

Tips and Tricks for Participating in Virtual Meetings



Technology

- Be familiar with the technology and practice with it prior to the meeting. Download any plug-ins or extensions required. Most virtual meeting platforms have chat features and the ability to adjust your video resolution and adjust your mic volume; those are some of the features you should become familiar with.
- If you will be on video, think about where your camera is positioned and what is behind you, and adjust as needed (people may not want to see your dirty laundry!). Some technology platforms even have a virtual background you can use. Think about your lighting; you don't want a lamp or window directly behind you, for example. Check out this short (four minutes) [fun video](#) to see if you are making some common mistakes. The video includes tips to help you look even better than you already do.
- During the call, if you're not speaking, put your mic on mute to avoid unnecessary feedback with the audio—but remember to unmute when you are speaking!

Prior to the meeting

- Review the agenda and any other pre-meeting material.
- If you need to leave the meeting early, let the meeting leader know that ahead of time.
- Practice the technology (see above).

During to the meeting

- If most everyone else is on video, be on video too. That helps everyone read body language and minimizes people talking over each other. Research shows that people are more productive and discussions more robust if participants can see each other.
- Be on time or even a few minutes early to get all set up.
- Avoid distractions. Don't multi-task, continue to check email, or work on another project. Close tabs. Give the meeting your full attention as if you were all in the room together.
- If the meeting leader or facilitator doesn't ask for a round of introductions at the beginning of the meeting, ask if it's okay to go around and hear who is there. This is especially important if the participants do not know each other or if there are some people only on the phone.
- If the meeting leader or facilitator doesn't go over ground rules at the beginning of the meeting, suggest some yourself:
 - Ask everyone to speak up.

- If you are not on video or if people don't know everyone in the meeting (even if you're on video), then state your first name prior to asking a question or making a comment.
- You can help your meeting leader, if needed, with these tips
 - Write down who is in the meeting. If there is a "meeting monopolizer," ask directly of someone who hasn't spoken yet to contribute, or just say, "I don't think we have heard from everyone yet."
 - To move the discussion along, try to summarize what you've heard and ask if that is correct. Or pretend you need clarification yourself and say, "I'm just trying to understand," or "what are the next steps?"
 - Offer to take notes and send them out after the meeting. You can take notes in a Google document that people can view, or depending on the technology you're using, directly on the screen for all to view.

After the meeting

- Make sure you complete any action items you volunteered to do.
- Thank the meeting leader—it's not always easy to facilitate a virtual meeting, especially when it's a large and diverse group.