TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL VIDEO CALL

Remote video calls are crucial in a time that doesn't allow us to collaborate face-to-face, but the digital tools have their own quirks and challenges. Below are a few tips and tricks to help you navigate video conference calls, but not all of them are intuitive. To help us all adjust to these new best practices, we're sharing an adaptation of 12 do's and don'ts of successful video call etiquette, created by Lemonlight.com: lemonlight.com/blog/12-dos-and-donts-of-successful-video-call-etiquette/

1. **Do test your camera and microphone ahead of time.**

   This is especially important if you're using a new software tool or logging in from a new computer. When you start using video conferencing software, you're often met with pop-ups asking you to authorize this, enable that, and so on. If you haven't done this in advance, everyone else will be waiting on you to get set up. Save everyone the time by doing this ahead of time.

2. **Do choose a location with good lighting.**

   Lighting is essential for video calls, so be mindful of the way light hits your workspace. Ideally, you'll want to be near natural light but without harsh light shining directly on you. You could run a test of your webcam camera to make sure the lighting looks good about ten minutes before the call starts.

3. **Do introduce yourself before you start talking.**

   Unless you're incredibly familiar with everyone on the call (like, you work together on a daily basis), introduce yourself at the beginning of the call. This helps with putting faces to names and facilitating remote team bonding. (Bonus tip: If you're on a conference call without video, you'll need to introduce yourself even more often. Not everyone will recognize you by just your voice, so it can be helpful to say something like, "This is John—to that point, I think…" to clue everyone into which comments are coming from each person.)

4. **Do dress appropriately (from the waist up, at least!).**

   Stay in your sweatpants if you must but be certain to wear something to appropriately cover your upper body. If there's a graphic design on your top, please consider the content to ensue the focus is on the conversation.

5. **Do mute yourself or minimize your background noise.**

   It's a good habit to mute yourself whenever you're not speaking so that other participants don't have to hear any background noise in your space. Background noise might include the sound of you typing, your child yelling your name from the next room, a siren blaring down the street, or any number of other distractions.

6. **Do warn anyone around you that you're going to be on a call.**

   Speaking of eliminating background noise, if you are using a shared space, you should let the others know that you're about to be on a video call. We've all heard horror stories of a significant other walking behind the camera in their underwear, a child running into the room unprompted, or a takeover by a pet needing some cuddle time.

7. Don't request a video call if all you need is a phone call.

Although seeing someone face to face might seem like the best option, consider when it is most appropriate. If there is no need to share screens or interact visually, you might want to consider a traditional phone call. This eliminates many of the connectivity issues and reduces the need to be concerned with what you're wearing.

8. Don't be late.

This one should go without saying, but don't be late! Some people think of video calls as being less official than in-office correspondence, but there's no reason for that distinction. Treat a video call as seriously as you would an in-office meeting and show up on time.

9. Don't rely on body language to make your point.

To all the "I talk with my hands" people out there—yes, you can still use gestures and other body language clues to enhance your message, but these movements are more distracting on a video call than they are in person.

Try to keep movements to a minimum whenever possible, and definitely don't use body language or gestures to make a point that you don't make verbally. For example, if you point to a chart behind you, you should verbally explain which chart you're pointing to. You can't assume that everyone's eyes are glued to the screen, so explain again in words whenever you make a gesture that's especially important.

10. Don't interrupt when someone else is talking.

This should go without saying as it's just as important in the real world as it is on video calls, but don't interrupt other people while they're talking. You may accidentally talk over someone if you both start talking at the same time, but correct this as quickly as possible and give one person the floor. Otherwise, no one can hear you anyway, so it's in your best interest to hold off on interruptions and let one person speak at a time.

11. Don't multitask in the background.

Video meetings (like all meetings) are not the time to catch up on email, scroll through social media news feeds, or do any other work that's not relevant to the meeting you're in. It can be tougher to stay focused during a virtual meeting, but it's even more important because it's easier to tell who isn't paying attention. Pay attention to the meeting that's in front of you, and do the other stuff as soon as it's over.

12. Don't forget to log out completely when you're done.

Make sure you correctly close out of the chat or turn off your camera and mic when you're done. Most platforms will shut everyone out of the meeting space as soon as the meeting host closes the window, but not all of them work that way. To maintain your privacy after the call ends, make sure you close out of the call window.

There you have it! As we transition to video calls, hopefully these best practices become more ingrained in everyone's minds over time. Please be aware that violations please be aware that violations to video-conferencing etiquette may result in calls being disconnected or referrals to the Office of Student Conduct: **www.cscc.edu/services/student-conduct/**

COLUMBUS STATE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE