

THE WEBINARS POCKETBOOK

By Stella Collins & Andy Lancaster

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

"Essential reference for newbies and experienced facilitators alike, the book is stuffed with tips and useful information to dip in and out of. Take up the challenge and you'll be surprised how soon you'll be able to apply your face-to-face skills in a virtual environment."

Clive Shepherd, Director, Onlignment Ltd

"A must for anyone brave enough to don the headset and connect with an audience you can't see. I wish I'd had this when I started hosting webinars. It will take your webinar from a mediocre broadcast to a vibrant and engaging exchange."

Perry Timms, Founder & Director: PTHR

"An excellent introduction to designing and delivering webinars. Delivering a webinar that's interactive is so important and this guide will really help you to do that."

Jo Cook, Director, Lightbulb Moment Ltd

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HOW TO DESIGN & DELIVER STICKY WEBINARS



◀ BEFORE THE SESSION

A sticky webinar is one that's interactive, appealing and memorable. People will stay with you and want to attend your next one.

Whether it's a webinar based classroom or a meeting, you'll need a clearer structure than an ordinary session because people aren't physically with you. It helps to use a design process so that you can check you've covered all the bases as you create, plan and run your webinar.

We use Colin Rose's **MASTER** model, which embraces key principles from the neuroscience of engagement and learning, for designing and delivering all sorts of information sessions. It focuses on how people actively learn and take in information rather than on content.

We'll start with a quick overview and cover some areas in more detail later.

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◀ BEFORE THE SESSION

MASTER MODEL

M Motivate minds

Design your webinar so that people are engaged from the start. Understand their issues, clarify their outcomes, contract with them, relate to their needs, give them WIIFMs (What's In It For Me?), provide positive emotional experiences throughout and create an environment where people actively participate rather than passively absorb.

A Absorb information

Information can only reach your brain through your senses. Presenting information through sight, sound, touch, smell and taste sounds challenging in a webinar but you can stimulate sensory areas in people's brains with images, language, metaphor, stories. Your visual cortex is the largest sensory area – use lots of images.

S Search for meaning

Find ways for participants to actively explore the information you share and understand it in a way that is relevant to them. Use Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences* to design exercises for people to experiment with information.

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◀ BEFORE THE SESSION

MASTER MODEL

T Trigger memory

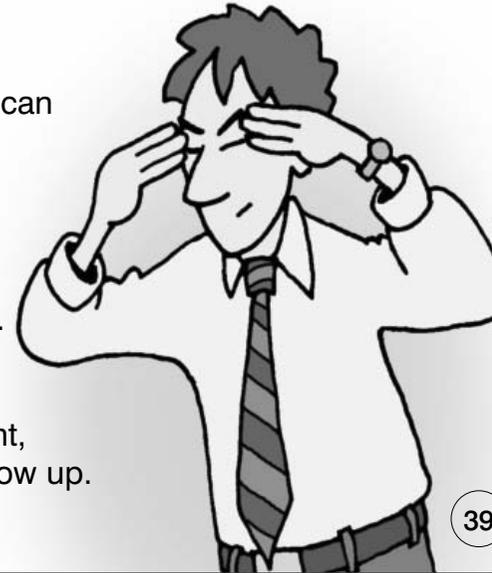
People need to recall information quickly and easily when they are back at work. Create a variety of strong memory triggers using Links, Emotion, Anchors, Repetition, Novelty and Stories (LEARNs).

E Exhibit learning/ knowledge

Create realistic 'tests' to give people confidence they can apply what they have discovered in your webinar and reassure you that they have understood.

R Review to retain

Before people can use information they need to remember it; creating long-term memories takes time. Research suggests information needs to be reviewed seven times over six months before it's permanently embedded, so your webinar is not a stand-alone event, particularly if you're using it for training. You need follow up.



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BEFORE THE SESSION PREPARATION

Prepare and script your webinar because it makes it much easier to adapt to unexpected situations if you have a plan in the first place. You don't need to learn a script – just have a clear structure to follow. Mindmaps are really useful tools for preparing almost anything. Another alternative might be to do post-it planning; just don't sit in front of your computer with a blank sheet. Here's a basic mindmap to start you off.



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◀ BEFORE THE SESSION

PLANNING WHO'LL BE PART OF IT

Clearly you need an audience for a successful webinar, so find out as much as you can about them to help you design something that meets their needs – otherwise they'll tune out.

Ideally having a host as well as a presenter gives you more freedom; the host looks after the technical aspects of the webinar while the presenter handles the content and the conversation.

You could try running a webinar as an interview where the host asks the presenter questions. You can decide which one of you handles the audience interaction; eg runs polls, reads the messages for questions and answers.

If you're lucky enough to have technical backup make sure they're on hand too.

And before you start, use the checklist in the penultimate chapter on *Troubleshooting*.



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◀ BEFORE THE SESSION STRUCTURE YOUR SESSION

Here's an example of a timed structure. Note the fast pace to maintain engagement.

Time	Who	What
5 min	H	Welcome, introductions, ground rules, timings, what's coming up...
5 min	H+F	Host asks presenter a question to give an overview of topic
5 min	F+P	Poll – views on the topic; then a short discussion from the poll result
5 min	H+F	Host asks facilitator to expand on key point 1 with case study
5 min	P	Exercise to explore key point 1 eg participants add key reflection in chat window
5 min	F	Introduce key point 2
5 min	P	Add ideas on whiteboard to build on key point 2. Participants use arrow stamps to note key points
5 min	F	Introduce key point 3 and show a short video clip
5 min	P	Open discussion using 'hands up' to share ideas
5 min	F	Summary of key points. Participants add key reflection from session in 'swim lanes' on a whiteboard
5 min	All	Q&A session – further discussion
5 min	H	Thanks, signpost to further information and social media #hashtag for comments

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◀ BEFORE THE SESSION

BE A CREATIVE BORROWER

How to get good ideas for running webinars that really make the grade:

- Attend other people's webinars – note what works for you and what doesn't
- Ask people what they enjoy, when they turn off, what distracts them
- Observe people in real webinars – what's different from what they told you?

Go wider in your research.

What keeps your attention in the papers, in meetings, on the internet, when you watch TED talks or YouTube videos? Add in your own ideas from your experience.

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◀ BEFORE THE SESSION

BE A CREATIVE BORROWER

What do they do on the TV news that grabs your attention?

How do magicians, TV personalities, actors, street performers, market traders direct your focus to what they are doing, despite the numerous potential distractions from elsewhere?

What creative techniques do designers use for inspiration? How can you use those ideas?

Collect:

Stories, ideas, blog articles, social media links, images, poems, quotes, video clips that relate to your topics.

Notice:

Games that keep people occupied; crosswords, word searches, Sudoku, bingo, quizzes – how can you use them in your webinars?

Listen:

Radio programmes, audio books, podcasts...

What else?

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◀ BEFORE THE SESSION

MOTIVATING PEOPLE TO ATTEND

What are your joining instructions like? Do they encourage people to attend and make it easy or are they full of jargon about technology?

Take a leaf out of marketing's book and create a Joyous Joining Invitation that sells the event and inspires people to attend. Tell them what they'll get out of it – what's in it for them, what the benefits are, what other people have said. Include photos of the presenters/ facilitators and possibly of the other participants if you've got small numbers – make it personal.

And make sure you've included the logistics too.

TOP TIP Create engaging joining invitations that highlight a clear personal benefit.



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◀ BEFORE THE SESSION

PARTICIPANTS' PREPARATION

A webinar is most likely to be part of something else: a marketing campaign, a learning programme or a set of meetings. Take advantage of the fact you've already got people's attention and get their further buy-in with some activities they can do before they attend and bring that knowledge with them.

puzzle

word search

further reading list

useful websites

summary mind map

relevant article

questionnaire

quiz

colours and graphics

ask people to send a photo of themselves to share

create a themed invitation possibly with themed gift

ask people to bring something to use in the webinar a quote, a magazine article

send something to prepare in advance

send a video clip/audio clip – extract from a previous webinar, welcome from trainer, testimonials from previous participants

TOP TIP Before the event send out ground rules about participating and repeat them briefly each time you start the webinar, because not everyone will have heard them. Also provide simple instructions about how to use the webinar tools or a short recorded webinar to cover the basics.

About the Authors

Stella Collins, BSc, MSc, FITOL

Stella is a passionate advocate for enhanced communication skills. With 16 years experience in the IT industry and 12 years in L&D, her company, Stellar Learning, transforms training particularly if it's tough, technical or tortuous. She founded The Brain Friendly Learning Group, speaks regularly at conferences, has co-published six e-books and is a regular writer for training publications as well as having her own blog. She consults internationally on communication skills for SME and blue chip clients. She loves helping people with writing to make life easier for both writers and readers.



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Andy has more than 25 years' experience in learning and organisational development in a range of sectors and has also worked in a consultancy role.

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