

# Use Virtual Meeting Training to Improve the Success of Your Virtual Events



Effective virtual events – meetings, education sessions, conferences – have several things in common, regardless of the size of the event. They all have participants that are prepared and engaged as well as strong moderators, speakers, facilitators, etc., who know how to make that engagement happen.



Whether this is your first virtual event or your fifteenth, it can help to provide virtual meeting attendees a reminder of what they should (and shouldn't) be doing during a virtual event. Some things – like reminding them to log on a few minutes early to ensure their technology is operating properly and providing a chance to review the agenda before the meeting – can go out ahead of time. But there are a number of other reminders that would be useful to provide at the start of the event.

## **Provide Virtual Meeting Guidance and Direction at the Start of the Meeting**

To help ensure everyone understands their role and your expectations, give a quick overview once everyone has logged in. This helps get everyone “on the same page” and should include an overview of important virtual meeting protocols, e.g., what attendees can do to remain engaged and how to participate more effectively, while making it easy for other attendees to do the same.

Here are some ideas for your virtual meeting training. Find what works best for your association chapter and your agenda, to better engage members virtually and provide attendees with the experience they were expecting.

**Using the technology.** For some, attending virtual meetings, and participating in them, is easy. They've been doing them for a long time, or they're comfortable with technology. For others, it may be more challenging. To make it easier for everyone, cover things like:

- Changing their name
- Muting and unmuting
- Using the chat – including messaging all attendees versus having a private conversation with another person
- Turning cameras off and on
- Using the Raise Your Hand function
- Testing the technology – Wi-Fi, microphone, camera, screen sharing, etc. – if they haven't already

**Removing distractions.** Remind everyone to silence their phones and move them out of reach, so they're not answering calls, texting or answering emails during the meeting. You may want to ask them to turn off email and messaging notifications for the device they're using to participate in the event, so they're not distracted by notifications that come in during the meeting and attendees aren't hearing the sound of each new notification.

**Following basic virtual protocols.** Of course each meeting will need a different set of rules depending on the kind of event, the audience, etc., but there are some basic guidelines everyone should follow. Having ground rules like these are critical to a successful virtual meeting as they help guide the behavior of all attendees.

- If the group is small enough, have everyone introduce themselves.
- For audio events, ask those speaking to say their names each time they speak, so it's easier to follow who's said what.
- Ask participants to mute themselves unless they're speaking and to give everyone a chance to participate.
- Allow others to speak and don't interrupt someone to get a point across.
- Read the agenda before the meeting and come prepared.
- Be in a quiet area where they can listen and participate fully.



The most important may just be a reminder to practice common courtesy. People want to be heard, seen, and respected during a virtual meeting—just like they would want if they were meeting in person.

It's all about holding the training that's right for your association chapter and your event. In those industries where virtual meetings still haven't become the norm, some people may require more in-depth training and even a standalone training session to go into all of these in a bit more detail and have time to answer questions.

