

Tips and Suggestions from engage2learn:

Systems for Establishing a Productive Culture in a Virtual Work Environment

How to Set Up a Virtual Meeting System and Protocols | Virtual Meetings That Work: 5 Quick Tips

Protocols	Essential Steps	Key Insights
Creating a Virtual Meeting System	Conferencing	We have found Google's Hangouts Meet to be the most versatile! Make sure you are using video-conferencing! If you don't already know why this is important, just imagine how many other things everyone will be doing if they are only on audio. You will not have productive meetings. Guaranteed.
	Calendar	Please, please, please do not start an email chain trying to find a time. Using a shared calendar and protocols makes calendaring efficient. Try using the "find a time" option on the Google calendar to send an invite at a time when people are showing as available.
	Project Management	Virtual meetings are not actionable over time without a project management system. If you have not used a project management tool before, Wrike is a great option that is free to start and very user-friendly.
Virtual Meeting Protocols	Cameras on; Mics muted.	So much of our communication as humans relies on nonverbal cues, and in virtual environments, we risk losing our ability to catch the subtle (and not-so-subtle) cues people use to express how they feel about a given situation. Keeping cameras on allows everyone in the meeting to look at each other the same as they would be able to in an in-person room.
	Use a headset.	A headset makes it easier to hear the meeting because the headset blocks out the sound in the room while only bringing the sound from the meeting closer to your ears. Laptop microphones also have a tendency to pick up a lot of background noise that gets fed into the meeting.
	Let people know you are on a call.	In light of the fact that most people working virtually in the next few months are likely to also have children or other people in their homes, it is important to let others know when you are on a call. You don't want to end up like this CNN newscaster !

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Making Virtual Meetings Actionable	Agendas	Do not schedule a meeting with a blank or open agenda. The type and content of the agenda is the secret sauce to ensuring meetings are actionable. Here is our agenda template . Always start on time regardless if everyone has joined or not. Always end on time. If you have a lot left to do, make the call with five minutes left to schedule a second meeting.
	Roles	Establish roles within the first 30 seconds of the meeting. Have people sign up for roles while everyone is joining by typing their name in the spot next to the role at the top of the agenda. Adopt a standard set of roles including: Facilitator, Notetaker, Task-Master, Time-Keeper, and Communicator.
	Goals	Determine goals within the first 3 minutes of the meeting. Start the meeting by determining the specific, tangible expectations for what is going to be accomplished in the meeting together with all of the attendees. Do not start solving the problems until all of the goals for the meeting are established. Adjust the agenda if the agenda tasks do not match the goals.
	Engage attendees	Ask questions and provide a place for everyone to add written responses; provide options and have people initial next to the one they want to select; take turns hearing from each person in the meeting on a topic; set up separate hangouts for teams of 3, have them confer, and then rejoin the meeting to share their ideas.
	Check Action Items	Leave at least 5 minutes at the end of the meeting to review the action items (AIs). You will find that when you do that, invariably, something was missed that is critical to be added. Truly actionable meetings end with action items recorded in a task management or project management system with persons assigned and due dates set for each task. If it is a project meeting, the next meeting can begin with a review of the AIs assigned. Here are a few project management platforms to consider for your organization: Wrike , Asana , Scoro , BASECAMP , and Proofhub .