



Guidelines for Facilitators/Instructors Who Are Presenting in a Virtual World

Presenting/facilitating/instructing is different in a virtual world than it is in-person. To provide the best experience for your participants, keep the following in mind:

- Ensure that you don't have distractions. We become accustomed to interruptions from children and pets in our day-to-day meetings these days; however, you want to provide the most professional setting for this type of presentation, so please make arrangements accordingly. Put your phone(s) on mute or vibrate, or keep them in a separate room.
- Ensure that you have adequate lighting in front of you to help your face to be clearly seen. Bright backlighting or windows behind you can make you look like you're in the dark, so avoid those. If you can't avoid the windows, try blinds or shades to eliminate the backlighting problem. Regular household lighting may not be sufficient, so you may want to move a table lamp over or purchase a ring light to provide more light. Ensure that your face is evenly lit, so none of you is in shadow. Remember that for those who are hearing impaired, they may be reading your lips, so the better you can be seen, the better the experience for them. If you wear glasses, experiment with lighting until you find a solution that creates less or no glare from your glasses.
- Keep your computer camera at eye level so you are not looking up or down at participants. Placing your laptop on a few books on a table can help to accomplish this, if you don't have an adjustable height desk or table.
- Ensure that your background is professional. If you're sitting in front of a bookcase, make sure your books and items are neatly arranged and that any very personal items or pictures are put away. (A picture from your wedding may be appropriate, but a photo from your drunken college beach bash may not be something you want your coworkers to see!) Ensure that your background doesn't make you appear as though you have plants or strange objects coming out of your head and that any art is tasteful and appealing to most. You don't want anything to draw attention away from your presentation! Also, some space between you and your background is preferable, as this provides some depth when viewed on screen.
- Dress fairly simply in colors that coordinate with your background and/or your slides. This way, everything will appear harmonious to participants when they see this all together onscreen. Dress more professionally, as if you are presenting in-person. (This is not the time to model your new working from home hoodie!) Remember that busy prints, bulky scarves and crazy ties can be distracting, and sometimes even appear to "move" on camera, especially when people are looking at them in a close-up mode over a period of time.

- Do a dry run with the technology one or two times before the actual presentation to ensure that you're comfortable. If co-presenting, this is especially helpful to ensure that things go smoothly.
- Look at the camera when you present, not at the other people on the screen. It's tempting to look at others when we are speaking, but when you do this in a virtual world, they see you looking at the screen or something else, rather than directly at them. We all need to look at our slides once in a while, but looking at the camera most of the time will ensure that you have great eye contact with your participants and that they feel you are speaking directly with them.
- During the presentation, avoid touching your face, wiping your nose, playing with your hair, looking around, or any other gestures that can be distracting. On camera, these look even more distracting than they appear in person. If you must blow your nose or fix your hair, turn your camera off for just a moment to do this.
- If you're drinking a beverage during the presentation, ensure that you use a container or bottle that won't spill so you don't have any accidents. It's alright to say, "Excuse me while I get a sip of water," just as you might in an in-person presentation. You can also turn the camera off for a moment to get a drink.
- Let your personality shine through your presentation. Sometimes, we can come across a bit more serious or "dry" on camera than how we are perceived when presenting in person. We want to be professional, of course, but it's wonderful to use a slightly more animated style when presenting virtually to help our participants feel more at ease and to keep them engaged. Here are a couple of examples: If you use humor when presenting in person, don't be afraid to show that on camera. If you use your hands when you speak, you can use your hands a bit on camera. Participants will appreciate seeing your unique personality and style!

*We hope these tips are helpful to you in giving a professional-looking and sounding virtual presentation!
As they say in show business, Break-a-Leg!*