

Video Conferencing Best Practices

Face the Light

Avoid having a sunny window or other light source behind you. This causes a silhouette effect, blocking out your face. Instead, face the window. Also, don't have a single bright light on one side of your face or everything on the other side will be dark and make you look like a film noir villain.

Camera Distance

Your colleagues need to see you clearly so they feel they are talking directly to you. Position yourself in the center of the screen so you can be seen from the shoulders to the head. Your shoulders should take up approximately half of the horizontal space on the screen. Anything closer may be overwhelming, and anything further will make your face too hard to see.

Stay Eye Level

Looking someone in the eye is as important socially as it is in business. It builds trust while showing you are paying attention. So it's important that your webcam is at eye level and you look at the camera while talking. You can have a separate camera, or you can raise the laptop by putting it on a stand, for example. If you're using a separate camera, it should be as close to your screen as possible.

Audio Check

In a video meeting, you need to be seen and heard. If you're in a quiet room, you can probably use the microphone on your laptop. Otherwise, it's a good idea to use a microphone that's closer to your face. A decent pair of earbuds or headphones that are equipped with a mic should work fine, especially if they enable you to talk at a normal, conversational level.

Mute Yourself!

Don't risk the embarrassment. MUTE yourself when not actively speaking.

Background

Keep your environment simple and clean without any distracting things (or people) behind you. Set up in front of a solid-colored wall, positioned far enough behind you so there aren't any shadows. People

are curious by nature, and will be more interested in your unmade bed and open kitchen cabinets than they are in what you are saying.

Dress Code

Aim for neutral colors. Pinstripes and checks can create distracting patterns on camera, while bright colors like white or deep black will cause your camera to adjust to those colors. A bright white shirt can "stop down" the focus of everything around it, making the image look darker and less clear, while a black shirt can make the surroundings too bright.

Sit Comfortably, Avoid Fidgeting

Not too comfortable, because you don't want to fall asleep, but comfortable enough so you can sit and communicate, and people don't wonder what's wrong because you're fidgeting. If you're someone that talks with your hands, practice keeping them still. Hand movements can distract your audience. Also, keep head movements to a minimum.

Etiquette

Be punctual. Don't interrupt other speakers. Wait for an opening in the conversation before putting in your two cents. Cutting other speakers off is rude. Use the chat function when appropriate. Your focus should always be on the person or people at the other end of the video conference. Avoid typing on your keyboard, turn off all sounds on your phone, and choose a room with limited background noise. And absolutely no texting!

Announce your Departure

Be sure to say "goodbye" when you're leaving the video call. That may seem unimportant, as people will likely see your image leave the screen when you hang up, but good etiquette is never a bad idea.

Be yourself and have fun!

Relax and have a good time. Be lively, break the ice with a joke, and make us laugh. It's easy to tune out in a face-to-face meeting, and even easier in a virtual one. Having some fun will help keep people focused and interested in what you have to say.

