

Four Tips to Ease Your Virtual Meeting Stress

Many companies are taking recent measures to either strongly encourage, or in some cases mandate, employees to work from home. Pandemic worries aside, working from home brings its own set of challenges like bringing your work online and leading virtual meetings.

It takes some adjusting to lead meetings in a virtual space. These tips can facilitate your work, strengthen team connections, and serve the goals you set out to achieve.



- 1. Learn the capabilities and limitations of your technology.** No matter which platform your use - Zoom, Skype, Cisco Webex - take some time to learn about the features and capabilities by exploring what can *and can't* be done. Find answers to questions like:
 - What's the best way to send invitations?
 - What is the best use for this platform? *For example, we find Skype better for 1:1 impromptu chats and Zoom better for planned group meetings*
 - What are the options for screen sharing?
 - Where is the chat box?
 - How can the meeting be recorded?
 - How is the audio quality?
- 2. Take a little time to plan.** This tip isn't unique to virtual meetings, but it will help sharpen the focus, especially with our other distractions and preoccupations. Consider:
 - Who should/will be there?
 - What do you aim to achieve during this time?
 - What is the plan to get there?
 - How much time it will take?
 - How you will do the work in the virtual context?
 - What can participants *do* in the virtual context?
- 3. Use this as an opportunity to build team connections.** A colleague once offered the following as a warm-up during a virtual meeting: *Take a moment and look out your window. Jot down what you see in the chat box.* An invitation like this can yield interesting comments and learnings about your teammates and where they live. Note: request that everyone keeps their webcam on.
- 4. Partner up to help run the meeting.** Having a partner to bounce ideas, do a gut check, and provide support is so useful. A support partner can help save time and avoid distraction and embarrassment when something might not be working smoothly. These partners can:
 - manage the chat box,
 - take notes,
 - handle technology issues, and
 - welcome latecomers.

We offer these tips in hopes of easing some of your stress during this time. May they help you discover opportunities in work and gathering virtually.