

Boost Engagement for Online Presentations

The following checklist is designed to remind you of the elements of an online presentation that can provide an optimal experience for both the speaker and the audience.

STRATEGIES FOR BOOSTING ENGAGEMENT

- ☐ Look into the camera when presenting so the audience can feel the eye contact
- ☐ At the start of the presentation do or say something unusual or interesting to grab the audience's attention
- ☐ Incorporate storytelling whenever possible
- ☐ Encourage audience to turn their video on to make it a more human experience for all
- ☐ It takes practice, diligence, and discipline to remember to look into the camera
- ☐ Use Zoom engagement tools often—polls, chat, Q&A, annotations, breakout rooms, and reactions
- ☐ Become familiar enough with your presentation that you don't have to rely on notes or a script
- ☐ Imagine a very interested person you know is inside the camera lens

EQUIPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

- ☐ Eliminate distractions—close unneeded apps, close email, close all browser tabs except for those needed, turn off computer notifications, silence or remove phones, turn off digital assistants (Alexa), put "do not disturb" sign on front door, keep kids occupied
- ☐ Internet connection—ethernet preferred. If WiFi, make sure signal is good and strong. Turn off or minimize use of other internet-using devices in the house
- ☐ If no virtual background, clean up your background scene and simplify as much as possible
- ☐ Make sure the room doesn't echo. Putting the microphone close to your mouth can fix this.
- ☐ Preferred devices for presenting online—laptop and desktop computers
- ☐ Make sure camera lens is clean
- ☐ Camera should be at or just above eye level

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LIGHTING

- ☐ Position light source in front of you, and optimally two lights at 45-degree angles
- ☐ Eliminate any “light bombs” in your background
- ☐ Avoid using ceiling lights directly overhead
- ☐ LED light panels—use bi-color and dimmable (ring lights not recommended)

AUDIO

- ☐ If using laptop’s built-in microphone, perform sound tests to verify quality. Earbuds with microphone are best option for laptops
- ☐ Built-in microphones on desktop computers are often fine. Perform sound check to ensure quality
- ☐ External podcast-style microphones great quality—must keep within 2 inches of your mouth
- ☐ External headphones with built-in microphone. Don’t scrimp here. Pay \$100 or more
- ☐ Check Zoom audio settings every session to ensure correct microphone is chosen in Zoom

ZOOM

- ☐ Virtual backgrounds take a lot of processing power from the computer. Use virtual backgrounds with care
- ☐ If virtual background used, keep gestures to a minimum and don’t attempt any hands-on demonstrations
- ☐ PowerPoint can be used as a virtual background

POWERPOINT

- ☐ Speaker development tools—see YouTube for tutorials on how to use these tools
- ☐ Microsoft offers free online account with access to PowerPoint, Word, and Excel
- ☐ Microsoft PowerPoint Online’s feature “Rehearse with Coach” a power and feature-rich speaker-development tool
- ☐ Create videos using PowerPoint

PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!

- ☐ Record yourself in PowerPoint
- ☐ Practice with PowerPoint Online’s “Rehearse with Coach” feature
- ☐ Record yourself in Zoom (with a free account)
- ☐ Schedule dry runs in Zoom and invite your friends
- ☐ Join a speaker development organization like Toastmasters