**NEW NORMAL ONLINE SESSION**

**QUESTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS AND ANSWERS FROM PRESENTERS**

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| **QUESTIONS** | **ANSWERS** |
| 1. Where will we be in 5 years with virtual meetings?
 | **Anne**Well, I’ve got out the crystal ball (A new one because the last one missed COVID 19!) and here is my guess:* In five years virtual meetings will just be used every day for the ordinary stuff of project meetings and team meetings.
* we will all be better at running them and being a participant in them
* hopefully the meeting tools will be better for a more participatory virtual experience
* but also I think/hope people will long for a better experience when they are physically together.
* for facilitators and engagement practitioners and organisations COVID 19 has created an international experience of real competition for the physical gathering, I think in the next 5 years communities will transform how they gather and meet and your job will be to catch up

**Greg**Virtual meetings will be accepted as business as usual for ‘standard’ meetings, such as information sharing and these will be facilitated by improvements in technology. However, there will always be a thirst for face-to-face human interaction for a richer, deeper connection. There will be an emphasis on seeing how virtual and real-life meetings can complement each other. |
| 1. What makes virtual teams tick?
 | **Nivek** I only have a very small team so I don’t have personal experience with this. Here is an interesting guide I found: <https://remoteworksurvivalkit.co.uk/>**AJ**Maintaining connection this means both formally and informally. The best virtual teams I've seen choose frequency over volume so are more likely to have shorter, more frequent catch ups and check ins and also do social interaction like trivia nights for example. |
| 1. Do you have any suggestions about platforms that you have found useful for different online contexts
 | **Nivek**There are lots of lists of online tools. Here are links to a few:* [http://www.participatedb.com/categorizationshttp://www.participatedb.com/categorizations](http://www.participatedb.com/categorizations)
* <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lPIlL4Cktzse5xKeIbMz0C6s747neqO6vUD0K_JAAjY/edit?pli=1>
* <https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/blog/opinion/digital-tools-participation-where-start>
* <http://www.deliberatelyengaging.com.au/2020/04/01/virtual-engagement-neednt-be-second-best/>
* <https://docs.google.com/document/u/1/d/1NyrEU7n6IUl5rgGiflx_dK8CrdoB2bwyyl9XG-H7iw8/mobilebasic?usp=gmail>
* <https://www.publicvoice.co.nz/lets-get-digital-52-tools-for-online-public-engagement/>
* [https://civictech.guide/listing-category/group-decision-making](https://civictech.guide/listing-category/group-decision-making/)/
* <http://opendesignkit.org/>

**AJ**Trello is a great tool for project planning and allocating tasks and tracking progress for a team  |
| 1. How do I create an engaging session online? What tools, methods might have you used in your practice that has worked in increasing online participation and engagement?
 | **Anne**Promoting online engagement approaches are similar to a general engagement* go to where people are already meeting or gathering
* network with your key contacts
* communicate your issue or the proposal you are engaging about in a way that the target group will understand it
* use live audience events

**Greg*** takingcharge of the technology, rather than the reverse!
* employing a variety of tools - breakout rooms, polls, videos, guest speakers - to provide for active involvement of the participants as opposed to passive recipients
* inject energy and humour
* provide a judicious balance of planning and flexibility in the session design

**AJ*** Ask more than you tell
* get people to engage early using the chat box and single letter comments like T or F, Y or N
* Get people to engage physically have them do dance hands, wave, put their hand up on camera etc
* have them share an item in the room they are in and tell each other why its significant
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| 1. What have you learned about yourself during this CoVid period? Something new.
 | **Anne*** I’ve learned that I’m competitive and that I still think I have something to offer
* I’ve learned that virtual meetings and tools have been adopted by teams and communities and families and they are using them more creatively than we have even used them before
* I learned that at a time when the world was searching for contract tracing, local government and government had to use mass media to communicate to communities and that in New Zealand it was the traditional “hard to reach” communities who were connected and ready to act, long before the broader community.

**Greg*** that I look older on screen than I imagined!
* that some of my facilitation skills do translate to an online environment
* that my reluctance to move online was not well-founded
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| 1. Can Anne please cover the 4 p's in case people want to ask ?'s
 | Here is a link to a presentation I did about my pivot and the 4 p’s<https://www.pattillo.co.nz/virtual-meetings-and-pineapple-lumps/> |
| 1. How to we encourage clients to think more innovatively to capture the opportunity opened up by online engagement?
 | **Nivek**I’d suggest case studies, examples of where others have used new approaches and gained valuable input as a result. There are lots of examples being posted on LinkedIn. |
| 1. How do we continue to engage/support vulnerable members of the community that are not familiar with online platforms?
 | **Nivek**There are a couple of options here. If people have access to the internet then you can provide them with ‘lessons’ in how to use specific technology ahead of them being part of the real world engagement. If they don’t have access to the technology then find other ways to get them involved. You may use Zoom or another platform for most of your engagement and call people and talk to them one on one or in small groups for people who don’t have access to the technology. **Greg**I think it is important that hard-to-reach groups not get swamped or immersed in larger groups that may be more experienced in the use of technology. I think we also need to offer alternative models for some groups - one-on-one phone calls or via a trusted ‘broker’, such as an interpreter or community leader. |
| 1. how do you keep the energy up in an online session where some people are interacting with video and audio and some only want to use chat?
 | **Nivek**Lots of breaks are useful when you are interacting online, particularly videoconferencing. Breaking up the type of interactions and including time for individual reflection can also help.**Greg**We need to accept that some people are not comfortable being outspoken in real or virtual sessions and therefore need to provide them with the opportunity to contribute in other ways. Breakout rooms and chats are useful here. |
| 1. What advice would you give for a leader who believes 'engagement is too hard' - we can now just push ahead with what we want to do.
 | **Nivek**Democracy doesn’t stop because of a virus, in some ways, it is even more important now that people who are physically isolated don’t feel that they don’t matter to decision-makers. Also, by demonstrating that whilst engagement is different it doesn’t need to be ‘too hard’, by using examples of how others are approaching this.**Greg**Leadership without engagement is an oxymoron. |
| 1. Can you break and discuss the answers for each question before going onto next
 | **Nivek**Yes, this is possible. Today’s Synthetron session was a taster only. You can do lots of things with this tool, including run polls, show videos and images in the session. You can find more here: <http://www.deliberatelyengaging.com.au/synthetron/> |
| 1. We lost some sound in the video where there was discussion around how virtual discussions can be transaction - any strategies/tips on how to avoid this and make conversations more meaningful?
 | **Nivek** - see presenter videos.**Anne**Here is a link to a presentation I did about my pivot and the 4 p’s<https://www.pattillo.co.nz/virtual-meetings-and-pineapple-lumps/> |
| 1. How to deal with online fatigue as engagements become more virtual?
 | **Nivek**Lots of breaks are useful when you are interacting online, particularly videoconferencing. Breaking up the type of interactions and including time for individual reflection can also help. And using different tools (not necessarily at the same time which can get overwhelming) for different elements of engagement. Spreading an engagement, which you might have completed in one session f2f, out over a couple of ‘events’ or processes, can be useful too.**Greg*** shorter, sharper sessions
* breaks
* a variety of activities
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| 1. In the past meetings often gave a break from screen time. Any more advice on how to schedule our day to manage screen time in the new virtual meeting world?
 | **Nivek**If you can try not to go from one online meeting directly to another. Plus you can build in non-screen time during online meetings - breaks, time to reflect, make notes etc. **Anne*** design connection activities at the front of the meeting,
* use a range of activities through the meeting
* be present and don’t forget your capacity to notice stuff happening on the edges of the meeting
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| 1. What were Anne's 4Ps again?
 | **Anne**Here is a link to a presentation I did about my pivot and the 4 p’s<https://www.pattillo.co.nz/virtual-meetings-and-pineapple-lumps/> |
| 1. Many virtual sessions can become very informative, factual and yet our emotional self is what makes us human - how do you engage with emotion?
 | **Nivek**There are some good ideas in the Online episodes of the Facilitating Public Deliberations podcast available here: <https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/category/library/podcast/> |
| 1. AJ - How did you balance what you were talking about mental and physical wellbeing when you were working 12 hour days!?
 | * Practice slow mornings
* Follow the 45:15 rule - 45 mins of work followed by 15 mins away from the screen
* getting out in nature twice a day
* staying hydrated and meditated
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| 1. How can you make it more engaging?
 | **Anne** * Think about engagement in **planning** your meeting
* Be engaging
* Get people to do stuff - write a list, draw a picture,
* Use smaller rooms for smaller conversations in
* Use recording tools to shift the focus from the Brady-bunch screen to recording and greeting
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| 1. Are there other tools than webinars to replace f2f workshops?
 | **Greg**To me, webinars connote one-way information flow which is neither necessary nor desirable if we want to have an experience like a f2f workshop. The online platforms can provide for small group discussion, interaction and a sense of discovery. I recently participated in an online open space event in which participants identified a series of topics and we all then could move around to different ‘rooms’ to discuss the ones that took our interest.  |
| 1. Any recommendation for undertaking stakeholder engagement activities in remote areas that lack modern means of communications.
 | **Anne**One option...My new advice for engagement approaches is to look for a balance of high tech and local touch. so key to that is building relationships with local community groups and design tools and kits that can be used in community or family lead conversations. |