

BEST PRACTICES FOR ONLINE EVENTS

COMMUNICATING & COLLABORATING IN A VIRTUAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

Three Types of Online Events

MEETINGS / VIDEO CONFERENCES

Used for collaboration, decision making, status updates, and action items. May or may not use video.

WEBCASTS / WEBINARS

One-way presentations from a speaker (or panel of speakers) who shares information with an audience

VIRTUAL TRAINING / CLASSES

Facilitated learning events for skill-building and/or on-the-job behavior change. Run in small groups.

SUCCESSFUL ONLINE EVENTS

The best virtual events have three things in common:

- Interactive Design
- Engaging Delivery
- Prepared Participants

Five Best Practices for Online Meetings

- 1 Define what type of event you are having.** Is it an online meeting? A webcast presentation? A video conference? Or a training class? Make sure everyone is on the same page in advance of the event.
- 2 Select the right platform.** Decide which platform features you'll need (polls? breakouts? etc.) and choose the best web conferencing tool to match.
- 3 Prepare speakers.** Teach them the technology platform and help them learn virtual facilitation skills. Allow them enough time to get ready.
- 4 Use a moderator or co-facilitator for high-stakes events.** Factor in extra time to prepare and rehearse together with the speakers.
- 5 Set participants up for success.** Set expectations in advance, and help them know how to successfully connect from their desk or other space.

EFFECTIVE VIRTUAL FACILITATORS...

- Are technology savvy (& willing to learn)
- Able to multi-task effectively
- Can engage an remote audience
- Make learners feel comfortable with the technology and the virtual environment
- Set expectations in advance
- Use headsets for verbal communication
- Partner with producers and co-facilitators/ speakers

Notes

Four Simple Ways to Engage a Remote Audience

Effective virtual events engage participants, create a comfortable space for dialogue, and allow for collaborations. Use these four techniques to engage a remote audience:

- Set them up for success with information and resources needed.
- Start early, with a soft opening
- Create a social experience
- Invite frequent interaction, at least every 4 minutes

Four Tips for Using Webcams

Use live video to help create community, anytime there's enough bandwidth available. Ensure the following:

- Put light in front of you
- Place camera at eye level
- Have appropriate distance from camera (use palm technique for measurement)
- Be aware of your background

Three Challenges of the Participant Experience

One big benefit of virtual events is the ability of participants to stay in their own workspace, not having to travel to an in-person event. However, one of the biggest challenges is that participants don't have to leave their workspace. It should be a virtual facilitator's goal to move participants from feeling...

- Isolated.... to Connected
- Uncertain.... to Confident
- Distracted... to Engaged

Use the techniques listed above to assist participants with this transition.

Notes:

TIPS TO CREATE YOUR BEST VOICE:

- Use the right volume
- Stand up
- Exude enthusiasm and energy
- Exaggerate your voice
- End strong, don't trail off
- Drink room temperature water
- Record yourself and listen: how do you sound?

ABOUT CINDY HUGGETT:

Cindy is the author of four books on virtual training, including *Virtual Training Basics, 2nd ed*, *The Virtual Training Guidebook: How to Design, Deliver, and Implement Live Online Learning* and *Virtual Training Tools and Templates: An Action Guide to Live Online Learning*.

She helps trainers, designers, and organizations move to the virtual classroom.

Contact her today:
www.cindyhuggett.com

cindy@cindyhuggett.com
or via twitter [@cindyhugg](https://twitter.com/cindyhugg)