



Video Conferencing and Online Meetings

Hints and Tips for Successful meetings

Video conferencing and online meetings are common place but they don't always go smoothly. The following hints and tips help make your meetings more successful.

BEFORE THE VIRTUAL EVENT

Choose to livestream, pre-record videos, or a use a hybrid of the two according to the event's needs

Remember to take this into account when deciding which software to use. Consider how these formats might suit your event, and whether potential platforms can support them.

Decide if the event should be extended a few more days

Consider a structure that helps attendees avoid Team or Zoom fatigue! Virtual attendees often focus better with shorter days spread out across a longer period.

Decide whether to make all content public, or restrict to registrants only

Weigh the benefits of potentially keeping some content private and more secure versus making your brand accessible to more people for your event.

If attendees span over a large geographic area, consider recording sessions and allow on-demand replay

Try to accommodate different time zones. If more people will be in a specific location, you can also consider holding engagement/networking opportunities for those groups. Do not forget the requirements around the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Privacy Regulations around the concept of "Consent." See also Point 23 below

Choose a streaming software platform (Teams, Zoom, WebEx, etc)

Consider what you need for your event, such as the number of attendees and concurrent sessions, and make sure the software integrates with the platform you plan to use.

Choose an attendee interaction software.

Depending on your event's needs, you might consider choosing a platform that integrates interaction with the rest of the event.

Select miscellaneous tools

Find services to support your event's other needs like an emailing service (e.g., Mailchimp), caption generation, and interpreter services if needed. Remember to stay PECR compliant with all marketing

Decide if you need high-quality A/V devices, such as recording devices to filter noise/echo

Bigger events with high production value may want to ensure high-quality audio, but for other, smaller events this will be less important.

Consider that certain services may not be available in some areas

When choosing which software and websites to use, be aware that sites like Google, YouTube, and Facebook are not available in some countries, such as China.

Create a participant guide for watching sessions and interacting with other attendees and send it with the event timeline.

Participants may need some guidance getting the most out of using unfamiliar platforms. See if the platform has attendee guides, and if not, develop your own.

Create a speaker or panellist guide on pre-recording or live streaming presentations

Ensure things go smoothly on the speaker side and help out potentially less tech-savvy presenters. Ask if they need assistance. You also check with the event platform to see if they have resources on hand.

Create a sponsor or exhibitor guide on effectively interacting with participants to achieve their ROI goals

Make sure they know how to use the platform to get the strongest benefits and return on investment possible out of the event.

Distribute a code of conduct to make sure all participants behave appropriately online

Make moderating content easier by setting clear rules and ensuring that attendees know ahead of time what kind of behaviour is acceptable. The ground rules we agreed for the live courses have transferability. However, you will also need a more tailored set of Virtual protocols. Appendix A provides a sample set.

DURING THE VIRTUAL EVENT

Start every session 15 minutes earlier to check the device and network

Take a little extra time to make sure everything is ready for the session. Have the speaker join the session early to ensure that everything is good to go.

Prepare for and react to any disruption

This can range from moderating inappropriate content to dealing with last-minute technical issues. Prepare Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) based on your experience, and which can serve as a standing reference point or anchor for any virtual event. Appendix A profiles important and expected behaviour protocols.

Mute/unmute and disable/enable video of participants accordingly

Be sure you can moderate participant interactions in all areas of the event. Check with the platform you are using to see which tools are available.

Collect and moderate online Q&A

In addition to removing offensive content, be prepared to choose askers, pin questions to the top, and remove redundant questions. Have someone besides the speaker/panellists on hand to manage Q&A.

Coordinate online gamification such as a photo contest

Encourage interaction with some friendly competition! Gamification like Whova's photo contest can help attendees get more involved while competing for a prize.

Start virtual meetups

While you cannot meet in-person, make sure to give attendees the chance online. Setting up virtual video meetups can be a wonderful way to get to know each other “face-to-face.”

Organise online discussions

Encourage engagement and get attendees talking by bringing relevant discussion topics through a tool like a Community Board or a separate app like Slack.

Share articles and videos

Spark conversations further by sharing resources, whether they are useful, interesting, or just fun, through these discussion channels. This can also be a terrific way to promote speakers and sponsors' content!

AFTER THE VIRTUAL EVENT

Cancel your streaming software subscription

Once the event is over, make sure you are not still paying for a streaming subscription, mailing service, or anything else you do not need to use anymore!

Look for a storage service to store the archived videos

If there is any content, you would like to save, do not just leave it in the virtual event. Keep pre-recorded videos and session recordings safely stored for you to access later. GDPR applies! See also Point 4 above.

Send attendee all promised materials and do not forget surveys to collect their feedback for the virtual experience

Feedback can be a valuable tool in making sure your next event is even better! Some event platforms can provide customisable surveys to make it even easier to send these out.

Check in with speakers, volunteers, and moderators and express your gratitude for their efforts in this special event

Not only is it good manners but making sure they know their efforts were appreciated can make them more likely to participate in the future!

Follow up with sponsors and exhibitors to thank them for their support during the tough time, and see if they reached their goal

Ask what worked for them, what they would like to see improved in the future, and if they feel happy with the results. You can use this information to make sure they get even better ROI in the future.

Send out the prizes for any online gamification

Remember to send out any prizes, or if they are not immediately available, follow up with the winners on when they will be sent.

Generate a report of the event to check the total participants, activities, and feedback.

Prepare for next occasion with a comprehensive overview of the event and compare with previous in-person events.

Online Meeting - Code of Conduct (suggested content)

All attendees, speakers, sponsors, vendors, partners, staff and volunteers at our Virtual Event and any related events are required to adhere to the following Code of Conduct. Event organisers will enforce this Code throughout the event entirety.

Prior to a Virtual Meeting, all participants are expected to be familiar with this policy.

Participants must register for a Virtual Meeting and provide an email, text, phone or (for special needs) other contact where they can be reached during the Virtual Meeting. Registration constitutes consent to audio and visual recording (and use and alteration of the recording) by us at the Meeting for non-commercial purposes aligned with the organisations mission.

Failure to register, provide such contact, or be available via the contact provided is grounds for being disconnected from the Virtual Meeting at the participant's cost, without further notice or process.

Our aim in hosting a virtual event is to build a stronger learning community. Our goal is to create an environment where everyone feels welcome to participate, speak up, ask questions, and engage in conversation.

This requires a harassment free and inclusive environment that recognizes the inherent worth of every participant. We invite all those who participate to help us create a safe and positive experiences for everyone.

We are dedicated to providing a harassment-free environment for everyone, regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, ethnicity, or religion (or lack thereof). We do not tolerate harassment of participants in any form. Sexist or Racist or other offensive language and imagery is not appropriate during any aspect of this virtual event/conference, including talks, workshops, parties, social media such as Twitter, or other online media.

Our Code of Conduct allows us all to create the best experience possible for all attendees.

The event itself may also generate additional tailored ground rules or learning agreements in order to facilitate full and safe audience participation. Once agreed by a cohort with the facilitator, trainer, or teacher they become part of this Code of Conduct.

Nine expected behaviours are listed next followed by a note on how to report any violation of the protocols set out throughout this document and of any additional ones agreed during an event.

Expected Behaviour – Nine Key Points

1. Exercise consideration and respect in your speech and actions.
2. Attempt collaboration before conflict.
3. Refrain from demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behaviour and speech.
4. Be mindful of your surroundings and of your fellow participants. Alert staff if you notice a dangerous situation, someone in distress, or violations of this Code of Conduct, even if they seem inconsequential.
5. During this virtual event or any of its related events no participant should engage in harassment in any form.

6. Do not disrupt the virtual meeting (e.g., “zoom-bombing”) or engage in harm or threats of harm of any kind. Do not create/contribute to a safety threat or unsafe or exclusionary situation.
7. Do not make audio or visual recordings of the Virtual Meeting in any medium—and do not distribute audio or visual recordings of the Virtual Meeting (via social media or any other means). Only the host organisation or its representatives may do so, after warning participants to give them an opportunity to opt out.
8. Do not take or distribute pictures of or copy research posters/presentation materials unless explicit permission is granted.
9. Participants violating these rules may be expelled from the Virtual Event without a refund at the discretion of the host organiser. Participants asked to stop any harassing behaviour are expected to comply immediately.

This free reference guide is based on Concrew Training’s extensive experience in delivering online training together with our expertise in areas such as public speaking training and more effective presentations training.