



WOMENomics® Forum Toolkit

Section VI: Webchat Guide

Welcome to the WOMENomics® **Webchat Guide**. This is Section VI of a six-part Toolkit, designed to help you conduct a WOMENomics® Forum at your workplace or in your community. All six sections of the Toolkit are available on our website, www.bpwfoundation.org:

- I. Introduction and Overview
- II. Successful Workplaces Discussion Guide (Equal Pay, Diversity, Work-Life Balance)
- III. Empowered Workforce Discussion Guide (Empowering all Working Women, with targeted research on sub-populations such as Women Veterans, Young Careerists, Women in the Green Economy)
- IV. Media Guide
- V. Event Planning Guide
- VI. Webchat Guide**

How to Use this Webchat Guide

Whether you hold a webchat as a marketing/educational tool leading up to your WOMENomics® Forum or as a way to conduct virtual brown-bag discussions on key working women's issues, this guide will walk you through the logistics of holding a webchat. Webchat online services are user-friendly, and event planners who have not hosted a webchat before may want to explore this new type of discussion tool.

This guide will prepare you to host an online discussion on any topic in your WOMENomics® Forum. Contained in this section are:

- A. Webchat Actions Overview & Responsibilities (pp. 2-3)
- B. Curriculum Format (pp. 3-4)
- C. Promotions Checklist (pp. 4-5)
- D. Call Outline (pp. 5-7)
- E. Program Evaluation and Sample Survey (pp. 7-8)

A.) Webchat Overview & Responsibilities

Webchat Actions Overview:

- ✓ Develop the webchat content. See the WOMENomics® Toolkit Discussion Guides on Successful Workplaces (Section II) and Empowered Workforce (Section III) for ideas and information.
- ✓ Set up a webchat registration (include a pre-evaluation survey).
- ✓ Promote the webchat. See WOMENomics® Toolkit Media Guide (Section IV) for promotion ideas.
- ✓ Host the webchat.
- ✓ Send out thank-yous and program evaluation.

The main players will be the program manager, host, host assistant, a subject-matter expert (based on your topic), and a working woman from a field related to your topic. For example, depending on your topic, this could be a diversity or work-life balance expert, a woman veteran, young careerist, or green jobs employer.

Program Manager

The program manager is responsible for the success of the webchat and will see it through from setting the date, creating the content, and sending out a post-program evaluation. The program manager will complete the webchat actions (listed above). The program manager may also be the host, or can assign that role to a content expert or other appropriate person. If the program manager is not the host, that person can act as the host assistant.

Host

The host will introduce the webchat, give a brief overview of the topic, introduce the speakers, and lead the discussion between the speakers and the live chat. Before the call, the host/host assistant, along with the program manager, should draft questions to ask the speakers, but should also be poised to react to the speakers and call participants as the discussion unfolds to discuss trending topics as they arise. The host also acts as a facilitator, bridging the gap between pauses and should be prepared to manage the flow of discussion appropriately.

Host Assistant

The host assistant will be responsible for all technology issues, monitoring the online chats, and sending relevant information to the host, such as trending chat topics and questions. The host assistant will also be involved with pre-webchat duties, as assigned by the program manager.

Content Expert

The webchat should feature one content expert. The host or program manager should look for a content expert (based on the specific topic) through local employers, professional organizations, local universities, or Chambers of Commerce. The expert should have first-hand experience in the particular topic you are discussing, and be able to provide research, resources, and advice to participants.

Working Woman representing the topic of your discussion

Each call should feature one working woman who has a compelling story to tell about her experiences related to the topic you are discussing. As an example, she might share a story on equal pay challenges or a success story about how she benefited from diversity practices.

Audience

The audience will be able to participate in the call via the dynamic online chat feature. The host assistant will initiate the chat conversation by asking questions of the audience and responding to chats. Due to the unpredictability of live radio, the audience should only be able to interact via chats. Because of this, it is imperative that the host assistant monitor the chat and relay chat topics to the host. Many key issues will surface among audience members in the live chat.

The audience should be a diverse group of people who are interested in getting to know more about the particular issue you are discussing. For example, they might be the general public, government workers, non-profit workers, employers, small business owners, HR professionals, diversity officers, social workers, and/or elected officials.

B.) Curriculum Format

Purpose

Webchats can be an excellent tool for conducting educational/marketing outreach in the months and weeks leading up to your WOMENomics® Forum. You might opt to hold virtual brown-bag or early evening discussions on key issues impacting working women. These are just a few examples of how to take advantage of webchats to reach a broad audience.

In order to determine the topics you'll focus on during the webchat, we recommend referring to the following Discussion Guides from the WOMENomics® Toolkit:

- [Section II](#): Successful Workplaces Discussion Guide (Equal Pay, Diversity, Work-Life Balance)
- [Section III](#): Empowered Workforce Discussion Guide (all working women, with research on targeted sub-populations including Veterans, Young Careerists, Women in the Green Economy)

Once you have chosen the topics, keep in mind that the online call will have two parts – voice and chat interaction. This will allow both the experts and the audience to express opinions and debate subject matter. This is not a lecture, but a dialogue.

Delivery Mechanism

Your organization or a program partner may have its own webchat service available that you can use for little or no cost. If not, some basic online services are available free of charge. A web-search will yield a list. One such service is TalkShoe, an interactive service – a live radio show – that allows experts and audience members to discuss issues of importance. While the featured presenters are talking, the audience members live chat (instant message) their reactions. The calls may be listened to live or downloaded after the webchat and posted on a website or blog. Easy instructions can be found on [TalkShoe](#). [See FAQs for information](#) or [videos](#).

C.) Promotions Checklist

Set the Date

It is obviously very important to confirm a date for the call and then to secure speakers who are available for that date. As soon as the date is finalized, it's time to set up an event registration and invite people. If speakers can be confirmed immediately, they should be listed in the initial invitation. If not, set up the event and send out speaker confirmations as they become available via an updated invitation.

Event Registration

Setting up an event registration will enable you to invite people to join the program and provide the necessary information about speakers and call times. You can use [Eventbrite](#), a free and easy service, to create the event registration and assist in other aspects of event promotion. Eventbrite allows you to track attendance and participant email addresses. You may also adapt free online survey forms as registration forms using www.surveymonky.com or www.zoomerang.com, for example.

Custom Registration

When setting up registration, choose the custom registration option to make sure you can capture tailored, specific information about each attendee. Make sure to collect participants' work data as a required field.

Pre-Program Survey

You may also create custom questions to learn more about the participants. Send out a post-program survey (see attached sample) to compare what attendees have learned and their reaction to the webchat. Your survey should be tailored to capture the key issues related to your topic. Please see the WOMENomics® Discussion Guides (Sections II and III of the Toolkit) for a list of sample discussion questions by topic.

Sending Invitations

Once you've created the event registration, create an invitation using a system such as Eventbrite. Send the invitation to your networks (upload excel files of email addresses). Tell your partner organizations and selected speakers to send the invitation to their networks, as well. Send out the first invitation one month in advance, and then every week thereafter, as new information is available (such as speaker confirmations.) Send a reminder the day before the call to let invited participants know it's not too late to sign up and remind people who have already signed up to call in.

Social Media Outreach

Eventbrite also allows you to create custom widgets and buttons to promote the event. Post these buttons on your website, partner websites, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter accounts. Also, create a hashtag on Twitter for the call to draw attention to the subject and create a community around the issue ([Hashtag 101](#)).

D.) Call Outline

Pre-Call

Once speakers are secured, arrange a conference call or in-person meeting to introduce speakers and enable the host to explain the flow, purpose of the call, and answer any questions. This may also be used as a brainstorming session, with the host encouraging the speakers to help build webchat content. The host and host assistant (and/or program manager) can develop questions from this discussion to trigger discussion in the live chat portion of the webchat.

In advance of the webchat, the host should send pertinent background material about the topic, which can include research documents, news articles, websites, or other information. The host should also review participants' pre-programming survey results to gauge audience background and screen for possible questions and issues to highlight.

Just prior to the webchat, the program manager, host, and speakers should hold a rehearsal to ensure everyone is comfortable with the webchat service and give the speakers a chance to run-through their discussion points. Rehearsals do not have to be lengthy and may last anywhere from 15 to 45 minutes.

Sample Call Outline [60 min total]

Host [3-5 min] – Introduces the call, background topic information, the speakers and outlines the flow of the call. The host will encourage insightful, courteous live chatting from both the audience and the speakers. The host will also inform participants that the call is being recorded and will be made available to the public. (See sample language below.)

Working Woman [10-15 min] – Tells her personal story (emphasizing points mentioned above).

Host – [5 min] Reviews relevant information from the chat (via the Host Assistant) and then asks one or two follow-up questions, which could be pulled from the live chat. Segue to content expert.

Content Expert [10-15 min] – Frames discussion using examples and can specifically react to working woman's story.

Host – [15 min] Asks follow-up questions, pulling from audience chats and stock questions.

Host [5 min] – Summarizes the call with findings, adding one or two follow-up ideas and/or questions for audience to think about (host assistant will send ideas, too), thanks speakers and audience, tells the audience where to find more information on [insert topic], final housekeeping (e.g., next audio call) and promotes upcoming Forum.

Call Introduction

Welcome callers and thank them for joining you for a WOMENomics® webchat on [insert topic]. Outline the topic and purpose of the call. Provide an overview of the agenda and the timeframe (how long the call will last). Introduce the speakers and their affiliations.

Remind participants that while the chat is going on, they should keep the dialogue going in the instant message component of the program. The host will be taking questions and shaping the call in part around their comments. Remind participants that there will be question and answer periods after the first speaker and at the end of the webchat.

Program Questions

These questions can be used to prompt discussion in brainstorming the content of the call or directed to the speakers during the call. Think of these questions as a way to start a dialogue and not questions that have one clear answer. Please see the WOMENomics® Discussion Guides (Sections II and III of the Toolkit), for a list of sample discussion questions by topic.

Post-Call

The audio portion of the call can be live-streamed or downloaded into an mp3 (and edited) for future use. The audio can be pasted on blogs and websites for others to listen to at a future time/date.

Before closing the live chat, the host assistant should copy the chat and paste it into a word document as a permanent record. The chat history is not inventoried by TalkShoe (unlike the audio portion).

From the emails collected through Eventbrite, send thank yous to attendees along with any additional follow up information (e.g. articles, books, or legislation discussed on the webchat). Let participants know where the audio mp3 (include this link) will be located

and encourage them to share it with their networks. If there are future calls, list the dates and, if possible, an invitation to join. Be sure to include the date and time of your upcoming Forum! Send thank you notes to the speakers as well.

Also, please send BPW Foundation a link to your webchat's recording to be shared in the Rawalt Online [research library](#).

E.) Program Evaluation

One way to gauge the program's success and attendee satisfaction is through a program evaluation. After the call (preferably the same day), email the participants a post-program survey. It's best to prepare the post-program evaluation in advance so it is ready to send immediately following the call. You can take advantage of [SurveyMonkey](#), a free, basic service to create surveys. **Attachment A** contains sample survey questions, which can be tailored to the specific issues discussed during your webchat.

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