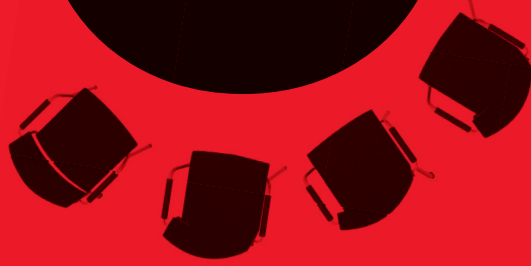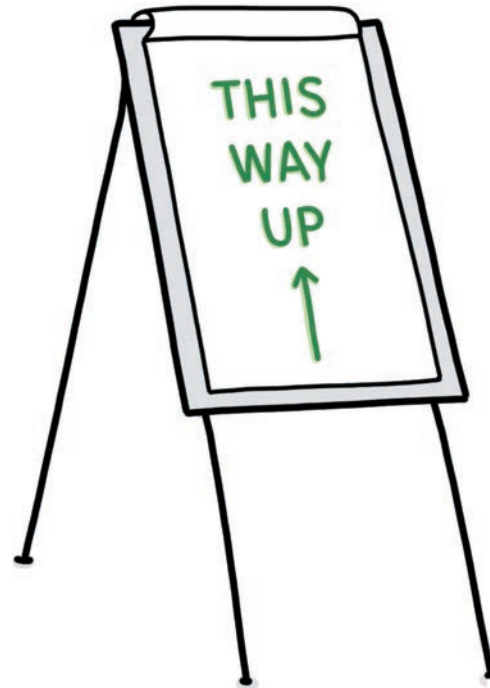# meet with impact

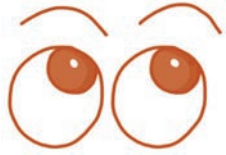## 40 visual tools for productive meetings and engaging workshops

Tom Russell

Not what you expected?
Read on to give your meetings unexpected impact.

Eyes up!

Everyone on the call is looking upwards towards a camera mounted on top of the TV screen. If you don't think this is off-putting, imagine your colleagues looking above your head every time they speak to you.

If you are new to the world of virtual meetings, and to some of the characteristics outlined above, I urge you to take a look at 'A Conference Call in Real Life' by Tripp and Tyler which can be found online. This is a wonderful four-minute film vignette of the types of problems experienced in virtual meetings. It will make you laugh and, if you have experience of virtual meetings, you may see behaviours that appear very familiar!

Before reading on, take a few minutes to consider the virtual meetings you have led or experienced. What worked well in those meetings, which would you like to see again in future, and if you could change your experience what might work better next time?

WHAT CURRENTLY WORKS WELL
IN MY VIRTUAL MEETINGS?

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO MAKE THEM
MORE EFFECTIVE?

What do you notice about your insights, and how could you use visual information more effectively in your virtual meetings to respond to these challenges?

Here are just a few of the comments we hear from leaders and participants of virtual meetings. . .

In Section 1 I explained that the purpose of this book is to explore how your meetings can be more engaging and productive through the effective use of visual information. This applies to virtual meetings too, but many challenges with virtual meetings cannot be resolved through the effective use of visual information alone.

Virtual meetings can be complex to lead, and whilst many are tempted to facilitate their own virtual meetings my recommendation is for all virtual meetings to be facilitated by someone who will lead the participants through the meeting process without becoming immersed in the content. This will allow participants to give their attention to the important topics being explored, whilst the facilitator ensures that everyone has a voice and the meeting achieves the desired outcomes.
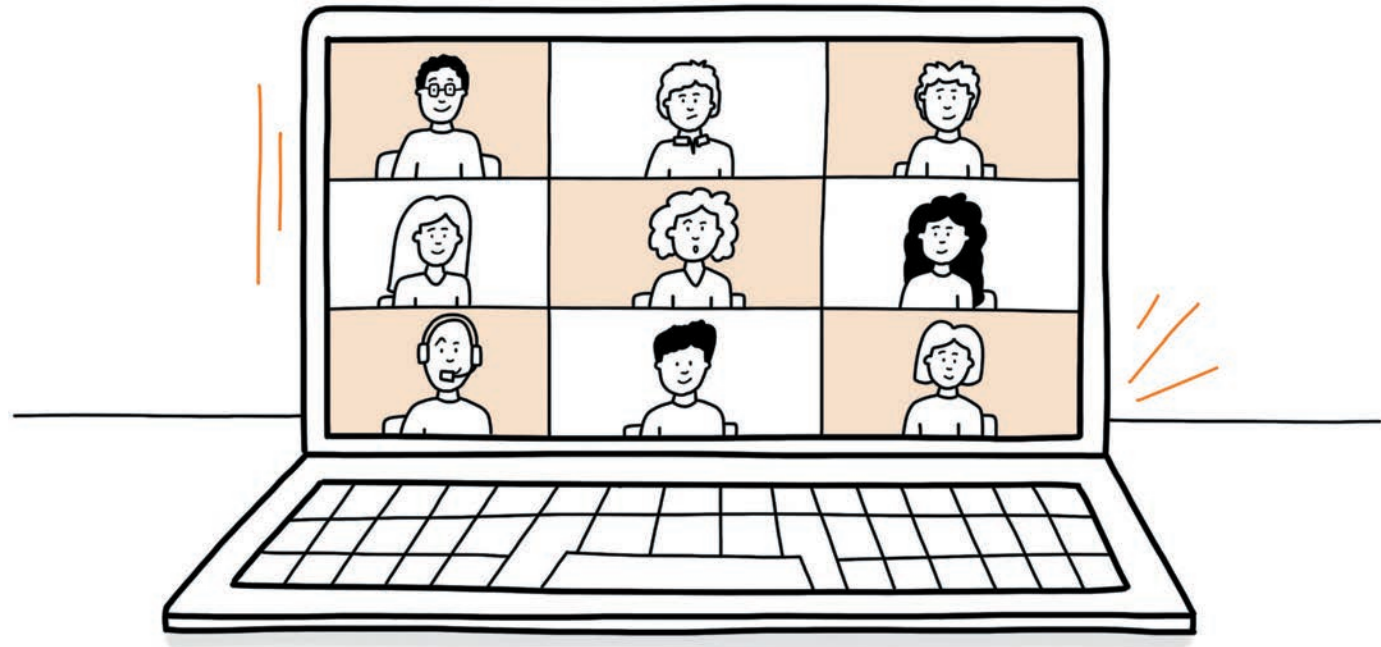
AGREEING WAYS OF WORKING

If you are unable to secure a facilitator for your virtual meeting, ensure you spend time at the beginning of the meeting discussing and then explicitly agreeing on 'ways of working' so that all participants understand what is expected of each other in order to make the meeting a success. Others may know these as 'ground rules' or 'rules of engagement'. The purpose is not to be prescriptive and rule-bound, but to build trust and shine a light on good practice in service of achieving the meeting purpose together.

You might be leading a virtual meeting for the first time with a group of participants with whom you meet regularly on a face-to-face basis. This group may also have an established way of working that works well for them. As we know, virtual meetings are very different from face-to-face meetings, and so it is worthwhile being completely open and intentional about that difference.

CAPTURING WAYS OF WORKING

One doesn't need cutting-edge technology to create a list of ways of working in a virtual meeting. There are various ways this can be done even if you are not using a video conference. For example, you could. . .
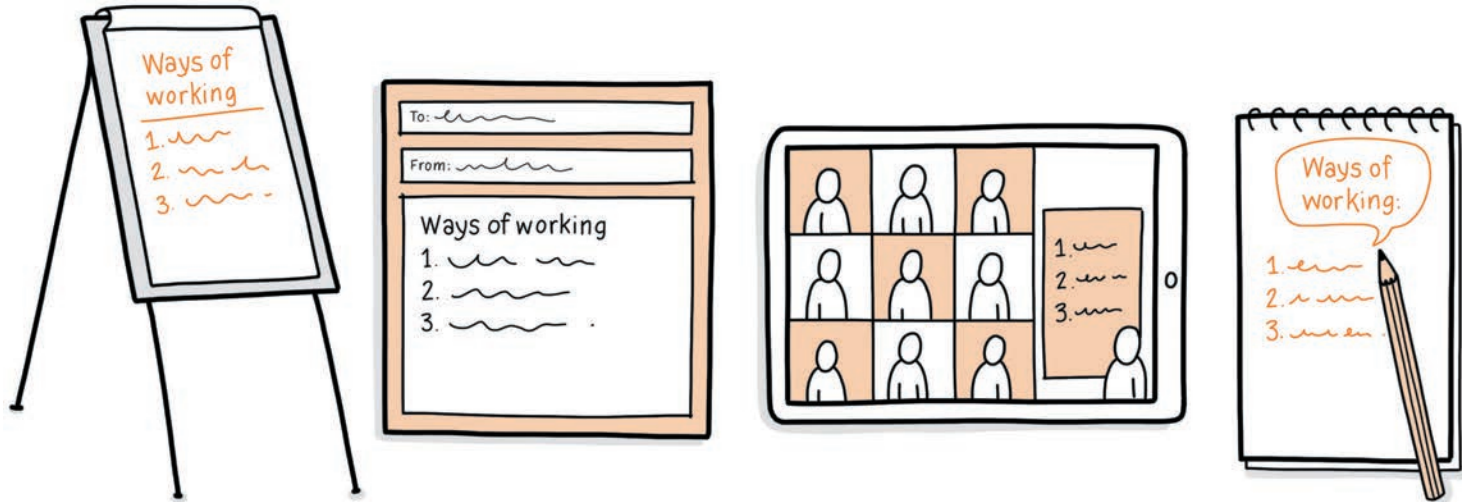
- Capture them on a flipchart (if in a meeting room) and take a photo to send to all participants.
- Make a list on an e-mail and send to all.
- If you have it, use the facility on your web conference platform to capture the ways of working as text points, so everyone can see them.
- Ask participants to note them down as they are agreed.