

# Video-Conferences— What You Should Know!

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While Video Conferencing can never replace face-to-face meetings, it's a good second choice. For busy executives with jam-packed schedules, it allows the opportunity to discuss important issues without taking two days out of their schedule or spending exorbitant sums of money on travel expenses.

Because calls can be taped, all of the required people can see and hear the same thing. Video-conferencing is of particular value when subject matter experts are located around the globe since it provides them an opportunity that they might not otherwise have to share research, review data and stay up-to-date.

While at one time, costs for video conferences were quite high and the quality of images hazy, today's new equipment and broadband access have made this quite an affordable and desirable vehicle. Businesses and corporations are using video-conferencing for client meetings, quarterly business reviews, interviews and training sessions.

To maximize a video conference, there are some things that you should know.

1. Make it easy for participants. Avoid having people download software or plug-ins if at all possible. This is cumbersome and makes people resistant.
2. Set the date for your meeting well in advance.
3. Learn what the pre-event tools are that the equipment provides. For example, does it have scheduling modules, viewer list management or document uploading capabilities?
4. Send out a well-defined agenda that clearly illuminates your expectations of participants. Since it will be difficult to read charts and

grafts remotely, it is important for people to have actual hard copies. Instruct people to review the agenda and familiarize themselves with the content of any document or slide show. If your desire is for input on each item from everyone, be sure to allow for it on your agenda.

5. Be sure to send reminders to attendees through software such as Meeting Planner.
6. If you are the facilitator, get comfortable with the media. If you have not seen or participated in a video conference, be sure to do so. Personally, meet the people who will set up the technology and handle the connection. Discuss your delivery options and screen options so that on the day of the conference, the technology will not throw you.
7. Learn what the Plan B is if participants suddenly go off line. People will be worried.
8. If possible, have multiple speakers to break up the monotony.
9. Ask interactive questions to make people feel involved. They should feel they are participating in a meeting, not attending a lecture. Use their names. Speak slowly if there are global participants. Remember, connecting with the audience is critical. Be sure to prepare your responses to any potential questions ahead of time so that your answers are crisp and people see you as confident.
10. Most communication is non-verbal. People will notice what you are doing. They will see the visual cues you are giving so pay attention to your body language.
11. If standing, pay attention to any quick movements. Due to the time delay, movement can seem distracting so it is best to minimize it or to stand still.

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12. While it is always important to emphasize your points with a gesture, make sure the gesture is slow, and not a fast, jerky motion.
13. Caution people that the tapping of pencils, fingernails and bracelets will be heard, as will the rattling of papers. Since cell phones, even on mute, create a distracting background sound, they must be turned off.

Video conferences fill a need for people to see each other and know each other when face-to-face meetings aren't possible. They allow multiple audiences in various locations around the world to be included in real-time discussions and decision-making processes. With proper preparation, participants will look forward to their next video conference and see it as a great opportunity rather than an annoyance.

*Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, [www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com](http://www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com).*