

Network to Work Meeting

November 2020

RESOURCE DOCUMENT #2

Virtual Meetings – Best Practices & Etiquette

Best practices before joining a Zoom virtual meeting or webinar

- Download the Zoom app (for computer or smartphone) in advance of the session you would like to attend.
 - Join a test meeting to familiarize yourself with Zoom and check your system.
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Preparation tips for attendees:

Always review the agenda, and any other relevant documents, in advance. It's the best way to ensure that you'll be on time and prepared. It also gives you a chance to address any questions or concerns.

1. **Work from a quiet room that's free from distractions** like pets or family members. (This may be difficult during the pandemic.) Bonus points if this room is carpeted, since that reduces reverberation. Turn off all music and TVs.

2. **Be aware of your surroundings; take note of the background behind you.**

Your coworkers won't be able to hear your ideas or take you seriously when there is a pile of dirty clothes in the corner behind you. You also want to avoid looking like you work from the inside of a cave because of bad lighting. Whether you have a home office or not, you need to make it look like you do. It's pretty hard to take people seriously when you can see their bed, dirty clothes, clutter, open closets, plates of half-eaten food, knickknacks and not suitable for work artwork.

Here are some valuable tips in this regard:

- **Test First** – Test out what will be seen in your camera’s view well before the meeting and create a setting that looks professional.
- **Plan the Setting** – It is best to have a wall behind you instead of an open room. A neutral background such as a grey-colored wall is good. Some tools like Zoom have a virtual background you could use if this isn’t feasible. Place objects in view that you’d be comfortable having in an office setting.
- **Consider Lighting** – Lighting is really important in a professional setting. Don’t have a window behind you because it will turn you into a dark silhouette. And make sure your room lighting is bright so that you can be seen easily.

3. **Dress appropriately.**

One of the magical things about working remotely is the freedom to wear anything to work. Still, there’s no reason to show your co-workers your PJs and bedhead. If you’re on camera, then definitely dress just as you would for an in-person meeting.

Take a few minutes to throw on a clean shirt and brush your hair. In addition to helping your colleagues take you seriously, dressing for success has a positive impact on your mental and emotional psyche, allowing you to feel confident and be more productive.

- ### 4. **Use your laptop and not your phone** since it’s more steady and keeps you hands-free to take notes. For audio-only meetings, invest in a decent pair of headphones with a built-in mic. Bonus tip: raise your webcam to eye level.

5. **Always test your tech before the meeting.**

For phones, that means having a strong signal and no interference. On a computer, making sure your connection is working, turning your camera on, and double-checking your mic and speakers. If you are having network issues, try turning off your video, logging off and back on, and/or consider calling into Zoom via phone (more information below).

6. **Log in to the meeting 10 minutes before the start time.**

By logging into the meeting early, you can check that you’re able to successfully join the online meeting and that your webcam, Wi-Fi, screen-sharing tools, and any other technologies you’re using are running properly by the time the meeting starts.

Rules of Virtual Meeting Etiquette

Partially excerpted from: <https://blog.gotomeeting.com/7-rules-virtual-meeting-etiquette-every-professional-know/>

To help you keep your meetings productive and professional, follow these simple virtual meeting etiquette rules and tips.

1. Be aware of things that can distract you and your coworkers, that are rude, and can take your attention away from the meeting. Limit these distractions by:

- Closing the door to the room you are in.
- Turning off your phone or silencing it and placing it away from you.
- Refraining from checking your email.
- Using a headset to cut down on background noise and so that you can hear more clearly.
- Not eating during virtual meetings.
- Not having multiple computer windows open and trying to multitask during the meeting (documents and presentations that are required for the meeting are the only things you should have up on your screen other than the meeting room).
- When someone has the floor, giving them the floor (don't talk over or interrupt others when they are speaking).

Some distractions may be unavailable when working from home (such as children and pets), so be upfront with other attendees by making aware of potential noises or distractions.

2. Leave the keyboard alone.

Whether you're diligently taking notes like a model employee or sneakily chatting with your work bestie, the sound of your typing is distracting. It's not only distracting everyone else in the meeting (because your laptop's internal microphone is inches away from your keyboard), it's also preventing you from devoting your full attention to the meeting. Opt for a quality headset or pick up your notebook and pen to take meeting notes instead.

3. Mute your microphone when you're not talking.

Background noise is the worst, and it's next to impossible to avoid when we are working from home. Whether your kids are playing in the background, your dog is barking, or sirens are blaring off in the distance, multiply that times everyone on the call and you've got one noisy situation, not to mention the echo noises that can occur from multiple microphones.

That's why one of the most important virtual meeting etiquette tips is to mute yourself when you aren't talking. Many times, the host of the meeting can handle that and will mute and unmute people as needed, but if they don't, you'll need to know how to do it yourself.

4. Look at the Camera & Speak Clearly.

If you were in an in-person meeting, you wouldn't be multitasking, looking away from people, or talking so low others can't hear you. The same goes for remote meetings.

Use these virtual meeting etiquette tips for proper interaction with the camera:

- **Be Present** – If you're looking down at your desk or off to the side or anywhere but at the computer when other people are talking, it will seem as though you aren't fully present.
- **Look at the Camera** – Likewise, when you have the floor and are doing the talking, you want to be sure to look at the camera so that others can feel more engaged with you. They'll feel like you are talking to them.
- **Pause** – Remember that there is usually a 2 to 3-second delay between you and the others in the meeting, so after you speak, wait for a response.
- **Speak Clearly** – Remember that microphones, speakers, and Wi-Fi issues can make it harder to hear people during virtual meetings, so speak clearly. Don't be afraid to project your voice, too. People will appreciate being able to hear you without having to strain their ears or turn their volume all the way up.

5. Stay seated and stay present

Also, if you're using your webcam, use attentive body language: sit up straight, don't make big extraneous movements, and don't let your eyes wander too much.

6. Don't Take Your Phone or Computer with You to the Bathroom

You would think this is common sense, but it seems like people can become disoriented when they are meeting virtually. You'd be surprised how many people do this, even without properly muting themselves or turning off their camera.

Excuse yourself if you need to just as you would if you were in an in-person meeting.

A brief message in the chat is one way to do this. Also, this is a good instance to make sure you are fully dressed (not just from the waist up), as people will see what you're wearing below your waist when you go to get up.