

Online Meetings Are Here To Stay – Here Are Ten Ways You Can Make Yours Better

Online meetings are here to stay - here are ten ways you can make yours better;

- 1) **Good sound quality** - use an external mic if you need to.
- 2) **Good lighting** - sit facing the light and make it natural and/or soft if possible - and plenty of it.
- 3) **Good camera position** - put the camera level with your eyes, no higher, no lower – trust me, we don't want to see up your nose.
- 4) **Good framing** - put the top of your head at the top of the frame, there's nothing more annoying than watching someone peer over the bottom of the screen.
- 5) **Ditch the automatic backgrounds** - yes they work, but they're also very obvious and make you look like an escapee from a bad Star Trek remake (sorry) - only use them if there's a genuine chance your partner might walk behind you naked.
- 6) If you're having a 1:1 and you haven't met the person before, **send a very brief video beforehand to introduce yourself** - 30 seconds tops - it helps short-cut the 'sniff test' process we all go through when we meet a new person and will mean the meeting itself is more efficient. You can record and send it on your phone in the time it takes to send an email.
- 7) **Make the meeting shorter** - screen-based meetings are exhausting for all the reasons I mentioned in a previous newsletter: your brain can't read all the sub-conscious cues it's used to which forces your conscious mind to work much harder; you have a camera in your face so you feel like you're 'performing' and you can also see yourself, which is super distracting and weird.

8) **Connect before you convince** - we've started getting used to a new level of disclosure and vulnerability - suddenly we have kids, pets, a real life - who knew. The consequence of this is that everything has become less formal. As Brené Brown often says, vulnerability is the first thing we look for in others and the last thing we want to disclose in ourselves. Be brave. People will like and trust you more, not less.

9) **Slow everything down** - social cues are harder, people need more time to think - particularly if you're in a group situation. No-one knows how to figure out who should talk first and no-one wants to be rude. If you're the facilitator or chair of the meeting and you're asking a question of the group, consider being prescriptive about who answers and in what order - alphabetically by first name, for example.

10) If this is a sales meeting, **find out where your colleague is up to** in their pandemic journey before you launch into your spiel. Everyone has been impacted in some way. When someone is drowning, don't try to sell them a luxury yacht when they need a lifeboat. This is something Peter Cook (who's awesome by the way if you're looking for extra brain food) is fond of saying. Meet them where they are.



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