Prepare for Your Virtual Workshop, Demo, Panel Discussion or Meeting

Don’t let these words send you into panic mode! Even the most seasoned professionals can have trouble making meaningful connections with their audience when they’re staring at the red dot on their laptop. Read through this guide for tips to help you bridge the virtual divide and present like a pro!

**TIP #1  KNOW THE TECHNOLOGY**

Nothing kills a presentation faster than a presenter who fumbles with the technology. This is a performance, so make sure you know how to make it work.

Make sure your Wi-fi signal is strong. If your signal is weak or unstable, plug your computer directly into your modem using an Ethernet cable. This will give you the strongest signal and most stable internet connection.

The built-in camera on newer laptops is very good but your smartphone may offer higher quality video. Whatever device you use, be sure the lens is at eye level.

While people may forgive less than perfect video, if they can’t clearly hear you, they will leave. Sometimes headphones or external microphones work better than the computer audio, sometimes not.

**TIP #2  CREATE AN ENGAGING PRESENTATION**

Just as if you were doing an in-person presentation, craft your presentation to engage the audience. Use high-quality graphics, charts and limit the amount of text on each slide to make them visually appealing. Be sure all transitions, links, and videos work correctly.

Your presentation should only be 15-minutes, to allow for the 5 to 10-minute Q&A session.

**TIP #3  DRESS PROFESSIONALLY FROM HEAD TO TOE**

Keep it simple! Avoid busy patterns and overly bright or dark colors—you want the focus to be on you, not your outfit! For example, some colors like yellow and magenta are too bright for the camera and can be distracting. Avoid wearing shiny accessories or anything too bright, as it can look like a disco ball on screen.
**TIP #4 SELECT THE BEST BACKGROUND**

Your background can either add to your professional presence or detract from it. Create a background that has some visual interest, looks professional and is clean and organized. Try to use a background that enhances your professional image and is aligned with your message.

**The hunts a foot!**
Add a unique (non-distracting) item to your background for the virtual scavenger hunt.

**TIP #5 USE DIFFERENT LIGHT SOURCES**

Try to use two light sources, one to light the room and the other to light your face.

If you can, take advantage of any natural light from the windows. However, be sure to sit facing the windows to prevent glare. If your back is to a window, close the shades.

Make sure you have good front light—meaning the light shines brightly on your face. Use nice lighting from the front of you, a simple desk lamp shining on your face will prevent grainy recordings.

**How do I look?**
This video is full of great tips & tricks for looking your virtual best! You can also get the ring light mentioned for about $26.

**TIP #6 ELIMINATE BACKGROUND NOISE**

Two-thirds of good video is good audio!

It is best to record in a private closed areas to avoid extraneous sounds that may distract participants. Secure a quiet room with a door and use a quality microphone. Don’t forget to post a sign that lets people know you are conducting a virtual presentation.

Beware of external sounds such as construction, pets, etc. Avoid rustling papers, turn off any notification noises (like email or chat alerts) and pause programs that upload or download files in the background.
POSITION YOURSELF
Get Close (But Not Too Close). People are drawn to faces, so you don’t want to lose that connection by being too far away, but you also don’t want your face to take over the whole screen like a dismembered head because, well, that looks creepy. You want the camera to frame your face, neck and shoulders without any of your head appearing off the screen.

MAKE EYE CONTACT
There are barriers we face when attempting to connect with an audience across a digital space. It can be tempting to watch yourself on screen, but it’s important to make eye contact with your audience on the other end of the camera.
Raise your camera up until it is just about equal to your hairline. The camera should be positioned slightly down at you to get the most flattering angle of your face. If your camera is too low, then you run the risk of creating a double chin. A camera that is too high makes it difficult to maintain eye contact, as you may find your gaze dropping as you speak.

ADJUST YOUR MOVEMENT & BODY LANGUAGE
Sit on the front of your chair and lean forward as if you were a TV news anchor. Keep your shoulders back, muscles relaxed and take deep breaths. Avoid slouching away from the camera, as that sends a signal that you are disconnected from the audience. Don’t cross your arms, since this makes you appear closed off.

PERFECT YOUR PERFORMANCE
Whether you are presenting in-person or virtually, all presentations are performances. Even though you want to infuse some animation and energy into your presentation don’t pump up the speed too much. If you tend to be a fast talker in real life, practice slowing down just a bit. If you’re a slow talker, you may want to speed up just a bit.
Remember to pause between sentences, and lower your voice if you naturally speak in a high pitch. Don’t worry about a few ‘ums’ and ‘ahs’. They tend to make the videos seem more real.
Again, just like in face-to-face presentations, audiences connect to authenticity, so be yourself! Let your personality shine through and have fun. If you look like you’re enjoying the presentation so will others.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>LIVE BROADCAST TIMELINE</strong></th>
<th><strong>PRESENTER</strong></th>
<th><strong>FACILITATOR</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BEFORE</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15-minutes before your broadcast, use the connection information provided by your facilitator to log in to the 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting Application.</td>
<td>Don’t stress out! Your facilitator and AV Tech will be there to make sure all the technical elements are taken care of.</td>
<td>Your facilitator will verify you have a good connection and ensure all your files are ready for display.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shine like the star you are!</td>
<td>When the broadcast starts, your facilitator, or a moderator, will introduce you and establish the ground rules for your virtual session.</td>
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<td><strong>DURING</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What if…</td>
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<tr>
<td>− I flub up during my live presentation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ If you make a mistake simply correct yourself, pause to regain your composure and continue on as if nothing happened.</td>
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<td>− I need to show something on my screen?</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Before we start, we’ll make sure all of your resources are available and coach you through how to access them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>− I am “team teaching” or part of a panel?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AFTER</strong></td>
<td>Your facilitator will relay questions to you that have been submitted through the chat tool that you can verbally answer.</td>
<td>At the end of your presentation, your facilitator, or moderator, will relay any questions to you and will let you know when to wrap up.</td>
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**There’s no “I” in Team!**

Work with your team/panel in advance to...
− Decide what role each of you have
− Identify who will talk & when in order to prevent bandwidth overload or audio feedback
− Always look like you are paying attention!