



Considerations for Planning a Virtual AGM

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Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, [World Council of Credit Unions](#) has developed the following considerations to assist you in your virtual Annual General Meeting (AGM) planning process. By addressing these questions, you can develop a strategic meeting plan which identifies the core technical needs for your meeting. This will then assist you in having more productive discussions with potential partners, solution providers and, ultimately, in conducting an effective meeting with your membership.

The suggestions in this paper are an accumulation of best practices from the research we have conducted. *Legal requirements vary among jurisdictions and it is your responsibility to verify that any changes to be implemented to conduct your virtual meeting comply with all applicable local laws and regulations, in addition to any federal mandates.*

It is important to note that an online AGM will differ from the traditional, customary AGM that generally allows for unfettered interaction, networking, salutations and social interactions.

Effective online communication requires better time management, concise questions, interactions and responses. This approach should characterize the management and participation of your virtual meeting. But with these limitations in mind, you should have no problem finding a process and a platform that will support the following key elements/features of your credit union or association's annual general meeting:

- Authentication of the Membership
- Ascertainment of a Quorum
- Acceptance or Rejection of Reports
- Acceptance or Rejection of Motions
- Voting
- Members Queries

Do your local laws and/or bylaws allow for a virtual meeting?

Find further references to help you address this question [here](#).

Does everyone need to speak/be seen?

- If yes, you may require a web conferencing/video meeting platform that allows every participant to appear on camera.
 - o In this case, we recommend muting everyone at the onset.
 - o This may require more preparation to make sure everyone feels comfortable with the platform you choose.



- You will have less control over the broadcast with this method.
- If no, you can utilize a webinar style platform.
 - This will allow the host full control over the broadcast, including who is on camera, who can speak and what viewers are seeing at all times.
 - In this case, you should minimize the number of video feeds needed to as few as possible. This will minimize the bandwidth that your broadcast requires, avoiding potential technical difficulties for both you and your viewers.
 - You may wish to enlist a production company that can assist you with your broadcast, showing slides vs video of speakers, controlling microphones and making last minute changes to the program, if necessary, to deal with any technical difficulties.
 - This method allows for a smooth, scripted meeting to operate, but still would allow for open communication with your delegates/members via chat, Q&A or hand raise features.
- In either scenario, you should schedule a dry run of your webinar/video conference with presenters beforehand to help you identify any potential problems before going live with your virtual AGM.

Who are you inviting?

- If your AGM is a closed meeting:
 - If only specific voting members will receive an invitation to your AGM, user authentication may not be required, as you will be able to easily verify who is online and establish your quorum.
 - You may wish to issue expectations to your closed audience that the link and/or login information that you provide them not be shared. If they wish to invite other participants or send a proxy, ask that this information be shared with the host, and their registration properly updated so that the intended participant receives the login details directly from the host.
- If your AGM is an open meeting:
 - If your invite goes out to both a voting and observing-only audience, you may need to establish a process of user authentication to establish your quorum. There are a few options for this:
 - More advanced AGM/Shareholder meeting platforms can provide link and password login options to provide a secure login process.
 - You would be able to send out a “viewing only” link to observers, and a secure login link to your voting members.
 - Most webinar platforms have a “waiting room” or similar features in which the host must permit each individual entry into the meeting. This would allow for a more controlled and identified entrance to the meeting. If using the feature, be sure to request that attendees log on 15-30 minutes in advance of the



meeting start time, depending on the size of your audience, to ensure you have time to check and admit all attendees.

- In either case, requiring pre-registration in some format will help you to keep track of who is attending and if the link is shared.

What will you be voting on?

- If you have items addressed with a ballot vote:
 - o These could be addressed simply with an offline, emailed document. This would allow you, as the host, to easily keep track of who submits their votes and address any weighted vote calculations.
 - Ballots may need to be submitted:
 - Before the meeting, to allow for easy tallying and announcement of results at the meeting.
 - During the meeting, if items require discussion before voting, but need results announced during the meeting.
 - After the meeting, if not all members can make the live broadcast and will watch a recording of the meeting and submit votes, for example, within 24 hours of the meeting.
 - o More complex solutions exist in the virtual marketplace in which ballots can be built into the viewing platform, issued by the host at any point in the meeting, and calculated and weighted within the system for instant results. These solutions are typically more expensive and require a larger bandwidth from your participants.
 - If you have items to be addressed with a verbal yay/nay/abstain vote:
 - o In a web conferenced meeting where all are on video, this can be addressed as usual, though you may wish to address each person individually to avoid any technical confusion.
 - o In a webinar-style meeting where only meeting leaders are on camera, you may want to ask for “Nay only” votes to streamline the proceeding. You may ask those with Nay votes to submit them in the chat or Q&A boxes or utilize a “raise your hand” feature. In either case, the host can then unmute this member to allow for further commentary.
 - o In many platforms, there is also polling functionality which can work well for yay/nay votes as well. However, consider which viewers are online. If you have both voting and non-voting members online, there generally is not a way to only send the poll to the voting members unless you are using a more advanced platform.

Do your voting members span multiple time zones?

- If you cannot find a time that will work for all members:
 - o Depending on your bylaws, you may consider not having a live portion of the meeting at all, record any proceeding to be sent to voting members for viewing,



allow a certain time period for shared commentary and then another period for any votes to be submitted.

- If you can reach a quorum amongst those who are able to attend, record your live broadcast to send to those who cannot attend and allow a period of time for them to submit their ballots offline.

Do your members speak multiple languages?

- You may need to find a platform that:
 - Allows for multiple audio feeds to be broadcast in which a simultaneous interpreter can also be logged into the meeting, allowing attendees to listen to that audio feed instead of the presenter. Some common webinar platforms do have these features.
 - Has localized navigation within the platform to ensure your users don't have trouble using the platform.
- Alternatively, if these members do not need to attend the live broadcast, you can have your recorded video dubbed and provided to them after the meeting.
- Finally, if there are few members that require interpretation, some interpreters can work outside the platform to provide one-on-one interpretation for those members.

Do your viewers have the capabilities necessary to view a virtual broadcast?

- Most webinar and video conferencing platforms can also provide a phone number to call into the meeting and listen to the proceedings, which can be leveraged if a member doesn't have the internet bandwidth necessary to view the video broadcast online. Be aware in this case that they will then likely not be able to utilize any polling functionality.
- Most platforms can be viewed on cell phones and tablets as well as desktop computers.
- You may consider sending a technical guide to your members before the broadcast, advising them on such items as hardwiring their connection instead of relying on WiFi or closing other feeds that may be using up some of their bandwidth, in addition to directions for accessing and using the platform you select, and contact information for technical assistance.
- Opening your meeting 15-30 minutes early and encouraging early log-in is also helpful to leave time to diagnose technical difficulties before the broadcast starts, as well as allowing time to bring your members in from the "waiting room" if you are utilizing that feature. Having a slide showing and music playing helps the attendees to diagnose whether their audio is working in advance.

Do your presenters have the technical capabilities to run a virtual meeting?

- Most platforms have the capability to have a host controlling the broadcast, meaning you can virtually manage the meeting for your presenters, allowing them to focus on their presentation.
- You should provide each presenter with some tips to help them successfully deliver their message on camera. These include ensuring:



- a source of light, whether natural or artificial, is in front of their face rather than behind it to ensure they are easily visible on camera.
 - they choose a quiet room with an uncluttered background that does not distract attendees from the message they are attempting to present.
 - they are close enough to the microphone on their computer or mobile device so that they can easily be heard.
 - they have working headphones that will allow them to respond to other presenters or attendees, if needed.
- Many virtual speaking guides also exist which you could provide to your presenters.
 - If your speaker doesn't have a very strong connection, you can opt for a simu-live approach, wherein some aspects of a scripted meeting, such as speeches and reports, could be pre-recorded and then broadcast live from a secured line. In this way, you can minimize the time that you have to rely on your presenter's internet strength, but still have them online to address comments after the recording if necessary.
 - Again, having a dry run of your virtual AGM with your presenters will help you diagnose such issues before the live event begins.

Vendor Considerations

When receiving demos/proposals from potential partners to support your virtual meeting, beyond inquiring about the functions of their solutions to ensure they meet the needs you would have established above, you might also consider the following:

- Does their proposal/pricing include a rehearsal? A rehearsal is beneficial to your speakers, vendors and staff alike to make sure you are all on the same page before you have an audience. Ensure that this time is included in any pricing you receive from potential partners.
- Does their agreement include a confidentiality section? You may wish to include a confidentiality clause in your agreement depending on the nature of your meeting.
- Do their services include dedicated technical support for your audience as a whole? If they typically work only with the planner and not with participants, you may need to dedicate a staff member to be the designated contact for participants, who then escalates to the technical team if necessary.

If you have questions about anything in this document, please contact Cassandra Schroeder, World Council Senior Events Coordinator, at kschroeder@woccu.org.