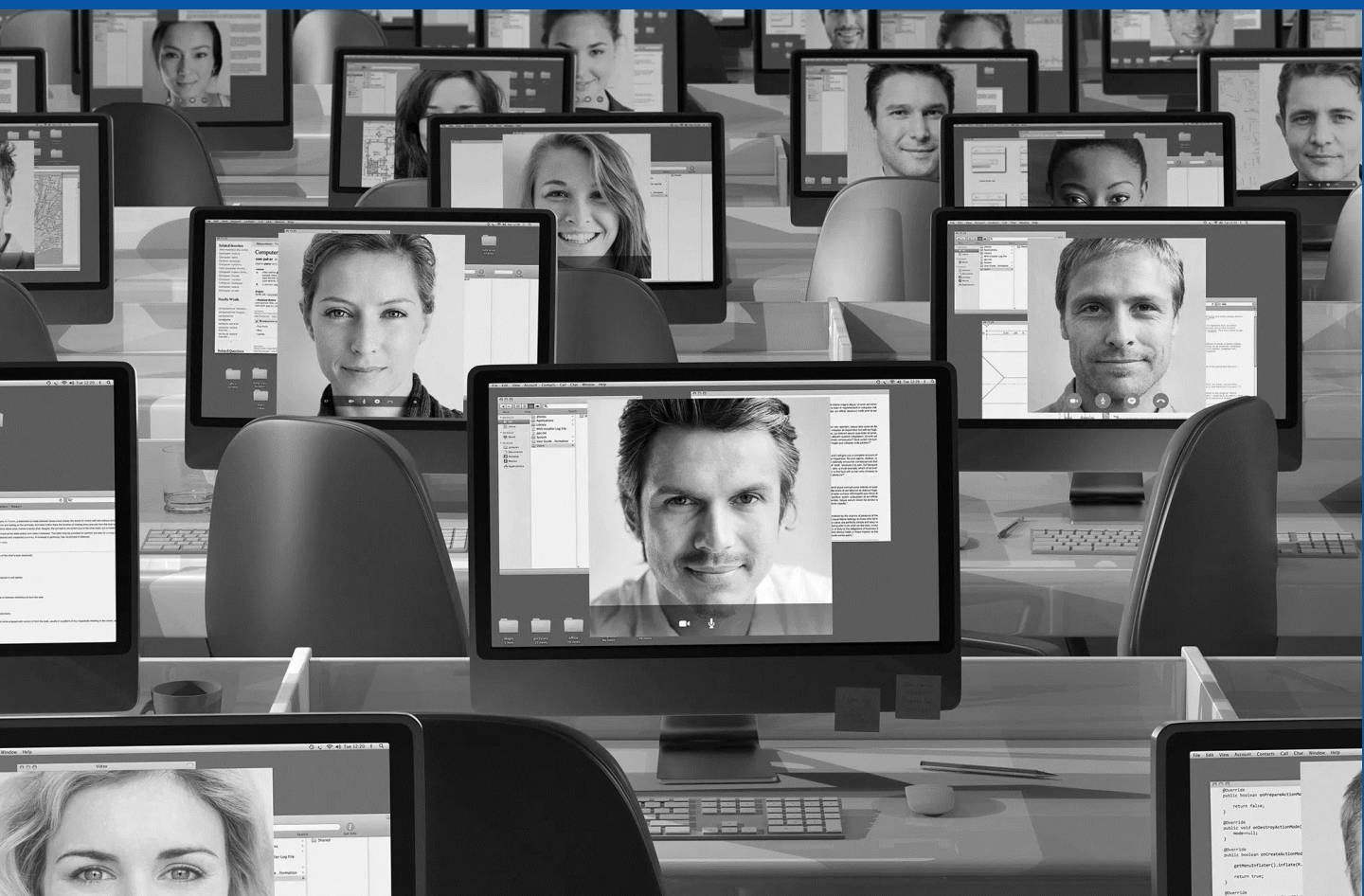


How to be an effective online Chair

Making meetings work



Online meetings

THE PLUS POINTS

- Several advantages
- No travel, no tea and biscuits
- Better focus, easier to be strategic
- Easier to have shorter ad hoc meetings
- Some say 'never going back'!

BUT ...

- Can feel remote, dry detached
- Human connection harder to maintain
- Less informal interaction
- Newer members may feel less involved
- Harder for the technologically challenged
- Needs MUCH more planning and preparation

THE KEY POINT

- Online meetings are not just ordinary meetings online
- Different demands, feel, outcomes
- Chairing is not the same – more facilitation, orchestration, preparation (and control!)

Planning & preparation: the tech

- **Check**
 - *Camera*
 - *Lighting*
 - *Background*
 - *Microphone*
- **Practice with the app**
 - *Teams, Zooms, Google, whatever – all slightly different*
 - *Chat boxes, muting, breakout rooms, screen sharing*
 - *Online voting*
 - *Have a tech-savvy assistant who has admin rights*
- **Have a ‘Plan B’**
 - *Technology can and does (frequently) fail*
 - *If you’re on Teams, have a Zoom back-up*
 - *Have a dial in number for those without internet*
 - *Have a designated person who can take over if your broadband fails*
 - *Learn how to ‘hotspot’ your mobile if all else fails*
- **Set the ground rules**
 - *Microphones on mute when not speaking*
 - *Indicate wish to speak on Chat (“raise hand”)*
 - *No interrupting or speaking over*
- **The kit ...**
 - *Invest in decent laptops, second screens for all*
 - *Pay for business quality broadband for those without*

The meeting ...

- **The agenda and timings**
 - *Build in comfort breaks, say at least every hour*
 - *Don't leave important strategic stuff to the end*
 - *Work out timings with the exec beforehand*
- **Before it starts**
 - *Ask people to let you know any items where they have a major contribution to make, or if they have items for any other business*
 - *Agree what Execs are to present and for how long*
 - *Be clear about purpose of each item*
 - *Assume all members have read papers – no long presentations*
 - *Think about what/who could be contentious*
- **Starting the meeting**
 - *Warm things up with an informal chat*
 - *Ask people to let you know on the chat about any items where they have a major contribution to make, or if they have items for AOB*
 - *Set the strategic context – what really matters from the agenda*
- **Conduct of the meeting**
 - *Rattle through minutes and matters arising if you can ...*
 - *Introduce each item and make clear what's needed*
 - *Invite named individuals to contribute, don't wait for the usual suspects to jump in ...*
 - *Make sure everyone has a chance to speak – draw out 'quiet ones' (keep a list and tick for each contribution)*
 - *Have a question or two ready if there's an unexpected silence*
 - *Sum up and play back as you go along*
 - *Bring each item to a timely conclusion/decision*

The meeting

- **If (when) things get tricky**
 - *Remember you're facilitating as well as chairing!*
 - *Be robust with inappropriate challenge or remarks*
 - *Have a quick comfort break and confer*
 - *Speak to the person concerned offline*
 - *Defer decision to a later date, ask for further reports if all else fails*
 - *If things are taking too long, remind the meeting – it may be important not to curtail debate but make the point*
- **The finale ...**
 - *Thank those who've presented*
 - *Summarise what's been done/achieved, and what needs to happen now, and who is to action*
 - *Ask how well the meeting went - go round and summarise any learning*
 - *Maybe a brief Board only session at the end to share reflections*
 - *Always end on an up note – give them a positive takeaway!*
- **Afterwards**
 - *Maybe send a note to each participant , referring to something they contributed and thanking them*
 - *Be ready to feedback suggestions for improvement to those who could have contributed more appropriately*

Traps - just remember ...

- Make sure the microphone is turned off when you make unguarded asides
- Maybe even better, don't make unguarded asides
- Same goes for the private chat facility – very easy to send to all – much safer with WhatsApp or iMessage if you must ...
- Turn off the camera and the microphone for eating, bodily functions, adjustment to clothing, interruptions by toddlers, pets, etc.
- If you've recorded the session, others may be able to see/share
- Formal dress on the top half and pyjamas on the bottom isn't a good look when you have to get up unexpectedly to answer the door bell

Tips – techniques – technology

Notes

[Your notes...]

Tips – techniques – technology

Notes

Tips – techniques – technology

Notes

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Onwards and upwards!



Reimagining – Resilience – Recovery

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To discuss further, please email: james@campbelltickell.com