

Thank-You Letter

Send this letter out by email as soon as possible after the event. Remember that every minute that ticks by without participants' taking the next action step is an opportunity lost.

The usual holdup involves getting the link for the recording (if applicable). If you have all the information in advance, send it out within minutes of the webcast ending.

Dear _____:

Thank you for attending today's "Five Ways to Write Emails That Don't Annoy People" webinar. We hope you found the investment of time informative and valuable.

Because we value your opinion, we'd love to hear your feedback. Please click on the link below and answer five simple questions to help us continue to improve our education efforts.

[Provide link to evaluation.]

To thank you for your time, we have attached, with our compliments, a PDF copy of the PowerPoint visuals from the program. We know you'll find it invaluable in your endeavor to avoid poor email practices.

We at _____ are eager to assist you in the fight against communication failure. One great step would be to schedule a demonstration of our product. Contact us at _____ to arrange for a personal look at just how we can help you achieve success.

The recording of this webinar will be available within 24 hours [duration may vary depending on your platform] at [insert the link to your presentation here]. We covered a lot of information in our time together, and this provides a great way to review the content. Also please share this link with your friends and colleagues—anyone you think might benefit from seeing the presentation.

Again, thank you for attending the webinar, and we look forward to being of service to you in the future.

Sincerely,

[Insert signature of sales representative or company president.]

[List contact information.]

Sending a “sorry we missed you” letter is a good way to reconnect with these people. This letter should resemble the thank-you letter outlined above, but with a recognition that even though recipients missed the live event, they can still get the benefit of the material and content of your presentation.

Include the following in that letter:

- ◆ Greet the recipient.
- ◆ Recognize that the recipient wasn’t in attendance. If participation was mandatory, don’t be subtle about reminding recipients to retake the course or at least view the recording. If participation was voluntary, recognize recipients’ interest in the topic and offer them the chance to benefit from the presentation despite being unable to join you live.
- ◆ Fulfill any obligations on your part.
- ◆ Remind the recipient of next steps (make any required action as easy as possible).
- ◆ Remind the recipient of the next event or presentation, or direct him or her to a recording of the presentation.

Surveys and Evaluations

If you have ever handed out course evaluations at the back of a classroom as people were rushing for the doors, you know you’ll get results of dubious quality—they mostly reflect strong feelings one way or the other, with most of the feedback being positive and nonspecific. The only worse alternative is to hand them out and ask people to “get them back to you.” Then you don’t receive much feedback at all.

The good news is that many of the major platform providers, including Cisco (WebEx applications), Live Meeting, and GoToWebinar, allow you to create surveys as part of the planning for your presentation. When you schedule the presentation, you can also schedule your follow-up, thank-you letters, and surveys.

Sorry We Missed You Letter

Send this letter out by email immediately after the web presentation is over—or at least as soon as you get the link to the recording. (You'll be amazed how many people get it and say, "Oh shoot, I forgot," but still take action or view the recording.)

Don't let the lead or the call to action go cold.

Dear _____:

Although you registered to attend today's webinar, "Five Ways to Write Email That Doesn't Annoy People," we couldn't help but notice your absence. We understand that in today's crazy work world, things come up, and you can't always attend an event even when you want to.

Fortunately, you haven't necessarily missed out on the opportunity to learn the techniques that dozens of people [or however many showed up—people love to be part of a crowd] heard. You can hear and view the recorded webinar by clicking here [include a link to the recording].

Because so many people requested them, we have also included a PDF copy of the PowerPoint visuals for you to use as a reference and share with others.

We at _____ know the topic is important to you. To get more information or to schedule a free review of your writing samples, please contact _____ at [insert a link here].

We know you'll find the recorded webinar interesting and look forward to having you join us live at our next webinar event.

Sincerely,

[Insert your signature and contact information on separate lines.]

Even if your provider doesn't have a survey feature, you can easily use SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com), Kwik Surveys (www.kwiksurveys.com), or Free Online Surveys (www.freeonline-surveys.com). Plenty of others are available as well. Depending on how much detail you want to include and how many people you're surveying, you can send evaluations to every attendee's email address and receive the answers already collated and ready to review.

Web Presentation Self-Evaluation

This worksheet will benefit every member of the team. Each should take a good hard look at his or her work and identify what worked well and what can work better.

Complete it collectively on a conference call or at a web meeting (now that you know how to run those so well), or send it by email with a specific time frame for responses. Respondents should be as specific and clear as possible.

Step 1. Identify your objectives and outcomes

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
Clearly defined my purpose for the presentation				
Got buy-in from all stakeholders				
Clearly defined the outcome				
Final presentation was geared to that outcome				

Step 2. Learn the platform

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
The platform was appropriate for my purposes				
I was able to use all the appropriate functions comfortably				
The platform was appropriate for my audience				

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
There were no problems with audience connectivity				
I chose and used all the functions appropriate for this presentation				

Step 3. Create a project plan

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
The roles and responsibilities were assigned properly				
There were no problems meeting deadlines or assigned tasks				
The plan is usable as-is for the next project or presentation				

Step 4. Work with others

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
I chose the appropriate people to ask for assistance				
The feedback I got was timely and useful				

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
There were no problems with deadlines or quality of work				
The co-presenters performed their assigned tasks flawlessly and worked well as a team				

Step 5. Create compelling content

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
The invitation process got us the attendance we wanted				
The invitations went to the right people at the right time				
People knew what to expect as a result of the invitation				
There were no problems with registration or log-in				
The introduction was clear and focused on attaining our outcome				
We followed the introduction template effectively				

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
The "tour" of the platform was clear and useful for the audience				
The housekeeping details were appropriate and concise				
The agenda was appropriate for the audience and outcome				
The content was properly targeted to the attendees				
Examples and success stories were appropriate to this audience				

Step 6. Create visuals that support your presentation

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
The number of visuals was appropriate				
Words in the visuals were all spelled correctly				
Visuals looked onscreen as they were designed				
Transitions, animations, and other visual aids worked properly				

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
Pictures and clip art were appropriate to the audience				
Visuals appeared smoothly and quickly				
Annotation worked smoothly				
Application sharing went smoothly				

Step 7. Sharpen your presentation skills

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
I felt comfortable presenting during the presentation				
My transitions from one visual to the next were seamless				
Annotations worked smoothly and didn't affect my concentration				
I chose the right annotation tools for each visual				
I had the appropriate level of interactivity with my audience				
I remembered to ask questions and interact at the right times				

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
The audience permissions were appropriate to my audience and my outcomes				
I displayed good verbal skills (per feedback sheet)				
I displayed good vocal skills (per feedback sheet)				

Step 8. Rehearse

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
There were no unexpected challenges with the audience experience				
I got accurate feedback from people who watched (use the feedback forms)				
There were no unexpected problems or challenges during rehearsal				
Changes based on rehearsal were easy to make and didn't create time pressure				

Step 9. Present and multitask effectively

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
I was calm and stress-free during my presentation				
I didn't lose my place or my concentration				
Any problems were invisible to the audience				
Question-and-answer session went the way I envisioned it				
The questions I planned reflected the audience's questions				
The audience came up with great questions				
The process of taking and screening audience questions worked efficiently				
My answers were targeted and concise				
I had appropriate time for question-and-answer session				
My call to action was clear				
I stated my call to action and next steps assertively and confidently				

Step 10. Follow up and keep learning

Action Item	Did You Achieve Your Goal?	How Do You Know?	Maintain, Delete, or Improve	Specific Steps to Improve Performance
The audience is responding and taking appropriate action				
The thank-you letters went out in a timely fashion				
The "sorry we missed you" letters went out in a timely fashion				
The recording was of good quality				
The recording was posted quickly, and links were included in all communication with registrants				
The evaluations measured important data				
The evaluations were sent out in a timely manner				
I got appropriate response levels to the evaluations				
The feedback I got was useful and clear				
Feedback from stakeholders was positive				
The celebratory margarita had the right amount of ice in it				

How to ask effective questions

Questions asked by the presenter of a session are good for the following reasons:

1. Engage the audience
2. Make it about them – NOT YOU!
3. To summarize

Effective Types of Questions to Use During Presentations

Open-ended	Questions that encourage two-way communication. “How do the rest of you feel about this?”
Reflective	Questions used to reflect understanding, demonstrate comprehension or to encourage further discussion. “So, is what you’re saying that the best advantage that you have is technology? What specific areas give you the most significant advantages as a sales person?”
Focused	Provide a means of guiding a group by drawing their attention to a particular area. “So how many processes have we covered so far?”
Redirecting	These are extremely effective in reinforcing a point or moving the discussion back from an irrelevant point. “What do the rest of you think about this?” “That relates to what Helen said earlier. Helen, what are your thoughts?”
Loaded	A question, which is biased to bring unfair pressure to bear on the respondent to answer a particular way. “Do you agree with our engineers that the new products are better?”

How to answer questions

Your ability to handle questions will determine the amount of interactivity you have in your session.

Tips for Answering Questions

- ◆ Receive all questions in an open, friendly manner.
- ◆ Listen carefully and restate the question to make sure you understand it and that the entire audience hears it.
- ◆ Think before answering. Consider:
 - Why is this question being asked?
 - How does this question fit with my topic?
 - How can I answer briefly and as well as possible?
- ◆ Use the KISS principle: Keep It Simple and Succinct
- ◆ If you do not know the answer, say so. Offer to find out the answer and to get back to the person.

Paraphrase and Summarize

Paraphrasing demonstrates you are listening and understand. Paraphrasing mirrors the meaning. Summarizing checks for understanding. Summarizing allows you to synthesize and check for understanding.

Types of Paraphrasing

- ◆ Restatement – You state in your own words rather than the participant’s a condensed version of what was just said.
- ◆ General to Specific – If the participant statement is general, paraphrase by stating a specific. It shows you understand the general.
- ◆ Specific to General – If the participant statement is specific, you can paraphrase it by stating a generalization or principle. By doing this, you indicate not only that you understood the statement, but also reinforce the broader concept.
- ◆ Restatement in Opposite Terms – You convey that you understood simply by restating the opposite.

Summarizing typically begins with something like:

- ◆ “In other words, . . .”
- ◆ “What you are saying is that . . .”
- ◆ “In summary, you think that . . .”

Reacting to Answers

- ◆ Acknowledge every contribution.
- ◆ Always acknowledge responses immediately.
- ◆ Correct responses-repeat the answer and emphasize or expand the main point.
- ◆ Broadly correct responses-emphasize key elements and seek further information.
- ◆ Incorrect answers – Try to find something of merit in the answer. Then, restate the question.
- ◆ Where the answer doesn't make sense-paraphrase to check understanding and then redirect.
- ◆ Where the response is completely irrelevant, restate to check meaning and then redirect.

Handling Challenging Participants

Tip: It's important to realize the different reasons that people are at a session to begin with. Often times as a presenter or trainer, it's a benefit to ask the question of the group prior to starting, "Why are you here?"

Problem	Effective Response
Domination by a highly verbal member	<p>When one person is over- participating, everyone else is under- participating. So, focus your efforts on the passive majority.</p> <p>Encourage them to participate more. Trying to change the dominant person merely gives that person all the more attention.</p>
Goofing around in the midst of a discussion	<p>Aim for a break as soon as possible. People have become undisciplined because they are overloaded or worn out. After a breather, they will be much better able to focus.</p>
Low participation by the entire group	<p>Switch from large-group open discussion to a different format that lowers the anxiety level. Often, idea-listing is the perfect remedy. If safety is a major concern, small group activities are very important.</p>
Quibbling about trivial procedures	<p>Have the group step back from the content of the issue and talk about the process. Ask the group, "What is really going on here?"</p>
Someone discovers a completely new problem that no one had previously noted	<p>Wake up! This may be what you've been waiting for: the doorway into a new way of thinking about the whole situation.</p>
Poor follow through on assignments	<p>Have people do assignments in teams.</p> <p>Build in a report-back process at a midpoint before the assignment is due. This gives anyone having trouble a chance to get help.</p>

Problem	Effective Response
<p>One or two silent members in a group whose other members participate actively</p>	<p>"I'd like to get opinions from those who haven't talked for a while." Breaking into small groups works even better. Small groups allow shy members to speak up without having to compete for air time.</p>
<p>Failure to start on time and end on time</p>	<p>Start when you say you're going to start. (Waiting encourages lateness.)</p> <p>If you must go overtime, call a break so people can phone home. If going overtime is recurrent, improve your agenda planning.</p>
<p>Two people locking horns</p>	<p>Reach out to other members and say, "Who else has an opinion on this issue?" or, "Let's step back for a minute. Are there any other issues that need to be discussed?" Remember: don't focus your attention on the dominant minority, focus on the passive majority.</p>
<p>Whispering and side jokes</p>	<p>With warmth and humor, make an appeal for decorum. "As you know, those who don't hear the joke often wonder if someone is laughing at them." If the problem persists, assume there's a reason. Has the topic become boring and stale? Do people need a break? Or the reverse; maybe everyone needs time for small group discussion.</p>