



QUICK TIPS FOR KEEPING VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED

Excerpted from our tips guide, "[Planning and Leading Exceptional Virtual Meetings](#)"

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Instead of asking everyone to mute their lines unless speaking, try asking everyone to stay *off* mute. That way, multitasking becomes more obvious, and people are more likely to jump into the conversation. This does mean that ambient noise be kept to a minimum and that people who have noisy backgrounds mute their phones as needed.

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Assigning a few different people specific roles will help keep people paying attention. For example, you might ask one person to be scribe, another to be timekeeper, another to lead the conversation, one to create the agenda, and another to maintain a list of actions and issues. You can rotate roles every so often to involve more people over the course of several meetings.

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At the start of the meeting, ask whether anyone has any distractions or obligations that may prevent them from participating fully in this meeting. If so, ask them to take a minute or two to finish up. If people need to exit the call, request that they

let everyone know when they need to jump off and whether they plan to come back on.

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Make sure the meeting is relevant for all who attend, minimizing opportunities for disinterest and boredom. This means selecting the right participants, clarifying goals and defining roles up front.

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Keep the conversations flowing. Be prepared with questions to stimulate conversation and keep the energy level high. Have questions prepared in advance in case energy flags, or if you need to redirect the flow.

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Vary the way you ask questions, call on people in a different way, or use a different order each time to keep people alert.

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If you sense that people are disengaged or restless, stop to take a temperature check. You might set up a simple survey with a 1-5 scale and ask people to vote on their energy level, perception of how well the meeting is meeting objectives so far, or relative sense of excitement for the topic at hand. Knowing how people are feeling and thinking will help you to quickly make needed adjustments to ensure that the meeting stays on track and people stay actively engaged.