Top Tips for Online Meetings
2. Involve everyone

A successful online meeting involves everyone.

Log on 30 minutes early

This gives time to test the video and audio and to upload presentations or papers. A holding slide can remind participants about meeting etiquette and display photos and biographies of the main speakers. It is a good idea to have someone there to welcome people as they log in and help with any technical issues.

Create a welcoming environment

Use the pre-meeting time as an informal space for participants to introduce themselves and get comfortable.

Start with an icebreaker

This can be done before the meeting to give people a chance to get to know each other – or at the start of the meeting. Ask people a simple question which they can answer in the chat box, or hold a quick poll.

Give clear instructions and housekeeping information

Remind people of things that will help the meeting to run smoothly. Should they put microphones on mute when not talking? Should they have their camera on or off? Are you using the chat box, "raise hand" functionality and so on?

Will presentations be shared after the meeting? Will you be recording the meeting? What will happen to the recording?

The larger the meeting, the more strict these instructions have to be.

Introduce the speakers

Ideally you will have shared photos and biographies of the speakers in advance so participants know if there will be more than one speaker. Signal changes in speaker clearly to avoid confusion.

Asking questions

A general question to all participants can result in several people talking over each other, or else an uncomfortable silence. Start the conversation with a direct question to a named individual and encourage the others to use the chat box.

Be strict about having breaks

Tell people when the breaks are going to be so that if necessary they can plan their support around these times.

Keep the meeting short

People's attention easily wanders online. Keep meetings as short as possible and use different methods to keep people engaged – including presentations, videos, polls and breakout sessions. Aim to have something changing on-screen every 30 seconds or so.

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