.

For example, Q&A capabilities, customization options and video and audio quality are crucial for our aims. Marketing tools have been less important because we already have software for that.

If you can, request a demo before you sign up to a contract.

What about for a livestream?

Well, these events are for a much wider audience and are usually hosted through social media channels.

Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn and TikTok all offer livestreaming.

So, which one should you use?

Well, it's pretty simple – you need to stream on the channels your audience use. If most of your audience uses Facebook, there is little value in streaming on TikTok.

TECH

What tech do you need to invest in for your live broadcasts?

This will come down to your aims and how you want to be perceived.

You may not need any fancy equipment.

You can go live on social media channels through your phone with the press of a button.

But for webinars and masterclasses and most livestreams, you will need to go beyond that.

It doesn't need to cost pots of money, but you'll need:

A stable internet connection: You're not going to get far if your signal keeps dropping out and your audience is left with a frozen screen and lots of buffering. People will quickly find something else to do.

A decent camera: Could you use your computer's webcam? While that's probably fine for Zoom and Teams meetings, you will need something with a bit more quality to engage your audience.

Microphones: Some people may be able to overlook poor visuals. But sound quality cannot be compromised – people need to hear what you have to say. So, you will need to go beyond your laptop's built-in microphones. Lapel microphones are a good place to start. But you'll need to figure out how this works with multiple guests. If people are working from home, a decent USB microphone such as the RODE NT-USB is a good choice and is relatively inexpensive.

TECH

Lighting: How many media interviews did you watch during lockdown restrictions ruined by awful lighting? It happened a lot. And it is a potential risk for your live broadcasts. There are some simple steps you can take. For example, don't sit with a window behind you as it could leave you looking washed out. You want the light in front of you – or ideally at a 45 degree angle in front of you, not behind. Again, depending on your aims, lighting can be much more advanced. A good starting point is an LED light with a diffuser. Go for something with too much power but that has the ability to turn down the brightness.

Of course, good live broadcast production companies can take these considerations off your hands.

We can bring our kit to your offices to produce webinars. Or you could come to our new broadcast-quality studios.

STRUCTURE

Just like a presentation, your webinar, masterclass or livestream needs a structure.

Without one, the audience will get lost.

You'll need a strong introduction to build on the early interest and maintain attention.

Give people a reason to stay – tease ahead to something that will come later in the session.

Then set the agenda for the session showing what you intend to cover. You can put a slide together to share the plan with your audience.

Then get into it and deliver the content you have promised.

Audience questions are great, and many live broadcasts include a live session towards the end.

But ensure they are not the last thing. You could end up answering a question on something that doesn't relate to the main message you want to get across. Instead, make the broadcast more conversational by answering questions throughout the broadcast.

That way you can finish your broadcast with a summary of your message and a call to action.

DON'T WRITE A SCRIPT

It can feel unnerving knowing you need to keep an audience entertained and informed for potentially up to an hour.

There's plenty of advice out there that recommends writing a compelling script.

Don't fall into this trap – it leads to robotic performances.

An unscripted, conversational broadcast is much more engaging.

Of course, you need to know where you are going and what you will say.

Having that solid structure in place, as we outlined earlier, will help presenters and guests as much as the audience.

And build on that foundation with a plan. Outline what stories and case studies you intend to address at specific points – remember, people love stories.

What statistics have you got to support your message?

When do your polls and audience questions come in?

What's the contingency plan if things go wrong?

Sometimes the conversation may cover something unexpected. If you think this is relevant to your audience, don't worry about deviating from your plan for a while.

PROMOTION

For your live broadcast to be a success, you need virtual bums on seats. So, promotion is crucial.

If you've got an email marketing list, use it to ensure your subscribers know about the session.

Send them a few emails to try and capture attention – remember, many of us have busy mailboxes, and one email could be easily overlooked.

But don't worry if you don't have a mailing list. There are many ways to build your audience.

You may have more of a marketing list than you think. Your social media followers could provide a large audience, for example. This is particularly crucial if you are running a livestream through a social media channel.

And the fact they follow you suggests interest and an investment in what you say.

PROMOTION

Forums and LinkedIn Groups also offer ready-made audiences – you just need to ensure you offer something relevant, compelling and valuable to grab attention.

Google, Facebook, and LinkedIn pay-per-click adverts offer promotion options and may be worth considering if your broadcast is about a new product or service rather than thought leadership. But there are cost implications to consider.

You could also write a blog promoting the webinar. Choose one aspect of what you intend to discuss and write about it in advance.

Also, consider adding a pop-up on your website promoting the live broadcast.

Finally, use the power of your team to promote your event. Sales reps will be grateful for the opportunity to provide something for free to their prospective and existing clients.

PRODUCTION

It's time to broadcast

Well, almost.

Before you go live, you need a run-through.

Book some time ahead of your broadcast to ensure you rehearse the webinar. In fact, book two rehearsals.

One should focus on ensuring all the technology works.

And the other on ensuring presenters and guests are ready to communicate with clarity and confidence.

Keep the engagement high

Think about how you can keep engagement levels high and maintain interest in what you have to say.

One of the best ways to do this is to involve the audience.

Ask them a question early in the session. Ask them to comment and read them out – a great way to begin sharing views.

You could get them to vote in a poll and show the results.

Perhaps you could hold a competition or even include a practical session in the middle of your broadcast.

PRODUCTION

Don't strive for perfection

A bit like TV or radio, things will go wrong when you livestream.

Don't worry.

Small mishaps are part of the appeal and can add to the authenticity of the session. The audience understands a live broadcast is unlikely to be as polished as a pre-recorded video.

See mistakes as a chance to show your flexibility. They can also help the audience see your human side.

The more experienced and better trained your presenter and guests, the better they will be at styling out any problems.

POST PRODUCTION

Don't leave them wanting more – send them it instead

You've captured interest. How can you build on it?

Think about what else you can send your audience.

For those who registered but didn't attend, send them a link so they can watch the session when they have more time.

Write a recap blog for those who came along. Or send them your slides.

Maybe you have an eBook or Whitepaper on a related topic they may find interesting.

Find out what they think

Consider sending your viewers a post-broadcast survey to see what they think.

What did they learn from the session?

Has it helped them overcome problems, achieve their goals or think differently about a subject?

While you are there, you could also ask if they have any topics they would like you to cover in future.

Review

No one likes watching themselves back.

But it is important to overcome that awkwardness and review your session.

What went well? What would you do differently next time?

Do you need to change any of the tech? Did the format work as well as you hoped?

POST PRODUCTION

Consistency

If you decide you want to host regular webinars, masterclasses or livestreams, sticking to a regular day could be beneficial.

Whether it is every week or once a month, your audience will know when to show up if you have a consistent routine.

If you think a regular series might work best for you, you'll need to get the structure right to ensure it is long-lasting.

Much like launching a TV, radio show or podcast series, this means coming up with a repeatable process and content structure that will not get boring.

But you don't need to create a regular series. Two or three live streams or webinars may be all you need to deliver results. Even a one-off can bring benefits - a scarcity factor can be beneficial.

Track your progress

Measurement matters. Track your live broadcast progress.

Are you getting the viewers you want?

Where are they coming from?

What's the ratio between registrations and those who turn up and watch the session?

Are the broadcasts increasing leads and helping you close deals?

There's plenty of data out there. So, use it to show you are seeing a return on your live broadcast investment.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Should you produce your live broadcasts (or call in the experts)

So, we've given you lots of advice on running webinars.

But there's still a whole host of questions to answer.

When should you produce your live broadcasts? And when should you get some professional help?

There is no rule around this.

Instead, there are things to consider.

A crucial consideration is your audience and aims.

If it is a small internal audience, a do-it-yourself webinar or masterclass could be perfect if you have the technical know-how and the kit.

But what if it is the whole organisation? Or clients and potential customers you want to impress? Higher production values could make the difference

between success and failure in these situations.

Could you or your team add a title sequence? Or a lower third (a text title or graphic overlay placed in the lower region of the screen)?

Equally, if you're not used to being in front of the cameras, using an experienced presenter to host the event could help ensure your audience does not go home disappointed.

Another consideration is budget.

Producing your live broadcast could be cheaper – although you will still need to invest in the right kit.

But don't forget to factor your time - and that of your team - into this sum.

Creating a live broadcast takes time. It can take a lot of time.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Should you produce your live broadcasts (or call in the experts)

Remember, there is a lot of planning and preparation needed to improve the chances of success. As well as planning what you will say and how you are going to say it, you've also got to promote your session.

A professional live broadcast company (like us), will be able to take this off your hands and cover everything from the broadcast plan to sending the invites.

A final consideration is that a professional broadcast company should offer your audience more support.

During our sessions, we have off-screen producers and technicians managing viewers technical questions, the slides, monitoring the audio and vision mixing between multiple camera angles.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

How can we help you with your live broadcast?

Whether you want to add webinars, masterclasses or livestreams to your content strategy, we can work with you to create something that informs, educates and offers quality. And provide you with long-term benefits.

We'll work with you to ensure viewers interact and connect with your live content and go away feeling they better understand the subject.

Our journalists can fine-tune ideas and help you identify angles, opinions and issues to discuss. They can also host webinars, asking questions that enable your experts to showcase their knowledge and compel those watching to interact.

The addition of a journalist host will also add credibility. It shows you are taking it seriously and not there to present a sales pitch.

We will also help you attract viewers - our creative team can create the material you need to market your event and compel people to register and watch.

And, as a company also working on [video production](#) and [podcast production](#), our audio and visual teams are ideally placed to ensure your webinars avoid any technical hitches.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Who have we worked with on live broadcasts?

We were asked to host, record, produce and livestream the National Union of Students (NUS) 2022 Election Hustings.

Here's what they said about our work:

"Working with Media First for our Elections Hustings in 2022 was fantastic. Their team worked really hard to accommodate all our requirements, and often had to be quite flexible to changes to suit the needs of our team and the candidates. Andrea was an absolute dream to work with, and helped us with all the tiny and important details. On the day, candidates were provided with media training and made to feel at ease with host Susan Bookbinder supporting them. The technical team also managed coordinate both online and in-person candidates, with everything coming together seamlessly. No easy feat!

"We were really happy with the results! Being able to hear from our candidates, and their views on students issues today was amazing, and was a key part in engaging students in our democratic process during our 100th Birthday year."

Lauren Prince, Membership & Governance Coordinator, NUS Charity

“

*Working with
Media First for our
Elections Hustings in
2022 was fantastic.*

”

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Who have we worked with on live broadcasts?

We worked with global music and technology company Utopia Music, to give more than 200 employees a fast-paced introduction to understanding the media.

Working with Utopia's comms team, we planned and delivered a live two-hour live webinar to help demystify some of the inner workings of the media.

We also produce monthly masterclasses for members of our learning and development programme – [The Media Team Academy](#).

These are hour-long sessions, and are usually presented by one of our current working journalist tutors.

They are produced from our new studios, and we use video clips, polls and live question-and-answer sessions to ensure engagement.

Each session is recorded, and the video is uploaded to an exclusive content hub for members of the programme.

We've also created webinars for our wider audience, exploring the issues that matter to them, such as crisis media management, message development and sustainability. These sessions remain available as [downloadable content on our website](#).

As well as our own live broadcasts, we've also produced them for our clients.



ABOUT MEDIA FIRST

We've been delivering communication training for around 40 years.

This includes working with 40 of the FTSE 100, public relations companies, charities, public sector organisations and businesses of all sizes.

Our customers are increasingly asking us for help creating compelling content for them, including webinars, masterclasses, live streams, videos and podcasts.

All our content is created by current working journalists who know how to inform, educate and entertain audiences.

And we can enable your people to play an active role in the content by ensuring they feel comfortable and can communicate with clarity and confidence.

We can also work with you to produce the marketing material to help you promote your content and guide you through repurposing it into other forms of compelling content.

