Best Practices: Video Conference Meetings

Prior to the start of the meeting/event:

Audio –
If possible, use a dedicated video room as it will have much improved microphones and optimally-placed cameras.

Test the technology: make a call to someone and test:
- Audio - sit in different seats and ensure that people can be heard when speaking at normal volume.
- Video – strategically place the key speaker(s) so that they can be clearly seen on the video and heard on audio.
- Video – check the lighting in the room at the time of the conference (lighting may change). If possible, close all blinds to reduce lights and shadows.
- Video – if it is expected that there will need to be camera and volume adjustments necessary during the meeting, assign someone or, better yet, bring someone unrelated to the meeting to make sure this happens smoothly.
- Video – if there is a plan to switch between video view and a presentation, test the switching so that it goes smoothly.

If using additional microphones, make sure they are placed where they will pick up all participants. If someone is sharing away from the mic, ask them to move closer to it.

Do not move papers, pens or use keyboards around the mic. It doesn't sound like anything on your end but is amplified at the other sites.

If you have many participants together in a conference, there could potentially be a lot of background noise coming through their microphones, which can be very distracting for everyone. To avoid this, ask all participants to mute when they are not talking.

Remind participants to test video before joining. Wireless connections often cause poor video quality or audio issues. When possible, plug in to the network. If video quality is poor, suggest shutting off video.

If there are many participants on the call, the moderator can make use of chat functions within the tool to ensure that remote participants have equal opportunities for participation.

Meeting materials - be prepared with presentation materials; send materials to all participants the day prior (if possible) to the meeting.

Starting the meeting/event:

Close doors to reduce outside noise

Greet and introduce all participants - just like any meeting, there will be a few participants who
arrive on time and a few who arrive 1-2 minutes late. It’s advisable to wait until everyone has joined so you can greet each participant as they join the meeting. This also gives you the chance to introduce participants to each other who have not previously met. Ask your participants to identify themselves before speaking and asking a question. This is especially important when the meeting includes participants who have not previously met.

Additional Tips -

- Be courteous to other participants
- Speak clearly and towards the microphone
- Be sure active participants can be seen on video
- Be conscious of the status of your “mute” button
- Beware of typing close to the microphone
- Don’t interrupt other speakers
- Don’t carry on side conversations
- Don’t wear “noisy” jewelry
- Don’t cover the microphone – use the mute feature
- Know your audience
- Put your mobile phone away – setting it on the table can cause loud vibrations
- Don’t eat during the meeting
- Remember that people can see it if you are not engaged in the meeting