

Ultimate Online Meeting Infographic

What does it take to run a Great Virtual Meeting?

Harvard Business Review compiled 42 steps you can take to run a great meeting

- 1. Use video**
To make people feel like they're all at the "same" meeting, use video conferencing rather than traditional conference dial-ins.
- 2. Provide an audio dial-in option**
Video conferencing can work very well, but it relies on a strong internet connection that may not always be available. People need the ability to participate via audio.
- 3. Test the technology ahead of time**
Nothing kills a meeting like the start of a meeting like a 15-minute delay because people need to download software, can't get the video to work, etc. Prior to a virtual meeting, all participants should test the technology and make sure they are comfortable with the major features.
- 4. Make sure faces are visible**
Ask individuals to sit close to their webcam to help to recreate the intimacy of an in-person meeting.
- 5. Stick to meeting basics**
-Before: Set clear objectives, and send a pre-read if appropriate.
-During: Use an agenda, set meeting ground rules, take breaks, and clearly outline next steps.
-After: Send minutes, next steps, accountability, or next meetings.
- 6. Minimize presentation length**
Meetings should be discussions. Background information should be provided beforehand if someone needs to present, use screen sharing to guide the conversation, so attendees can literally "be on the same page."
- 7. Use an icebreaker**
It's important to use every tool to reinforce interpersonal relationships when people may be feeling isolated. Also, it's important to know if a participant may have a close friend or relative fighting the virus, so some type of "check in" is in order.
- 8. Assign a facilitator**
It's usually harder to manage a virtual discussion than an in-person one. It can be helpful to assign one individual to guide the conversation, allowing the other participants to focus on the content.
- 9. Call on people**
Getting everyone to participate without talking over each other is one of the more challenging aspects of running a virtual meeting. We recommend periodically calling on individuals to speak, even by virtually "going around the table" before a decision is finalized. Some software packages even allow attendees to "raise a hand" if they want to.
- 10. Capture real-time feedback**
Gathering and processing high-quality input during a virtual meeting can be challenging, especially since visual cues are harder to read. Use a phone-based survey tool like Poll Everywhere to collect on-demand feedback from attendees on specific topics in real time. Keep the polling open, separate from the video conference to avoid disrupting the conversation.
- 11. Don't be afraid to tackle tough issues**
Meeting virtually is a learned behavior, and you'll be amazed how much you can get out of it once you and your team begin to be comfortable working this way. Don't shy away from controversial topics.
- 12. Practice once or twice while you're still together**
Hold your next staff meeting virtually, with each executive sitting in their office and hooking into the meeting with no assistance. After the meeting concludes, gather and debrief about the experience. What went well, and what didn't?

Source: Harvard Business Review - What It Takes to Run a Great Virtual Meeting, 2020

How do You Prepare for an Online Meeting?

7 Powerful Tips for Highly Productive Online Meetings

- 1. Have a clear and well-communicated agenda**
- 2. Appoint a meeting moderator**
- 3. Prepare your system in advance**
- 4. Set time limits**
- 5. Minimize distractions**
- 6. Conclude with clear action items**
- 7. Share meeting notes**

Source: Business - 7 Powerful Tips for Highly Productive Online Meetings, 2020

Running a Successful Virtual Meeting

- 01. Choose the Right Technology**
Look to your agenda to choose the most suitable platform to use. The best platform for a quick "check-in" can differ from the right one for brainstorming or decision-making sessions.
- 02. Work on Specific Skills**
A virtual meeting's success often depends on the guidance of a facilitator, so it's important to learn the skills and tools that you'll need to succeed in this role.
- 03. Spend Time Preparing**
When participants haven't met before, ice breakers can encourage everyone to relax and get acquainted before discussing business.
- 04. Set Ground Rules**
Ground rules are an important part of virtual meetings, because they guide the behavior of everyone attending. Common ground rules include asking attendees to mute their lines until they are ready to speak or if the call is audio only, ask everyone to state their names before speaking.
- 05. Communicate with Virtual Reality in Mind**
In face-to-face meetings, people pick up important cues from facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language. However, these are often lost in virtual meetings, which is why you need to take this into consideration when communicating with participants.
- 06. Get Everyone Involved**
One of the biggest challenges with virtual meetings is that participants can find it hard to get involved and contribute. Your job as the facilitator is to make sure that team members have plenty of opportunities to speak up.

Source: Mindtools - How to Run Effective Virtual Meetings, 2020

People Join Meetings From a Multitude of devices

Source: Entrepreneur - How to Run a Better Meeting, 2021

Video Conferencing can Increase Productivity and Efficiency in the Workplace

Source: Grandstream - Video Conferencing can Increase Productivity and Efficiency in the Workplace, 2017

What is an Effective goal for a Virtual Meeting?

The key to Success is a Sharp Meeting Objective
A meeting objective is defined as a specific result that a group of people aims to achieve within an identified time frame with available resources.

Meeting objectives should be SMART, just like goals. They should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound.

It helps if you ask yourself a few questions while preparing your meeting objective:

- What do we want to accomplish?
- What are our desired results?
- Why do we want these results?
- How important are the results?
- When should it be accomplished by?
- How will we measure success?
- How might this be accomplished?

Source: Trainings - Effective Virtual Meeting Planning: A Key to Success is a Sharp Meeting Objective, 2022

What are the Advantages of Virtual Meetings?

Are virtual meetings effective?
The 8 Benefits of Virtual Meetings

- 1. Online meetings are more cost-effective compared to physical meetings.**
The service only requires a computer or mobile device with internet connection. On the other hand, a physical meeting requires time and money to travel, hotel accommodation expenses, other meeting facilities, and so on.
- 2. It allows connection from anywhere in the world.**
The technological advancement in the modern world has improved the internet connection such that users on the web can connect and interact from any part of the world.
- 3. Virtual meetings allow sharing of a broad variety of information in real time.**
Connecting to the meeting only requires you to click on a specific URL, enter your username and password. The participants can then share information; whether text, video or audio without the need for expensive telephone bridge connections.
- 4. Increased opportunities.**
It is not always possible to attend every meeting you receive an invite for. For instance, when hosting online meetings for potential clients, the number of attendees is mostly likely to increase if the session is conducted online as compared to the complicated traditional meetings.
- 5. Increased productivity and efficiency.**
Virtual meetings allow interaction through different channels. For instance, you can directly present PowerPoint files on a shared screen while speaking. You can also get real-time user feedback, conduct Q&As and even polls to make sure your attendees get the most of everything.
- 6. Meetings that use webcam enable the speaker to establish a much intimate interaction or an "in the same room" feeling with the participants.**
Using desktop sharing software, the audience can follow along with virtually any operation you are conducting on your screen.
- 7. Virtual meetings allow effective illustrations.**
Whiteboard features enable drawing and typing on the screen to enable sketch type illustrations of ideas and note-capturing.
- 8. Contribution to environmental protection.**
As virtual meetings reduce commute times and home offices use less lighting compared to offices, online sessions help reduce the carbon footprint of businesses.

Source: azfzila - The 8 Benefits of Virtual Meetings

Video Killed the Web-Conferencing Star

Business professionals reveal the power of video-centric collaboration and the frustrations with web conferencing.

Video Conferencing
- Provides a two way visual or audio communication between two or more people who are in different locations via video or audio streams.

Web Conferencing
- Provides a live audio or video communication over the internet between two or more locations to communicate and share information.

Video for the Win

Professionals Are Ready To Face Up To Important Communications

Metric	Percentage
Want face-to-face video in most or all of their online meetings	65%
Prefer to discuss sensitive HR issues using face-to-face video	73%
Would rather speak with a customer with face-to-face video	80%
Want to connect with their manager with face-to-face video versus without video	87%

One Tool To Rule Them All

85% Want one service for remote meetings

Meeting Multitasking

76% Feel attendees are less likely to pay attention on a video conference than on a video conference

Meeting Multitasking

62% WHO'S THERE: are unsure who is dropping in and off of the meeting in a web conference

64% HATERS GONNA HATE: feel customers don't like Web conferencing

46% BLAST FROM THE PAST: of people feel Web conferencing is outdated

Source: Bizsparks - Video Killed the Web-Conferencing Star, 2014

VIDEO CONFERENCING ETIQUETTE

Consider exercising these tips for your next virtual meeting or training session

- PLAN AHEAD TO AVOID DISTRACTIONS**
Carefully choose where you will take part in the virtual session to avoid distractions for you and your colleagues.
- PREPARE**
Complete a test run before your meeting or training session to make sure all the equipment is working properly. This will ensure you can start and end the conference on time and keep everyone engaged from the beginning.
- THINK POSITION**
Position your camera at the top rim of the monitor in the center, or slightly left or right. By doing so, you will look the most natural.
- BE AWARE OF LOCATION**
Your surroundings are also on camera. Inappropriate decor or a messy space reflects poorly on you.
- ELIMINATE BACKGROUND NOISE**
If your system isn't on mute, be aware that everyone can hear you moving around - including rustling through papers, typing on your keyboard, coughing or tapping on your desk.
- CONSIDER LIGHTING**
You want to eliminate background light from windows so that you don't appear as a bright shape; however, a bright front light can be equally garish, causing bad shadowing. Experiment and see what lighting arrangement works the best.
- SELECTIVELY MUTE**
Avoid potential feedback by muting your microphone if you will not be speaking for a longer period. Also mute your microphone if you need to get up during session.

Source: Careermate - 7 Videoconferencing Etiquette for Effective Meetings, 2017

How Do You Look Good in a Virtual Meeting?

Where do you look During Zoom meeting?

Camera Angle
Laptop cameras often forces you to bend and look awkward or be too far away and make you look distant and disengaged.

Headspace
Your headspace can make you look smaller or taller. Too much headspace can also bring the attention to your background instead of you.

Lighting
Lighting is one of the easiest ways to fix or ruin a frame. Avoid fluorescent lights as they can usually cast unflattering shadows. Overhead lights tend to create shadows under your eyes. Make it a habit to test your lighting before meetings.

Good lighting allows you to show facial reactions and gestures clearly. These are important aspects of communicating better, especially in a digital meeting.

Tip: Use a few books or a laptop stand to lift your webcam to eye level. Don't forget to look into your camera, not your screen, when addressing people directly.

Tip: In the absence of natural light, put your light source in front of you to accentuate your features. LED desk lamps with multiple temperatures and brightness are great for night meetings.

Source: Making Business Matter - How to Look Great in a Video Call Infographic, 2020

Video Conferencing Do's and Don'ts

- Do:** Mute your microphone whenever you're not speaking - even if you're alone in the room. Background noise can be an annoying distraction and stifle any meeting's flow.
- Do:** Be aware of your video settings. Check if your microphone is muted before delivering a two-minute monologue that no one will hear.
- Do:** Make sure your room is well lit (side lighting is the best). Use natural light from windows or simply turn on the overhead light in the room to brighten up the conference.
- Do:** Wear appropriate clothing. Dress as if you're meeting face to face. You never know when you're going to have to get up suddenly or if your camera might fall. So wear clean, professional clothing for your video calls.
- Do:** Be aware if you are talking over someone. Active listening plays a huge role in online calls to make sure you know when to talk and when somebody is still explaining their thoughts.
- Do:** Your wall art or decorations should be work-appropriate and your surroundings clean. This also includes your desk! Avoid having multiple coffee mugs, dishes and trash on the surface.
- Do:** Test your microphone before you video call, especially if it's an important meeting. Test it by video conferencing your colleague before the meeting.
- Do:** If you're in a group call without video, introduce yourself before you talk. Consider something like "Hi it's Jim, I have a question."
- Do:** When you're talking, look into the camera instead of looking at yourself talking on the computer screen. It will help others on the call feel like you're 100 percent engaged and present.
- Don't:** Position your camera too low, too high or hooked onto a different monitor. Weird camera angles can be very distracting - and unflattering - during video conference calls.
- Don't:** Check or read emails or peruse articles while on the video call. This also includes doing additional work beyond the call. It's easy for other participants to tell if you aren't fully focused and present during the video call.

Source: The Verge - The do's and don'ts of video conferencing, 2020

The Importance of Using Signs in a Video Call

To help improve your communication skills in virtual meetings, using universally recognized signals and with some help from Sign Language

Here are 10 Signals We Borrowed from the British Sign Language

You can use to Improve Your Virtual Communication Skills:

- HELLO**
Simplest way to signal you are in the meeting and ready to start.
- AGREED/OK**
Express agreement without interrupting the speaker or adding to noise. Works well in large groups or if you are hearing problems hearing each other.
- THANK YOU**
With your palm facing yourself, put the tip of your fingers on your chin. Then move it away from your chin. This can also be used to say "please".
- DEAF**
This sign means "deaf" and in a video call is an easy and clear way to say "I can't hear you". Point your index and middle finger on one ear.
- CALL AGAIN**
Extend your pinkie finger and your thumb and hold it on your ear just like you would when making a phone call.
- I CAN'T SEE YOU**
This one can help with visual difficulties in a video call. In BSL, it means blind. Use your index and middle finger and swipe it across your eyes to tell the others your their cameras are off or they cannot be seen properly.
- Step 1**
Palm to camera and tuck thumb
- Step 2**
Trap Thumb

Isolation has led to a rise in domestic violence. This is a subtle way to ask for help in a video call. If you see someone doing this sign, don't mention anything in the call and alert the authorities.

6 Gestures You Should Avoid When on a Video Conference

- 1. Don't avert your eyes.**
Maintaining eye contact always makes a positive impression. You should be looking into the feed of the camera. This will provide the effect that you are in fact making eye contact with them.
- 2. Don't become inanimate.**
An absence of all hand gestures will make you look disengaged and robotic. Speaking with your hands shows enthusiasm. However, when you are not talking but listening to someone else, then keep your hands in your lap.
- 3. Don't stouch. Sit up straight.**
Your upper body is visible to everyone - so energise your spine and show that you are paying attention and not falling off to sleep. Lean forward slightly to show your interest and keep your shoulders back. Great posture also promotes confident vocal expression.
- 4. Don't tell your facial expressions run wild.**
Every expression tells a story - let yours be a friendly one. This is especially important when you are listening to others and are in a "passive" mode.
- 5. Eliminate negative expressions.**
Leave quizzical, exasperated, frustrated, yawned faces in your office drawer. Bring your best face. And don't bare it. It could set off an epidemic on screen.
- 6. Don't use sudden gestures.**
It can pull focus from the speaker as everyone looks to see what is causing the commotion. So don't rock on your chair in case you fall over, don't play with rubber bands and stifle yourself, don't gesture wildly to draw attention to camera to bring you coffee.

Source: 24Meetings - 6 Gestures You Should Avoid When On a Video Conference, 2019

7 hand gestures guaranteed to get people to listen to you

- I'M CERTAIN**
Why it works: Anthropologist David Givens found that the hand gesture conveys assertiveness, both in humans and throughout the animal kingdom.
- Use it:** When you know what you're talking about and have a strong directive to give.
- I'M BEING OPEN**
Why it works: Authors Barbara and Allan Pease explain that open palms are associated with truth and honesty, showing your audience you have nothing to hide.
- Use it:** When you want to be fully transparent. Bring it all out there, you welcome people in.
- I'M CONFIDENT MYSELF**
Why it works: Steadiness is a strong display of power and reflects higher order thought processes like problem solving.
- Use it:** When you want to show or share your wisdom on a certain subject matter.
- I HAVE A BIG IDEA**
Why it works: According to body language expert Dr. Carol Kinsey Goman, it visually conveys something grand and communicates your enthusiasm to others.
- Use it:** When you're introducing a new thought that just might be a breakthrough.
- THIS IS THE WAY IT IS**
Why it works: The gesture embodies the abstract idea of rigid, unwavering precision, physically grounding the message for the audience.
- Use it:** When you want to make precise point or show your strong stance on a topic.
- [I MEAN IT] FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART**
Why it works: Researchers Pazuchowski and Wojciszke found that this gesture increases others' perception of honesty and the honesty shown in one's own behavior.
- Use it:** When you truly believe in what you're saying and want to convey that to others.
- FINGER COUNTING**
Why it works: The movement makes your points easier for listeners to remember and serves as a nonverbal anchor for your list.
- Use it:** To help people follow along when you have a series of key items to highlight.

Source: Leaders - 7 hand gestures guaranteed to get people listen to you, 2019

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