

Video Conference? Be Camera-Ready!

Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy

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When the world took its major pause

Ideas gushed in with an applause

Connecting within confined walls

Was a major milestone after all

Airing events on a single cord

Joining us all in one accord

Video calls were often a wreck

Though we never forgot to audio check

'Hello, am I audible?', be slogan of the year

Let's now enhance video quality, to be clear!

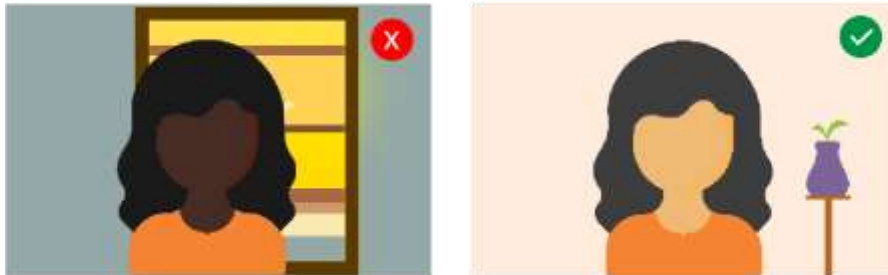
In a Covid world, organisations are turning to videos for strengthening their communication, and reaching a larger audience through impressive social media presence. Videos — with a powerful ability to connect with the audience — are much sought after for meaningful audience engagement when people can't meet face-to-face. They also enable reflection and dialogue, and have a long-lasting impact on the audience.

Virtual workplaces have put video conferencing at the centre of organisational communication. It, thus, becomes important for us to consider and level up on how we present ourselves in front

of a virtual audience. Since video conferences impersonate physical meet-ups, the importance of retaining the focus of the audience remains unchanged.

Here is a quick guide to putting your best self forward.

Lights come first



Be mindful of the lighting you choose. Find a well-lit space with enough natural light or simply turn on the overhead light to do the job. Try to avoid a light source hitting from behind, as it will form a silhouette.

Dress up

Remember that you are dressing up for the camera. Wear pleasant-coloured clothes that are neither dull nor striking. Solid and rich colours like sapphire blue, emerald green, and ruby red are camera friendly, so choose them over multicoloured patterns. Go for formal clothing that you are comfortable in; avoid bold prints and shiny fabrics (like silk or satin) as they can be distracting.

Frame it



Though you can frame the video in various ways, the mid close-up shot is ideal for video conferencing. Make sure the subject is at the centre of the screen and there is enough headroom. Neither get too close to the camera nor stay far away.

Level your angle



The most appropriate angle for placing your laptop is at your eye level. If your table is too low, consider placing a few books below the laptop to bring the level up.

King's seat

Comfort is vital. Make sure you are comfortable in your seat; watch your body posture. Sit up straight so that your back is not strained. You can lean back, but only slightly, else you may appear less interested in the discussion. Prefer a chair with armrests but no wheels. The chair should also offer good lower-back support with sufficient room for vertical adjustments. Avoid noisy places that might distract you and your audience.

Ready to go



Check your audio levels and video settings and preview them before making yourself visible on the platform. Make sure you have eye contact with your webcam and keep your hand gestures and body movements minimal.

Jazz it up a bit

If you wish to take the video quality a notch up, it's pretty simple. All you need is a proper lighting kit (ring light)! A ring light casts light evenly on the subject, and helps in getting rid of the shadows. It also highlights the eyes, significantly enhancing the video quality. It is easy to operate, portable, and works well with a USB cable. Connecting an external camera to your system through a USB/HDMI cable will also add to the video quality.

Keep the etiquette

Once the conference starts, be sure to follow the video-conferencing protocols. While sharing your screen, make sure you keep your home screen neat and all personal tabs closed, so that it doesn't distract the audience. Keep all the files that you want to share ready beforehand. If there are links or study material to be shared, type them into the chat box. Use the gesture keys (hand

raised) on the video-conferencing platform to ask a question verbally, or type your question directly into the chat box.

The bottom line

With the virtual workspace gaining prominence, video conferencing is set to take, and retain, centre stage in all organisations. You must, therefore, acquire the knowledge and skillsets necessary to keep up with the trend, and deliver a powerful performance.

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