

RUNNING "HYBRID" MEETINGS

#49

Creating a level playing field is an important way to keep all people equally involved and engaged. Instead of having some people in a room while others are remote, try having everyone participate remotely if possible. This way, fewer people are likely to feel alienated or disadvantaged and are more likely to feel that all are equal players. If most participants who work together sit near each other, they may hear echoes if all are on a call together. Plan for this in advance by asking people to change office locations for a call.

#50

Use a good-quality speaker phone, making sure it is well positioned and away from distracting table noises for people who call in. Make sure speakers are centrally placed. Test audio capability at the start of the call so you can calibrate whether in-person participants need to shift location when they speak.

#51

Try using a visual reminder of phone participants. For example, make a large tent card with the virtual participants' names and ideally, their photos. Place them around the table, or around the phone, and make sure they can be seen by all. You can also try tying a balloon to the phone as a reminder that there are participants on the other end of the phone.

#52

When going around the room to ask for opinions or ideas, start with those on the phone to make sure you don't inadvertently leave them behind.

#53

Ask all face-to-face participants to describe any activities that cannot be guessed at without visual cues—such as writing on a flipchart, drawing a picture, or underlining important words on a flipchart.

#54

Make sure that you describe out loud any observations that convey important nonverbal communication, such as: “Everyone is nodding” or “People are rolling their eyes.”

#55

Limit the time that phone participants must spend in any given hybrid meeting. Invite them to participate only at critical junctures, such as to give input at the start of the call, review the output of the group at the end, or to provide important perspectives related to a particular topic. It’s unfair to everyone if virtual phone participants are left hanging for hours with little to do.