

The 7 Rules of Virtual Meeting Etiquette Every Professional Should Know

As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to spread, few industries remain unscathed – and virtual meetings have become an essential part of how modern businesses maintain productivity and continuity. They're an easy, cost-effective way to align multiple offices, keep remote employees engaged and work with clients and vendors.

While [virtual meetings](#) have likely been a part of your daily work routine for some time now, it's still easy to fall victim to some major meeting faux pas. If you're taking an online meeting from home, and your webcam displays your unmade bed with Star Wars sheets, that's a problem.

To help you keep your meetings productive and professional follow these seven simple etiquette rules and tips!

1. Leave the keyboard alone

Whether you're diligently taking notes like the model employee you are or sneakily chatting with your work bestie about where to go for happy hour, the sound of your typing is distracting. It's not only distracting everyone else in the meeting (because your laptop's internal microphone is inches away from your keyboard), it's also preventing you from devoting your full attention to the meeting. So either use a headset or pick up your notebook and pen to [take meeting notes](#).

Side note: [Some research shows](#) you actually retain more information if you take notes by hand versus typing them. Writing your notes forces you to process and condense the information rather than typing everything you hear word for word. So really, writing your notes is better for everyone!

2. Dress appropriately

One of the magical things about working remotely is the freedom to wear anything to work. It's the dream. However, when you are in a virtual meeting and sharing your webcam, your coworkers will be less than thrilled to see your lazy clothes and bed head.

So take a minute to throw on a clean shirt and brush your hair. The best part of actually getting ready is that you'll feel more focused to take on the virtual meeting.

3. Be aware of your surroundings

Your coworkers won't be able to hear your ideas or take you seriously when there is a pile of dirty clothes in the corner behind you. You also want to avoid looking like you work from a cave because of bad lighting.

Adjust your work set up so that you face a window or are exposed to plenty of light. And make sure your background is professional and work appropriate. This means:

- No beds (unmade or made) in the background
- No messy rooms or open closets where everyone can see your clutter
- No random passers-by or super cute pets that will be distracting
- No NSFW artwork

While kids and pets are adorable (and a much needed distraction when you're feeling overwhelmed), your co-workers won't love having to talk over a screaming child or barking dog, so be mindful of noise and...

4. Mute your microphone when you're not talking

There's nothing more frustrating than hearing that alien echo noise from conflicting microphones. Save everyone from the ear-splitting madness by joining the meeting while on mute!

If you're working in an open-office layout, a noisy cafe, or anywhere that has a lot of background noise, make sure to keep your microphone muted when you're not speaking so it gives other participants the ability to chime in and share their thoughts without distraction.

5. Speak up

First of all, when you enter a small meeting (around two to five people) announce yourself when you join. It's awkward to hear the someone-just-joined ding followed by silence. When you hop on the meeting, introduce yourself and say hi – just make sure not to interrupt someone mid-sentence.

Secondly, don't be afraid to speak loudly during a virtual meeting. Your team will appreciate being able to hear you without having to strain their ears. Keep in mind if your team is in a conference room, that means they are all sitting around a single phone speaker or crowded around a laptop. It doesn't hurt to invest in a good microphone set up to help ensure you are heard during virtual meetings.

6. No food allowed

Make sure to eat a snack before your virtual meeting. No one wants to see you stuff your face with chips while discussing important business matters. It's distracting and you won't be able to focus on the task at hand because you have to worry about dropping crumbs all over your keyboard.

7. Stay seated and stay present

It may be tempting to check your inbox or carry on a side conversation during a dull moment in a meeting, but don't do it! You might miss out on key information or an opportunity to give input. If you're using your webcam, use attentive body language: sit up straight, don't make big extraneous movements, and don't let your eyes wander too much.