

Video Conferencing Hints and Tips

Introduction

Many of us are adapting to new working techniques, more of us are using video conferencing for our tasks and activities. To support our members, we have put together these Hints and Tips to support with your video conferencing experience.

1. Make sure to have a stable internet connection

The most important aspect of video conferencing is a stable internet connection. When the connection is slow or unstable, it will affect the video conference adversely with visual disruptions and inconsistent audio. You may increase the quality of your video conference by switching off other Wi-Fi enabled devices or your camera and muting your microphone.

2. Select good video conferencing software

Quality video conferencing software will aid in facilitating good online communication. It is possible to download these types of applications for free. There are several free online video conferencing tools available, these as a few of the most recognised ones:

- [Google Hangouts](#)
- [zoom.us](#) – SCS have written Guidelines on how to download and set-up Zoom which are available to download from our Actify Hub or the SCS Covid-19 section on the home page of our website.
- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [GoToMeeting](#)

3. Use video conferencing informally

Video conferences do not have to be formal, rigid and scheduled every time. It can be acceptable to have a video call instead of an e-mail conversation, or it can be treated like an informal discussion which would usually take place within an office environment and it is a good alternative to a telephone call also.

4. Choose the right environment

When choosing the right environment consider three main areas; noise, lighting and background. Choose a location that will have no background noise so people are able to hear you clearly. Choose a location with good lighting so you can be seen and a plain background that will not be of any distraction. If you cannot avoid background noise, ensure that you mute yourself during the meeting and unmute only when you are about to speak. As with in person meetings make sure your mobile is on silent to avoid distraction also.

5. Send an agenda prior to the video conference

As with physical meetings you can include an agenda for the meeting along with the meeting invitation. This will enable your guests to understand the reason why they have been invited and they will be able to prepare appropriately. Distributing materials via email before and/or after the video conference can also be beneficial.

6. Be acquainted with video conference features

Individually, and especially if you are chairing or hosting the meeting, try to eliminate any background noise while the video conference is going on, which should also minimize any echo from the microphone. Moreover, make a point of informing the participants how to mute as well as unmute the microphone and ensure that all of them are making use of this feature. This is especially useful if you expect lots of attendees to join your call. Some software applications include additional features such as chat boxes and raising your virtual hand when you wish to speak or ask a question, it is recommended that you familiarize yourself with these features also.

7. Avoid speaking at the same time

It becomes challenging when there are lots of guests in the same video conference. You need to practice patience and refrain from speaking while others are expressing themselves. It is suggested for the host to hold queries until the end so that everybody gets an opportunity to voice their opinions. It is up to the host to manage the video conference to make it successful.

8. Be yourself

As alluded to previously, the reason you're on the call in the first place may be because in some cases life simply gets in the way of getting into the office. If the culture of your workplace accepts it, there is nothing wrong with showing a bit of 'real life' on the call. An example being letting your child wave to the camera.