

A man with curly hair and a beard, wearing a blue shirt and a large black headset, is gesturing with both hands while speaking. He is positioned in front of a white laptop. To his right, a smartphone is mounted on a small black tripod. The background is a blurred office setting. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

# COMMUNICATE

 **eyeful**presentations



## THE COMMUNICATE PHASE


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This is the phase that, quite naturally, dominates the thoughts of anyone involved in the creation and delivery of webinars or virtual events.

- Which technology to use
- Ensuring the aforementioned technology is tested within an inch of its life
- The cat-herding headaches of getting presenters to share their content
- The production of endless versions of the event slides. Oh, so many versions and so many slides
- Ensuring your presenters have allocated sufficient time for rehearsals

These and a myriad of other concerns adorn the planning checklists of webinar or virtual event organisers.

**However, are we focusing on the right stuff?**



Perhaps a better way of viewing the Communicate phase is viewing it as a *transaction* between you, the presenter, and your audience. This is the point where you have to step up to the plate and deliver *value* to those people who have carved precious time out of their already busy schedules. What are you going to put in place to ensure that you uphold your side of the bargain?

Suddenly the focus moves away from branding and delivery platforms to something more pressing. How can you ensure that the event delivers/ demonstrates value for all involved? We'd suggest a few areas to focus your attention before blind panic kicks in...

A hand is holding a tablet. The tablet screen shows a line graph with three data series (blue, dark blue, and light blue) plotted against a grid. Below the graph, there are labels for 'SAT' and 'SUN'. At the bottom of the screen, there is a donut chart showing 30.23% completion. Below the donut chart, there is a table with line items and their values.

# NUMBERS

The days when the success of an event (in person or virtual) was measured by the number of attendees are long gone. Success is now judged on outcomes, not bums on seats.

In our experience, by far the best way of delivering an outcome-based success is to focus your content on the specific needs of your audience. Make it relevant and valuable to prompt an action. Simple, really.

By the same token, it goes to figure that the larger your audience, the more 'broad brush' and generic your message must become. It's a case of diminishing returns - as you move up the 'generic scale', the less value each of your audience members are going to receive. This in turn has an impact on their willingness to take action which, as we all know, is the reason for you running the event in the first place.

**Getting the balance right is tricky, yet invaluable.**





Our advice is to specialise earlier than **you** might feel comfortable. Virtual audiences don't have to battle the personal anxiety associated with walking out of a seminar room, being watched by presenter and peers alike. The 'new rules' mean that a quick mouse click and they're gone, perhaps forever. The only way to keep them engaged is by ensuring that your event delivers valuable and relevant content – it *really* is that simple.

What this means is that running a plenary session for five great delegates, who enthusiastically consume your content and follow up with your intended action is far more valuable for your business than 500 delegates who listen passively and don't do anything afterwards.

# BUILDING UPON THE BASICS

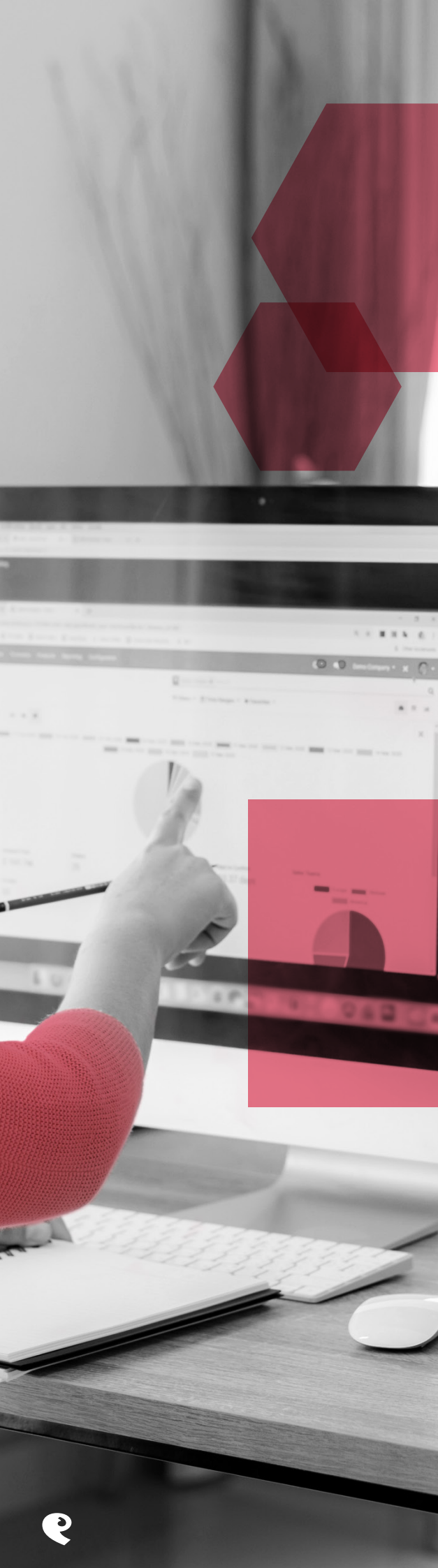
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If you've properly engaged with the Connect Phase, you should be able to quickly **answer** the following questions:

- What are your key messages (and why)?
- What is it, you want your audience to not only do, but also remember as a result of their engagement with you?
- How will you guide them to the most relevant content?
- What does it look like in terms of structure and timings? Remember, no one ever complained about a presentation being too short. This has never been more important than when engaging with a remote audience.
- How do you plan to address the distractions that will be bombarding your audience throughout your event?

These frustratingly awkward but valid questions will help you build content that delivers value to your audience. Much has been written about how to engage and capture the imagination of presentation audiences – from the science of timing your 'hooks', story structures and the creation of tension throughout your presentation – but none of this matters a jot if the presentation is not delivering value.





We would recommend demonstrating value as early on in the process as possible. After all, by building a story that connects with the needs of your audience, you have a much better chance of them sticking around for more content. By contrast, if the first 5 minutes of your keynote presentation are self-obsessed or simply plain boring, it's safe to assume that your audience will vote with their feet and move on.

In terms of slideware, keep it simple. Cut down on the animation, keep the slides visual and ensure that you maintain a connection with your audience throughout (Q&A, votes, conversational presentation are all options that work). The team at Eyeful have written extensively about the dos and don'ts of remote presenting – plenty of great advice can be found [here](#).



A blue and white coffee cup with a white lid is positioned on the left side of the page, resting on a wooden surface. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

## THINKING AHEAD


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The way we consume and share content has changed massively over the last few years. What was once a 'binary' engagement is now more 'serial' – increasingly the swapping and reinforcement of information is the key to success. Relying purely on one event, be that a webinar or virtual conference, exponentially increases the stakes.

Social media is now regarded as a vital ingredient in your event success. The good news is that a pragmatic approach to creating quality, value-led content for the event naturally lends itself to supporting your social media campaign.

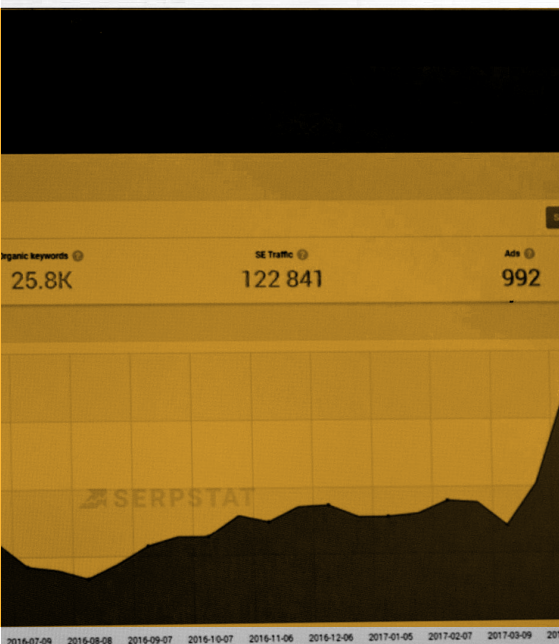
The Eyeful team are finding themselves developing presentation content for an event and then spinning it out into other formats. An animated .gif, infographics or a 'sneak peek' video are now commonly created from core slide materials.



A black and white photograph of a man in a white shirt and blue tie, holding a tablet. The tablet displays various business charts and graphs. Overlaid on the image are several dark blue hexagonal shapes of varying sizes. The text is positioned on the left side of the image, with a dark blue background for the first paragraph.

**Word to the wise** - the key to efficiently 'repurposing' this core content is having a strategy and shopping list in place early on in the process. Any presentation designer will tell you that it is so much easier to build with a range of different outputs in mind up front than it is to take a slide apart and rebuild!

Of course, social media is more than simply throwing animated .gifs and infographics out into the ether. Take time to create a strategy that amplifies the impact social media can have on your messaging. Timing a tweet to coincide with a key message in your keynote is powerful. This is made all the more powerful when the presenter references the social media channels/hashtags as part of their speech.



## LESSONS LEARNED

Webinars and virtual events can be very stressful. This means that there is a huge temptation to collapse in a heap at the end of the event. While we completely understand the temptation, there remains plenty of very valuable work to be done.



### STEP 1 - GATHER FEEDBACK

- What worked for your delegates?
- What didn't?
- What was missing?
- What would they like to see next time round?

Yes, we know that this might feel a bit like a school report...but this feedback is gold dust. It not only provides you with a greater understanding of your audience (a fundamental success criteria for any event) but also helps you focus your post-event communication on the areas you know are of most interest to your audience. To learn more about the options here, watch our Sustain video [here](#).



## STEP 2 - DIVE INTO YOUR DATA

Data provides a valuable insight into quite how your audience engaged with your content.

Look for patterns within your data – perhaps certain job roles or sectors locked into key elements of your content, requested downloads and were keen to continue the conversation. This is something to explore as part of your 'Sustain' follow up.

Equally, you may have handpicked the attendees and aligned your content directly to the issues you've been told are important to them BUT if their interest levels consistently dropped after 5 minutes and the majority of them checked out after 10, you know that something doesn't quite add up.

Learn from this. Data, even the uncomfortable truth bits, are powerful tools for planning short term wins from this event and ensuring that more of your success criteria are ticked off next time around.





## YOU'RE NOT DONE YET

Webinars and virtual events are marathons, not sprints.

The Communicate phase is undoubtedly the most public of the three stages, but not necessarily the only opportunity to have to shine. It's one of the cogs that keep your event turning but should not be seen as an only measure of success.

Preparing for the Sustain phase is just as important. Great events, no matter how valuable the content, can miss by a country mile if the Connect phase is not conducted thoroughly. Equally, well attended and engaging events can quickly wither and die in the absence of a strong Sustain model.

To learn more about the part played by Sustain, click [here](#).