

20 Quick-Tips For... Optimizing Your Virtual Presence!



01

LOCATION

The first step is to find the **best place** to conduct the meeting. Windows work best with natural lighting; however, avoid letting the light shine directly into your eyes, making you squint. If possible, perhaps get a few lamps removing the shades, and place them in front of you while you are behind the camera. Try various positions of the lamps to see which position best lights your face.



02

BACKDROP

Make sure the backdrop is complementary to your personal coloring. The backdrop is your frame. This may not be an easy task, but if you can find a wall color that frames your coloring well, or paint one, then do so. Also, be careful of what the video can see behind you. Perhaps move things around or remove them altogether. Too much “stuff” can be very distracting.



03

EYEWEAR

Remove eyeglasses if possible. When wearing glasses, non-reflective lenses are recommended so that others can “see” your eyes. And no sunglasses. I know it is obvious, but you never know!



04

DRESS THE PART

Dress as if you were going to be face-to-face with others. Do not just dress professionally above the waistline and wear shorts and no shoes below. When fully dressed, you will project amore confident, credible professional presence.



05

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?

What is the tone of the meeting? Do you need to project more of an authoritative or approachable look? Dark colors communicate an authoritative presence, while light colors communicate an approachable presence. To project more of an authoritative look, wear solid colors, avoid "patterned" shirts and tops. Sharp contrast such as black and white or navy and beige work well. Avoid wearing light pastel colors alone. Eyewear with plastic rims works great for this look. For women, you can wear your hair back or up. Avoid putting your hair above the crown of your head.



For a more approachable look, wear medium to lighter colors. Wear subtle contrast in colors such as camel and cream. Wire rim eyewear works great for this look. For women, you can keep your hair more relaxed.

06

MEN-GROOMING

Men ensure that you have freshly shaven an hour before the meeting. You do not want fresh cuts or irritation to show. Give the skin a chance to calm down. If you cannot get a haircut due to the coronavirus, be sure to shave the back of your neckline. This will give you a fresh-cut look. Also, ensure there is no hair growth on, or in the ears. I know, this sounds obvious, but you would be surprised how often this detail is overlooked. Just know, the camera will pick that up very well. It is the details that define distinction.



07

WOMEN-COSMETICS

Ladies be sure to wear makeup. Do not go overboard and look clownish, just wear it how you normally would. Red lipstick is a great power color if you can pull off that look off. Also, if you do your own hair color, do not do it the same day as the interview. Five days prior if possible. Plan accordingly.



08

EYEBROWS

You should have two, not one! Be sure your eyebrows are neat and trimmed. An eyebrow wax is best; however, you can do a quick trim with a razor or tweezers. You can “brush” them in a backward motion to look for longer hairs that need to be trimmed.



09

THE CAMERA

Set your camera or laptop at eye level. Be sure that you are looking directly at them, not down on them. Be creative, remember no one will see this. Think of your screen as the face of the attendees. There are desk-risers. You can use a stack of books or anything that can raise whatever type of camera you use. Consider a tripod, these add great for flexibility.

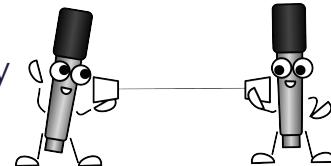


10

MICROPHONE OPTIONS

Most meeting platforms allow you to use your computer's audio. Be sure your mic and speakers work before the meeting. For best audio results, consider stereo microphones.

Stereo microphones pick up sound the same way you do, with two ears. A stereo microphone has two microphones housed in one single body. You will see many YouTube professionals use these types. These output separate channels of audio typically designed as left and right.



Another alternative is a wired, stereo, lapel microphone. These are great if you tend to walk around a great deal or need more distance between you and the camera. The two mics are attached to one single wire and fit on your lapel positioned next to each other. You will see many news reporters wearing these. They should plug directly into the PC or camera.

There are stereo, wireless mics too; however, they can lose connection and cause you to lose sound. Regardless of which type of lapel mic you use, be careful not to let shirt collars or other clothing hit the mic.

11

DO NOT DISTURB

Turn off instant messaging on all your devices. Especially your computer. You want to avoid a bunch of dings and rings going off during your meeting. And you do not want others to read your instant messages.



This also includes your cell phone and landlines!

12

EMAILS OFF!

Turn off all email notifications. These are pop-ups that let you know you have an email waiting. These, like instant messages, can be very distracting.

**13**

COMPUTER DESKTOP

Place all documents on your computer's desktop in a folder called desktop files. This will clean things up and no one can see your personal information.

**14**

ADD A SECOND SCREEN

Consider a second monitor to help you stay focused. You can use an extra monitor or even a laptop if you are using a PC. Be sure to align your camera with that screen. Use one screen for managing everything and the second one for the attendee's eyes only!



15

CO-HOSTS

If someone is co-hosting the presentation with you, ensure that he or she knows how to accept and hand back the “baton”. Have good segues for the host and co-host to keep the momentum consistent and moving forward. This should be practiced ahead of time.



16

TOO MUCH NOISE

Avoid shuffling any papers during the meeting. This can be very disturbing.



17

POSTURE-FEET

Keep feet planted directly on the ground. Do not cross them at the ankle or over the knee. If you tend to release your energy by shaking your feet, be sure to gain control over that during your presentation.



18

POSTURE-SITTING

Sit up straight. When we stand, we slouch from our shoulders; however, when sitting, we slouch from our waist. To avoid leaning in close to the video screen and slouching on your desk with hands and or elbows on the desktop, practice sitting by pushing your waist forward to lift the upper torso. Better yet, record yourself and find that perfect look for the video. It might seem awkward, but it looks good on camera.



19

PREPARE – PREPARE – PREPARE

Preparation is key. If you are ready “to go” 30 minutes ahead of time for your meeting, you will appear organized. If you are shuffling papers and trying to “find” things under a pile of papers, you will appear disorganized. This can be seen as being disrespectful of other’s time.



20

USING THE MOUSE

If you have a PowerPoint to share, use a wireless presenter remote. Keep it away from the mic as much as possible. When presenting with a regular mouse the clicks can be very distracting, especially if you are recording the meeting for others to playback.

