

TOP 10 VIDEO MEETING TIPS

Videoconferencing enables you to communicate information on a timely basis and to be able to do it cost effectively. The use of the technology, however, can be challenging. It's nice to have a technician available, but that's not always possible, so it's important to become familiar with the technology—and to practice! Here are 10 tips that will help you have more successful meetings and interviews:

- 1) Familiarize yourself with the technology.** If you aren't comfortable using the videoconferencing system, try to contact a technician or co-worker who is – before the meeting, if possible – so he or she can show you what to do. If you'll be using PowerPoint or a video, do a test sometime prior to the meeting to make sure everything is working and all your media are compatible with the system. And, you should also have a back-up plan just in case a disconnection occurs. (e.g. Is there a nearby speakerphone I can use if the video connection fails?)
- 2) Frame a nice shot of yourself,** or whoever is speaking. A waist-up view (sometimes called a medium shot) is a good place to start. Tech Tip: If you're not seeing your own room on the monitor, press the "layout" or "PIP" key to bring up a picture of your own site to help you compose your camera shot, then use the arrow and zoom keys on your remote control to center the picture.
- 3) Make eye contact.** Make sure you are sharing your attention equally with all participants, regardless of their location. Be sure to look at the other site(s) at least as often as you look at people in your own room.
- 4) Nod and react** when participants at the other site(s) are speaking. This will assure them that you are hearing, and listening, to them.
- 5) Inform all participants** that "private" conversations can be picked up by the microphones, so when they are talking to another person they should assume they will be heard in the other meeting room(s).
- 6) Avoid "sidebar" conversations,** since that may be considered rude behavior by those in the other room(s). If you must participate in a side conversation, inform all parties that you'll be doing so and that you will mute your microphone for a moment and turn it back on when you're done.
- 7) Minimize the distance.** Avoid using phrases and terminology that make reference to the distance between sites. Expressions like "remote sites," or "out there in the field office" only make people feel more distant. Instead, simply treat all sites, including the one you're at, the same way. Refer to each site by name or location, without stressing how far away they are. And try not to refer to the site you're at as the "home" site or "main" location. Remember, the goal is to get everyone to feel like they're all together in one big room, and on equal footing.
- 8) Be aware of how loud you are speaking.** In general, it helps if you speak up to ensure that your voice projects. If you're having trouble hearing someone at another site, ask them to speak up or use your remote control to boost the volume in your room. It's also a good idea to do a quick sound check at the beginning, just to make sure everyone can clearly hear you – and you can hear them!
- 9) Consider what you wear.** Blue, cream, or solid bright-colored shirts, blouses, ties, and scarves look best on video monitors. Fine stripes can look fuzzy or wavy. Also, gray jackets come across more effectively than jet black ones. And try to avoid jewelry that "jangles." The noise can be a distraction when picked up by the microphones.
- 10) Act natural.** Just like the regular meetings or interviews you conduct, you're most effective when you're yourself. And don't dwell on the technology. People will get comfortable very quickly if you use the techniques above.