Some of our personal experiences of what works well in the On-Line World:

Meetings - We have many years of experience of conducting meetings on-line and have learned what you need to do ensure they are effective:

- Always provide a clear agenda (ideally 7 or less items and circulated in advance) and be clear about the meeting's objectives – is further communication expected? Is a decision needed?
- Agree the start and end times of the meeting both when inviting participants and at the start of the meeting. Ask people how flexible they are regarding possible over-runs. There is nothing worse than losing a few people at the end without having sorted out the resultant actions and next steps.
- Maximise participant "buy in" by circulating a draft agenda and inviting comments/additions to it. Also, reviewing it again with all the participants at the start of the meeting.
- Ensure that there is always an effective facilitator amongst the participants (yourself or a nominated participant). The facilitator needs to act assertively, but politely, to ensure all participants have a chance to contribute whilst ensuring all the agenda items are covered within the allocated meeting time. It's usually better to arrange a further meeting than to rush through items as the meeting's end time is approaching.
- Always agree the wording of any Actions, who owns the Action and the Deadline for its completion. Wherever possible, conclude the meeting with a summary of the agreed actions.
- If one of the actions is to arrange a next meeting – try and to it real-time at the end of the meeting otherwise you will find yourself potentially wasting a lot of time in trying to co-ordinate diaries after the meeting. Doodle.com's scheduling tool is invaluable for diary management if you are forced to do this after the meeting.

You can find an excellent collection of tips and on-line resources for creating inspiring online meetings at www.meeting.toolchest.org

Two Displays - We have found that having two active displays can be a great help in many on-line situations. The displays need to be set up in "extended" mode not "duplicated" mode so that the content on each screen can be different. Following on from the Meetings Tips listed above, you can use your main display to participate directly in a Web Meeting whilst using your secondary screen to keep the agenda in view and capture notes and actions from the meeting. Another use of two screens can be when delivering a Webinar. In this case you would have the active slide on your main display and on the second be viewing your prompts/script or supporting materials.

Whenever practical; we have our video streams switched on in Web Conferences as this shows other parties that you are fully engaged in the dialogue and enables non-verbal communications to enhance any audio contributions. This is even more useful in the current Covid-19 situation where many people are self-isolating as it enhances the feeling of community and team working. Again, two displays enable you to appear more clearly to your audience on your video stream whilst accessing meeting collateral on the other screen.

One often used feature of having two screens is cutting and pasting things from the application on one screen to the application on the other.

On-Line Working Pros & Cons – Our experience of On-Line Working has highlighted both its strengths and weaknesses:

- **Strength** – One very clear strength is the improvement in collaborative working that happens when two or more team members share the same screen via a web conferencing app. In some ways, collaboration is easier on-line than it is when the collaborators are co-located (it is often logistically more difficult to gather around a screen or flip-chart in today's often crowded office environments). We have certainly found on-line collaboration has helped us develop higher quality outputs; particularly those that are usually iterative e.g. Pyramid Thinking Schematics.
  (see https://www.compellingpropositions.com/pyramidthinking)

- **Weakness** – The other side of the On-Line Working coin is that when you work from home there is not such a clear boundary between "work time" and "leisure time" and if you don't take this into account when arranging your working day, it is all too easy for "9 to 5" to become "24 x 7". We have found it best to develop a routine e.g. beginning your working day at the same time each day, setting a deadline for stopping work and ideally keeping Saturdays and Sundays free of work activities altogether. We also find its helpful to dress for work – this needn't mean a suit and tie, but it does mean not starting work in your pajamas or dressing gown.

Covid-19 – We can't claim to have any lengthy experience of working On-Line in the Covid-19 World, but we believe that some of the best practices that we know are very important in On-Line Working Ecosystems will become even more important.

A good example is that communications with colleagues, customers and other key stakeholders need to be much more frequent than would be necessary in workplaces where day to day physical interactions are the norm. In a world of social-isolation and social distancing frequent social interaction via cyber space will go a very long way towards maintaining mental health.

That said we have also seen that this can lead to so much social interaction on-line that it makes it difficult to concentrate on a single piece of work without distraction. A solution here can be to designate some times of the day as "busy" periods. For these periods set any notification in messenger applications to "busy" and send the phone to voicemail. Let people know when your "busy" periods are scheduled so they can work around them. If there are some people who you do want to be able to reach you during these periods given alternative means of communicating with you – but do advise them that they should only contact you this way if absolutely necessary.

We are also pleased to observe that many employers are recognising that remote working in a Covid-19 World presents a lot of challenges to their newly home working employees. One great example is Warner Brothers who have written to their staff and also engaged them directly via zoom to say that they are not expecting home workers to be able to perform in the same way as they would in their normal places of work. They have actually gone as far as to say that employee's families must take priority over day to day business because they understand that many of their staff

now have to factor in the provision of nursery care, delivering home schooling, shopping for vulnerable relatives, and sharing work-space and broadband with other family members.

We wish you every success in managing your working-from-home life.