

How to Make Your Video Calls and Meetings More Appealing

Are you tired of video calls yet? There was something new and fun about them when we were all locked down for COVID, but now they've lost a lot of their sparkle.

For some of us who work from home, video calls can feel like an unnecessary intrusion where we need to worry about what we look like, what we're wearing, what our home office looks like, and having to run interference with kids and pets with the possibility of them entering the screen view at any moment. It adds more work and more stress to something that used to be a functional communication tool.

But it doesn't have to be that way. You can bring back the novelty and enjoyment behind seeing a face and gauging a reaction. You just need to give some thought to how you do it.



Humanizing Your Video Calls

It may seem weird to talk about humanizing something that was supposed to make phone calls more personal to begin with. But the actuality of what happened was akin to the invasive quality of dropping in on someone with only a few minutes warning because you were "in the neighborhood."

If you want to reverse the feeling of an intrusion, you must do something that couldn't be accomplished by just a phone call.

Give Warning and Be Clear

If you're hosting a video call do so with advanced warning and make sure everyone invited knows it's a video call. Many companies these days use video calling software like Zoom even with cameras are off. So, it's hard to tell what's expected from the simple invite.

You want your attendees to know you want to see them or whether you're just using the call-in Zoom number for convenience, no screens required.

Providing warning allows people (and their surroundings) to look their best and gives them advanced notice to plan for small distractions like barking dogs or cats who want to sit on keyboards.

Don't use video calls for an unexpected quick compliment, reprimand, or assignment. If you do, you're introducing unneeded stress on the other end.

Also, before scheduling a video call or meeting, ask yourself if it's necessary to see one another. If it is, go ahead. If you're just giving an update, and a face isn't necessary, forgo the video call.

Use the Tech

If you have several people joining, the chat feature can be incredibly important for keeping the conversation going without creating interruptions. Dutiful multi-taskers can host the call and monitor the questions coming in. But if you want to concentrate on the delivery of the content, place someone in charge of answering and monitoring as you go. That way everyone can remain engaged while you speak.

Whenever possible make time for questions. If you can't get to them, create an FAQ to be delivered (or posted) later to attendees based on what appears in the chat. This helps give everyone a voice and ensures they feel heard. It also is an incredible development and refinement tool if you are giving the same presentation to multiple groups. By saving the chat and reviewing it later, you can see exactly what points require additional clarification and prepare for your next presentation accordingly.

There are fun filter features where you can change backgrounds or your face (remember the CEO stuck in potato head mode?). Consider allowing your team to use these on occasion for a little comic relief, where appropriate.

Lead with Humanity

If you're the host or organizer, be human. Loosen up a little on a video call. Be less formal. Host the call from a room that doesn't look like a board room. Let your audience see more of your personality by what objects are behind you. Log on early to make small talk with those who dial-in ahead of schedule.

If you come across in a formal setting with no noise in the background and a stern look on your face jumping right into whatever you're discussing, these types of video calls will become something your employees dread. No one wants that.

These are just a few suggestions to help make video calls more tolerable. Remember, just because you can, doesn't always mean you should. Some topics warrant full face views and others can be quicker and more manageable with just a voice.

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