



How to Gamify Panel Discussions with Live Polling

Panel discussions are informative, but rarely engaging. iMeet Central raises the stakes by introducing Survivor-style voting.



Panel discussions are a great way to dispense knowledge: put some knowledgeable people on a panel, let them discuss the subject at hand, and absorb their wisdom.

But project management software company iMeet Central, led by VP of Customer Success Mark Fordham, wanted to inject some flavor into a format that can often feel bland. They [introduced Survivor-style voting](#) so the audience could vote members off of the panel, raising the stakes of dialogue.

How do you make panel discussions engaging?

iMeet regularly invites outside experts to chat about topics relevant to the company mission.

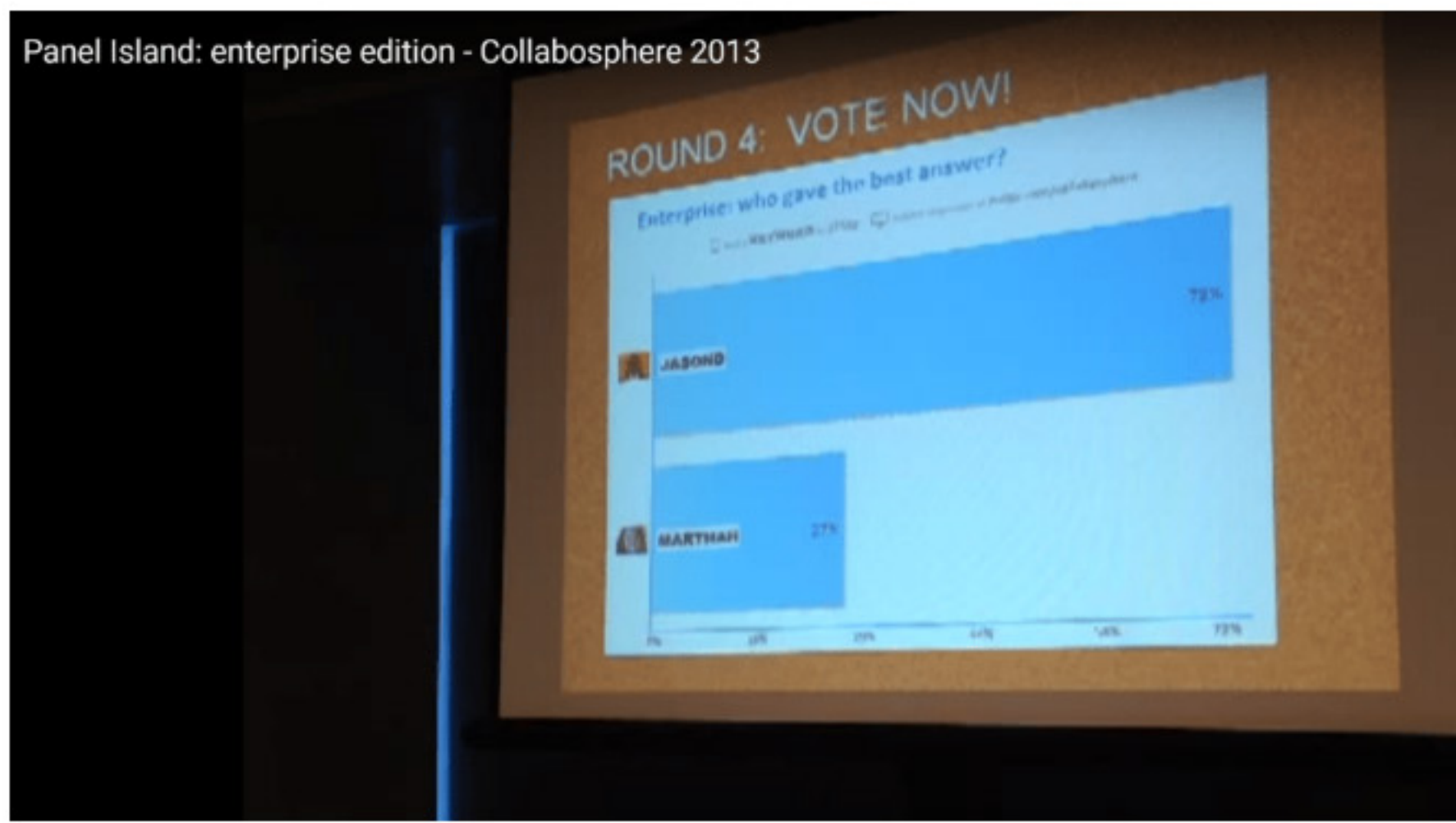
Knowing that more memorable experiences tend to produce greater recall in employees later, Mark invited Christina Pagliero of Hearst, Martha Hernandez of USC, Jason Diehl from CBS On-Air Promotions, and Kathy Rakosky of Alexander’s Mobility Services to take part in a Q&A on collaboration, the cloud, and the future of work.

Each panelist would be required to answer specific questions related to their fields, and those who gave the best answers (as voted by the audience) would go onto the next round. Those who didn’t were banished.

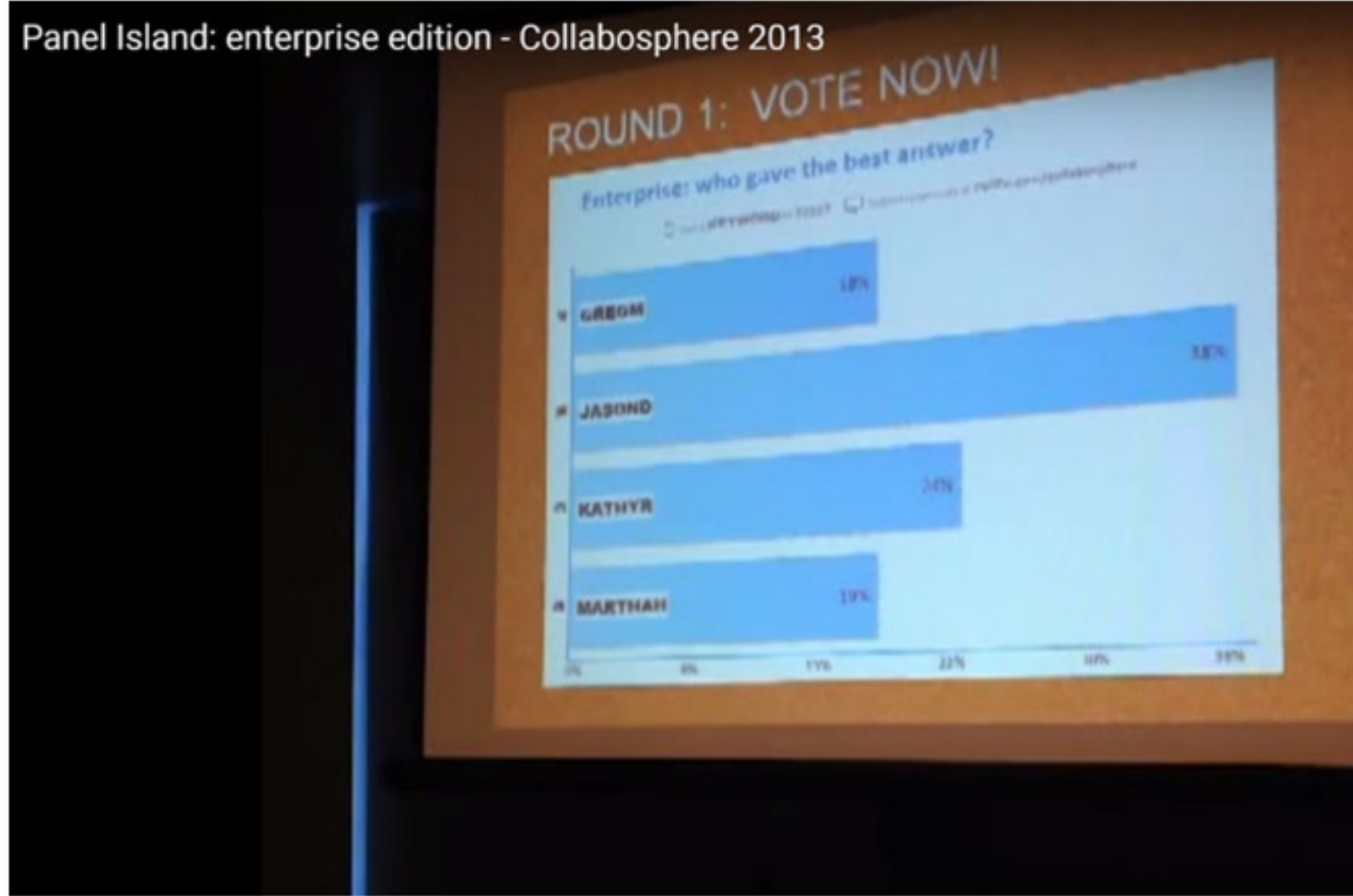
Four experts. Three rounds. One survivor.

“Welcome to Panel Island, one of my favorite sessions of all-time. Not because I get to vote nice people off, but because you get to vote nice people off.”

— VP of Customer Success Mark Fordham



Gamify panels with live polling, Survivor-style



Panelists introduced themselves, and the competition began. Each took turns answering the first question, and once everyone had answered, the audience pulled out their phones and voted for the best, most complete answer.

The first round was treated as a demo, so despite the voting results, every panel member survived. From then on, the panelist with the lowest amount of votes was forced off of the panel ([with a free parting gift and a hearty round of applause](#)). The three remaining panelists moved onto the next round.

As the votes rolled in, the audience’s enthusiasm was obvious: everyone was having fun, and the thrill of watching the bars move back and forth in anticipation of the winner—and perhaps trepidation for the loser—put everyone on the edge of their seat.

The panel continued until only the victor remained, the King of the Island.

Introducing a gaming element makes panel discussions and the material discussed more memorable

Panel Island was such a success, iMeet Central held half a dozen of the events over the years to enhance the discussion around project management and collaboration. Poll Everywhere powered each one.

How can you do this?

✓ Step 1

Give your panelists a few minutes to introduce themselves before starting the first round.

✓ Step 2

Use a demo round as practice to make sure everything goes as planned in the rounds that matter, and as a chance for your panelists to get warmed up.

✓ Step 3

Set up one [multiple choice poll](#) for each round, using panelists’ names as answers. You can use individual polls or, to make transitioning from one poll to the next more seamless, use the [survey feature](#).

✓ Step 4

Once the results are in for a given round, announce the departing panelist and delete her as a potential answer in the following round’s poll (you can do that from the [my polls page](#)).

✓ Step 5

Repeat till you have a winner.

✓ Step 6

Award the winner cake and/or cookies.