

# "Adversity is an opportunity for creativity - it forces one to dig deeper and discover something new about oneself"

Paul T. P. Wong,  
Psychologist and Professor

## 19 creative ways to engage your audiences during COVID-19

Like many of you, at Brands at Work we're monitoring the impact of Coronavirus on the events industry and clearly, the safety of our people, our clients and communities is paramount.

And of course, the wider economic impact of the virus will continue to be felt across all industries and markets across the globe, which is why it's vital to keep our companies and our people united. But for most of us, the new reality is that we're being advised to restrict travel and social contact, to work from home, or to self-isolate. So, now what?

For us, COVID-19 affecting 'mass gatherings' has brought into sharp focus that now more than ever you need to have compelling communications and clever ways to engage your people, with purpose-driven content that encourages conversation, collaboration and community.



In addition to keeping clear lines of internal communication, engagement and motivation, if you and your teams have to rapidly adapt to new working conditions and environments because of travel restrictions or the need to work at home, this is likely to throw up other unseen challenges.

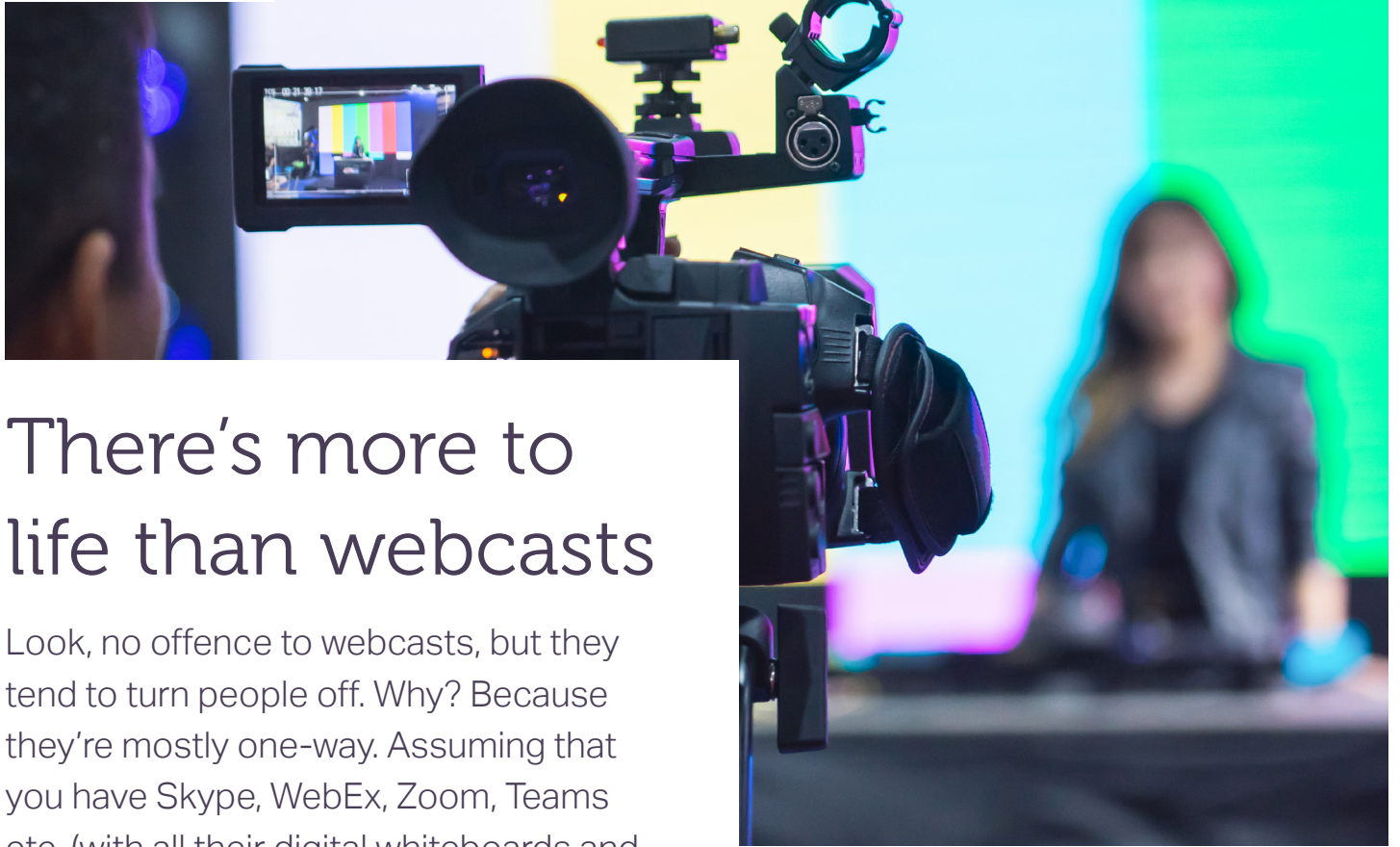
People will be experiencing a wide range of emotions and as well as feeling concern for the wellbeing of themselves and their loved ones, there is a danger that the lack of camaraderie that the physical working environment provides will make people feel isolated, lonely and disconnected. This could have a longer-term impact upon team unity and morale, particularly when everyone eventually returns to the office.

One of the things that can unite us in business is having a connection to a common purpose and a clearly communicated strategy. [Here's an article that our Managing Partner Karen Kadin wrote on the subject recently.](#)

As well as helping our clients to shape their engagement strategies we also design and deliver innovative, effective and emotionally engaging communications channels and imaginative campaigns.

We look forward to the triumphant return to normality for the live events industry, but in the meantime, we've suggested 19 creative ways that you can keep your engagements going in the face of COVID-19.

We've delivered all 19 (and more!) of these for our clients, so if you'd like to discuss them, or to pick our brains on anything else, then feel free to get in touch at [\*\*hello@brandsatwork.eu.com\*\*](mailto:hello@brandsatwork.eu.com).



## There's more to life than webcasts

Look, no offence to webcasts, but they tend to turn people off. Why? Because they're mostly one-way. Assuming that you have Skype, WebEx, Zoom, Teams etc. (with all their digital whiteboards and screen sharing capabilities), what else can you do to make your digital comms as two-way as possible?

### 1. **Turn virtual meetings into live broadcasts**

Skip the standard Skype call and stream a TV style-show from a suitably secure location, with no-crew-contact options to ensure the safety and wellbeing of anyone 'on set'. A senior business host (or pro presenter) holds the reins, as a virtual studio audience tunes in and provides live reactions. With the simple integration of glisser, slid.o and other useful ARS software, your audience can engage, comment, vote, participate in polls and more with their smartphones.

### 2. **Crowdsource your content with Seenit**

Build your own digital community of vloggers through crowdsourcing video app Seenit. Your people become virtual video producers, submitting bite-sized films from their smartphones to create a rich repository of authentic content that can be viewed – and cut together – creating a dynamic, digital scrapbook.

### 3. **Paint pictures with a digital scribe**

Inject some artistic flair into your video conferences with live graphic facilitation. Whether 'Apple pencil' digitizers or 'pen and paper' illustrators are your thing, seeing visual imagery being created in front of your eyes is a great way to give your online content a lift – and you'll get the art to take away and send out afterwards as a piece of cascade comms.

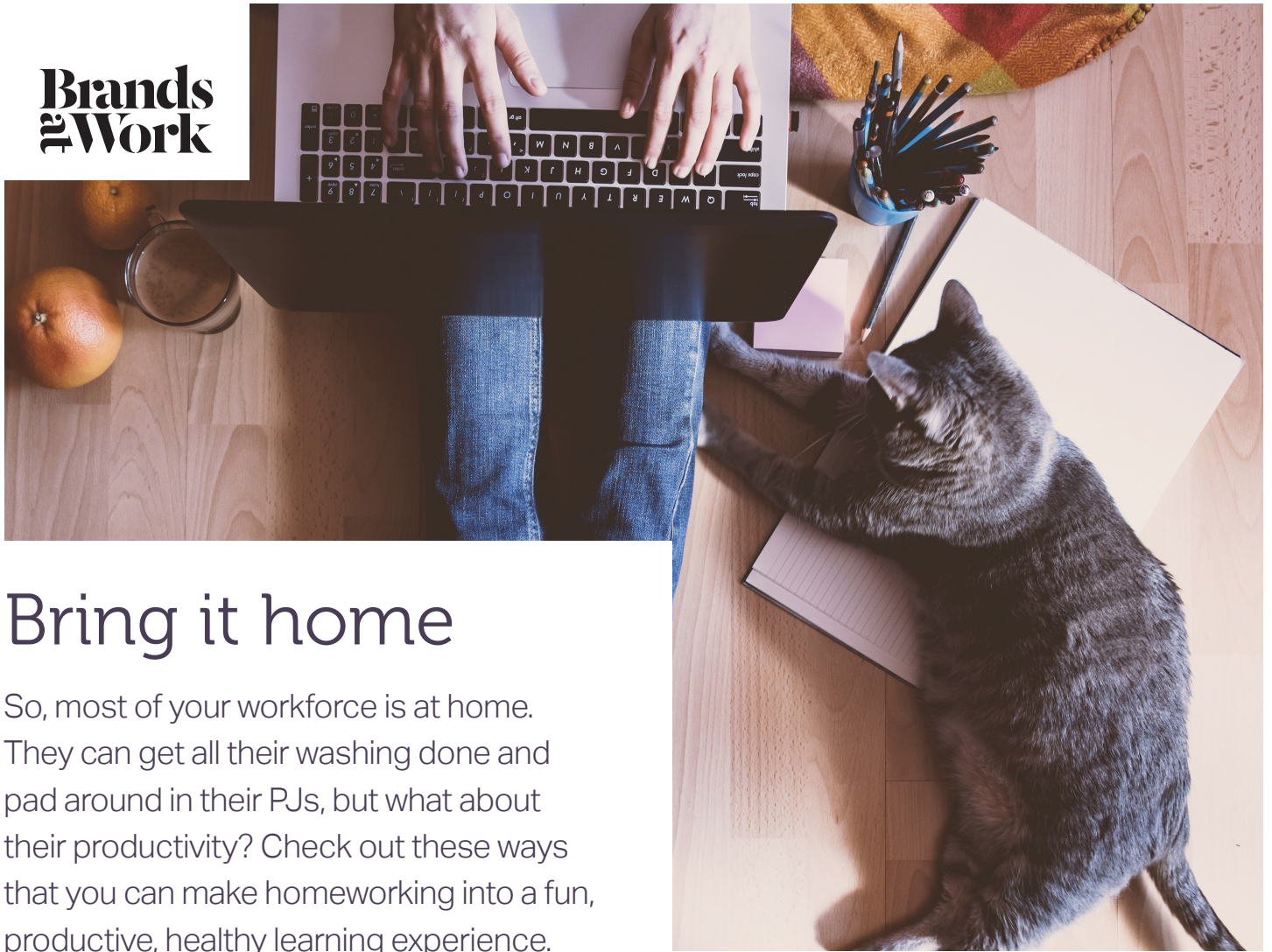
### 4. **'Choose your route' interactive films**

Inspired by popular Netflix shows, why not create a suite of interactive films where viewers get to press pause and choose what happens next? Using a combination of your people, animations and on-screen graphics, the films could be linked to learning, cultural behaviours or to help people explore your new strategy.

### 5. **Embrace the virtual world**

Virtual events have come a long way in a short space of time - it's now actually possible to replicate your entire conference virtually! From your people building their own life-like avatars, to turning your 2D floor plans into virtual exhibition stands and fly throughs, a VR event is perhaps more possible than you think.





## Bring it home

So, most of your workforce is at home. They can get all their washing done and pad around in their PJs, but what about their productivity? Check out these ways that you can make homeworking into a fun, productive, healthy learning experience.

### 6. Home office cheat sheet

Send your staff a simple branded PDF or video with tips for turning their home into a fully functional workspace. Whether you're telling them to ditch the dining chairs for better posture or have regular 'digital brain date' conversations with colleagues, this cheat sheet will show you care without costing you the Earth.

### 7. Work from home wellbeing

Curate a wellbeing programme to ensure remote colleagues are staying fit and healthy while working at home. Show your people that travelling less doesn't have to mean doing less; with desk yoga and stretching routines, lunchtime home workouts and links to mindful podcasts and videos.

### 8. Unbox your meeting

So, you've already done a pile of professional printing for that face-to-face conference that's just been cancelled? Why not repackage it all as a meeting-in-a-box or toolkit and post it out to your people at home? From branded goodies and giveaways to strategy posters and handouts, you can still maintain the consistency of your message and do your bit for sustainability.

### 9. Sticky online learning

Could this be a good time to refresh your e-learning content? Turn your mandatory modules into character-led stories and gamified adventures to make your content really stick. Encouraging healthy competition with digital learning leaderboards and faster-finger-first prizes are fun, and crucially, they're WFH-friendly.

### 10. Sharing the knowledge

Embrace user-generated content and empower your people to prepare short, sharp 'knowledge share' sessions that they can deliver to their peers online. Workshops could be on practical skills such as IT shortcuts or Excel hacks, best practice business behaviours or even sharing a story from a recent life experience that could benefit others.

## Intelligent imagination and interactivity

A wise person once said: "Never let a crisis go to waste". These challenging times give you a great chance to be more creative with your content. Here's some ways to continue building community amongst your people, by using a bit of intelligent imagination around interactivity.

### 11. **TV Studio in a box**

We're in a new age of remote video streaming but that doesn't mean you have to rely on wobbly camera work and presentations in your PJs. Simple equipment such as high quality microphones, HD cameras, lighting and even pop-up green screens can be packaged up and delivered to your door as a plug-n-play TV studio. It's never been so easy to create high a high quality, professional broadcast.

### 12. **If Comic Relief did a conference**

Based on a classic TV telethon format, host an 'online marathon meeting' that unites all global teams in different time zones with fun features and allocated speaking slots. Different business units, leaders and teams would all have a part to play in the show, from the CEO answering the phones to a 'cascade' nomination process inspired by the ice bucket and mannequin challenges.

### 13. **Get your digital show on the road**

Planning a roadshow that's been revoked? Why not digitize it and empower different regions to 'own' different parts of the agenda? Small groups of 10 are given a brief to fill a series of slots in the roadshow, as you go 'around the regions' to hear from each local hub via your online conference platform.

### 14. **Bite sized business buzz-feed**

Drawing on our insatiable appetite for short form, snappy content, turn your e-comms into daily digestible doses. Your e-newsletter could become a beautiful online lifestyle magazine, you could launch little listicles and pithy pieces around 'everything you need to know in 5 mins'. Having a fresh approach to company news will keep your business buzzing.

### 15. **The key to unlocking online speeches**

If you've booked an external keynote speaker but your event is in doubt, why not ask them to deliver online instead? With some clever camerawork you could create your very own TED-style studio, giving them an option to broadcast live or pre-record before a pre-production polish.

### 16. **Keep everyone 'appy**

There's a whole host of web-based apps that can add instant sprinklings of interactivity to your meetings and events – and they work just as well online as in person. Tools such as *slido* have Q&A functions and live voting that you can even embed in PowerPoint, allowing you to present your content and get live feedback from your online colleagues in real time.





## When business is unusual, try unusual tactics

Did you know that experiencing a surprise raises four times the level of serotonin in your body? For the scientifically challenged, serotonin is a super-cool chemical that contributes to your wellbeing and happiness. Surprises take us from the norm to the unexpected, so why not experiment with some unusual tactics to boost your staff's serotonin levels?

### 17. **'At home with' your people**

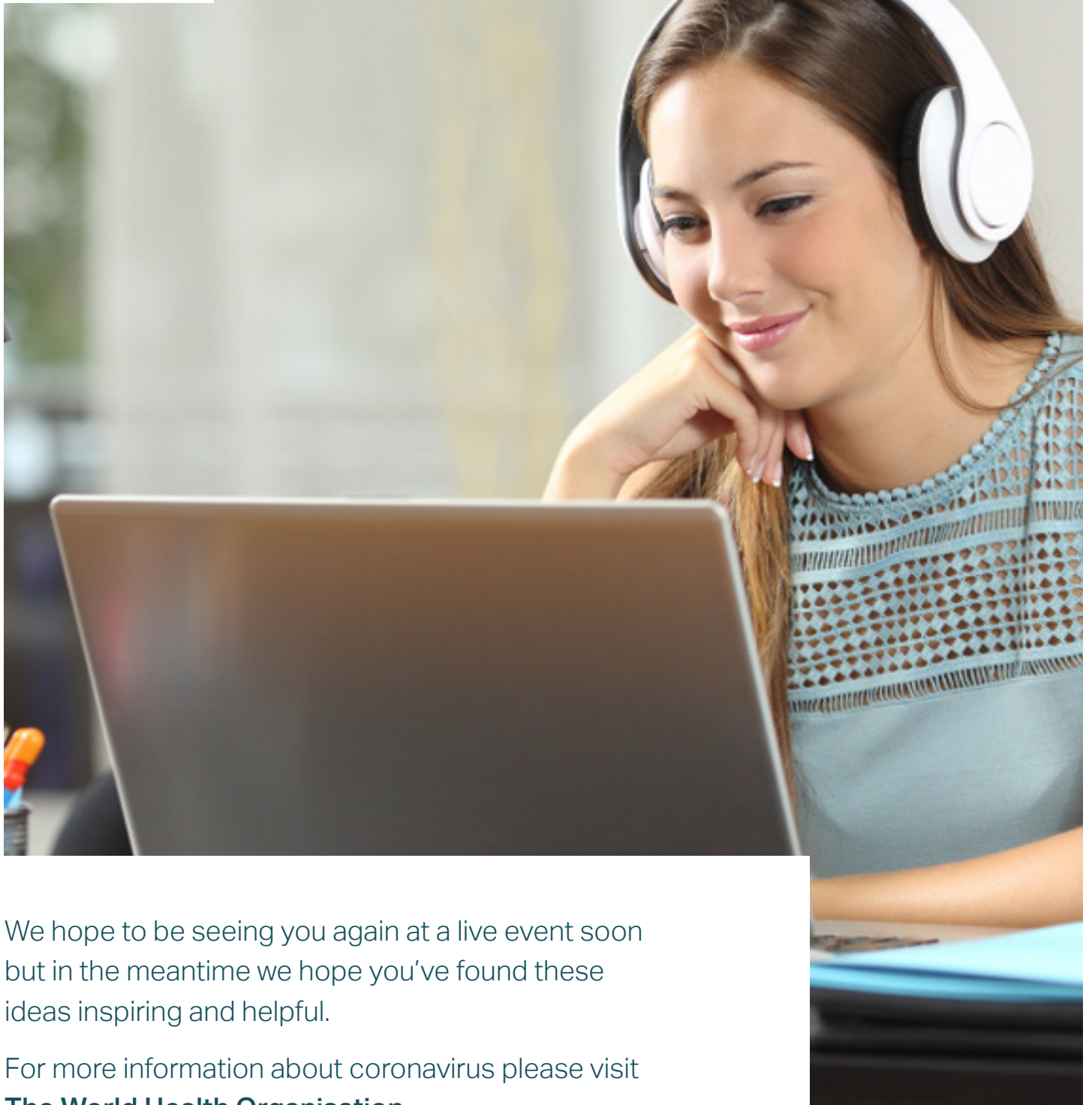
Launch a series of 'At home with' shows to give your people the chance to demo their business skills, do 'show and tell' sessions or even give tours of their home! From colleague cookery classes and presenting tips to shared Spotify playlists, building a community of content curators can help to encourage wellbeing – and provide a platform to showcase the personalities of your people.

### 18. **Power of play**

Business is a game where we play to win, so let's get more serious about the way we play! Play encourages shared conversations and offers people the freedom to explore new things. From morning online energisers and games to quick quizzes and live collaborative competitions, gamification can play a huge part in bringing a remote workforce together.

### 19. **Everyone loves free stuff**

They just do, right?! Make their day by sending a surprise gift to their home – a business book to bolster productivity, a branded AR brochure with scannable content, or just a cup of their favourite coffee delivered to their door. These 'little big things' can go a long way to showing your people that you're thinking of them, even if you're not in the same room.



We hope to be seeing you again at a live event soon but in the meantime we hope you've found these ideas inspiring and helpful.

For more information about coronavirus please visit [\*\*The World Health Organisation\*\*](#)

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