EVOTEC
InfoBrief

Introducing Video Conferencing to your organisation is an excellent opportunity to improve your meeting productivity. For productive and stress-free Video conference calls, here are some useful tips and tricks from LifeSize.

1. Keep it concise

Keep your video calls short and sweet. In today's busy world, everyone has schedules that are jam-packed and frivolous conversation is not only unproductive and time-consuming, it can be extremely frustrating. Getting your point across in a few minutes rather than an hour or two will ensure that your video participants are engaged in what you're communicating, rather than reaching for their Blackberries to cruise some email while "this long-winded dude" gets to his point.

2. Be prepared

Video conferences can often seem so lifelike, it is as if you are in the same room as the other participants. As a result, you may feel the need to catch up and schmooze before the meeting begins. Unfortunately, this can really hurt productivity. Start on time, bring an agenda and stick to it. Save the schmoozing for later.

3. Use visuals

Visuals are a great way to keep a meeting interesting and fresh. Use the data-sharing feature on your HD video endpoint to share PowerPoint presentations, videos, charts, graphs, or a Word document for real-time collaboration.

4. Record it

Unfortunately, quick projects and last-minute deadlines can pop up unexpectedly throughout one's workday. For that reason, it is important to record your video call so late or absent colleagues can tune in later, at their convenience, to catch up on the information. LifeSize® Video Center is one such solution that you can use to accomplish this task.

5. Optimise the room for video communications

Though video conferencing can be done just about anywhere, a well-designed meeting space can help make the call more aesthetically pleasing for viewers. For example, bright colors tend to heighten engagement, so paint the walls of conference room accordingly with blue, green or yellow. Lighting is also a very important factor on a video call. Make sure the room is well-lit and glare-free (close any windows to deflect outside light). Don't forget to have a little fun, too. Personalise your office or conference room with small trinkets, paintings or photographs.

6. Minimise distractions

It is important to make sure that everyone is focused on the meeting at hand. So try to remove distractions around the room. Make sure that everyone's mobile phone is off, their laptops are muted and the room is quiet. If you are sharing your screen with the other participants, try to disable pop-up notifications and close other programs like IM and e-mail.

7. Keep meetings small

The more individuals on a call, the more confusing and distracting things can be. Fewer people mean higher productivity and increased participation. Of course, if you are having a company-wide meeting, you will want everyone to join. In that case, opt for a streaming solution if you have more than 48 participants.

8. Ask for feedback

One way to improve video calls, especially if your company is new to these types of meetings, is to ask participants to fill out a short survey after their meeting. They may bring certain things to your attention that you did not even know where occurring, such as poor lighting or a choppy connection.

9. Don't interrupt!

Like slouching, butting in when the boss is talking has never been a good career move, but with VC it is even more annoying. LifeSize VC has Voice Activated Switching, so when two people are talking at the same time, it blocks out the lower-volume noise source. If your meeting is a conversation with rapid interruptions, your remote participants may struggle to keep up – only hearing half the conversation. Participants in the main host room may not notice this, because they can hear both parts of the conversation. So with VC, only one person can speak at a time. This is a good thing for communication! Pay attention to the person speaking. Turn your mobile off. Don't interrupt and don't hog the conversation. If you are chairing a VC meeting, remind people of this before the meeting starts and ask frequently if anyone has anything to add, or has a question.

10. Prepare they meeting!

Preparing visual support materials for meetings has always been a major factor to meeting success. But because VC tends to make meetings more formal, any delays in finding on-screen documents and visuals seem more embarrassing and disruptive.

11. Smile, and remember you're on camera

In the old teleconferencing days, you could respond to your colleague's feedback on your presentation by saying, "Great thinking Johnno!", at the same time rolling your eyes and circling your forefinger around your ear. With VC, your reactions are continually visible and may well be recorded for future training (which after all is one of the main reasons for your investment in an Evotec LifeSize solution). So show some enthusiasm and behave yourself – remember your reactions are on show.

12. Speak up, articulate and mind your Ps and Qs

LifeSize microphones use beam-forming technology that minimises background noise and optimises a speaker's volume to deliver class-leading audio. But the old rule of garbage in, garbage out still applies. If you have any Colonel Kurtz mumblers, verbal machine gunners, or F-bombers in your team, ask them to speak clearly, slowly and tone down the language. Consider running some presentation skills training for your staff.

13. Sit up

Slouching was never a good look, but with VC, it's a major blunder and if your meeting is recorded, it's a blunder repeated.

14. Watch what you wear

First impressions are always important, but what you wear can have an added impact on a video call. For example, small, complicated patterns and stripes can be distracting on a sharp, HD call. Choose neutral, solid colors instead. They are more flattering and can help participants focus on the content of the meeting, rather than your attire.Raise some discussion on your organisations expectations on appearance. Pre-VC, your back-room people could get away with a relaxed dress code. This may be less-than-optimal for VC meetings with corporate clients.