

# Virtual Pitching

Steps to success in a world working from home

# Executive summary

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During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, brands and agency partners have developed new, remote ways of working.

*Similarly, pitching has also moved online, with both advertisers and agencies having to adjust established processes, often with the help of independent consultants who have pivoted and redesigned the process for the virtual world.*

Initially, brands reacted to the pandemic by pausing pitch processes already under way or postponing pitches they were planning. As a result, fewer pitches were run in H1 2020 compared with the same period in 2019 – worth half as much in terms of billings – but activity is picking up again in H2.

*There are many aspects of virtual pitching that work well, including low or no travel, lower costs, increased agility, and broader access to clients. There are lasting lessons from this recent experience that all players in the industry intend to take forward to 2021 and beyond.*

Some aspects of virtual pitching are less optimal, including attention deficit, the difficulty of building chemistry online, and Zoom fatigue. There are mitigating factors, but there are some elements of long-established, in-person pitching that many in the industry are keen to see return, once it is safe to do so.

This guide provides advertisers – and their agency partners – with guidelines on how to make the most of this new world. The guide is discipline agnostic and can be applied to any form of agency pitch. We have used our own experience of virtual pitching over the last few months and have also sought out external perspectives to encapsulate learnings from the advertiser community and across the media and marketing industry.

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*There are lasting lessons from this recent experience that all players in the industry intend to take forward to 2021 and beyond.*

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# Introduction and market context

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## A world working from home

The 2020 coronavirus pandemic has changed where and how most people working in the knowledge economy do their jobs. To suppress transmission of COVID-19, in many countries this has meant most office workers working from home, keeping apart from others, and avoiding public transport for at least several months. In the U.K., for example, data from YouGov showed that lockdown meant the proportion of the working population working from home went from under 10% to approaching 50% overnight.<sup>1</sup> And although offices in many markets started limited opening half-way through the year, most are unlikely to be at more than 25% capacity for at least the rest of 2020. Some may never go back to how they were just last year.

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*Over the years, agencies have perfected the art of the immersive pitch, crafting their storytelling capabilities to engage and excite advertisers. Moving that online isn't straightforward, as people need physical cues to help determine chemistry. As a result, we've had to evolve our own processes to help clients build relationships with their agency partners.*

*In this age of digital transformation, there's been talk for a long time now about the importance of agility. With the global workforce mostly working from home, we've had the opportunity to see just how agile agencies can be. The current dynamic gives clients the chance to get to know their teams outside of the theatrical environment. Being invited into people's homes and seeing how they cope with disruptions – from their partners and children, pets and deliveries – all help us better understand who you'll be working with and in that way build stronger, more transparent relationships.*

**Laetitia Zinetti**

Managing Director, Continental Europe at Ebiquity

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bit.ly/2CoCg60>

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## New ways of working

Working from home and interacting with colleagues, clients, and commercial partners via video conference call has become the de facto way of doing business. With remarkable speed and comparatively little disruption, Zoom, Teams, and Google Meet have become the way to meet and get things done. Use of Zoom jumped 30-fold in April alone, with more than 300m daily users at the peak of lockdown and sales expected to exceed \$1.8bn in 2020, double what the company had forecast in March.<sup>2</sup> In marketing services as in other sectors, the IT and data infrastructure over the internet has proved to be remarkably resilient, providing companies that were able and permitted to trade under lockdown to do so straightforwardly.

In marketing services, advertisers and their agency partners have seized the opportunities offered by technology to continue – and in many cases

strengthen – their partnerships. Issues that before coronavirus might have waited for weekly status calls or monthly face-to-face meetings have often been addressed in quickly-set-up video conference calls. Working under the commercial pressures and extreme conditions of lockdown has been intense, but for many it has been possible to maintain the established dialogue and rhythms of their business without team members having to step outside their front doors.

In May 2020, Ebiquity ran and published a survey of almost 100 brands with combined media spend in excess of £2.5bn. We found that almost four in five advertisers rated their media agencies “very good” or “good” in helping them to adjust to trading conditions under the pandemic. Approaching three in five said the same of their creative agencies.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52884782>

<sup>3</sup> “Advertising investment in the wake of coronavirus: Findings from our second brand survey”, 27.05.20, <https://bit.ly/2AsYvGU>

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## The pitch and agency selection market in 2020

When the pandemic hit, many advertisers paused or stopped pitches altogether, cutting the number and value of advertisers' business under review. Global data from COMvergence show that, as a result, in the first six months of 2020 across the world, just under \$8.7bn of media business has been pitched across just over 1,000 clients. This represents a fall of 46% compared with H1 2019, when almost \$16bn of media business was pitched.<sup>4</sup>

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## Other trends identified in COMvergence's analysis of the agency selection and pitch market in the first half of 2020 include:

- › Food and beverages brands are the most active categories looking for new agency support. This is unsurprising, as these sectors have remained relatively buoyant, even under lockdown, with online and offline retail performing well. Globally, Amazon recorded its best ever quarter at \$45.8bn, a 49% increase in sales year-on-year, while in the U.K., leading supermarket delivery business Ocado grew 45.5% in the 12 weeks to 9 August 2020
- › Despite the collapse in global travel, some travel brands have taken the opportunity to tender their business, along with several airlines and government tourism brands
- › Where brands are pitching, change is in the air. Retention rates by incumbent agencies have fallen from ~15% in H1 2019 to just ~11% in H1 2020
- › There are more pitches taking place in China (27% of all pitches in H1 2020) and the U.S. (26%) than in any other territories
- › A small percentage (3%) of brands that had been in-housing ad tech have moved back to outsourcing via their agency partners, which is attributed to clients seeking to manage costs and cut overheads

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<sup>4</sup> Source: COMvergence "Media Agency New Business Barometer H1 2020" and "Spotlight on concluded global and multi-country media pitches 2020"

So, the agency selection market has shrunk significantly during the first half of the year, with some categories worse affected than others. Pitches are more likely to be local and regional than global, although there is some evidence that brands are using the pandemic to take the time to fast-track wholesale digital transformation. A report from the International Data Corporation predicts global spending on digital transformation tech and services will grow by more than 10% to \$1.3tn in 2020, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.<sup>5</sup> In part this is likely to be a response to marketers observing the robust performance of online-only and omnichannel retail brands during an otherwise turbulent year.

Periods of great turmoil usually lead to fast-track innovation, and the coronavirus pandemic is no exception. Established practices – held dear for generations “because that’s the way we do things” – are more easily cast aside without sentiment. Advertisers and agencies that recover and grow in new partnerships in the wake of coronavirus will be those who forge new – and reinforce existing – partnerships driven by this renewed spirit of innovation. A critical part of this will be for brands to have the resilience to create new ways of working that are focused on business transformation and growth not solely on cost. This is particularly challenging at a time that many CFOs are looking to recoup cost in the short-term, at the expense of marketers putting in place plans and new agency relationships that will enable their brands to thrive in the medium-to-long term.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.idc.com/getdoc.jsp?containerId=prUS46377220>

## Industry perspective: the creative agency view

Mary Bond is Head of EU Media at Bethesda Softworks:

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*When lockdown was introduced, we immediately hit the pitch pause button. As time went on and it became clear that coronavirus and working from home were with us for the foreseeable future, we started the process up again. Of course, you miss out on human interaction by running pitches virtually. Because our team is so big, we were all on mute, and there was much less discussion of ideas than in person. The extended process gave us a result we're very happy with – we've got a great new agency partner.*

## Virtual pitching

Although pitching stopped around the world when lockdowns were introduced, brands and agencies have in recent months started to run pitches once more, with agency and technology partners able to respond to briefs and present their credentials and capabilities online. What historically had almost always – at least in part – been delivered in person has been compelled to take place online. Just because there's a global pandemic doesn't mean that advertisers don't need to refresh their roster of agency and technology partners or, indeed, change their lead agency altogether if the incumbent is no longer fit-for-purpose. This is particularly true for brands as they look to rebound after what seems certain to be the deepest and most sudden recession in living memory.

In normal times, there is an etiquette and there are established norms of good behaviour expected of both advertisers briefing their agency partners and receiving pitches and proposals from agencies, as well as of agencies pitching to brand teams. Engagement, responsiveness, and full attention is

expected from both parties throughout the process, as is courtesy, providing a fair opportunity to convey ideas, and a level playing field for assessment of proposed plans of action. Often several agencies will tender for the same piece of business, and agency proposals should be considered on equal terms. This is true whether pitches run in person or virtually.

There are clear advantages and disadvantages to virtual pitching, and we have created this short and practical guide to the topic to share best practice and our experience of this revised way of working. The guide covers the pros and cons of virtual pitching. It includes different perspectives from right across the marketing services industry – from advertisers, agencies, and consultancies involved in helping others pitch remotely. It provides top tips for better virtual pitching, and considers which aspects of this new way of working are likely to endure in the medium-to-long-term future, even if medical research identifies effective vaccines and treatments for COVID-19.

## Industry perspective: the creative agency view

Stephanie Brimacombe, Group Chief Marketing Officer at VCCP:

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*In the busyness of the day-to-day before 2020, clients often found it challenging to prioritise these important decisions. Under lockdown, more senior members of the team had more time to think about them and with more clarity than before. The pandemic has been a great leveller – we truly have all been in the same situation together. Everyone's had to adapt and find new ways of working, and although pitching virtually has taken the chemistry from the process, it's also humanized it too. We've all had to learn how to improvise.*

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### The role of consultancies

Advertisers and agencies are not the only parties involved in the pitch process. Expert media and marketing consultancies, including Ebiquity, are often contracted by brands to run the pitch process on their behalf, particularly for complex, multi-market or global agency pitches. The consultant's role is as an informed, honest broker to ensure that due process is followed, that the best possible array of prospective agencies present their capabilities to their clients, and that the right choice of partner is made. Consultancies have also had to adapt to this new age of virtual pitching, and in some cases, brands are relying on consultancy partners more now than they did before the pandemic to ensure that the right choice of partner is made, to manage the new on-line process, and all under what can often be strained and challenging circumstances. Ebiquity has published a Viewpoint paper on the new agile ways of working that advertisers and their agency partners have been compelled to adopt because of the pandemic giving broader guidance on how agility can drive impact.<sup>6</sup>

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*The Ebiquity pitch process has all the rigour that clients need to identify and select the best agency partner. The process is one that continually evolves with every agency review project we run, providing advertisers with clear, best-practice advice that recognises their changing needs.*

*It was encouraging to see how adaptable our process has been in the pivot to the virtual world. We have reimaged a whole range of client-agency interactions, including: chemistry sessions, digital technology evaluations, programmatic media buying tests, tool demonstrations, evaluation discussions, and ideation brainstorming. By working with our clients and agencies, we've enabled our process to deliver results that transcend the dimension of online vs offline. This is evidence of flexibility and agility at its best.*

#### **Leela Nair**

Managing Director, South East Asia at Ebiquity

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<sup>6</sup> Built to last? Embedding Agility is available for download at <https://bit.ly/3jl4cBK>



# Top tips

## for better virtual pitching

Pitching is a process of courtship in which agencies look to impress brands that their future needs are best served by forming an enduring relationship with them instead of other potential partners. During the process, the onus of responsibility and performance shifts from brands briefing and outlining their needs and agencies listening, to agencies proposing their solutions to the brief and brands listening and evaluating the agency response.

One dynamic that hasn't changed as all parties have rapidly adjusted to the new world of virtual pitching is brands' desire to brief their agencies in the best way possible. Brands want agencies to understand their business and objectives and give the best possible account of their capabilities. In writing this guide, we've deliberately kept it deeply practical –

at times focused and detailed – because our role is to help brands facilitate and get the best pitches possible, to find the optimal partners for the medium-term future.

We trust you find the advice contained in this guide helps you to succeed together, wherever your organisation sits in the marketing supply chain.

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# Top tips

# 1

## **Get active even before the pitch.**

Virtual pitching allows you to get some elements of a traditional pitch out of the way before you hear the agency's strategic and creative recommendations. Offer all agencies the opportunity to have equal and fair access to some key members of your team between first briefing and final pitch. Encourage tissue meetings for agencies to share initial thinking with you, and try to get as much of the technical and commercial negotiations out of the way before the pitch itself, not afterwards.

**Tips for agencies:** if your potential clients don't offer access to their team between the brief and the pitch, ask if this can be arranged. Look to hold at least one (and maybe more than one) tissue meeting with them before the pitch, and embrace the chance to negotiate on commercials – either with client-side procurement and finance teams or via an intermediary consultant – in the run-up to the pitch. Not only does this approach allow you to focus on your ideas and strategies in the pitch, if you win the pitch, you can start working with your new client right away.

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# Top tips

## 2 Choose and use the right presentation and meeting platform.

Be sure to let prospective agency partners know early in the virtual pitching process if there are any platforms that your organisation is unable to use, or indeed if there is a platform that you favour. Some clients – particularly government, financial, and legal bodies – mandate Microsoft Teams over Zoom for security concerns. Although Zoom is now encrypted and “unbombable”, the lingering security concerns about the platform mean it is not acceptable for some. Invest time in training your team to use the platform so that team members can see and hear presentations easily, know how to mute, how to ask questions.

**Tips for agencies:** choose the right video conferencing platform to display your team and talents to the full – and at the same time one that your prospective clients accept. Ensure that all team members know how to use it without needing to be reminded to do so.

## 3 Prepare and rehearse both to give and receive a pitch.

In the days before you receive a set of pitches from prospective agency partners, be sure that your team receiving the pitch meets to get into the right mindset and has read any pre-reads to support the pitch that the agency may have sent through. Throughout lockdown, many of those working from home have grown used to multitasking – attending a budget meeting while dealing with emails or similar. Client teams multitasking is unfair on agencies pitching – they deserve your full attention for the work put in to prepare the pitch. More importantly, to make the right selection, the whole team needs to attend to what is being proposed by the agencies tendering. It’s a combination of good pitch etiquette and commercial common sense.

**Tips for agencies:** make sure you rehearse virtual pitches, in real time, to ensure the pacing and technology works as expected. Rehearsal enables team members to visualise what the actual pitch will be like, ensuring that the right people are delivering the right content. When showcasing technology, be sure you have a back-up plan to your back-up plan; have a plan A, B, and C. Have multiple users able to access the platform remotely. If that fails, show screenshots of the platform in operation. And if that fails, have a video testimonial of a client already using the platform to deliver third-party credibility. Systems and connections fail, and you need to prepare for the worst.

# Top tips

## 4 Hold commercial negotiations before the pitch.

Appointing a new agency partner can be held up by the commercials. You meet a team with the right ideas and you decide you want to work with them. But before you can start the new relationship, your finance and procurement colleagues have to negotiate media, creative, or platform rates and costs. Because pitching virtually is less time-consuming than pitching in person – essentially because of the lack of travel, particularly for big regional and global pitches – this gives finance, procurement, and third-party consultants the opportunity to effectively negotiate commercial terms before the pitch.

**Tips for agencies:** seek out the opportunity to negotiate with prospective clients – on FTE staff allocations and day rates, platform costs, and third-party tech fees – before the pitch. In-house procurement teams and procurement consultants will be willing to let you know how your proposed fees compare with your competitors, at least in relative terms. By negotiating before the pitch, not only are you saving time once the formalities have been completed. You can also identify early whether the prospective client will generate sufficient return for your agency or agency holding company.

## Industry perspective: the media agency view

Kim Berkin, Client Managing Director,  
dentsu X:

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*What has worked well for us is being brave and not being afraid of allowing calculated elements of uncertainty into the process. We have had success thinking creatively about getting genuine engagement; not using PowerPoint at all, sending reading materials in advance, creating a second screen experience to share additional content, even letting the clients dictate their way through the presentation choosing what to hear, when. We will take these adaptations into 2021 and beyond.*

# Top tips

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### Ensure pitches run to time.

Allow all agencies a fair and equal amount of time to present their ideas. Appoint one of your team as the timekeeper, whose role it is to let everyone know how you're doing for time. If you allocate two hours per agency, allow up to 10 minutes for set-up, introductions and pleasantries, and build at least a couple of quick comfort / leg-stretching breaks into each pitch. Indicate to agencies beforehand how long you are allocating to the pitch, and the fact that you're planning on quick breaks. It's really challenging to concentrate as an audience member for more than 25-40 minute blocks, particularly online, so respect this in setting the ground rules for the pitches you run.

**Tips for agencies:** make a virtual pitch presentation shorter than it would be in person. Be sure the pitch runs to time – and ideally finishes a little early. It's much better not to overstay your welcome. Rehearsal and practice with presentation platforms should mean agencies are ready and able to start at the appointed time. To enhance sign-posting, it's worth marking different sections, saying "We're now about half way through" and so on.

## Industry perspective: the procurement view

Tina Fegent is an independent marketing procurement consultant:

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*I've been impressed with how much time senior, influential people both client and agency side have made available for pitches during the pandemic. I'd characterise virtual pitches under lockdown as better value, more engaged, and quicker. In the pitches I've been involved in since lockdown, we've had all the commercial discussions and negotiations covering fees and the contract terms before the final pitch. Since the commercials have all been done, both parties can start working together, subject to the contract being signed.*

# Top tips

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### Evaluate pitch performance fairly and equally.

Agencies often put their heart and soul into pitching for your business, so be sure your evaluation criteria are rigorous and applied consistently and fairly for all agencies pitching. This is as true for virtual pitching as it is for pitching in person, and as virtual pitching is still a relative novelty, build time into the process to provide meaningful feedback to all agencies pitching on what worked and what could have been improved. As ever, avoid telling all unsuccessful agencies that they came “a very close second”. Be specific in feedback workshops on how they can do better next time.

**Tips for agencies:** as early as the briefing stage, be sure to ask your prospective clients to build in time and a formal mechanism into the process to give you proper feedback on your team's performance. All parties are learning the dynamics of virtual pitching, and given how much time and effort you and your peers usually apply, the more, useful feedback you can gather quickly, the better.

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*Having worked with advertisers for the last 30-plus years, helping lead agency pitches, I know first-hand that confidence in the pitch process is a major consideration for brands. Pitching is something most brands do infrequently, so they're often unsure of the most up-to-date processes and practices.*

*The pandemic provided the opportunity to bring pitching into the digital age. From our conversations with brands and agencies who have been through pitching in the virtual world, much of it is working well. The consultant's role is to bring the best out in all parties, and many advertisers have relied on Ebiquity to reinvent the process in these turbulent times.*

### Debbie Morrison

Managing Director, Global Partnerships & Events at Ebiquity

# Top tips

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### **Engage more deeply throughout the process.**

Both brands and agencies have welcomed the opportunity for more of their teams to spend more time with each other during the pitch process. More interaction throughout the process seems set to stay, with briefing, Q&As for clarification, and tissue meetings likely to stay online. This will allow agencies to focus exclusively on client 'exam questions'.

## 8

### **Be realistic – but not over-ambitious.**

Brands need to make sure they give each agency pitching for the business the attention their presentation deserves. Try to resist the temptation to book three or even five pitches in one day, just to get it out of the way; you'll generate extreme fatigue in your team and be unable to judge fairly. Much better, try to hold them at the same time each day, one in the morning, one in the afternoon, so you can consider each agency's approach equally.

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### **Whenever possible, try to meet in person during the pitch process.**

Although both advertisers and their agency partners have made the most of very difficult circumstances under lockdown, both parties are known to favour in-person pitching as soon as that proves to be practical. As Martin Jones of brand-agency matchmakers AAR Group told U.K. ad industry title Campaign recently: "Nothing trumps being able to meet face-to-face to help read the room and be aware of the power of the 'knowing look!'"<sup>7</sup> As economies emerge from lockdown and both brands and agencies return to offices for a day or two each week, key stakeholders on both sides will really benefit from meeting – even if only for a socially-distanced coffee – during the pitching process.

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<sup>7</sup> "A post-COVID chemistry lesson: transformation of the pitch", Campaign, 22.07.20, <https://bit.ly/2BGiTVI>

# The pros of virtual pitching

Issue/aspect	Consequence
<b>Low or no travel</b>	Makes pitches less time-consuming, less tiring, and less expensive for all involved especially for multi-market pitches, not to mention a significantly reduced carbon footprint.
<b>Accessibility and interaction</b>	Senior brand and agency staff from multiple markets more available, more likely to attend briefings, Q&As, and pitches. Higher quality dialogue throughout the process.
<b>Increased agility</b>	More straightforward to align and connect specific expertise both brand- (marketing, finance, procurement, legal) and agency-side (creative, media, digital, tech).
<b>Technology upside</b>	Easier to connect bigger teams, understand the workings of new platforms. Simultaneous and instantaneous sharing of screens, data, strategies. Breakout rooms match peers. Chat and Q&A capture questions without halting flow. Recording sessions for learning and to aid understanding.
<b>Face-to-face experience</b>	Despite experience of "Zoom fatigue" and video conferencing not "just like being in the room", it does enable brands to see agencies in person, read some body language.
<b>Right content, right time</b>	Pitches not taken up with credentials, case studies, commercial questions – those can all be covered in separate sessions before the pitch. Focus on 'exam questions'.
<b>Location neutrality</b>	Briefings and pitches no longer held at global or regional HQs/centres of gravity. Equality for all experts and team members, irrespective of home office location.
<b>Judgment on content</b>	With pitches not running in agency offices, there's less chance of 'theatrics'; smoke and mirrors. Levelled playing field allows brands to judge based on content not theatre.

## Industry perspective: the creative agency view

Tracey Barber, Global CMO, Havas Creative:

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*Conscious of carbon footprint and the universal stress we were all feeling during lockdown, we asked the clients to share where they lived (across eight countries) and then their relevant agencies sent goody boxes showcasing the work each of them have been doing to support staff mental health, relaxation tools and tips, and initiatives they had done with existing clients. Procurement and consultants have been incredibly professional throughout lockdown. Adding in time, setting up encrypted logins for financials, and working through how to get the best, most secure solution for both sides.*



# The cons of virtual pitching

Issue/aspect	Consequence
<b>Chemistry</b>	It's much harder to observe physical (especially facial) reactions on video conferences. Eyecontact is harder and it's difficult to detect agency team chemistry, dynamics.
<b>Reading the room</b>	7% of our ability to persuade comes from words, 38% from tone of voice, but 55% from paraverbals. More than half these cues are lost if you're not in the room.
<b>Zoom fatigue</b>	The reality of working from home is that each day can be just a series of Zooms. It's hard for to find enthusiasm for pitch meetings if they're "just another Zoom call".
<b>Attention</b>	It's hard to retain focused attention throughout a virtual pitch, particularly if it's one of many. Even when the pitch isn't covering your area, resist the temptation to multitask.
<b>Interruptions</b>	Pets, children, partners, flatmates, and delivery drivers have all made appearances in virtual pitches. Advertisers and agencies should minimise risks of intrusion during pitches.
<b>Preparation</b>	As working from home can be one call after another, too often those receiving and those giving pitches are under-prepared. Treat virtual pitches as seriously as in person.

## Industry perspective: the client's view

Vincent The, Digital, Strategy & Insights, Careline Director – India South East Asia at Danone Specialized Nutrition :

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*Collectively, we applied all the successful principles of an in-person pitch to the virtual agency review. We were overwhelmed by the willingness of the agency partners to move into the virtual environment, be adaptable and flexible, as well as accommodate our needs and ways of working. Overall, it has been a really positive experience for all and we got a great outcome from the review. There are some aspects, without doubt, we'll be taking forward into the future, too.*

# The "phygital future" of virtual pitching

It is understandable that some advertisers, due to hold pitches for new agency partners, decided to put the process on hold at the start of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. Everything was new for everyone, all around the world, and both advertisers and their agency partners needed time to pause, take stock, and adapt to a new, virtual work life.

What is remarkable is that so many brand advertisers – most notably those in companies still able to trade despite the pandemic – adapted so quickly and relatively painlessly to this new way of working. And when it became clear that business could continue in familiar (if changed) circumstances, the appetite for holding pitches returned.

Virtual pitching has much to commend it, and despite the limitations identified in this paper, there are some ways of working we've adopted that will without doubt endure the passing of COVID-19 and some that many will happily leave behind with the memory of lockdown, as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.

Extreme conditions accelerate the pace of innovation, and although some of the new ways of working feel radically different from 2019 and the years before, most were already under way before the pandemic struck and temporarily closed society and the economy down. Coronavirus was therefore less of a motive cause for change and more of a catalyst to accelerate change. Those brand advertisers and agencies that embrace the positives that have emerged in recent months are likely to be those that recover and grow in partnership in the months and years ahead.

The same is true in pitching. As pitching has moved online, so it has created change in the way pitches are run. There are some aspects of virtual pitching we should keep, yet others which we should abandon as we move into the next normal. It seems likely that the future will be a hybrid, taking the best of what existed before with the best of what has emerged since; a "phygital" mash-up of both physical and in-person with virtual pitching, online.

## Industry perspective: the media agency view

Jodie Stranger, Chief Global Growth Officer, Publicis Media:

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*Moving forward, I think we will continue to see a blend of elements that have worked well in the past, combined with ones we have been forced to pivot to. For now, we focus our efforts on preparing our teams to deliver content in a virtual world in as personal way as possible, embracing the technology to our advantage to enable faster and more direct communication on a more regular basis than what would have occurred when relying exclusively on setting up live meetings.*

# Acknowledgements

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This guide was developed by a collaborative team of Ebiquity's global agency selection experts based in France, the USA, Singapore, and the U.K. The team included: Laetitia Zinetti, Managing Director, Continental Europe; Leela Nair, Managing Director, South East Asia; Debbie Morrison, Managing Director, Global Partnerships & Events; Priya Patel, Principal Consultant; and Clare Hutchings, Director, Media UK.

We are also grateful to the industry professionals outside of Ebiquity who have contributed to this guide, in alphabetical order by surname: Tracey Barber, Global CMO, Havas Creative; Kim Berkin, Client Managing Director at dentsu X; Mary Bond, Head of EU Media at Bethesda Softworks; Stephanie Brimacombe, Group Chief Marketing Officer, VCCP; Tina Fegent, an independent marketing procurement consultant; Jodie Stranger, Chief Global Growth Officer, Publicis Media; and, Vincent The, Strategy & Insights, Careline Director – India South East Asia at Danone Specialized Nutrition.

# We are a leading **independent** marketing and media consultancy

We harness the power of data, analytics, and technology to **improve marketing outcomes.**

## Our five core beliefs are:

1

We believe **marketing is as much a science as it is an art** and that brands enhance the business impact of marketing when they align it with business outcomes.

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2

We believe that **CMOs should have a single view of total marketing performance**, treating the ecosystem as an integrated whole across the customer journey.

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3

We believe that brands and their agency partners can achieve better marketing outcomes by **aligning all interests behind clear business objectives.**

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4

We believe **brands should own and control the strategic elements of marketing**, including consumer data, parts of marketing technology, and measurement and analytics data.

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We believe in the **power of independent analysis and advice** of marketing performance data, supported by best-in-class governance and conducted with high integrity.

We work with **70** of the world's leading **100** advertisers

We run **100+** strategic media management assignments each year

Ebiquity analyses **\$55bn** of global media spend annually