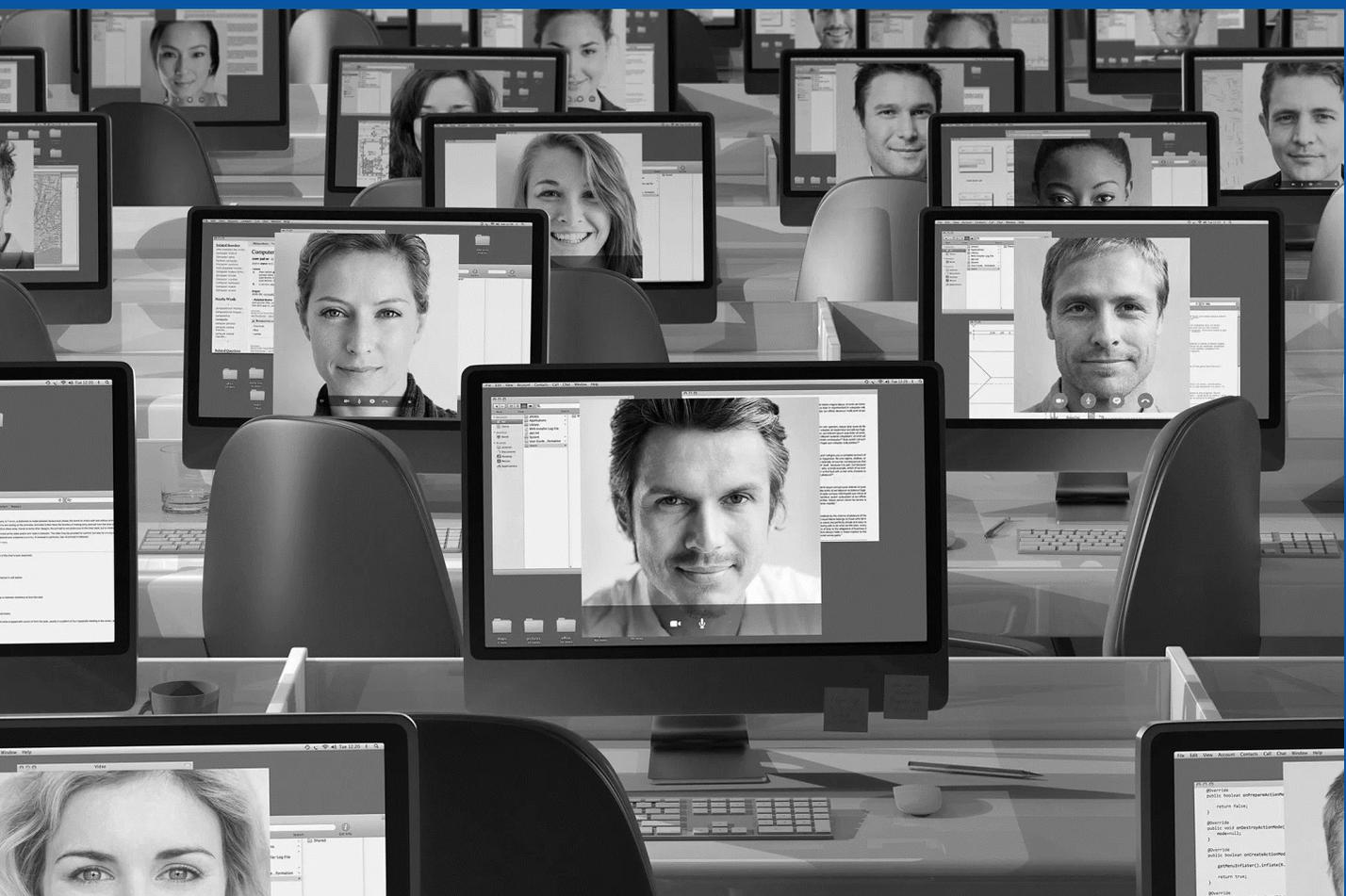


# How to be an effective online Chair

*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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