

Etiquette for a Multi-Point Videoconference

Advance Preparations

1. **Be on time!** The start and end of videoconferences are pre-programmed. Videoconference systems not turned on at the appropriate times will not be able to join the multi-point conference.
2. Provide all participants with the meeting agenda that includes conference date, time, participants and a contact name and phone number.
3. Make sure each speaking participant has a clear understanding of his role in the conference.
4. Build in time for audience interaction, which gives the meeting a more traditional feel.
5. Provide participants with instructions in the event of technical problems or a disconnection.
6. Use a facilitator to ensure full participation, especially if more than two sites are involved.
7. Advise participants to avoid wearing anything too distracting, such as clanking and/or flashy jewelry, or boldly striped or flowered clothes.
8. Request that all participants be ready 15 minutes prior to actual start time.

Getting the Room Ready

1. Prepare the conference room at least 1 hour before the meeting.
2. Be sure video equipment is on and functioning at 1 hour before the meeting.
3. Adjust camera angles; be aware of the lighting, angle, and focus.
4. Keep curtains and blinds closed to reduce glare, avoid sitting in front of a window.
5. Minimize background noise by closing doors to prevent outside noises from being heard by other sites.
6. Put a sign on the table to identify your site. This is especially important when several sites are participating.
7. Place microphone away from TV monitor and lower TV volume to a reasonable level.
8. Mute your microphone whenever you aren't speaking and never move your microphone across a table unless it is muted. *Shuffling papers while microphone is on can be heard 10 times as loud at the other sites.*

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During the Meeting

1. For interactive videoconferences, introduce the speakers and attendees from each site before beginning. State the purpose and agenda of the videoconference.
2. To maximize conference time, stick to the agenda as closely as possible.
3. To avoid distracting background noises that affect audio quality, non-speaking participants should mute their sites until it is their turn to speak, or until a designated question-and-answer period.
4. Encourage participants to address other conference participants by name when responding to questions to avoid confusion during interaction.
5. Organize presentations in short segments to help the audience better retain information to which they would like to respond.
6. Make the most of highly visual printed materials such as colorful charts and graphs to communicate key points, and use clear vocal cues before introducing new material.
7. Be aware of the image you are projecting to the "world" - avoid faces and gestures that would appear inappropriate to those watching. Appropriate language, questions and comments are a must.
8. Avoid sending unintended signals with careless body language, such as pencil tapping, chair swiveling and finger drumming, which may convey anxiety or boredom. *Also, remember that lips can sometimes be read during videoconferences.*
9. It is good practice to mute your own audio when you are not speaking.

Determining Conference Type

Broadcast: Allows attendees to view and hear the speaker. The speaker can hear and respond to audience comments when attendees ask questions. This is ideal when the objective is to deliver critical information to a large audience at multiple sites (**8 or more videoconference sites**). All participants see one site, whichever site is speaking.

Multi-Point Videoconference: Conference among 3 or more videoconference sites. Each site can see and hear each other. This is ideal when interaction is needed among participants (**best between 3 and 8 videoconference sites**). A visual image of the Hollywood Squares game show or the Brady Bunch can best summarize this type of conference.

Audio Conference: If your meeting is heavy on audio and requires little or no visuals, consider a traditional audio conference, which is far less costly to execute because it does not require video.

** All above-mentioned conferences can be initiated by the New Jersey Department of Corrections.*