



# IS YOUR PRESENTATION ‘REMOTE READY’?

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Moving from face-to-face to remote presenting changes the game. It's not simply a case of doing what you would have done in person and moving it online.

It demands more from presenters, slide decks and technology BUT, when done right, can be a powerful and effective way of sharing your message with your audience.

**The team at Eyeful have identified 5 key stages to ensure your presentation is 'Remote Ready'...**

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# 5 KEY STAGES

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**STAGE 1** – Set up & Prep



**STAGE 2** – Story & Structure



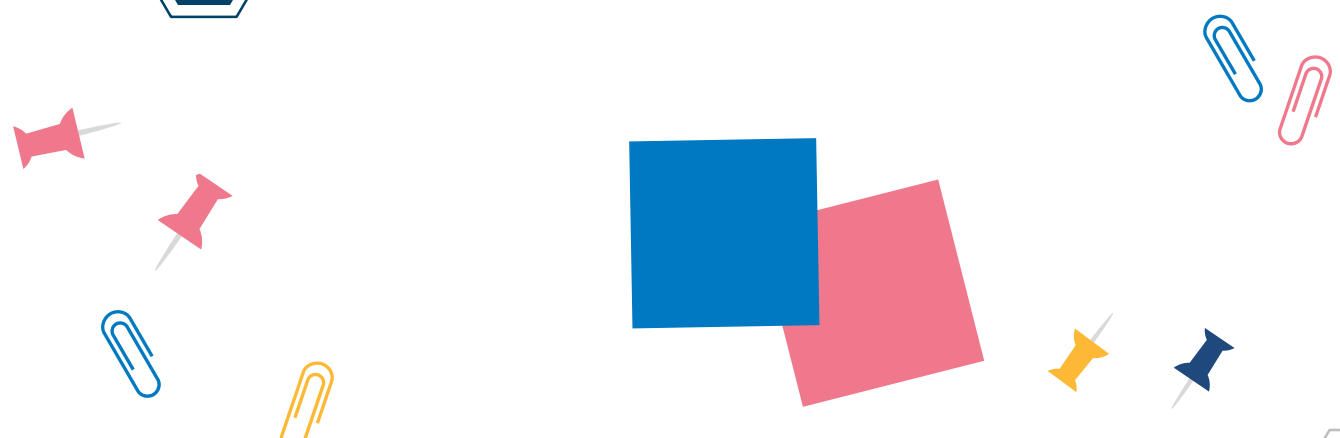
**STAGE 3** – Visuals



**STAGE 4** – Delivery



**STAGE 5** – Follow up



# STAGE 1

## SET UP & PREP

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### Technology

Choose from the plethora of platforms available to you (Microsoft Teams is our fave) and get to know it inside out. Run test meetings with colleagues, check how it runs on your home network (an Ethernet connection is always preferable) and practice sharing your screen and responding to questions, with and without webcam.

In the same way you'd put the rehearsal time into a new face-to-face presentation, make sure you dedicate sufficient time to practice using this new tool.

### Your Presenting Environment

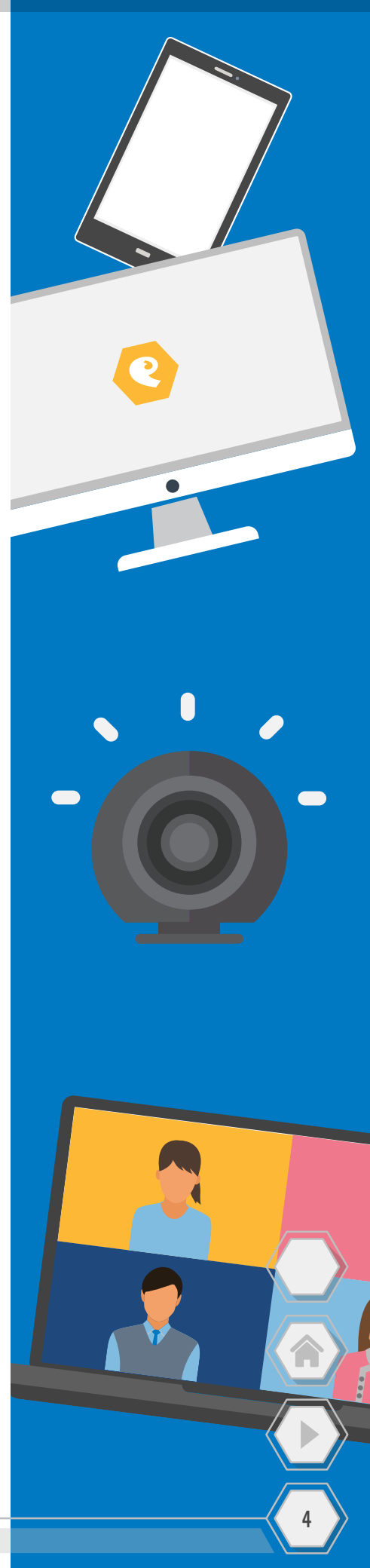
The switch to remote presenting means that you may be delivering from home. This means every time your webcam is switched on, your audience can see behind you. To ensure you are the focus of the audience's attention (and not the pile of ironing in the background shot!), have a tidy up.

If space is at a premium, time has run out or the ironing pile is simply too big to move (we've all been there), consider using a tool like Background Blur in Microsoft Teams to hide the evidence.

### Audience

Eyeful has made a bit of a name for itself by [\*\*obsessing over audience\*\*](#) as part of your presentation prep. Never has this obsession been more important than in remote presenting.

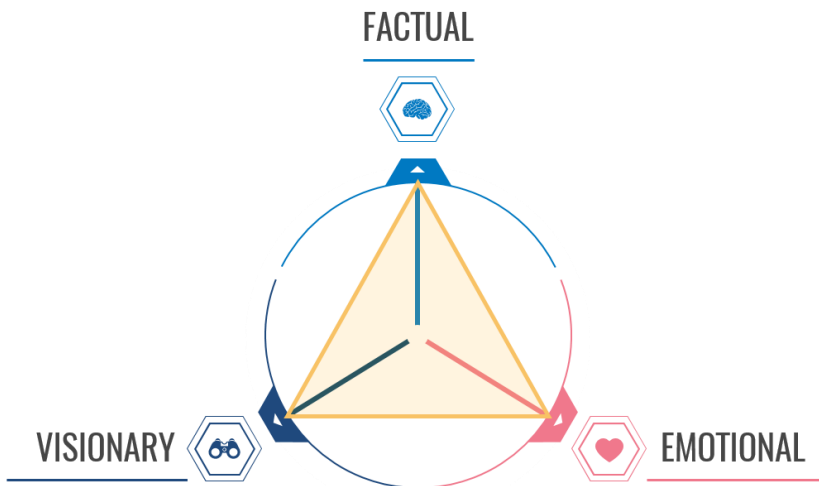
By stepping away from the intimacy of face-to-face engagement, presenters need to work that little bit harder to keep the audience engaged and on track. Be prepared to deliver differently by equipping yourself with a set of questions at key stages of the presentation to spark/reignite engagement.



# STAGE 1 CONTINUED

It's also easy to fall into the trap of viewing the audience as names on a screen rather than people wishing to engage with your message. This is a slippery slope that can lead to presenters becoming lecturers that drone on without any audience interaction. This is bad news for you and your audience. One of the tricks employed by seasoned remote presenters is to tape pictures of people above their screen. It might seem a little silly but serves as a valuable reminder that there are people at the other end of your presentation!

Employing a process such as [Audience Heatmapping](#) allows presenters to take a step back from the clichés and stereotypes and consider exactly what is driving a prospect audience to action at that particular stage of the sales process.



# STAGE 1

## CONTINUED

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### Objective Setting

Just because your presentation has moved online doesn't mean you don't need to put the basics in place. Each and every presentation needs to have a clear goal in mind to ensure that you get results from the valuable time invested by you and the audience.

We use a handy **Must-Intend-Like** model to challenge ourselves to create a set of realistic objectives for each presentation. As you shift to remote presenting, it is important to revisit these objectives to ensure that they are still achievable. For example, if your sales process dictates that a full in-person product demo is a prerequisite to winning a deal, the fact that you're now delivering remotely is likely to have an impact on what is possible.

By realigning your objectives to acknowledge the impact of presenting remotely, you'll be in a much stronger position to get the results you want from each engagement. It will also give you greater clarity in the 'Follow Up' phase (more on that later).



# STAGE 2

## STORY & STRUCTURE

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### Hooks

One of the limitations of remote presenting is the absence of face-to-face interaction. This puts even more onus on remote presenters to 'hook' their audience in with engaging story structures throughout the presentation.

Consider using stats, insights or new stories to create engagement and intrigue in your audience. We often use our 'Audience Pathway Model' story structure to help presenters better engage with audiences by using hooks, stories and proof points. Take time to identify engaging and relevant hooks to share with your audience at key stages of the presentation to keep them on side.

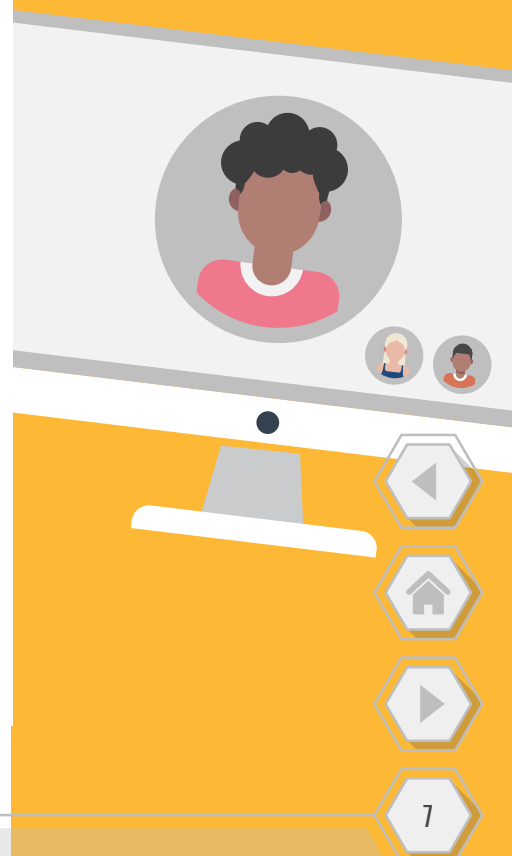
### Content

Breaking news – Death by PowerPoint isn't the result of ugly slides or unskilled presenters, it's the inevitable result of presenters sharing too much content with their audiences.

Chances are that you've been the victim of Death by PowerPoint in face-to-face presentations. The risk of inflicting similar pain to your audience increases significantly when you move to remote presenting.

The easiest way to fix this issue is to focus your energy on aligning your message with your audience – what is it you want them to **remember** and **do** after the presentation? Once you have the answer to this simple question, only share the content that will help you deliver on this objective.

Remove the inconsequential fluff and keep it focused. Any audience, especially a remote one, will appreciate it.



# STAGE 2 CONTINUED

## Proof Points

Audiences love a story, especially one that reinforces the information they are in the process of consuming. When it comes to remote presenting, case studies and other proof points are worth their weight in gold as they provide a useful step change in the flow of the presentation to allow the audience to process the information they've been given.

Use customer stories and other anecdotes to reinforce your message while prompting discussion and questions. Each new story not only serves to bring your content to life but also provide discussion points between presenter and audience.

## Driving CTAs

Every presentation, face-to-face or remote, should prompt an action from your audience (and if not, you might want to ask yourself why you're presenting in the first place!). The action might be as subtle as a mindshift for an internal audience or as obvious as a signed contract following a sales presentation. Either way, your presentation should always have a CTA – Call To Action.

CTAs are a trickier thing to handle when you're presenting remotely. It's not as easy to 'read the room' if you're not actually 'in the room'. Equally there's that nagging doubt that those audience members who popped themselves on mute have either disengaged with your presentation or are having a separate conversation with their colleagues about your message.

Either way, it's incumbent on the remote presenter to take charge. We recommend building mini-CTAs throughout the storyflow of the presentation so factor in reinforcement questions and test audience understanding/buy-in at regular points.

Saving your CTA until the bitter end is never a good idea. For remote presentations, it can backfire horribly!





# STAGE 3

## VISUALS

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### Layout

Cluttered slides are already the bane of too many presentations. Squeezing too much information onto a single slide damages audience engagement in face-to-face meetings so you can only imagine what it could do to your remote audience.

A recurring theme through this section will be the need to pare things back and give your visuals space to breathe. This allows your remote audience to view your slides as they should be – visual punctuation to your narrative. If your slides are too cluttered or contain too much information, your remote audience will do one of two things:

- 1. Switch off and start checking their emails/social media/family pet**
- 2. Read the slide and immediately stop listening to you**

Neither makes for a good remote presentation, so think on.



### Animations

When used correctly, animations are a powerful way to bring your message to life. Great face-to-face presenters can work with them to take presentations to the next level (check out the [late great Hans Rosling](#) if you need convincing).

However, remote presenting changes the rules because too much animation becomes a real distraction. It can gum up already struggling broadband connections and create an uncomfortable lag between the spoken word and the visuals shown. The net result is a confused and disengaged audience – not good.

We recommend splitting out any complex animations into separate slides. Keep each slide simple, clear and relevant to ensure they deliver your message (after all, that's what they are there for!).



# STAGE 3 CONTINUED

## Transitions

In a similar fashion to animations, keep fancy transitions to a minimum when presenting to a remote audience. While the mind-altering Morph transition might look very smart on your PC, your audience might be viewing a juddery pixelated mess due to a slow PC or internet connection.

Again, keep is subtle, simple and sophisticated and focus your attention on your delivery, content and message. That's what *really* counts.

## KISS

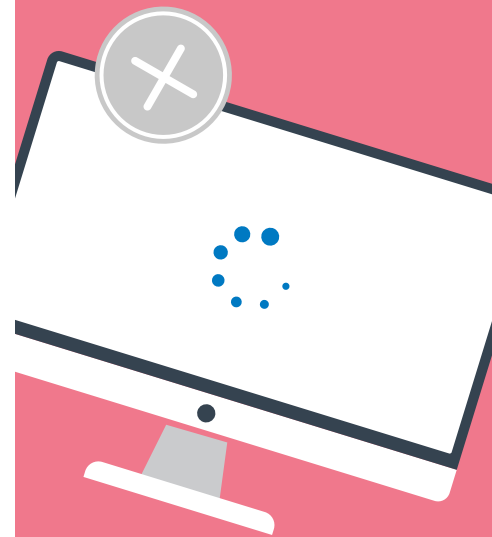
This is a recurring theme for all remote presentations - keep it short and simple.

Your audience are more susceptible to outside distractions, so you've got to ensure you get to the point quickly and demonstrate value through your message. Waffle is never a good idea in presentations (ref. Death by PowerPoint!) but can spell the end to any benefits and actions from a remote audience.

Consider splitting your presentation into blocks of information aligned specifically to the needs of the audience. Keep the number to a minimum to avoid bombarding your audience with too much information - one of the benefits of this 'chunking' process is that you filter out the noise and only share the good stuff.

Finally, consider making your presentation more conversational by building interaction into it. Read our comments on [Toolkit Conversations](#) in the Delivery section.

In short, keeping your presentation short is more important than ever.



# STAGE 4

## DELIVERY

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### Webcams

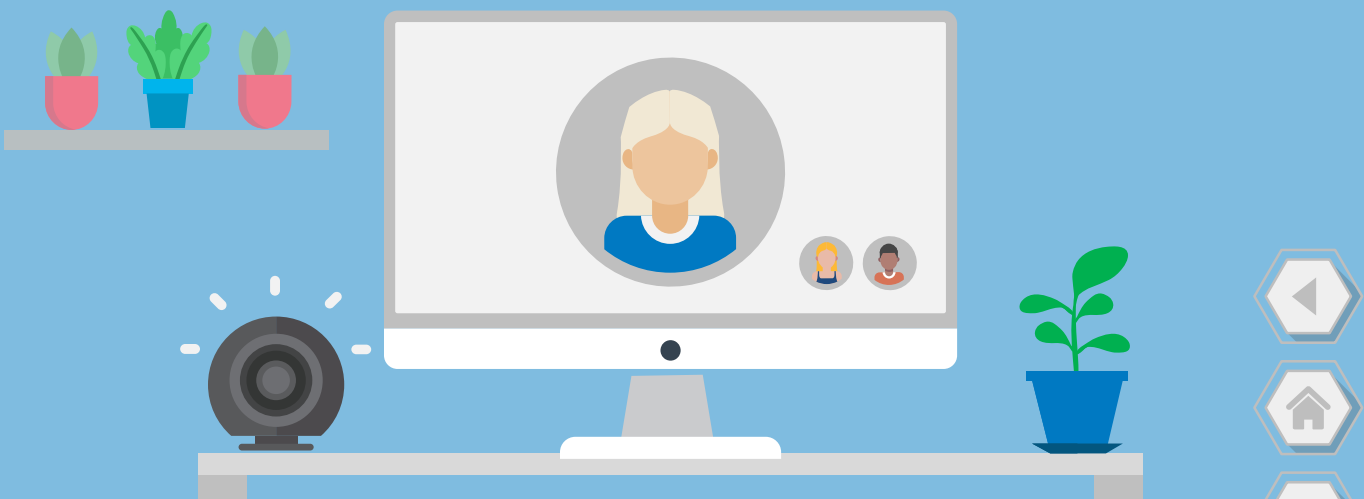
Perhaps the least comfortable element of technology when presenting remotely is the dreaded webcam.

While few people enjoy being on camera, it *is* a powerful tool for communicating remotely. We all know that being able to see the person you are engaging with adds a huge amount to the quality of communication. It plays an important part in the way we engage with people every day, from social occasions to being able to 'read' an audience in face-to-face presentations. So why would you possibly remove this important tool from remote engagements because you feel a little uncomfortable with the medium? The answer is you don't.

Use your webcam to build rapport at the start of the presentation (people like to see faces) but don't feel obliged to keep it on the entire time. If your slides are the most valuable visual communication tool at key points of the presentation, let them take centre stage. When it's more important that your audience sees you, for example when answering a question, it's time to turn the webcam back on.

When in doubt, think binary – your audience should either be seeing your face or a slide visual. Both at the same time runs the risk of distracting your remote audience.

One final point - it's very easy to get distracted with some of the clever technology that comes with webcams and remote presenting platforms. Our recommendation is to keep it simple. Forget options like using your slides as the background – you're a business communicator, not a weather reporter.



# STAGE 4 CONTINUED

## Soft Skills

The good news is that the vast majority of the [soft skills](#) that presenters have worked on tirelessly for face-to-face engagements still stand.

1. No audience, remote or in person, wants you to monotonously read a script to them
2. Equally they'll want you to pace things in line with their knowledge and attention spans. Rushing your way through complex content won't work. Neither will going at a snail's pace.
3. And they'll want you to break your story down into short, snappy chapters that are delivered with confidence and commitment.
4. Finally, they'll expect you to have rehearsed and be able to speak freely around your content rather than being hampered by a script.

So far, so good.

Remote presenting does, however, demand even more audience centric thinking by presenters. Put yourself in their shoes. They will have more distractions than ever (social media, email, the fridge!) so your soft skills need reflect this fight for their attention.

- Ask questions
- Ask for their feedback/opinion (the voting buttons found on most online platforms are a quick and simple option)
- Share stories
- Shift from speaking 'at' your audience to a more conversational style of presenting (see [Toolkit Conversations](#) section)

Your challenge is simple – make your presentation more interesting than their social media feed!

Ultimately remote presenters need to develop a delivery style that prompts interaction and engagement. This is much easier with smaller groups but equally effective with larger audiences if you create 'breathing space' at key stages of the presentation.



# STAGE 4 CONTINUED

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## Toolkit Conversations

As highlighted in the Soft Skills section, there is great value in turning your remote presentation into a conversation. It ensures you're delivering value to the most important stakeholders in any presentation (your audience) and gives you the freedom to keep them engaged by focusing on the information that is most relevant to them. This in turn delivers value to the presenter by moving your audience towards your intended CTA (Call To Action) quicker.

It's a win-win.

However, you may feel hamstrung by your slide deck. It's likely to be linear which means navigating from one section to another might necessitate escaping out of slideshow mode and scrolling down until you get to the slide you're after.

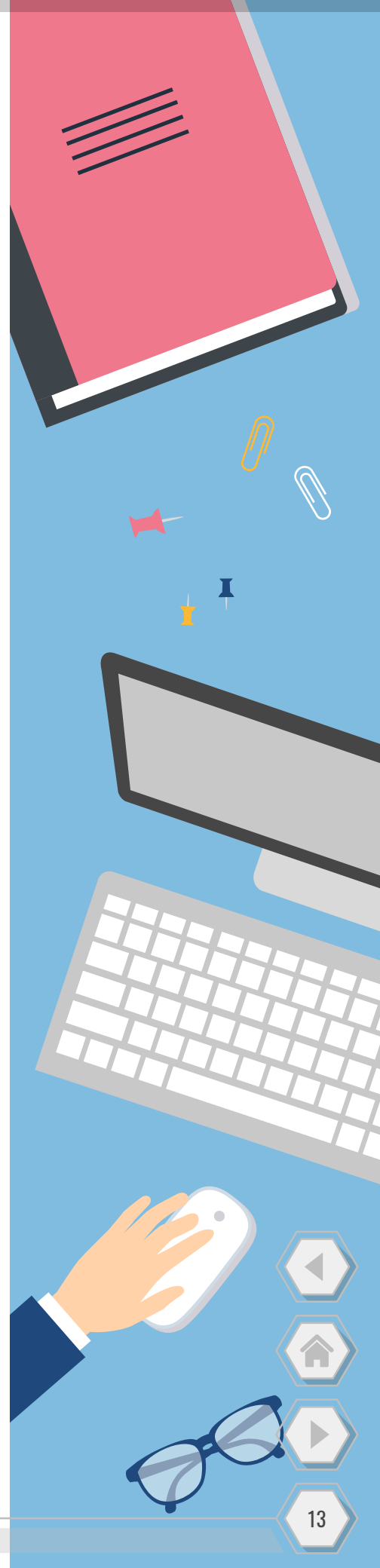
Not good.

Toolkit presentations break this cycle by putting the content you need within a click's reach by using hyperlinks and custom shows in tools like PowerPoint. These allow you to shift from a formal 'I talk, you listen' engagement to a more conversational format. This means your audience are able to become immersed in the presentation 'conversation' while you are able to respond to their questions in real time, delving into the detail and sharing stories that are valuable to them when it matters.

This is a powerful tool in face-to-face presentations. It becomes a gamechanger in remote presenting.

## Reinforcement

While this brave new world of remote presenting technology makes some presenters a little nervous, it does also provide us with new ways of reinforcing messages and agreeing next steps with audiences.



# STAGE 4 CONTINUED

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Pretty much all the platforms provide presenters to record meetings\*. While we don't recommend recording every presentation you do (there are some exceptions – see the 'Follow Up' section), you can use this feature to gather feedback and agree next actions from your audience. Before concluding the remote presentation, hit the record button and ask each member of the audience for their key takeaways and agreed next actions. You can then share this as a summary of the presentation with your audience to help ensure the agreed CTAs are followed up.

This would obviously be a valuable tip for remote sales presentations but the same focus on CTAs should apply to other audiences (internal, technical, marketing).

\* This may seem obvious, but it is VITAL that you ask for permission to record anyone before hitting the button. Not only is this a professional courtesy, it will keep you on the right side of GDPR rules.



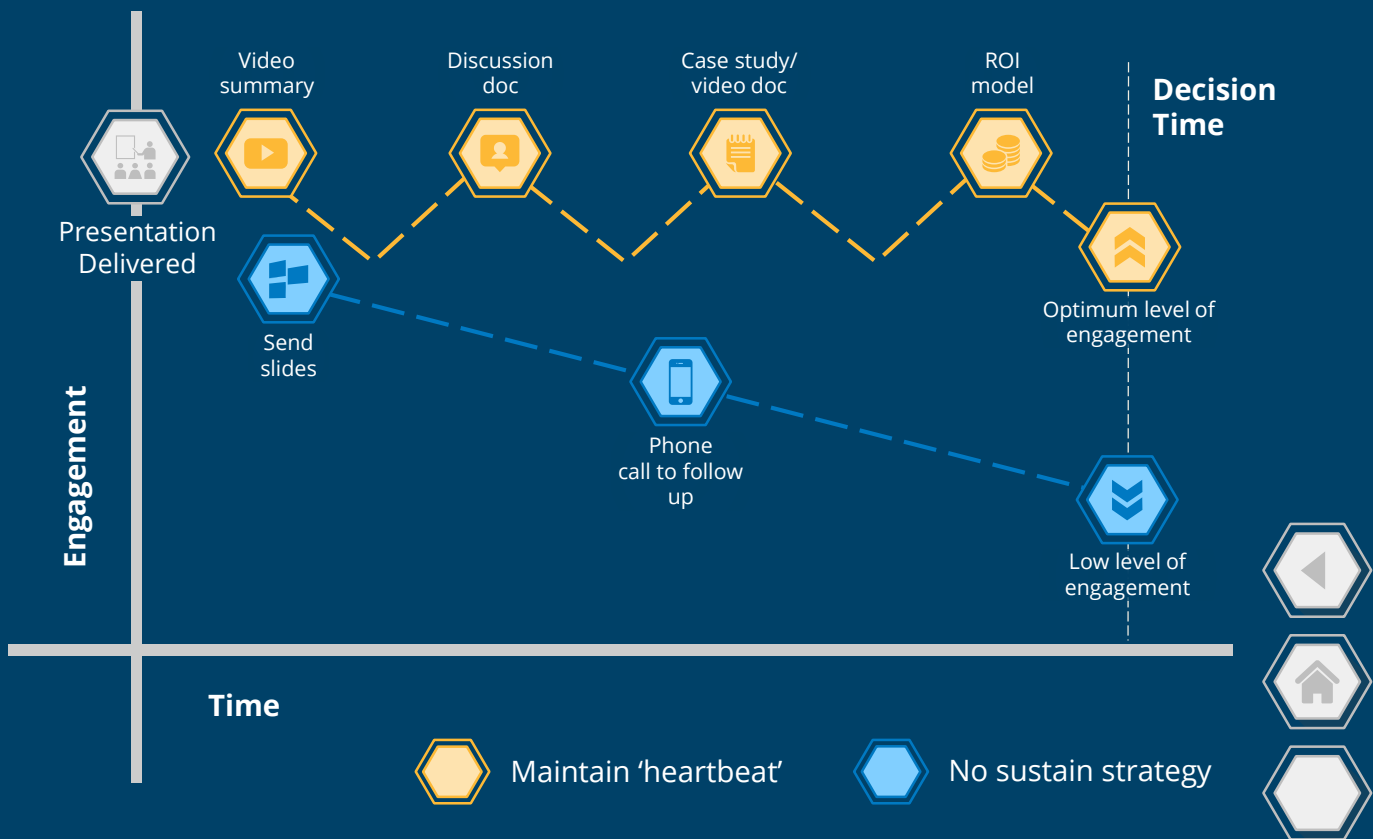
# STAGE 5 FOLLOW UP

## Sustain Strategy

In the main, the process of business communication, from sales and marketing through to internal engagement, should be viewed as a marathon and not a sprint. Your remote presentation is likely to be part of a multi-faceted communication process with your audience. The key is to plan this ahead of time rather than fire off random bits of information following your remote presentation.

Think of your audience engagement plan as a series of heartbeats. Yes, your presentation will play a really important part in this process, but it's unlikely to stand alone. How do you plan to follow up the presentation? Discussion document? Infographic? Video? The remote presenter has a long list of options so make sure you consider them carefully and build a sustain strategy that delivers the right follow up information at the right time to ensure maximum impact.

Timing of your communication heartbeats is a really important success factor. If you peak too early, your winning message runs the risk of losing some of its sheen by the time your audience comes to make a decision. Equally, too little too late (typically the result of not having a strategy in the first place) means that the credibility and connection built with your audience through your presentation can go to waste.



# STAGE 5 CONTINUED

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**WARNING!** A sure sign of not having a plan in place (and thus jeopardising all the hard work you put into your presentation) is simply sending your PowerPoint deck as a follow up email.

This never works. Why? Because *you* are the presentation. Your knowledge, enthusiasm and credibility-building stories are what makes a presentation connect with an audience. Your slides are merely visual punctuation to the great content you have to share. As soon as you're taken out of the equation, the presentation loses its impact and power.

Worse still – in the hands of your (well-intentioned) audience, any further communication of your message within their organisation to those hard-to-reach-but-important-stakeholders is likely to be mangled. By handing over your slides, you lose all control of how your message is delivered to the people that could make all the difference when it comes to a decision.

In short – build a sustain strategy and stick to it.

## Sustain Tools

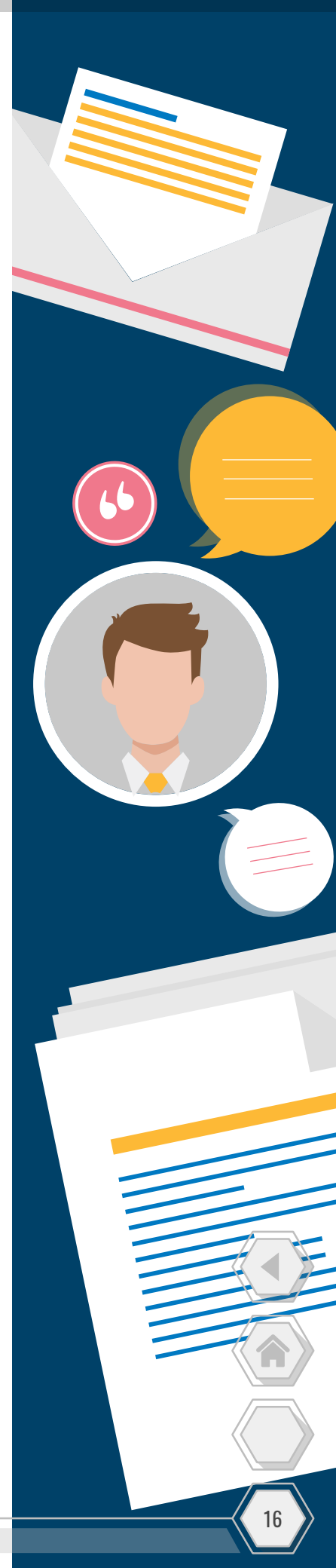
And now for the good news...

The very process of developing a powerful presentation story, supported with engaging visuals and valuable content, means that you have pretty much all you need to create a wide range of tools to sustain your message:

### Hard Copy Documents

Take key visuals from your presentation and build these into a discussion document for your audience. If the thought of writing a comprehensive document to summarise your message fills you with fear, consider using a transcription service (we love rev.com). Simply record yourself delivering your PowerPoint presentation, send them the audio file and wait for the Word doc version to arrive. Your job is now about editing your wise words, not staring at a blank page.

You can use this format for a range of 'heartbeats', from an [insight driven discussion document](#) through to case studies and ROI models. The key is to deliver chunks of valuable content at the right time.





# STAGE 5 CONTINUED

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## Video

As already highlighted, your webcam can make all the difference during the delivery of your presentation. It's also a great tool to utilise post-presentation. Capture a short summary video after your presentation to share with your audience (and those hidden stakeholders). In terms of quality, stick to the best practice (tidy up your background, dress appropriately etc) but don't stress too much about creating a piece of film worthy Spielberg! Your focus should be on authentically sharing your message in a way that resonates with your audience.

Hosting on channels like YouTube and Vimeo is easy and means you can send an emailable link to your audience rather than worry about file size and firewalls. Do, however, remember to make the video private on your video sharing platform – chances are you don't want the world to see your summary, personalised for a specific audience!

You can extend the use of video and personalised content through tools like [Eyeful Lens](#). This is particularly effective when you are looking to engage with hidden stakeholders on a one-to-one basis. Examples can be found here.

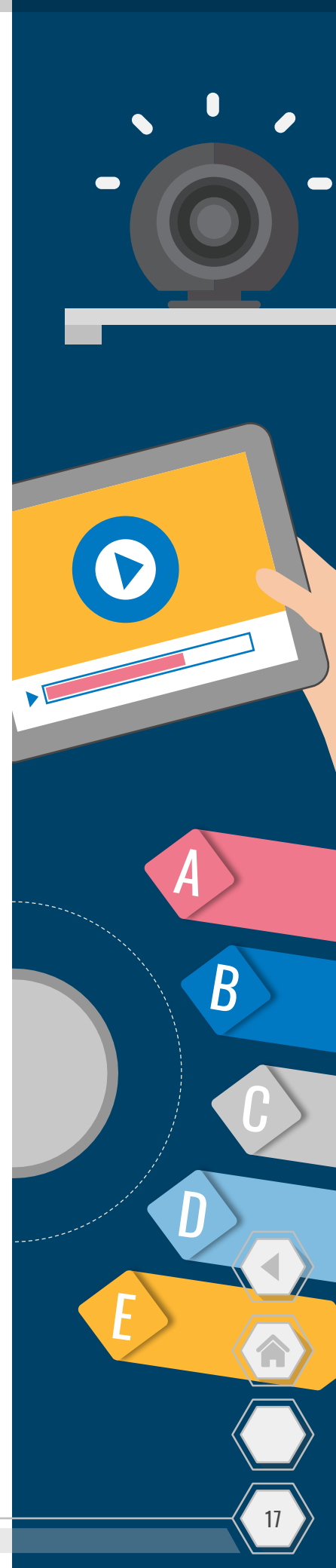
Other sustain tools to consider...

**Animated gifs** developed from PowerPoint for use on social media

**Infographics** developed from PowerPoint as standalone 'heartbeats' or to support hard copy documents

**HTML5 interactions** developed from a toolkit style presentation that could be hosted as a hidden link on your website/intranet. This 'heartbeat' is particularly good for internal comms and post training support

The list goes on..! The key is to remember that the communication process doesn't start and finish when the final slide is delivered. Build a strategy for each engagement to sustain your presentation message to help ensure you get the CTA your audience wants (and you deserve!).



# EYEFUL PRESENTATIONS

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There's no getting away from it – remote presentations are tricky things to get right. BUT, when you do get them right the world is your oyster.

Eyeful understands the important role that remote presentations continue to play in today's evolving business landscape. As such, we are perfectly placed to provide you with access to thought leaders and industry experts who will help to ensure your presentations are 'Remote Ready' and continue to deliver a ROI.



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