

How best to make the initial contact?

Pre Covid, the most likely way to arrange a catch up or meeting might have been over the phone.

However, in this new Covid world, written forms of contact such as email are the best way to initiate contact and in which to arrange that formal phone, zoom or socially distanced catch up. Depending on how well you know the person, you may also wish to use text message, WhatsApp, or LinkedIn to contact them.

When making the initial contact, consider including the following:

- **Introduce/re-introduce yourself** so that the person can recall where and when they last met you (even if it's someone you know well). For example:

"Hi Mary, Hope you are well. You might recall we met a few months ago when you needed advice drafting the new UK supplier contract." Or "Hi Tom, hope all is well. You might remember we met at the Data Protection seminar we hosted back in January in our offices."

- **Say why you are contacting them:**

"I was hoping we might arrange a catch up so I can see how you are doing and how your business is going."

- **The Benefit to them:** Typically just saying why you are contacting them (the above) should be sufficient. However, you may wish to add what's in it for them or the possible benefit. So for example:

"I would like to catch up to hear how you are doing to the extent to which I might be able to share some useful / relevant insights from the work I am doing, or from what I'm seeing in the market, or from the conversations I'm having with similar organisations in your sector."

Possible pushbacks

The biggest possible pushback from the client / contact at this stage might be time e.g. they are delighted to hear from you, would like to catch up, but they are just too busy.

To overcome this, ask when might be a good time and suggest putting some definite times in the diary for a few weeks' time when things are quieter.

Try and avoid a "table tennis type" email going over and back arranging the time /day and instead take control by listing out several alternate dates/ days and times to choose from – mixing up the days, times in the day (mornings/ lunch/ afternoons) and spreading out over the week. The contact's daily routine during Covid may have changed, so providing a range of options gives them the flexibility to pick a time/ day that suits them best.