A glowing yellow lightbulb with a visible filament inside. The text is centered within the bulb's glow.

# **Making the most of your live online session**

*Notes, resources, tips  
and tricks from  
Lightbulb Moment*

*Authored by  
Jo Cook*

*June 2017*

## About this document

This support document was originally written to go alongside the Learning Technologies Summer Forum 2017 session delivered by Jo Cook.

It can also be read independently by webinar and virtual classroom practitioners and managers of teams who are developing these skills.

This document covers topics of the type of webinar you might offer and the different platforms, how to structure your session and tips and tricks for delivery.

There are also links to further reading on some topics.

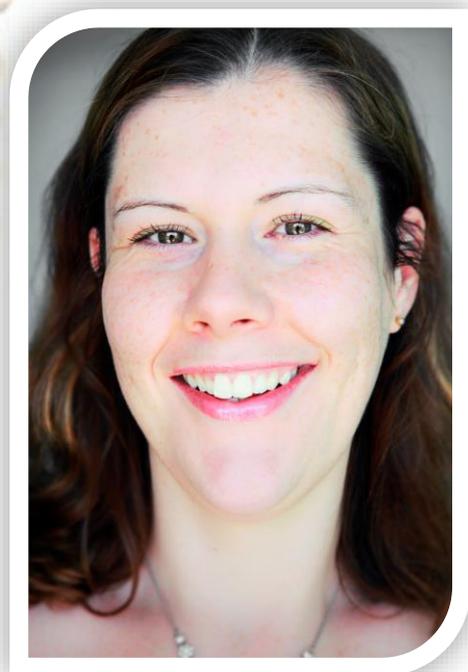
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✚ *The links look like this one, which is to Jo Cook's LinkedIn page*

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## Live online learning - T4S3



13-Jun-2017 15:00 - 16:00 Conference Room 4

### Making the most of your live online session

It's one of the most widely-used learning technologies in the workplace. It's also one of the least well understood. Ever sat through a webinar and wondered at the end what happened to that hour of your life? Quite. In this workshop Jo Cook will expertly guide you to an understanding of how to get the most out of live online tools and never deliver a dull webinar again!

Webinars have been a sales and marketing tool for a number of years and the use of them for efficiently connecting with an audience and disseminating information is on the rise. However you've probably sat through your share of boring presentations, with little or no engagement, hosts that struggle with the technology, awful sound and distractions in the background.

Join webinar and virtual classroom expert Jo Cook to deconstruct the webinar and ensure that your approach, whether for learning, marketing or otherwise, makes best use of: the technology to hand; ensures you are memorable with your audience for the right reasons; engages people in dialogue that is useful to you and them.

Actions you can take after this interactive workshop:

- Select the right approach the type of webinar for your purpose
- Choose the technology and webinar platform that performs for you
- Structure your webinar to get to the point to keep your audience
- Deliver a webinar to engage with your audience so that you understand them better
- Use tips and tricks for confidently delivering to a remote audience

#### Chairperson

 Sharon Claffey Kallouby, Head of Product Education - State Street Global Advisors

#### Speakers

 Jo Cook, Blended learning and virtual classroom specialist - Lightbulb Moment

## About Jo Cook

Jo Cook is the Director of her company Lightbulb Moment Limited, which specialises in developing, facilitating and training others to deliver great live online training sessions, virtual classrooms, webinars and blended, digital programmes.

Jo has a background in teaching, technology and journalism. She facilitates, speaks, writes, blogs and tweets on L&D topics.

Part-time she is also the Deputy Editor of Training Journal magazine and website.

Jo's background includes further and higher education, the charity sector, small and large organisations, including CNN News/TimeWarner Group and Bupa International.

You can get in contact through [LinkedIn](#), [www.LightbulbMoment.info](http://www.LightbulbMoment.info) or [@LightbulbJo](#).

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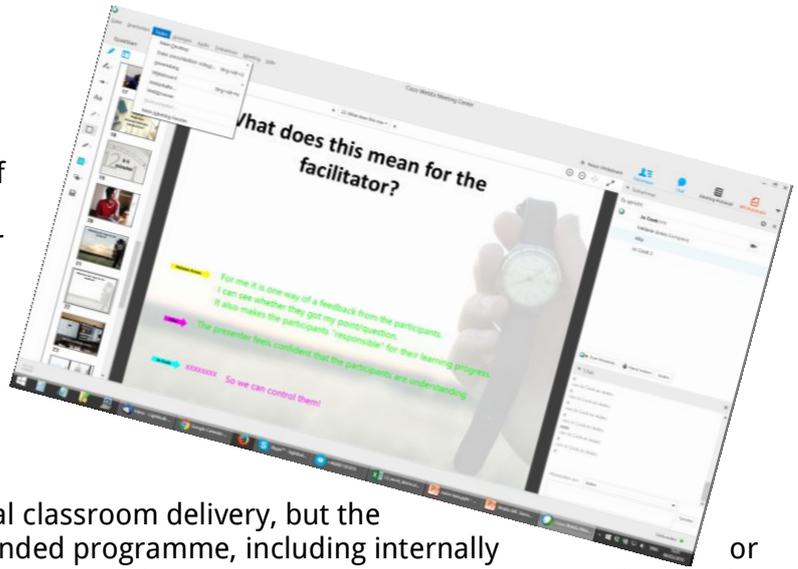
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# What is live online learning?

It's a great name to describe the use of webinars, virtual classrooms and other digital learning. It's a good term as it has the word "live" to differentiate it from the self-paced, click-next e-learning modules that people often use.

The "online" part can also encompass not just a webinar or virtual classroom delivery, but the other components of a really great blended programme, including internally or externally-sourced curated resources, such as article and blog posts, and perhaps social learning, such as forum questions to discuss.



“ *Online can also encompass not just a webinar* ”

## More specifically – what's a webinar?

It's using specific software based on the internet to connect people together.

Common software would be Adobe Connect, WebEx Meeting Centre, GoToWebinar and many others. Typically a webinar would include PowerPoint slides to deliver information, a speaker on phone or microphone, and lots of participants – into the hundreds or thousands!

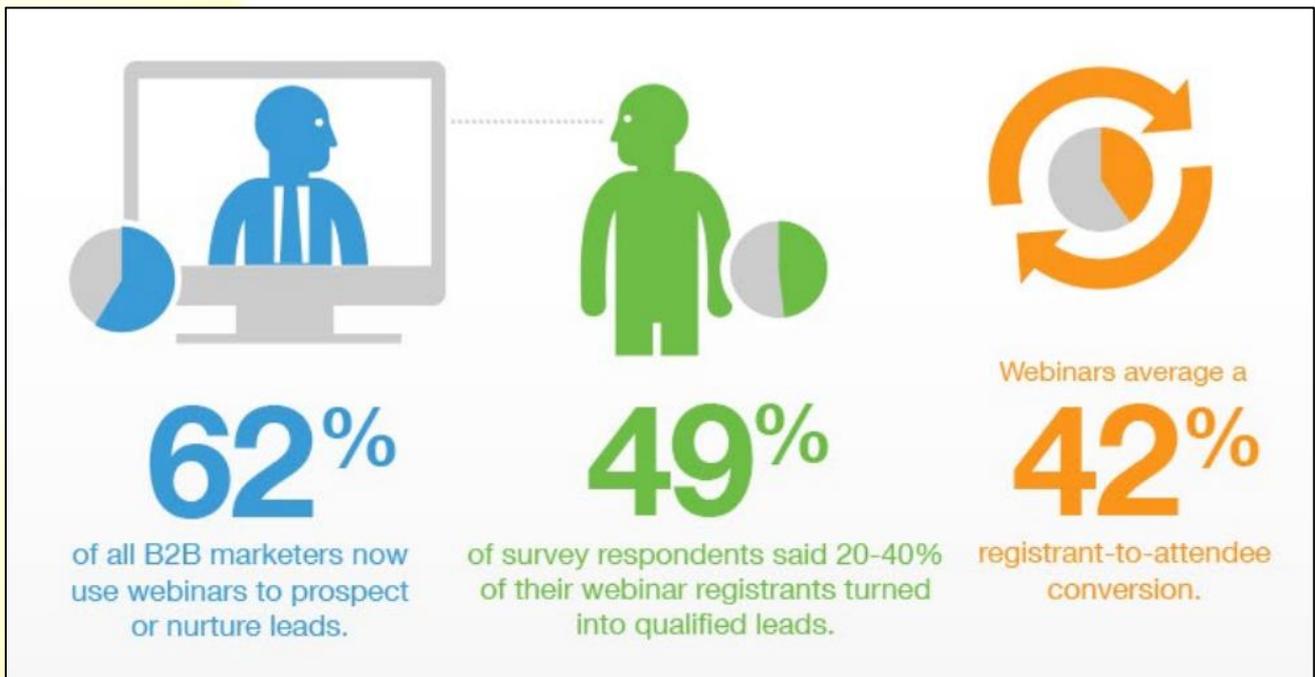
## So what's a virtual classroom?

Take those basics from the webinar, and make the audience much smaller!

Make it focused specifically on the learner and what they need to do their job, including activities, discussions and so much more.

## Why are we discussing webinars now?

They are growing! These statistics from Ready Talk show just how many people are using them.



From: [Ready Talk](#)

This information is from the Towards Maturity [report](#) about preparing for the future of learning.

The report shows responses from over 600 L&D leaders around the world in a variety of sectors.

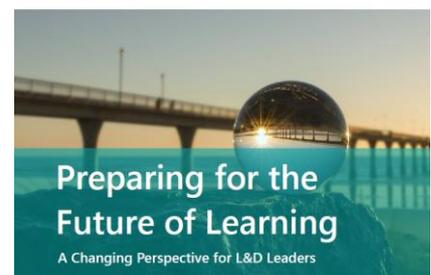
- **86% of those companies are using live online learning**
- **Specifically, 45% are using virtual classrooms**

This is good news!

It's a developing field that many organisations are seeing as good for delivering learning solutions.

TOWARDS  
MATURITY

IN-FOCUS



[www.towardsmaturity.org/in-focus/2016/futurelearn](http://www.towardsmaturity.org/in-focus/2016/futurelearn)

Authored by Laura Overton  
and Dr Gerry Dixon

In conjunction with Strategic Partner

CIPD

In-Focus  
Report  
April 2016

## So why are so many webinars presented so poorly?

According to the report above, **ONLY 23%** of leaders think that their teams have the right skills!

Half say that their staff don't have the knowledge of the potential of this technology, let alone the implementation.

# Webinar strategy

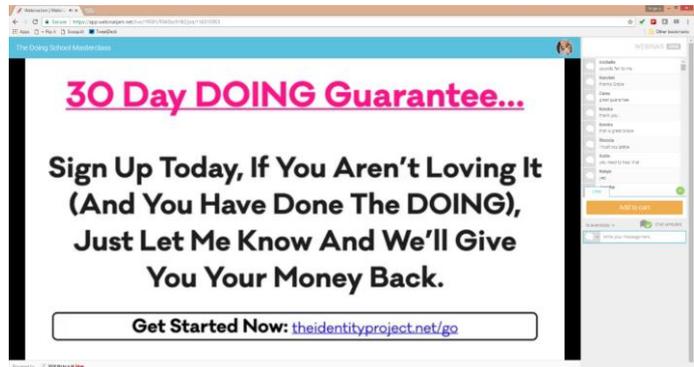
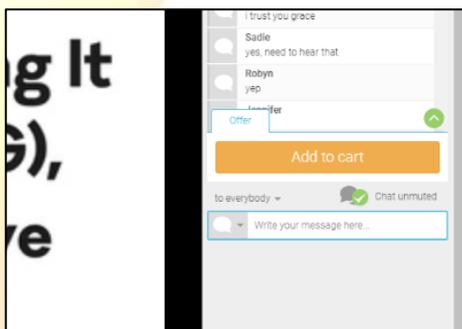
There are different strategies and approaches you can take with webinars, depending on what you are using them for.

## Marketing

You might want to make use of the features that show special offers more prominently.

Webinar software platforms Webinar Ninja and Webinar Jam are both great at this.

Such as this add to cart button from this marketing webinar.



## Information dissemination

This could be called a webcast, seminar or presentation and is usually to a lot of people.

Firstly, consider alternative communications that may get the message across better and be more efficient use of your company and staff's time:

- Email communication
- Videos
- Desk drop
- Company newsletter
- Intranet
- Company blog

“ Consider alternative communications that may get the message across better ”

If a webinar is the best method, you need to ensure that your licence can accommodate the number of people you expect.

## Live or recorded webinar?

LIVE ONLY



65%

ON-DEMAND ONLY



28%

From [ON24](#)

This information shows that of those registered for webinars **65% of people watch just the live session.**

If you know people are likely to watch the recording afterwards, and 28% of people do, then you need to consider how you are going to disseminate this information and how people will access it.



### Sales webinar

Depending on the product or service being sold, you may want to use features for demonstration.

In a webinar this is likely to be some kind of application or screen share.

You need to make sure that it's easy to use.

The person doing the demonstration may not be the person experienced in the webinar software.

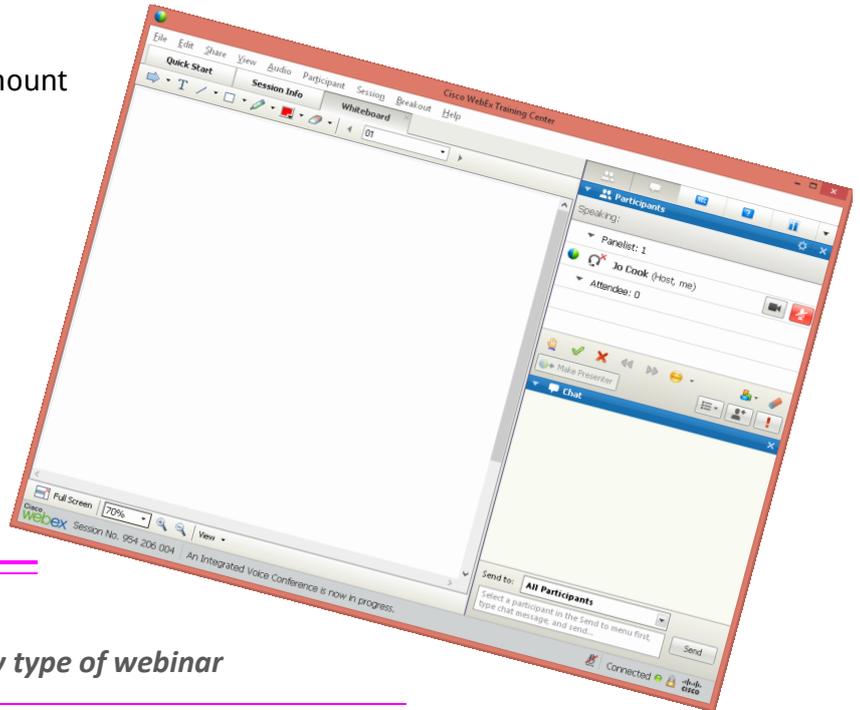
- The screen sharing in WebEx is delightfully easy and a strong point of the software.
- In Adobe Connect it's not as easy, but still very robust

## Learning webinar

This is where communication is of paramount importance, as learning is a two-way conversation and not just a lecture or seminar delivery.

You need to ensure, as a minimum, you have a chat window that people can use.

The software GoToWebinar, for instance, doesn't have this facility. It has a question panel for the attendees to ask the speakers questions, but nothing to discuss amongst the audience.



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**+** *Read this blog post about the importance of a chat panel in any type of webinar*

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## Virtual classroom

If you want some serious learning then you need to focus more tightly on the group and the activities that they are doing.

In this case you need to limit the number of attendees, ideally around 8-10 people to have great group collaboration.

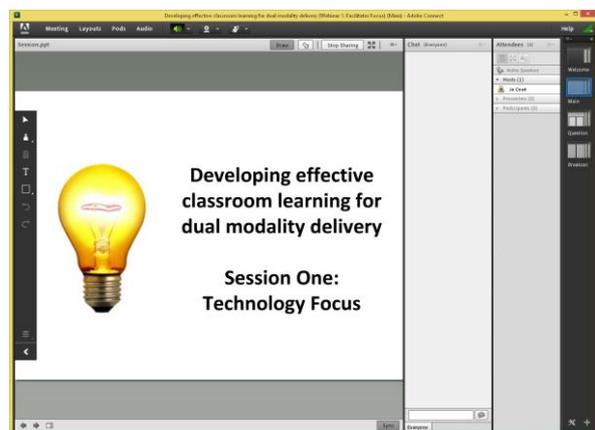
A virtual classroom takes the basic elements of a webinar and pumps up the volume!

You use more of the facilities on offer in order to get to know a group, for them to get to know each other and practice the skills and performance needed for the work place.

A key concept here, especially if you are working internally with staff, is how easy it is for people to access the software on your company network.

You'll need to consider:

- Is a computer download is needed
- Is Flash up to date, which Adobe Connect relies on
- If you have any VPN or firewall issues, which often block things like Cisco WebEx audio



It's imperative to make friends with your IT department if you are selecting and implementing webinar or virtual classroom software.

# Top tips on selecting your platform

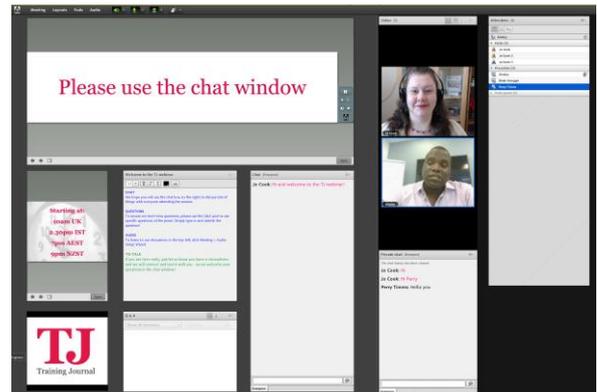
## Adobe Connect

Probably the best, and most expensive, and with a steep learning curve.

As with any Adobe product, it's a professional tool that's capable of some stunning stuff, but you have to learn it.

There are two huge selling points with Adobe above all else:

1. It's so flexible. The different parts of the screen and layout allow you to truly make it your own and you aren't fixed to where the chat window is or how big your slides show up.
2. It's host control and a presenter only area for supporting trainers that are less experienced in the software.  
This gives the technical person, perhaps a producer or experience facilitator with huge control in the session. I don't know of any other platform that gives this level of support.



## Cisco WebEx

There are a variety of license types, some people will be familiar with Event and Meeting Centre. They are good for meetings and allow some functionality.

However if you want to take on board these tips, you really need the functionality of Training Centre. This gives you breakout rooms, polling function, emoticon feedbacks, like the green ticks, and more.

If you are planning that most training will be an experienced online facilitator with no producer, and/or you are doing a lot of application share and want to get people involved in experientially learning, this is the tool for you.

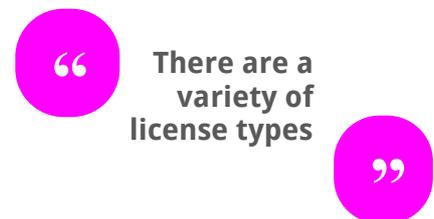
## GoTo

GoTo also has a number of different products, such as GoToWebinar earlier. I don't recommend this product for the simple reason it doesn't have a chat window.

This means people can't discuss and learn amongst themselves. It cuts down engagement.

Other GoTo products, like Meeting and Training, do offer these features. The interface is pretty easy to use, but you need to look at whether you are co-delivering and who that might be.

If they aren't great with technology then think again about Adobe Connect due to the support features that are available.

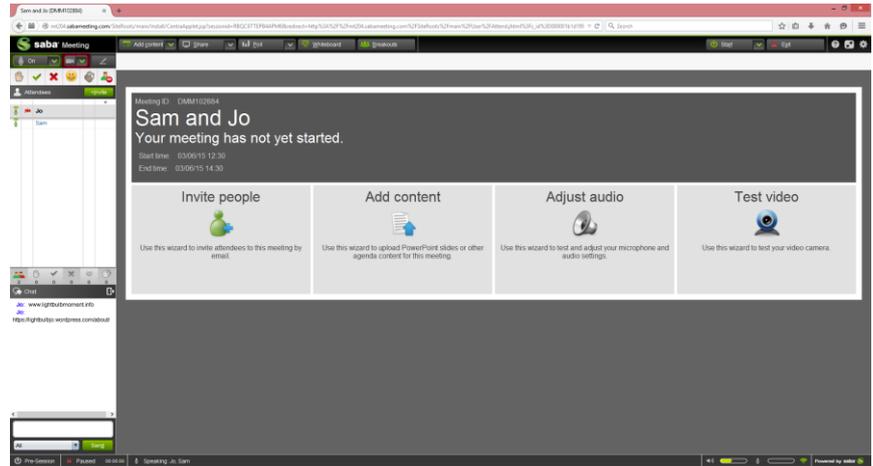


## Others

Webinar Ninja and WebinarJam are good webinar tools, hence their names.

They have some simple features good for broadcast sessions. They are also reasonably priced.

Saba Meeting is good if you already have Saba Cloud as it's already integrated.



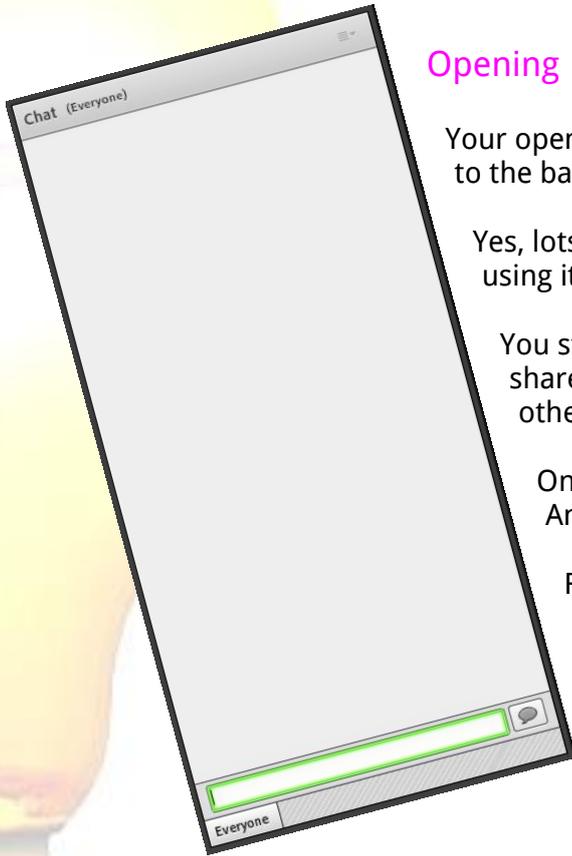
It has some nice features, as well as some annoying ones, as all software does!

Zoom is a platform that is getting a lot of attention and offers things like a plugin to run sessions from your iPad.

There is also a cool feature where, if you have a green screen behind you on webcam, you can super impose images. Very Hollywood! Zoom offers a free option and reasonably priced too.

# How to structure your webinar

We need to ensure we engage our audience right at the beginning and keep that all the way through, whatever our overall aim is.



## Opening

Your opening could and probably should include an introduction to the basic tools, like chat.

Yes, lots of people will know how to use it already and will start using it.

You still need to encourage them and highlight that this is to share comments, ask questions of the speaker and each other.

Only explain what you are going to use when you use it. And only the basics, get people using it.

For instance in Adobe Connect, you can change the text colour and size, but people don't need to know that right away.

## Careful with polling

Asking a question of people right at the beginning of the webinar is a great way to get them involved and stop you or your speaker rabbiting on!

A lot of people use a poll right at the beginning as it's a great way to find out why your audience are attending, what they know already and what they want to know.

Be just a little cautious with them though, as it's easy for us to pigeon-hole people, to write a closed question.

Make sure you use a feature like the chat window for added richness here. People want to tell you things, so allow time for it in the chat window.

### What is your social media platform of choice?

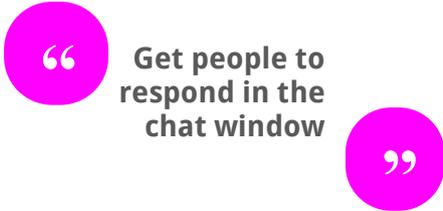
Poll Results (single answer required):

Facebook	61%
Twitter	10%
Instagram	13%
Snapchat	0%
None of the above!	16%

# It's all about them

To deliver a truly great webinar, you need to concentrate on the attendee and get them involved as much as possible.

- You should not be delivering a lecture or presentation with no feedback. For most people, it's boring and it will miss the point.
- A marketing or sales webinar is still about educating your clients or potential customers in some way, so you want to get them involved.
- Present some information, ask good quality questions and get people to respond in the chat window. There will be much richness there if you design and deliver it well.
- This gives you opportunities to understand more about your clients, your learners, your potential customers and what they all want in the context of your business.
- If you are selling or marketing, you might be worried that people will ask uncomfortable questions, and they might! But you need to be prepared for that with some answers. Also it gives you a chance to handle those objections, to explain things to the potential client and others.



Get people to respond in the chat window

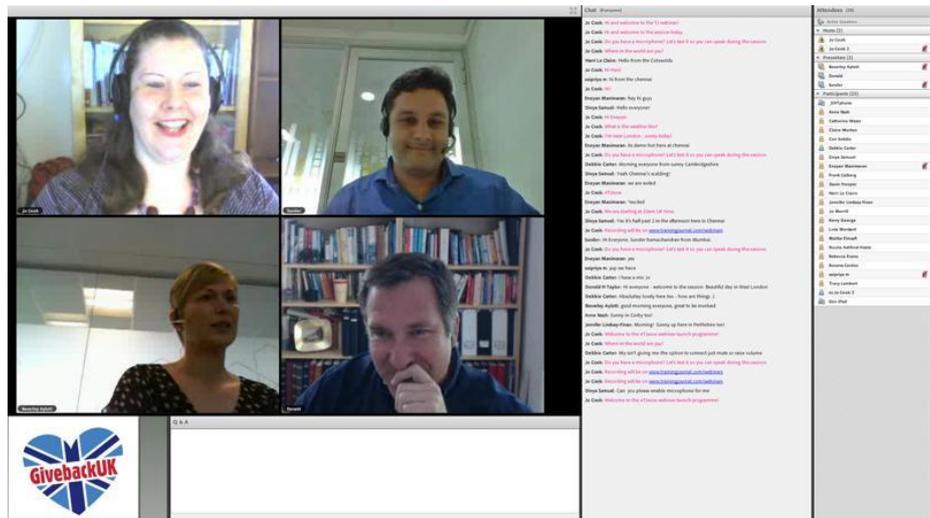
# Involve the host or producer

If you are running a public webinar you will probably have a host, or a producer role to help you.

It's a great technique to get them more involved in the delivery of the webinar.

Most webinars don't include verbal interaction from the audience as it can be a challenge to manage this in a short, pacey session.

Therefore getting another voice on the session can add variety and make the delivery more conversational.



Perhaps ask a question of the audience and get the host to verbalise some of the answers from the chat window before handing back to you.

Your host can also pick out comments and questions to interrupt you with – if the chat window is lively it will be hard for a presenter to keep up with it.

## End of the webinar

The closing structure should be no different from any other good session.

- You need to provide more information relevant to your context.
- Contact information as appropriate.
- Also time for questions, and offer to stay online after if people have more questions or detail that they want to get into.
- The closing Q&A shouldn't be the only time people have had an opportunity to ask questions – it's there as a catch all.

# Tips and tricks

## Plan your interactions

When designing any webinar or virtual classroom, or any session, you need to plan the interactions with the audience.

Online, this can be as quick and simple as asking people to click the green tick if they agree with you.

It could also be a whole activity you design, which uses many different features of your chosen platform.



## Deconstruct your face to face delivery

The way to think about this is to deconstruct what you normally do face to face and build it into the virtual environment.

One of the biggest challenges people have when going from any face to face meeting or training into the virtual environment is that they can't see people and interpret their body language.

“

**One of the biggest challenges people have is lack of body language**

”

If I would normally ask a question, look around and see nods, smiles and so on, I need to find a rough equivalent online.

In the virtual classroom or webinar I would ask for a green tick or red X if people agreed or disagreed.

An alternative is to ask in the chat window for people's reactions to something, or for an answer to a question to check their understanding or learning.

## Use a range of tools

This brings me to the point about designing using a variety of different technology tools and goes back to the importance of selecting the right platform in the beginning.

If you have one of the platforms with less options, WebEx Meeting Centre for example, there are no ticks and crosses or smiley faces to use at all.

GoToWebinar, whilst it does have annotation tools for people to draw on a slide, it doesn't have a text tool. So I can't get anyone to write down ideas on a slide I've designed.

Also people don't want the same interaction all the time. If everything is "green tick if you agree" and "green tick if you see this" and "green tick if you think such and such" people will stop responding as you are over using it.

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**+** *Read this Learning Technologies article by Jo Cook about design for the online classroom*

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## Delivery to a remote audience

As for the delivery, this can feel very odd at first. We are used to seeing lots of faces looking at us.

We have to bring all the professionalism and energy from our face to face delivery into the online environment.

I mentioned the feedback emoticons earlier. It's not the same as body language, but it's just one way that I can start to see the participants.

Some might lie and green tick in agreement even if they don't think so. But at least it's their intention and I'm not mis-reading it.

“ You need to interact and engage your audience ”

## “See” your invisible audience

I've said throughout this session that you need to interact and engage your audience, through the chat window, polling, asking and answering questions and allowing time for those conversations.

This is another way for me to see people. If they are excitedly adding information or asking questions in chat I can see that. I can read the language people are using and make inferences about what they think.

If you use annotation tools people will practice and draw smiley faces, or write “bonjour” to share their first language. These are subtle and rich ways to get know individuals and groups.

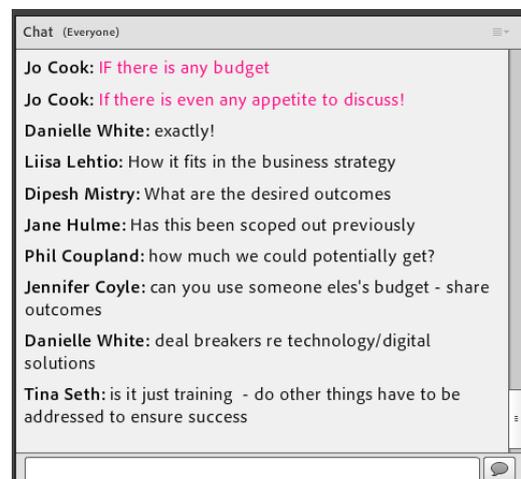
My last tip is that when you are delivering, to look at the list of people's names when you are.

This is my equivalent of eye contact.

Do people see it? Of course not. But it allows me to focus on real people, seeing their names and remember they are out there on the other side of the internet.

If you are answering a specific question from the chat window, again, I keep looking and talking to that question.

It's got the person's name there, so you can make your answer personal to them.



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➕ [Read this Training Journal article by Jo Cook about facilitating a group you can't see](#)

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## Summary

Make sure you know the overall organisational aim of your webinar:



For all of the above make sure you are focusing on the real business need, not what someone has just come and asked for. Make sure that the time and money you spend has an impact you can demonstrate.

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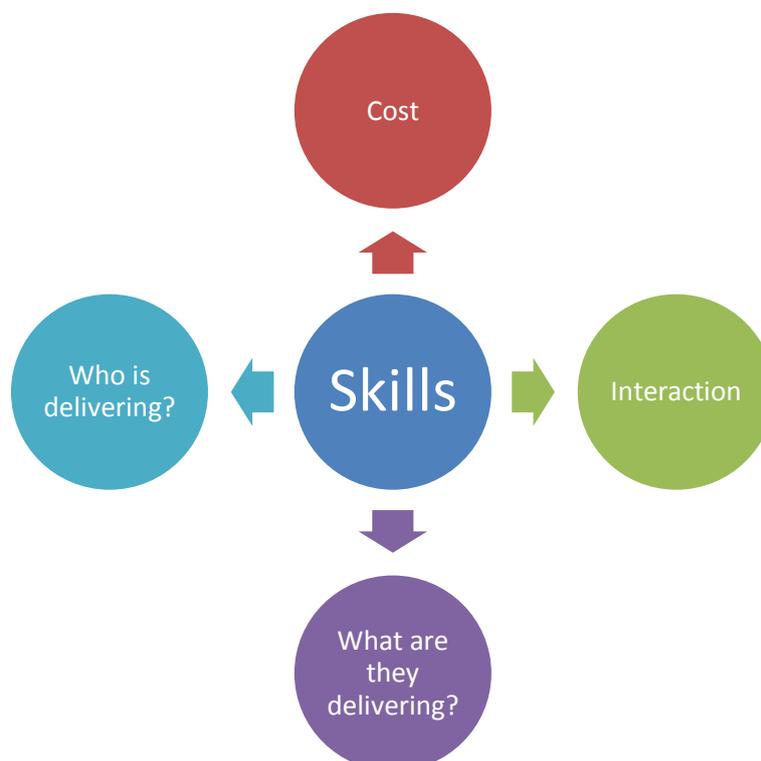
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✦ *Read this [Lightbulb Moment blog about instructional design](#)*

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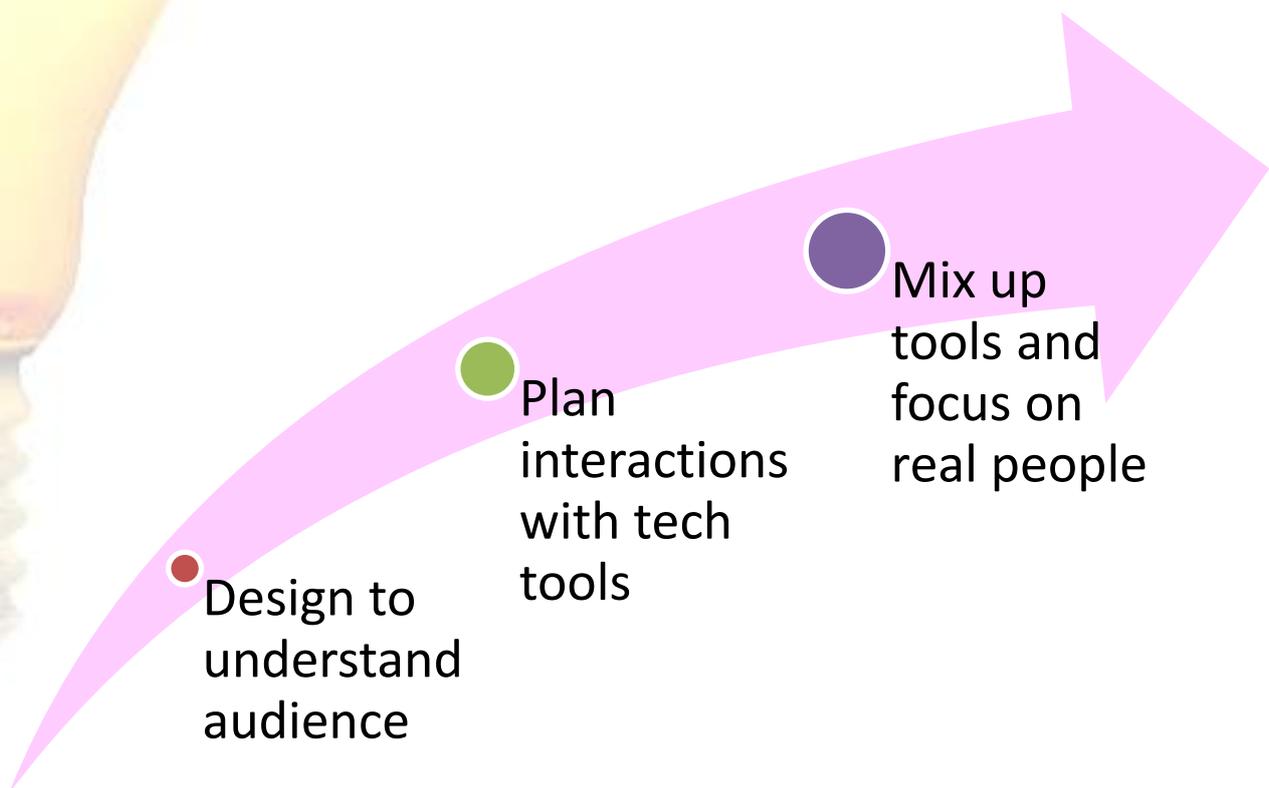
Knowing your overall aim and the people involved in the design and delivery will help you select the webinar platform. Take into consideration:



The structure of the session needs to include:



Design the webinar to:



# About Lightbulb Moment

We are all about supporting you and your teams in developing their skills. We cover:

- Developing, facilitating and training others
- Great live online training sessions, virtual classrooms and webinars
- Blended, digital programmes
- Consultancy, design and coaching



## Facebook community

All are welcome to chat, share and learn all about webinars, virtual classrooms and the digital learning world.

[Click here to join.](#)

## Free webinars

We also run a number of regular free webinars to encourage you to continue developing your awareness and skills around the virtual classroom and digital blended learning solutions.

Suitable for those new to the virtual classroom, continuously developing your skills, or managers and senior directors who want to understand the concept and how it can be delivered with exceptional results.

[Click here to see the latest webinars.](#)



## Bespoke programmes

Developing the skills and confidence of your team to deliver outstanding webinars and virtual classrooms is paramount for the future of your L&D team and training delivery.

Ensuring you have the best quality skills development, most up to date training materials and programme development will ensure the success of your teams.

Contact us today to discover more about our range of programmes.

Telephone: 07970 101154 E-mail: [jo@lightbulbmoment.info](mailto:jo@lightbulbmoment.info) or [michael@lightbulbmoment.info](mailto:michael@lightbulbmoment.info)