

UP YOUR Virtual Meeting Game

Virtual Meeting
Etiquette and How to
Make Remote Meetings
More Successful

by Janice Grace,
Webideation

Virtual Meetings - The New Normal

Propelled by Covid-19, [virtual meetings](#) have suddenly become integral in maintaining productivity in today's modern business environment. An increasing number of businesses are realizing how cost-effective remote working can be. An unexpected result of social distancing brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic is the expansion and normalization of the remote workforce.

Social distancing has forced us into using new technologies, and business owners are quickly embracing remote working environments. They are reducing overhead by decreasing physical space for on-site employees to occupy. Some are automating productivity monitors to decrease supervision time while allowing employees more freedom to structure daily activities. [NBC News reports that telecommuting saves employers money in a variety of unexpected ways.](#)

Well before the pandemic, the popularity of remote work had been steadily growing. In 2018, [CNBC reported that an estimated "70 percent of professionals work remotely — a phenomenon known as telecommuting — at least one day a week, while 53 percent work remotely for at least half of the week."](#)

While web conferencing isn't something new to most of us, using it daily might be - and as professionals, it's a good idea to be mindful of best practices to make the most of your virtual presence. Here are some tips for maintaining a professional image while video conferencing.

How to Present your Best Professional Self in a Virtual Meeting

1. Dress for success

Ah, the freedom to wear what you want and feel comfy. Don't fall into the belief that being at home is an excuse to underdress for a meeting. Make no mistake, your work associates don't want to see you in your jammies, nor will you make the right impression by appearing disheveled. Prepping your visual image will also help in shifting into a business-meeting mindset.

2. Look around

There is wisdom in prepping for a meeting, but prepping for a virtual meeting includes looking at your environment and making sure it conveys professionalism, even if you are at home. This means no unmade beds or clothes and trash lying around in the background. Take the time before every meeting to look at yourself and everything within sight. Improve the lighting if needed. Better yet, use a customizable background when possible. Along with the more common photo websites, [Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy](#) and [PC Mag](#) have great free background images.

3. Log in early

It sounds like overkill, but by logging in a day or a few hours before your meeting, you can avoid keeping others waiting if you can't proceed before making a software update or if the software is one you aren't familiar with. This will also give you time to correct microphone or camera problems, or set up background filters.

How to Present your Best Professional Self in a Virtual Meeting, Cont'd.

Prepping well in advance will allow you to present a smoothly professional appearance. Your colleagues might sound helpful and patient while you fumble with technical issues, but remember that doing so wastes precious time.

4. Avoid the keyboard

You may be tempted to take notes on your keyboard, but don't. Others can hear you typing which can be distracting, maybe even rude. Doing so also sends the message that you aren't fully engaged, and that probably isn't the impression you wish to give.

If you must, use a headset so the microphone isn't next to the keyboard as you type. Or invest in a digital pen like [Livescribe](#). Livescribe pens simultaneously record sound and digitize your notes so that one can simply tap anywhere on the page to hear what was being said at the time a particular note was written. It's like magic. Another option is to use [GoToMeeting's Smart Assistant](#) to auto-transcribe for you.

5. Mute it

To avoid adding to background noise and echo, mute your microphone unless you are speaking. Your meeting members will appreciate it. Reducing ambient noise inhibits distractions and allows meeting participants to be heard more clearly. Also - while coworkers might coo appreciatively at seeing your children or pets, they definitely won't want to navigate around the noise or interruption often accompanied by their presence.

6. Announce yourself

Be sure to announce yourself when entering a meeting and avoid that awkwardness when someone joins but doesn't introduce themselves. Try not to interrupt anyone mid-sentence, and speak up so others won't need to ask you to reintroduce yourself.

7. No eating

Just as you wouldn't munch chips or slurp noodles during an in-person meeting, don't do so in a virtual meeting. Being at home during a virtual meeting does not mean making yourself at home.

8. Pay attention

This probably goes without saying, but don't have side conversations. Try to behave as if you are in an in-person meeting, even though the temptations to do otherwise are so great. Don't text your bestie, and don't get up, walk around, and be otherwise distracting. Remember that others can see and hear you. Try to sit upright and appear attentive. Be courteous.

You can be a remote meeting rockstar.

Follow these simple tips, allow yourself plenty of time to become familiar with new technologies, and soon you will become a remote meeting rockstar.

Now is the time to update your professional skills to include video conferencing. Today's business environment demands it, and this technology is here to stay.