

Thorsten Jekel and Thomas Skipwith

30 Minutes  
Online Meetings

((Imprint / Page 2))

30-Minute Series

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You will know more in 30 minutes!

This book is designed to enable you to absorb concise and sound information in a short time. A guidance system will guide you through the book. It allows you to grasp the essentials within your personal time allotment (from 10 to 30 minutes).

Short reading time

You can read the whole book in 30 minutes. If you have less time, read only those passages that contain important information for you.

All important information is printed in blue.

Key questions with page references at the beginning of each chapter allow for quick orientation: you turn directly to the page that closes your knowledge gap.

***Numerous summaries within the chapters allow for quick cross reading.***

A fast reader at the end of the book summarizes all the important aspects

A register makes it easier to look up.

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## Foreword

Whether it's the volcanic eruption in Iceland, the corona virus worldwide, new working models, environmental protection and time savings through less travel: everything speaks for the fact that more and more virtual work is being done - in the home office, in the company and on the beach, for internal presentations and customer meetings. With this development we are at the interface between technology and rhetoric. On the one hand, a professional use of technology and on the other hand, many elements of rhetoric are needed to make an online presentation and an online meeting attractive. In this book we show you many possibilities how to use technology and rhetoric successfully. We have already tried out and successfully used the tips and tricks in this book in many online meetings. Of course, we are also constantly learning new things. Do it right away. Also: If you have discovered something new, let us know.

We hope to make a contribution, make your life easier and ensure that there are less boring presentations - especially online.

For a better reading flow, the simultaneous use of the female and male form is avoided.

We wish you much inspiration and success in your future online meetings.

Thorsten Jekel and Thomas Skipwith  
Berlin and Oberwil-Lieli (near Zurich), September 2020



30 minutes

***What are the challenges of online meetings?***

***Page***

***What is the attention span?***

***Page***

***For whom is the effort of an online meeting greater, for whom smaller?***

***Page***

# 1. Challenges

If online meetings and online presentations only had advantages, they would have become established years ago. Because virtual meetings and experiences pose new challenges for meeting leaders and trainers, the better you know them, the better you can make your online meetings and trainings attractive for your participants.

## **1.1 People learn with all their senses**

It has now been well researched that we remember messages and experiences much better if as many senses as possible are addressed. Especially if it is a training and we can imitate something and try it out for ourselves. This is one of the central reasons for live meetings and training. Those who just sit passively around, sooner or later fall asleep. Even two liters of coffee are of no use. So make an effort to interact during the online meeting as well. Because in an online meeting, usually only two of the five senses are addressed. So use surveys during your presentation, for example. Greet the participants by name at the beginning and make small talk with them. Ask the participants a few casual questions right at the beginning. For example: "What industry or location are you from? Are there participants from the XYZ sector? Do you already have experience with ABC? " "By show of hands: Who is here voluntarily? "Once you have done a survey, briefly go into the survey results and present them to your audience.

### ***Technology limits the visual and acoustic experience***

If only two senses are involved in the experience of online meetings anyway, technology - especially on the participant side - further reduces the experience. This is because the meeting leader has little or no influence on

the technical conditions of the participants. A live presentation or session is also acoustically superior to PC speakers or home speakers. The same applies to image transmission, in which the participant only sees a small section of the image of the person opposite. This depends on where the camera pans to and how large the image detail shown is. In real sessions these limitations do not exist. So make sure right at the beginning of your online meeting that most participants can hear and see you well. Make sure that the technology on your site is (at least) good. If you see a bad picture and/or hear a bad sound, switch off quickly.

## **1.2 The attention span is short**

Most people's attention span is particularly short on the Internet. It is now even said that a goldfish with nine seconds has a higher attention span than we humans with only eight seconds. You can counteract this with a well thought-out concept, interactive elements and invitations such as: "It is best to close all browsers". Ask your participants to do something regularly. Also offer variety, e.g. by alternating between individual presentations and interview situations. In this book we will discuss the different possibilities.

## **1.3 Do not underestimate the effort**

Thanks to online meetings, considerable costs can be saved. Travel and accommodation costs, catering costs and room rental are all eliminated. On the other hand, the meeting leader or trainer has to make some additional technical effort to make the meeting a success online. After all, nothing is worse than technical problems at the beginning of an online meeting or the participants falling asleep during the meeting.

*((Z1))*

*The effort required for an exciting and interactive online meeting is usually greater than for a conventional meeting. Therefore take enough time for preparation.*

30 minutes

***Which provider should I choose?***

***Page***

***What do I have to pay attention to with the hardware?***

***Page***

***What does an optimal setup look like?***

***Page***

## 2. Technology

Online meetings are unthinkable without hardware and software. A webcam, microphone and a stable Internet connection are the minimum requirements for a successful online meeting. Video conferencing allows for interaction with the participants and helps to guide the audience. More on this on page 45.

The top priority of technology should always be: "Technology is good if you don't notice it." (Thilo Baum) To describe the respective technical advantages and disadvantages of individual solutions in detail here is difficult and quickly outdated. Nevertheless, we would like to briefly compare the currently common providers so that you can see what is worth paying attention to.

## 2.1 Video conferencing platform providers

The most popular providers in the market for online meetings and video conferencing are Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Google Hangout and Google Meet, WebEx, GoToMeeting, Bluejeans and Jitsi. All of these solutions are very powerful, but each has specific advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, it is worthwhile to compare them in order to choose the solution that suits you best.

The most important decision criteria are:

- Stability
- Number of participants with/without video
- Screen sharing options
- Interaction possibilities via chat
- Interfaces to whiteboard solutions
- Option of splitting into subgroups
- Data protection
- Available platforms
- User-friendliness
- Integration in companies
- Costs

MS Teams, for example, has the advantage of particularly good integration into the Microsoft world and support for work organization in departments and project teams.



It is Microsoft's structured answer to the bestseller Slack. Teams are often already available in the company within the framework of an Office 365 license and can therefore be used without additional costs. With MS Teams, even up to 10 000 viewers can be added at no extra cost. Teams is also constantly being further developed by Microsoft. While at the beginning only a maximum of four participants could be shown in the video, this number had already risen to 49 by the time the book went to press. In addition, it offers, among other things, a common file storage area, and it can be expanded modularly.

Skype is the consumer version of Skype for Business, which is now integrated into teams by Microsoft. Both services can communicate with each other. This trend is also becoming more and more established across manufacturers. The keyword here is interoperability. This means that in future you will be less dependent on which video conferencing solutions your customers and business partners use. Today, for example, we use all common providers to adapt to our customers. You should do the same, because the worm should taste good to the fish and not to the angler.

Zoom is by far the most stable and powerful videoconferencing solution for most requirements. Thanks to its various interfaces, it can be integrated very well into other systems. Meanwhile, it is also well encrypted and can be used GDPR-compliant if it is set

correctly. Zoom, like most systems, can be used not only with PCs but also with conference room systems. This makes sense in companies where meetings are to be started in meeting rooms at the push of a button. Most of these solutions also have a conference room spider. This is a table microphone system with several directional microphones that ensures the best possible sound without the participants having to wear a headset.

If you need a little more privacy, you should take a look at blue jeans as a zoom alternative. The solution is almost as comfortable as Zoom and also allows for the division into breakout rooms. However, the data security is somewhat higher here. For example, it is a system used by DATEV (a German software house and IT service provider for tax consultants, auditors and lawyers).

Google offers Hangout, a variant for end customers, and Meet, a business solution for video telephony. The main difference is the number of participants, which is significantly lower with the private customer variant. Similar to Teams for Microsoft customers, Google Meet is included in the G-Suite for corporate customers. In general, the G-Suite is a very good alternative for Office 365. Many well-known companies rely on this solution and, as corporate customers with Google, pay with money and not with their data.

WebEx has been a rather unpopular system in many companies in the past because it was rather unfriendly to use. This has now changed significantly. The current

versions are easy to use and very powerful. Furthermore, there are many good conference room systems for this purpose. We particularly like the zoom function on the iPhone in landscape format. So you can even view shared documents in video conferences on the iPhone.

If you have the focus on webinars, you should take a look at GoToMeeting. This solution has a very powerful webinar option. The main difference between the meeting and webinar solutions of all providers is that in meetings usually all participants can activate their video and sound, whereas in webinar solutions this is only possible after approval by the webinar leader.

If you want to set up your own server for your video conferences, Jitsi is a highly recommended solution. However, you should make sure that you have enough internet bandwidth available for your own server, and the cost of running your own server should not be underestimated. In any case, you should put the solution through its paces before you use it in a customer environment. With many participants, other solutions are often much more stable.

As the services of the providers are developing almost weekly, you will receive a tabular comparison of the most important providers as a reader service for this book at [www.jekelteam.de/onlinemeetings](http://www.jekelteam.de/onlinemeetings). On this page you will also find further bonus material for this book.

*((Z1))*

*Compare the different providers and choose the one that best suits your needs. We have a current comparison available for you online.*

## **2.2 Hardware**

### ***Camera***

Unfortunately, the webcams installed at the factory usually have a very poor picture quality. Therefore, an external webcam is always recommended. The classic is the Logitech C920 HD. At the time of going to press, we believe it has a very good price/performance ratio and works smoothly with all systems. In addition, it even has a tripod thread and can therefore be used very flexibly. With a free additional software from Logitech you can even adjust many more settings and zoom factor.

Every new generation smartphone has a better camera built in than many laptops and desktops. Therefore you can also use this camera. The best way to do this is to install the EpocCam app, which is available for all common operating systems.

If you have a camcorder, you can also connect it to your computer as a USB webcam using an adapter. This is possible without any additional software, for example with the Elgato CamLink 4K.

## *Exposure*

Your face and body should be clearly visible. Therefore make sure that there is no window behind you. The webcam cannot produce a good picture of you with a bright background - the background becomes bright, you are poorly lit, sometimes almost black. It is also unfavorable if the sun (suddenly) shines in from the front. The bright rays of the sun do not only disturb you in your face, but also the webcam.

If you often attend online meetings, it pays to invest in professional lamps, e.g. a ring light.

Tip: people who wear glasses should make sure that their lenses do not reflect the light from headlights or windows. This is because your eyes can then no longer be seen, or only poorly. If you also wear contact lenses, we recommend wearing them instead of your glasses at online meetings. To prevent light from being reflected, you should change the angle of incidence of the light. If you use a soft box or LED panels for lighting, this is particularly easy: move them or position them a little higher. In daylight, you need to move their position in relation to the window or work with a day curtain.

The professional pays attention to the color temperature between white and yellow. The white daylight looks cold, a tone balance with yellow makes the skin color look more natural.

If you want to be shown as a speaker with more depth, i.e. 3D, the lighting technician recommends a pointed

light in addition. It comes from behind and illuminates shoulders and head.

## *Clothing*

Although they sometimes present from their home office, speakers also look more professional in a suit and tie than in boxer shorts and baggy T-shirt in front of the webcam.

As with exposure, white dresses and shirts are not suitable. To light your face correctly, you would have to adjust the brightness of the webcam by hand in this case. If you want to save yourself this effort, it is best to put on at least a light blue shirt from the outset, or additionally a plain dark jacket.

## *Skin type*

Also consider your skin type. Depending on your skin type, your clothes and the background you choose will make you look pale or powerfully vibrant.

## ***Headphones and microphone***

Thanks to headphones and microphone, calls often sound much better for everyone. If you don't have a microphone, use headphones anyway. Really. Even a cheap pair of headphones helps (if you don't want to invest in an external microphone). Or you can use a podcast- or clip-on microphone. A good option is also to

use a single-ear headset. This leaves you with one ear free in case you need to make parallel calls. This is especially helpful in case of dial-up problems of the participants. On the book's website you will find our latest hardware recommendations.

### *Microphone on mute*

If you are not speaking, we recommend that you mute your microphone. For groups of more than three people, this is an important etiquette. It is also a good rule, regardless of the size of your group, if you have children or pets or if unexpected sounds such as street noise frequently occur in your surroundings.

The moderator of the online meeting should always be prepared to mute all participants except the speaker. This prevents disturbing noises, conversations and noise from one of the participants.

A headset with a mute switch is also recommended, especially in order to be able to react quickly to sneezing attacks. This is always quicker than setting it on the computer. The tricky thing is, however, that you often forget to deactivate the mute button and you wonder why you don't hear any sound even though the computer settings are activated.

Muting is done with two clicks if you as the host first mute all participants and then unmute yourself.

## ***Tripod***

With a tripod you can ensure that the spectators do not see your nostril perspective (freely after Klaus Siedenhans). And you will also not see the ceiling. In this way, the audience will not focus on your chin or the ceiling, but on you and what you have to say.

Instead of a tripod you can also use a sturdy shoe box or a cooking pot (idea by Robert Spengler). The latter you simply turn around and place your laptop on it. The camera is already much higher than without. This is also possible with a stack of beverage crates (idea by Joachim Simon).

## **2.3 For advanced learners**

### ***Software***

For interactions the tool Mentimeter is very suitable. With this tool you can ask questions to the participants and meanwhile even organize quizzes. There is no room for boredom. Word clouds can be used to identify key terms and the results can be exported as PDF or Excel files.

With Padlet you can create a digital pinboard and work on it as a team. You can use it for kanban boards, digital metaplan walls and photo walls, among other things.

The important thing about all interaction tools is that they are easy to use and very fluid. That is why the following two services are our personal favorites:



Ecamm Live (Mac only): With this software you can work like in a TV studio. With buttons you decide what is to be displayed / streamed at the moment. You can select different cameras, YouTube clips, PowerPoint presentations etc. The result (output signal) from Ecamm can then be fed into your video conferencing solution as a virtual webcam.

A good alternative to Ecamm is Prezi Video. It allows, like Ecamm Live, to show an additional layer in the same window where you are displayed. This small video on YouTube introduces the function: <https://youtu.be/iK79dwcgqlA>.

If you prefer to work with hardware - i.e. prefer to press buttons to switch inputs - you can use the ATEM Mini video mixer, for example, to mix several inputs into one programme. The video mixer is connected to your computer via USB-C and is also recognized as a webcam. The ATEM Mini is available in stores for about 320 EUR. Please note: The HDMI-cables you have to buy additionally.

## ***Second device***

Dial in with a second device so you can see what it looks and sounds like to the participants. This way you can answer the common questions such as "Can you see me? Can you hear me? ", most of the time.

## ***Second screen***

A second screen can help you keep track of several open windows. Sometimes even a third screen is useful. If you have an iPad, you can use it as a second display for your Mac or PC with the Duet Display software. If you have a recent Mac, this feature is even built into the operating system. The function is called Sidecar and you can find it in the Mac settings.

((box blue, non-serif))

## ***Time delay between picture and sound***

Feed the sound directly into the camera. In this way, the signals for picture and sound arrive at the streaming software simultaneously. Otherwise, you will have to use software that can delay the sound. With the ATEM Mini mentioned above, you can even set this directly.

((box end))

*If a clear picture and good sound are important to you, invest in an external webcam and microphone. In addition, a tripod is often helpful for a targeted picture. Advanced users use additional software and hardware.*

## 2.4 Background

### *Virtual backgrounds*

Often the background in the home office does not look very tidy. To look more professional - and not have to tidy up - there are several options.

The simplest option is a matt white dialect screen in the background. You can simply set this up as required. Ideally, you should wear something dark to ensure the contrast.

Many tools, such as teams and zoom, also offer the possibility of virtual backgrounds. These work best in front of monochrome surfaces, such as the canvas just mentioned or a green screen.

A virtual background is possible with most tools - with zoom it is particularly easy.

You can create virtual backgrounds yourself (1280 x 720 pixels) or download them from the Internet. In the latter case, make sure that you have / have received the rights. A good source for ready-made backgrounds (including videos) is [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com). However, always make sure that the background does not distract viewers too much from the content of the session.

You can find more free images on [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com) and [Pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com).

If you want to be really professional on the road, then work with a green screen. So the camera will also display your gestures without any problems. Otherwise, the combination of camera and virtual background is too slow for fast movements, resulting in blurred or "fish-skinned" movements.

Depending on whether you are working with or without a green screen, you should check whether or not the checkbox for green screen is set in the software. In this way you will create the best possible background.

With the above mentioned ATEM Mini Video Mixer you can already easily create a virtual background. This looks much better than the software solutions and it works wonderfully even on older computers.

Tip for Toastmasters and other timekeepers: You can prepare three virtual backgrounds: a green, an orange and a red background. After a time agreed with the speaker, you as a timekeeper change your background to green, then to orange and just before the end to red. Suppose the speaker has been given 15 minutes for his presentation. After 10 minutes the timekeeper changes to green, after 12 minutes to orange and after 14 minutes to red. In this way, the speaker can see where he stands in time and can stop at the exact moment.

### ***Add virtual background***

One of the reasons why Zoom has become famous is that from the very beginning the software allowed a virtual

background to be displayed after a check mark was placed. This feature allows you to record a video call from a messy room and hide it by adding a virtual background. This function works best if you have a green background (green screen), but it is also fine if you don't have a green screen.

You can also upload your own pictures in the background. It can be a landscape, a cityscape or even the logo of your organization. You can find this function in the settings of your videoconferencing programme.

### ***Greenscreen***

A green screen is highly recommended. Essentially, it is about having a uniform color in the background. Thanks to the uniform color, the software can much more easily recognize the background and replace it with another background. As a result, your (hand) movements are transferred much faster. There are almost no delays when you gesture. A television studio does the same. There are different models of greenscreens.

One model can be mounted directly on the office chair. As long as you sit, this is a very elegant and portable solution.

You can also simply order a roll-up banner in extra-large. Be careful: many are only two meters high, so you may not be able to fill the whole space you need if you want to stand when you talk. A little tip: if the roll-up is too short,

you can also put it on two crates of drinks, because often your feet are not in the picture anyway.

As a third option, you can buy tripods with a crossbar in a DIY store or on the Internet and hang a green cloth on it.

Even more elegant are roller blinds that you can mount on the ceiling or wall in the office. In this case, the green screen is particularly easy to "put away", similar to many screens.

By the way, the cloth for the green screen does not necessarily have to be ironed. But the fact is that the smoother it is, the better it works. It is easier for the software to detect an even color tone, and wrinkles in the cloth create shadows, which creates different shades of green. It becomes even more professional if you not only illuminate yourself but also the green screen.

### ***Corporate branding with vanity URL and logo***

Especially for companies it is interesting if the branding is adhered to. This is also possible with one or the other supplier.

On request and with a little knowledge of HTML you can set this up, for example, at Zoom for a long time. With the URL you can then switch to your company.zoom.us. It is now also possible to integrate your zoom room into your website. You will find instructions for this on the book's website: [www.jekelteam.de/onlinemeetings](http://www.jekelteam.de/onlinemeetings)

*Either the background supports your message or it distracts the audience. To make the background look good there are the possibilities of a virtual background with and without greenscreen. So you can also implement your corporate design, for example.*

## **2.5 Zoom**

### **Menu navigation**

#### *Show chat*

In Zoom you have a menu bar at the bottom of the screen, which appears at the latest when you move the mouse to the bottom of the screen. Click on the Chat button. There you can send private messages to individual participants or public messages to everyone.

At the end of the session, you can save a log of the chat. The chat in breakout sessions is not automatically saved. It is therefore important that there is one person responsible for each breakout session who can copy and paste the chat into a Word document if required.

#### *Show list of participants*

In Zoom you have a menu bar at the bottom of the screen, which appears at the latest when you move the mouse to the bottom of the screen. Click on the button Participants.

The list of participants is displayed on the right-hand side of the window. There you can see whose microphones and webcams are activated. You can also see whether you or another participant is raising a virtual hand.

### *Waving and clapping*

The Zoom software has a button on the menu bar at the bottom of the screen that allows you to virtually clap or wave. We consider this to be of limited use. It has proven to be much more interactive if you ask the participants to really clap and really wave. This keeps both the person who is participating and those who are watching awake.

### *Side-by-side mode*

Side-by-side mode allows you to split your screen and display a PowerPoint presentation, for example, while still being seen by your viewers as a speaker in a part of the window. This is much more personal than the many webinars during which you only see the slides and the voice comes from off screen. The size of the two window areas - the PowerPoint presentation and your picture (or the gallery view of the participants) - can be adjusted with the mouse. Some prefer to have both windows about the same size. This way, you can see the slide and the speaker very well. In the meantime, you can even show PowerPoint slides behind you as the speaker in Zoom.



The only thing you have to keep in mind is that all animations and videos will be lost.

### *Switch between views*

You can view the participants in different views. You can switch between a gallery view, which is arranged like a chessboard, and the speaker view, which highlights the speaker.

Some providers allow you to specify in the settings whether or not to display those who have turned off their camera. Without their video, you do not need to be distracted by them and their names or initials.

### *Zoom Bombing goodbye*

If you make the right settings as a host, you will certainly not fall victim to so-called zoom bombing. Zoom bombing means that someone gains unauthorised access to the meeting and shares discriminatory content with everyone else without you, the host, wanting to.

### *Unique ID*

When you create a zoom account, the app assigns you a Personal Meeting ID (PMI). This is a numerical code that you can send to people when you want to meet them. You can use the ID over and over again; it will not expire. If you have a permanent meeting with a team or a weekly check-in, it is useful to use the same code because

participants can attend without having to look up the registration number for that week.

Zoom also offers you the option of not using your PMI for a session and generating a unique code instead. If you are hosting a large public zoom call, it makes much more sense to use a unique code instead of your PMI, because once you have published your PMI, anyone can join your zoom calls at any time.

If you are scheduling a zoom meeting, look for the meeting ID options and select "auto-generate". This closes one of the biggest gaps that zoom bombers can exploit.

### *Meeting password*

Let's say you invite people to a meeting in public, but you demand a response first (an RSVP: Répondez s'il vous plait. In English: A reply is requested. ) to check the list of those who have registered. One way of protecting the meeting is to set a password that is only issued to those who have replied and are trustworthy.

To protect a meeting with a password, check the box next to "Require password for meeting" when scheduling a meeting.

### *Connect with contacts*

Similar to what you know from Skype or WhatsApp, you can also connect to your contacts when you zoom. For

this to work, you need to send your contacts an invitation, preferably in advance. They register with Zoom and accept your invitation. The contacts will appear on your contact list. When you start a meeting, you can now select from your contact list the people you want to invite to your online meeting. Invitees only need to click on the link in the invitation and do not need to log in with a meeting ID or password.

### *Register*

Days before the video conference, participants can be asked to register for the video conference. This gives you greater control over who will and will not participate.

### *Advance Form*

Depending on how you use Zoom, you may not know who is on your call or details about them, such as their background or what they hope to get from the call. One way to collect information from participants is to ask them to fill out a form before participating. You can ask for general information, such as name and email address, or create a custom form.

To create a form, the host must have a licensed account and the meeting cannot use your personal meeting ID. If you meet these requirements, open the Zoom web portal and select Meetings. Here you can either select an upcoming meeting or schedule a new meeting. Then

check the "required" box next to "Registration". Then look for a section called Branding where you can create your form. You can even add a banner and logo. Zoom also gives you the option of automatically approving all people who come to the meeting and fill in the form. Or you can review the forms and approve participants as you see fit.

### *Waiting room*

A zoom call can be made in two ways. It can start the moment the first person logs into the call, or it can start when the host says to start. For small groups of people who know each other, it is common to log in and make small talk while waiting for everyone else to join in. Sometimes you want to let them chat. On other calls, however, you may not want the participants to chat with each other or even let the call begin officially until you, the host, have logged in and are ready.

In this second case, the solution is to set up a zoom waiting room. When the participants join the conference call, they will see a screen of the waiting room that you can customize and they will not enter the conference call until you, the host, let them in. You can let participants in all at once or one at a time, so if you see names you do not know in the waiting room, you do not need to let them in at all.

Tip: Don't let the participants stagnate in the waiting room. It's best to have an assistant (co-host) who will

take care of admitting the participants so that you can concentrate fully on the content of your presentation.

### *Close room*

When all participants are in the zoom meeting, you can also lock the meeting room for further access.

### *Share screen*

Do not let anyone hijack the screen during a zoom call. To prevent this, make sure that your settings specify that the only people who are allowed to share their screen are hosts.

You can enable this setting both in advance and during a call.

Go to the Zoom web portal (not the desktop application) in advance, navigate to Personal > Settings > In Meeting (Basic) in Settings, and search for the screen sharing. Select the option that only the host can share.

The tips and tricks for zoom described above can also be used in many other solutions. We have therefore only described them once in this book as examples for Zoom.

### *For the technique we recommend the following:*

- *Choose a video conferencing provider that suits your needs. Criteria include stability, a simple user interface and the possibility of incorporating interactions.*

- *For a sharp picture and good sound you should also reach into your pocket. Buy a good microphone and an external webcam.*
- *Advanced users use additional hardware and software.*
- *A virtual background with or without a green screen looks more professional.*
- *Regardless of which provider you choose, make sure that the software settings are correct. In this way, you can reliably prevent unwanted guests from attending your online meeting.*

30 minutes

***How do I prepare myself optimally for an online meeting?***

***Page***

***Do I need (technical) support?***

***Page***

***How do I set myself up optimally?***

***Page***

## **3. Preparation**

When you present online, a good structure and setup of your presentation is all the more important because you can influence the learning and understanding process as well as the attention of the participants during the online presentation less than during a live presentation. So prepare yourself with even more effort than for a live presentation in front of an audience. Always remember that setting up the technology requires additional time.



## 3.1 Preparation is half the battle

A good preparation

- includes technical and content test runs,
- ensures that a technically experienced person is available at all locations represented at the online meeting. (This is particularly important when external guests are attending).
- provides enough time for the technical setup (switching on, logging in, etc.) at all locations.

### *Invitation and parcel post*

A presentation already begins with the invitation. Choose an inviting subject line, a good invitation text, a good picture or even send the invitation by snail mail. You can also send something to the participants in advance (idea by Ralf Schmitt) that has to do with the event. Be it a break snack, a checklist or a postcard with mood pictures. In this way you show your appreciation for the participants.

*For an online meeting to be effective and enjoyable, good preparation is required. It starts with the invitation and ensures that there is enough time for preparation.*

## 3.2 Technology manager

Make sure that someone accompanies the online meeting who understands and focuses on the technology. In important customer meetings it can be worthwhile to call in an external service provider for this purpose. The person responsible for technology monitors the login (if necessary also the waiting room, a function of Zoom), looks who has raised their hand and which questions and answers have been received in the chat. If necessary, he or she also looks up something on the Internet. He can also look after participants who have technical problems. It is also helpful if he has an additional communication channel available so that he can be reached by the participants, for example via WhatsApp, Threema, Signal or Telegram. If you are a presenter and speaker, we recommend that you set your mobile phone to silent but do not switch it off! This way you will remain available to the participants in case something goes wrong.

Experience has shown that you need one person to provide support for groups of 20 or more participants, as organizational questions often arise: "Where do I get the log-in data? "Or: "What was the password again? "Or: "When do we continue? "If someone else can answer such questions for you, you can concentrate fully on your online session and presentation.

*Having someone to take care of the technology is worth its weight in gold. So you can concentrate almost completely on the content.*

## **3.3 Setting up**

### *Audio and video*

Run your software up to 30 minutes before a meeting to check and test your equipment. To do this, open the settings of your programme. Select the correct input and output for your audio and microphone. Test them. Then navigate to the video settings and do the same for your camera.

Tip: You may need to check and adjust the settings of the operating system (Windows or Mac) as well as the settings of Skype, for example.

### *Close programme window*

If you plan to share your screen, it can quickly happen that the other participants see something you would rather keep to yourself. We therefore recommend that you close all "private" or other programme windows that are none of the others' business.

((box blue, non-serif))

Tip: Before you go online, restart your computer once. Then only open the programs you need for the online session. Delete all unnecessary documents and also the "history" in your web browser. Then you are on the safe side. Then the following will not happen to you, which would have happened to a sales manager: He wanted to show a new online tool live in his web browser in front of an assembled audience. When starting the programme, the last visited websites - including erotic offers - appeared in the input line. Not only was it embarrassing for everyone, but the predominantly male audience first looked curiously to see what there was to see.  
((box end))

### *Eliminating noise sources*

Some sources of noise lurk especially in the home office. First and foremost are the flat mates. Inform them that you have an online meeting from then until then. This way your flat mates will be able to understand if you are unavailable for a while. Or establish fixed office hours. Also set your loudspeakers or telephones to "mute". Do not forget to unmute them later. This will give you more control over the interaction with the participants and any anxiety they may experience.

## *Workplace*

If you sit uncomfortably, you cannot work productively either. So anyone who works in a home office might consider buying a high-quality chair. A desk that can be raised and lowered electrically is also ideal. This allows you to alternate between standing and sitting.

## *Speaker view in PowerPoint*

When you view a (PowerPoint) presentation, you will probably see it on your own screen in full screen mode. However, this will prevent you from seeing the notes and subsequent slides in the speaker's view of PowerPoint. This can be of no concern to those who do not need the notes or the next slides to know what they want to say. If this is not the case, however, it is advisable to select the settings in such a way that you are shown the instructor view and the participants only the slides. At the time of printing, for example, in Zoom, the instructor view was only displayed if you first split the screen with PowerPoint in edit mode and then called up the instructor view with Alt-F5 (from the beginning) or Alt-Shift-F5 (from a specific slide). (The check mark in PowerPoint for the instructor view must already be set). At this point, a second device is particularly suitable. With the second device and thus also a second login, you can check how the presentation is displayed to you and the audience.

*Make sure that audio and video work. Close all Windows windows that are not needed for the online meeting. Eliminate all noise sources. Set up your workspace to suit you.*

### **3.4 Mental preparation**

Often forgotten, but in many cases just as important, is mental preparation. Plan the online meeting with enough advance notice so that you certainly don't have to work a night shift. Pause for a moment before starting, so that you can find inner peace. Remember what your goal is and how the online meeting will be successful.

### **3.5 When to avoid an online meeting**

Despite the many advantages, online meetings and virtual presentations also have their limitations. In certain situations the personal meeting, the personal appearance brings much more.

Do without an online meeting if ...

- you need to convey a negative message, e.g. on personal or highly emotional issues
- you want to build a relationship or trust. To build trust, you need to appeal to several senses of your audience. This is only possible during a personal meeting or presentation.

- you want to initiate change processes. Changes require the willingness to participate. This is difficult to achieve in virtual space.

There is also the good traditional telephone conference. It is always worth considering which is the best way to achieve your goals. It is also worth considering whether to send the documents to the meeting participants in advance by e-mail. That way, technical problems can be avoided if necessary.

*For a good preparation we recommend the following:*

- *Do a technology check at an early stage.*
- *Invite the participants in a way that makes them want to participate in your online meeting.*
- *Designate a person responsible for the technology.*
- *On the day of the meeting, set everything up so that it works, including a webcam and microphone.*
- *Eliminate noise sources.*
- *Prepare yourself mentally as well.*
- *Do not hold an online meeting if there are better communication channels, such as the telephone. Especially when it comes to change, face-to-face meetings are preferable in most cases.*

30 minutes

***What should I do to make a good trap at an online meeting?***

***Page***

***What should I pay attention to in terms of sound?***

***Page***

***How do I keep the attention of the audience?***

***Page***



## **4. Professional presentation**

The ultimate goal of any online meeting is to ensure that participants do not fall asleep. The online meeting and the online presentation must be attractive. It should convey information and a good feeling. Since almost exclusively only two senses are stimulated, this is a special challenge. In the following we describe what can all contribute to ensuring that the participants are fully engaged. In any case, you should also plan an experience or experience for the participants in the virtual world and not give a boring monologue or lecture.

## 4.1 The picture

### *Webcam is different than stage*

You should move less in front of the webcam than on stage or during a live presentation. As long as you sit, you will probably not move much: Keep your arms on the desk. However, if you follow the recommendation to stand, you must be aware that your range of movement is limited. Otherwise you will run out of the field of vision of the webcam and the spectators. Advanced speakers have more than one camera and/or one that follows you automatically. Some even have a professional camera crew.

We have already mentioned another reason for not moving too much on page 24. If you have activated a virtual background, your hands will become blurred if you move quickly. If the Internet connection is also poor, you will move like a robot for the viewer.

Speaking of bad internet connection: If the bandwidth is not good enough, it can help if the participants switch off the picture transmission. This way, more bandwidth is available for sound transmission. However, this has the serious disadvantage that participants feel unobserved and probably often do something else than listen to the speaker. Our clear recommendation: Participants should be visible.

## *Look into the camera*

Look into the camera, not at the picture/pictures of your participants. It is like being on television. The camera is your contact. At the beginning it takes some getting used to talking only to the camera and not to get any reaction from the participants. But that's exactly what daytime speakers and television presenters do.

To make it especially easy to look into the camera, we recommend to place the camera on a small tripod in front of the screen.

This way you can also bring the camera right up to eye level. This way you avoid the "nostril perspective", which means that you do not look down on the audience from above. If you are using your laptop for an online meeting, a few books, an upside-down beer crate or a pot can make the camera stand higher. With dark displays with a built-in webcam, it is often difficult to see the camera lens. A small smiley face that you stick next to the lens can help here. Some even cut out one eye of the smiley and stick it over the lens. This way you can always look into the eyes of your participants when you look into the smiley.

## *Reading prohibited*

Many people feel that they have a great advantage when presenting online: You can read. Wrong! Try it yourself. Just read your manuscript: your audience sees it and falls asleep or clicks away. It's like reading off the slides in a

live presentation. So you have to prepare yourself just as well as you would in a normal presentation - even better!

## *Notes*

You may ask: "How can I look into the camera when I am dependent on my notes?" Here are some thoughts: The slides already serve as notes for most speakers and chairpersons. If you want to use more detailed notes, you can use the speaker view (from PowerPoint). With the instructor view, participants only see the slides (and your face if side-by-side mode is activated), and you also see your notes that you have written per slide.

If you have an external webcam or camera, you can set up your webcam in front of the screen so that you can see what you're going to talk about, similar to a teleprompter. In this case, however, the text (the slide) is behind the webcam/camera and its tripod. (A particularly slim tripod is suitable for this, e.g. the Nebula Capsule)

You can also write notes by hand. These are particularly discreet if they are stuck or placed near the webcam. The closer the notes are to the camera lens, the more the viewer has the feeling they are looking at him (anyway).

## *Smile*

You may smile sometimes. As described above, it is difficult to smile into the camera, but in many cases you

will be better received. Your voice will also sound more positive! Thanks to a smile it will change and appear more sympathetic. (See "Your voice" on page 56)

### *Use of PowerPoint*

PowerPoint slides are also often used for online meetings. Even more so than when creating slides for live presentations, the following recommendations apply in particular in virtual space:

What fits on one slide in a live presentation is distributed over several slides in online presentations. Because you always show a new slide, you keep the audience on tenterhooks. In addition, a graphical presentation improves understanding.

### *Design of the foils*

- Simplicity: The slides should be easy to understand and contain a maximum of one message per page.
- Use of images: Visualise as much as possible. Choose emotional images if possible. Text deserts are not suitable for arousing enthusiasm in the audience.
- Structure: Show processes in steps. Look for relationships that you can represent (e.g. from large to small, sequential, or building up).
- Shorten: Keep it short. As the advertisement for a car said a few years ago: "Reduce to the max".

- Speed: Don't stay on the same slide for minutes, but click quickly.
- Interactivity: Schedule interactive elements. (See the chapter on page 59)
- Directness: Get your messages to the point even faster. Only tell short and good stories. Limit yourself to a brief but original introduction.

When creating slides, even die-hard presenters and good live speakers often make the mistake of simply transferring their slides to the virtual medium without any changes. The most important difference here, however, is the high speed at which the slides should be clicked through. This is how you make sure that the participants stay alert. Professor Lawrence Lessig of Stanford University once gave a groundbreaking online presentation: 235 slides in 30 minutes. Wow, the students were on the ball!

In many cases you should avoid PowerPoint animations: on the one hand, because technical delays in image transmission can often disrupt the flow. And on the other hand, because you should under no circumstances show the viewers a slide over several minutes. You will have read it within seconds and next - fall asleep guaranteed; or do something else. Instead, you should create a separate slide for each statement.

Use large images as in a live presentation. In an article on LinkedIn, Lars Sudman even recommends changing the

background colour of the slides and not always writing the text in the same place.

## *Clothing*

It is true that you can do without the expensive pinstripe suit when exchanging *without* using video, because in this case your professionalism is only perceived through your good preparation and your voice. But if you feel better in elegant clothes, then put them on.

## *Appearance*

As the saying goes: "Clothes make the man." This popular saying is also true online. You can also use face filters to make you look better. Face filters are not only suitable for Instagram and Tiktok. Zoom in particular has a tool called "Retouch My Appearance" that adds a soft focus to your video that smoothes your skin. Everyone will look years younger and fresher.

If you have enabled this setting, Zoom will remember this setting for the future.

*To look good at an online meeting, make sure you look into the camera, read a little and give the audience a smile every now and then. Also make sure you create a positive visual experience for the viewer by following a film design suitable for online meetings and dressing appropriately for the circumstances.*

## 4.2 The sound

### *Your voice*

Your voice is also a very important instrument for virtual presentations. If your voice sounds pleasant by nature, then you already have an advantage. Nevertheless, there are a few things to consider:

- Play with your voice.
- Vary the speed of your sentences.
- Vary the pitch of the voice.
- Vary with emotions. Feel what you say.
- Vary the volume.
- Vary by using pauses in speech.
- Use gestures and facial expressions - regardless of whether you are seen or not. Gestures and facial expressions have an influence on your voice.
- Articulate clearly.
- Use simple words.
- Spray a positive mood (including positive words, praise and your own joy in the matter).

If you speak too fast, people might think you are nervous; if you speak too slowly, your audience will fall asleep or do something else on the side. So always be aware of the tempo and modulation of your voice. Try recording yourself with a microphone and listen to the recording yourself. That way you will be aware of possibilities for



improvement! (If you are really serious, book a voice coach, e.g. Arno Fischbacher)

Tip: Have a glass of water ready! This will help if your mouth gets dry or you feel a coughing urge. Avoid dairy products, nuts and too much coffee on the day of the presentation. They can cause pharynx and damage your voice.

For your voice to be fully effective, you should be relatively close to the microphone. However, this is only possible with an external microphone attached to a tripod or one that you can clamp to your shirt.

### *Sitting or standing*

Whenever possible, you should get up to present. This will give you more energy and your voice will sound better. (It also helps you stay awake.) As you stand up, you can gesture more naturally, move more - taking into account the background. With a virtual background, the viewer may see fish skins between your fingers. In this case, you should use gestures sparingly.

It is best if you leave about a hand's breadth above you to the upper edge of the picture. At the lower edge of the picture you should be able to see your navel.

Of course there are those who feel more comfortable sitting than standing, for example because they are used to it from sessions. Try it out. Also look at what you like better and what goes down better with others. When you

are sitting, you should adopt an upright posture and not slouch in the chair.

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Tip: Either way, use a green screen if possible so that the gestures don't blur and your fingers don't get webbed. (See chapter on page 24 and page 51)

((box end))

As soon as the presentation is over and you return to normal conversation, you can sit down again. Just like in a live meeting.

### *Music and audio*

Music influences the mood enormously. Music can be played during the waiting time at the beginning, during the break or at the end of the meeting. Music usually has a positive influence on the mood.

Music can also be played in the background during a presentation. However, it must be chosen in such a way that it supports the message and/or slides.

You can also record an original sound from someone. Or applause. There are few limits to creativity here.

However, you must make sure that you have acquired the rights or use music that is free.

## *Repetitions*

Repeat important thoughts! Repeat the statements with a slightly different emphasis a second time and only then continue. At the end, remind the audience of what you have told them. In addition: One sentence that makes the attention of the participants soar is: "If you take just one thing from this presentation, this is it: "...". Professionals let the audience repeat. And you have interaction with the audience again.

*Also and especially for online meetings, the motto is: "The sound makes the music. Avoid a monotonous voice, use music to additionally create a positive mood and repeat important statements."*

## **4.3 Action**

### *Warm-up*

As in a real meeting, not all participants will arrive at the same time. It is worthwhile to be in the room 15 - 20 minutes before the start of the video conference to welcome the participants. As host (host), it is even worthwhile to be there up to 40 minutes in advance to check the technology and, if necessary, to consult with one or more co-hosts. Here too, the motto is: "Preparation is half the battle! "

The warm-up can also help participants to feel more comfortable. Just like in real life, it can be worth spending a few minutes getting to know each other first.

You are welcome to welcome the participants with their names. (Even during the online meeting it has an activating effect if you address the participants with their names from time to time).

If you plan to record the online meeting, now is the time to inform the participants and get their consent.

### *Interactive elements*

In virtual presentations you fight against the (alleged) multitasking ability of the participants and their short attention spans. With a single click or hand movement, your listeners are online chatting (e.g. via WhatsApp), or even writing e-mails to non-participants. In addition to the speed of presentation described above, the real dialogue capability of modern communication software helps to keep participants engaged.

The most common interactive elements are:

### *Surveys*

Add a survey to your online session to quickly collect responses from people on a topic. You can also make a session more entertaining or serve up a quick icebreaker. "Which meal of the day is your favorite? "Are you a dog or cat lover or neither? "You can also use surveys for

more relevant information. "Yes or no: have you already read the compulsory reading? "

Before you can carry out a survey, you need preparation. In Zoom, for example, you need to activate the function from your web account (not from your desktop). The instructions for activating surveys differ slightly depending on whether you have a personal account or are an administrator of a group account, but in both cases you start under Account Management > Account Settings. Alternative survey tools are Mentimeter, sli.do and Kahoot.

## *Whiteboard*

In order to make a subject matter understandable, it can be immensely helpful if you can draw and/or write something yourself or together with the participants on the same page. This is possible with practically all software providers. On a so-called whiteboard, ideas can then be written down, pictures annotated and sketches created.

With a smart pad and a pen, this is of course easier than on the desktop.

In Zoom, you can use the whiteboard as follows:

If you are the meeting host, you can enable or disable annotations for all participants. In either case, you must use the Zoom web portal rather than the desktop application and enable it for yourself. It is located in

Account Management > Account Settings > Meeting (Tab)  
> Meeting (Basic).

If you are a participant and want to join in by selecting an image provided by the host, you must display your toolbar. Go to View Option > Comment.

### *Other applications*

You are also welcome to use Kanban boards to show the progress of work in your team. Or work together with your team on documents. (See also Whiteboard). For this we recommend Padlet, Trello or Meistertask.

### *Flip chart and pinboard*

You can certainly use a physical flip chart or pin board. This assumes that you have one or the other available. This is more likely to be the case in the office than in the home office. You will also need to consider how to keep the right camera angle. If you have two cameras, this can be easily done: One camera is focused on close-up - when you are sitting, for example - and one is focused at a distance to capture you along with the flipchart. A quick change of camera and you'll be visible with or without the flip chart or pinboard.

### *Chat*

In the chat you can get wonderful answers from participants. Ask them a question and ask them to write

the answer in the chat. If you have a large number of participants, it may sometimes be appropriate to open the chat only during questions and answers. Either way, it helps to have a co-host who takes care of the chat, technology and surveys.

### *Collect feedback*

Responses should be (a) written in the chat, (b) spoken by audio, (c) shown by video (e.g. with a wave or thumbs up) or (d) entered into a form (e.g. using SurveyMonkey or Google Forms; share the link in the chat). The latter requires that you have created the form before the online meeting.

### *Ask and answer questions*

Answer a participant question (delivered via chat or email) early in the presentation. This ensures interaction and interest. In case you don't get any questions, prepare some that you ask yourself and answer them yourself. You are welcome to use this opportunity to express genuine praise in between - be it for the question or a comment from a participant.

### *Quiz*

Take a little online quiz. Even those who are connected by mobile phone can take part. We like to use Kahoot as

a pure quiz tool. But in the meantime Mentimeter has also become a very good quiz tool.

### *Presenting in a team*

Alternate between several speakers. You will see how good it feels to see a lot of change: The voice, the speed, the image... For example, you could appoint a person to lead the Q&A part, moderate the session, and someone to take minutes and give a short summary of the main points.

If only one person is available as a moderator, he/she can, for example, open, introduce, summarize, answer questions online via the chat, ask them in plenary and support you in your presentation.

Even if it sounds contradictory: Plan spontaneity specifically. For example, the moderator can ask the team colleague some questions that have been discussed with you beforehand and thus contribute to interaction and spontaneity. Not to mention that your answer will be incredibly good (because you already knew the question beforehand).

### *Speech duration*

Never present and talk for more than 10 minutes at a time, preferably only 5 minutes. Add variety to the online meeting with questions, surveys or inserts. But be



careful: Don't plan employment programmes through false, non-targeted interactions. In general, a good presentation on screen can keep the audience engaged for a maximum of 30 minutes. Then at the latest there should be a change. But it also applies: The better the speaker, the longer I can follow him. You decide how well you and your speakers rate yourself and your online meeting. Depending on this, you should plan the course of the meeting.

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Tip: Watch a presentation on YouTube by Daniele Ganser. He manages to keep the YouTube or online audience on the go for more than an hour with just words and a few slides.

((box end))

### *Timekeeper*

It has proved to be a good idea to use a timekeeper. He or she can keep you informed of the time remaining.

At online meetings of Toastmasters Clubs the time information is often displayed in a way that the timekeeper changes his background (from Zoom): green background when the minimum time is reached, yellow background when the middle time is reached and red background when the time is almost up.

## *Props*

You are also welcome to use props on the computer. Just show them on the screen. How about showing a Swiss Army knife, for example, to show how flexible and versatile your services are?

## *Side by side mode*

If you share your screen, for example to show a PowerPoint presentation, it is more attractive to have your portrait still visible. This is possible with all providers. In Zoom, for example, this is called the side-by-side mode.

## *Agenda*

Share the agenda with the participants of the meeting, meeting or training. This way the participants know what to expect.

## *Breakout room*

Group rooms (breakout rooms) are suitable for group work. It is best to set up the groups before the video conference or presentation starts. This way, the groups are already defined and you can quickly assign them as a host. When the time for group work has expired, you can call the participants back.

Participants can leave the breakout room at any time and return to the plenary by clicking on the link at the bottom right of the window.

Caution: If a participant clicks once too often in the bottom right-hand corner, he or she is completely out of the videoconference and has to log in again. This can take time if a waiting room is set up and the host does not notice that the participant would like to come back in. (Especially if you have participants with little experience, you should instruct a co-host to check the waiting room from time to time to see if anyone else wants to be admitted back into the plenary session. See also page 34.

### *Lessig style*

If nothing happens on the screen, the viewer has a tendency to digress and do something else. Therefore, you should also present in Lessig style. There is a slide for almost every word. Observe yourself as a participant in the next video conference. Are you constantly attentive, or do you find it difficult to focus your concentration on the speaker or moderator?

### *Clapping*

In online meetings there is often even more silence after a presentation than in a cemetery. Therefore you can check if you don't want to clap virtually. Instead of muting all participants and letting them clap as normal,

you can use the online meeting moderation to get them in the mood for the following procedure. When someone has finished their presentation, the participants should raise both hands and shake them in the air. In the gallery view, the speaker can thus see his applause. This is good for the speaker's soul and the participants are (re)activated.

There is also an external keypad for PCs and Macs, the so-called stream deck from Elgato. Here you can put music clips, such as applause, on keys and retrieve them as needed.

*Take advantage of the many opportunities for interaction to keep the participants engaged. This starts with chat and does not stop with quizzes.*

## **4.4 The content**

It is important that a presentation has good content and is well structured. Unfortunately, it would go beyond the scope of this book to go into this in detail. We therefore refer you to the wide range of literature that has been published on this subject. (For example: *The worm must taste good to the fish. Present with power and score rhetorically.* By Thomas Skipwith and Reto B. Rügger) The same is true when it comes to chairing a meeting.

If you want to improve your presentation many times over, you can subscribe to a list of the most common presentation mistakes for free: [www.thomas-skipwith.com/haeufigste-fehler/](http://www.thomas-skipwith.com/haeufigste-fehler/)

### *Flipped Classroom*

But one thing can be said about the content. For online meetings the concept "Flipped Classroom" from school practice is often very suitable. This concept allows the participants to read, practice and/or view the content beforehand. In particular, content that is regularly repeated, e.g. security measures in the company or the introduction of new employees, can be professionally recorded on video and thus be recommended to the participants to read or watch in advance. During the online meeting, only almost exclusively questions about the content are then answered. A prerequisite for the success of this method, however, is that the participants have also read and/or viewed the content.

*Professional presentation comprises four central aspects: image, sound, action and content.*

- *To get a good picture, you should keep your eyes on the webcam. That way the viewer feels really addressed. Read as little of the notes as possible and, if available, make your slides short, concise and attractive. You are also welcome to pay attention to your appearance and clothing.*

- *Use your voice to add variety to online meetings. Stand. Play music to positively influence the mood. Repeat the important statements.*
- *An online meeting should not be a boring event. You should therefore consciously plan for meaningful interactions. These range from questions and answers in the chat to studio guests and quizzes.*
- *Make sure you have a clear structure with a beginning, middle section and end.*

- *30 minutes*

***What does it take for optimal post-processing?***

***Page***

***Why should I record an online meeting?***

***Page***

***How can I help to make online meetings more enjoyable over time?***

***Page***

## 5. Post-processing

Online meetings can be easily recorded and made available again later. Email your audience after the presentation: Summarize the most important contents in short sentences and repeat the call for further steps. Include a transcript, a "thank you", a copy of the slides (including handouts if you did not record the spoken text) or a link to the recorded session/presentation, if applicable.

Do not forget the people who wanted to participate but did not. In this way you can also reach them with a skilful follow-up.



## 5.1 Recording an online meeting

Suppose you are holding an online meeting to share important information with all your colleagues, employees or customers. It is possible that not everyone can attend. Everyone has the ability to record the meeting, so you have a video that you can share so that participants can watch it whenever they want. Recording a meeting is also useful if you want or need to write down notes from the meeting later or learn from it.

Before recording a meeting, for reasons of etiquette (and in some cases legal requirements), you should inform participants that they can be recorded in sound and vision, depending on whether and how they participate. You can save your recorded video locally or on a cloud storage service such as Dropbox.

## 5.2 Self-reflection

Think about what went well and repeat it in the future. But also think about what still has room for improvement and make it better next time. In this way, you will soon be a sought-after participant, speaker and/or moderator of online meetings. We wish you all the best.

*Make sure that online meetings are also professionally edited.*

- *A big advantage of an online meeting is that it is easy to record the meeting. So you can share the meeting with people who could not be there.*
- *In addition, as with any good meeting, it is useful to send minutes to participants and absentees.*
- *Think about what went well and what did not. That way you can improve from time to time.*

30 minutes

***What should I write in the invitation for an online meeting?***

***Page***

***Is there an etiquette for online meetings?***

***Page***

***Which checklist should I work through?***

***Page***

## **6. Text templatén**

With the following text templates and checklists you don't have to invent everything yourself. They are aids that allow you to prepare your next online meeting more quickly. In time, it will make sense for you to create your own text templates and checklists.

## 6.1 Invitation of the participants

Dear Sir ... / Dear Madam ...

Soon you will be participating in ... from ...  
[Benefit for the participant].

I have already sent you a calendar invitation (.ics) with the link for logging in. Nevertheless, as a reminder here again the link for the online meeting from ...:

Meeting URL:     <https://...>  
Meeting ID:       123 456 7890  
Password:         998877

Technical checks: ... clock  
Small Talk: ... watch  
Start: ... clock

Breaks: ... clock (and ... clock)  
End: ... Uhr

1. Please install the software client locally on your computer. [Link for download <https://...>]
2. Please register.
3. Prepare the following: ...

I have set up a waiting room so that only invited guests will attend the meeting. From there the moderator will allow you to join the online session. If you are late, you may have to wait a long time. ]

Best regards

...

((box blue, non-serif))

## **For the netiquette**

First of all, I will send you a few noteworthy details about etiquette for online meetings:

### *Testing the technology*

Check your technique. Do you get into the online meeting room? Is the Internet connection strong enough? Do the software, webcam/video camera and microphone work without problems?

### *Preparation*

In the same way that documents are compiled in advance of a classic meeting, participants in an online meeting should also be able to save materials such as pictures, graphics, videos or texts in advance so that they are easily retrievable.

## *Eliminate disturbing factors*

This is just as important as for personal meetings. Avoid interruptions or other disturbing factors. Inform third parties that you are participating in an online meeting / conference call so as not to be disturbed.

Mute your phone before the meeting. The ringing mobile phone is a real "meeting killer" during a video conference and is just as disturbing there as in offline-meetings.

## *Punctuality*

Actually, it goes without saying that the most important commandment is punctuality, as everywhere else in everyday business life. If the delay cannot be avoided, the moderator should be informed in time. In this way, those affected can at least use the waiting time effectively.

## *No multitasking*

Avoid doing other things on the side during a video meeting, even if you are not actively participating. Your colleagues will notice if you just check Facebook, quickly finish an email or just look bored - and that's a big nuisance. By the way: Even if participants eat during a video conference, it distracts the others and reduces the quality of the meeting. So it's better to leave your snack in your pocket until after the online meeting.

## *Clean up before desktop sharing*

Anyone who shares their desktop with other participants in an online meeting should make sure that the virtual desktop is also clean and tidy. Untidy, cluttered desktops do not belong in a professional meeting.

((box end))

## **6.2 Checklist: Technology**

Create a checklist for your online meetings and presentations. Here are selected suggestions:

- The participants are invited and have received the link to the event.
- Passwords are available.
- Internet connection running.
- PowerPoint presentation is available.
- All participants are set to mute.
- Virtual background is ready.
- Greenscreen is ready / is set up.
- Smartphone is set to mute.
- Headphones, microphone and webcam are tested.
- You have scheduled an additional technical check a few days in advance.
- Authorizations for co-hosts are assigned.
- Water is ready.
- Second screen is connected.
- Second device and second login are ready.
- Tripod is available.



- Power cables for laptop, iPad are available or are plugged in.

## 6.3 Checklist: Present

- The camera is at eye level.
- You look into the camera.
- You interact (as planned) with the participants.
- The films are tight and crisp.
- The notes are ready.
- They are mentally in good spirits.
- They smile.
- They are dressed appropriately.
- The tone is right.
- They consciously decide whether to stand or sit or to switch between standing and sitting.
- You repeat the important statements.
- They have fun.

*Use text templates and checklists. That way you don't have to invent everything yourself.*

- *Invitation to the participants*
- *Text for the Netiquette*
- *Checklist Technology*
- *Checklist Presentation*

# Fast Reader

## 1. Challenge

*The number of online meetings is constantly increasing. Not only because the Corona pandemic has forced people to have a home office, but because many employees and managers have realized that it can be an attractive way of working. However, those who take part in online meetings face several challenges. People learn with all their senses. In online meetings, only two senses are used: the acoustic and the visual. The technology of the receiver limits the visual and acoustic experience. This makes it all the more important that the technology works. Furthermore, online the attention span of the audience is even less than live. Furthermore, the technical effort required for online meetings is often greater than when you meet in person. This circumstance is often underestimated.*

## 2. Technology

*Online meetings become a success when the right hardware and software is chosen. It's worth considering what your needs are.*

*From the hardware side, it is worth buying an external microphone and an external webcam. A tripod can also help to make your own contributions more appealing to the audience. Advanced users will also want to use additional hardware and software.*

*To make sure the picture is right, we recommend a virtual background with or without a green screen. On the one hand, the background should contribute to making a professional impression and on the other hand, it can be used to consistently implement the corporate design, i.e. also in this room.*

*Any video conferencing software can be configured to protect against uninvited guests. The only thing that matters is to make the right settings.*

### **3. Preparation**

*As online meetings are still new to many, good preparation is particularly worthwhile here. When you invite them, think about the effect you want to achieve with the audience. The invitation should also be designed in such a way that the participants know when and where they should be and how they can join the online meeting. We also recommend appointing a technical manager to deal with any technical problems. This will allow the speaker to concentrate on his or her content and presentation style.*

*Make sure that audio and video work. Close all programme windows so that they do not distract you. Eliminate all noise sources. Set up the workstation so that you can work comfortably. Do not forget the mental preparation.*

*Remember also that online meetings are not the egg of the day. Sometimes a conference call does the trick - or on the contrary, they should meet in person.*

## **4. Professional presentation**

*Looking professional online is even more demanding than live. Therefore, the first thing you need to pay attention to is an attractive picture. One way to achieve this is by looking at the webcam. In this way you can keep eye contact with the person opposite you. Try - as with a presentation in person - that you constantly hang on to your notes and read them. Unfortunately, you will perceive much less of the participants than in a live presentation. Nevertheless, or even more so, you are welcome to smile from time to time. If you use PowerPoint, we recommend that you focus even more on keywords and present more slides than is usual live. The quick change from slide to slide helps to keep the audience engaged. Otherwise they run the risk of viewers answering their emails or doing anything else. A professional appearance also includes clothing and enough sleep.*

*Secondly, a good tone is created by a strong voice. You will be able to produce more vocal volume when you stand while presenting. If you wish, you can also use music and sound clips to make your online meeting more varied. Don't be afraid of repetition of content either.*

*Use different possibilities to interact with the audience. This keeps you and the audience awake. Interactions are elements from surveys to whiteboard use to breakout sessions.*

## **5. Post-processing**

*For an online meeting to be successful, it is worthwhile to rework the meeting. Think about it: What went well and what could you do better next time? A video recording of the meeting is suitable for this analysis. Participants will also appreciate it if you send them a record of the online meeting afterwards.*

## **6. Text templates and checklists**

*Use text templates and checklists so that you don't have to reinvent the wheel every time.*

## The authors



Thomas Skipwith is a speaker, trainer, coach and author on rhetoric and presentations. With coachings, trainings and lectures he supports his clients in such a way that they succeed in every appearance online and offline.

He is the founder and managing director of the DESCUBRIS Institute, founded in Zurich in 2002. More than 25 years of experience in presentation techniques, including seven

years of international management consulting with Accenture in the areas of change management and human performance, have convinced him that everyone can learn to present better.

Thomas Skipwith co-founded the Rhetoric Center at the University of St. Gallen HSG. He is an active Toastmaster and was president and founder of several Rhetoric Clubs. From 2005 to 2013 he was multiple European Rhetoric Champion. He has recorded his experiences, tips and tricks in his books.

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## Thorsten Jekel



As IT project manager, author and speaker, business economist and MBA Thorsten Jekel is THE expert for Digital Working. From his 30 years of professional experience in sales, service and IT project responsibility, and as a long-standing managing director in medium-sized businesses, he speaks from the field for the field.

Since 2010 Thorsten Jekel has been supporting people and companies in the productive use of new IT technologies. For example, he accompanied Coca-Cola, Transgourmet (REWE-Foodservice, part of the Coop Group) and many banks and insurance companies in the successful introduction of up to 1,700 tablets in sales. In addition, he regularly accompanies companies during Office 365 rollouts.

As a sought-after sparring partner for managing directors, board members and entrepreneurs, he will show in his practical and visionary lectures how to

make the best use of digital working technologies. As a trainer, consultant and project manager, he brings years of project experience from IT rollout projects.



## Further reading

Jekel, Thorsten; Schmitt, Ralf: Digital Events, GABAL, 2020.

Skipwith, Thomas: The worm must taste good to the fish. Present with power and score rhetorically. 3rd edition. Oberwil-Lieli: DESCUBRIS, 2015.

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## Book tips

### The worm must be tasty to the fish.



Topics, tips and tricks for successful online and offline presentations can be found in the book:

The worm must be good for the fish. Present with power and score rhetorically. Von Thomas Skipwith and Reto B. Rügger.

It also includes tips for using PowerPoint, the

Power Presentation Model, the Clear Message Structure (10 steps to the red thread in 30 minutes), tips for international appearances and how to prepare faster. Order at [amazon.de](http://amazon.de) or [www.thomas-skipwith.com](http://www.thomas-skipwith.com).

## Digital Working for managers: working efficiently with new technologies

# Digital Working für Manager

Thorsten  
Jekel



Mit neuen Technologien  
effizient arbeiten

GABAL

Curse or blessing? In view of our constant accessibility via e-mail, smartphone, tablet, social media, this question seems more than justified in the context of new technologies. And often the pendulum unfortunately swings in the direction of a curse. Then, for example, when it is not we, but technology that dominates us.

Where and how are digital aids useful? Where does good old paper do it? If we already carry smartphones and tablets around with us, how can we make the best use of them? The aim of the book is to show how we use the new technologies intelligently and efficiently for our purposes. After all, you don't just drive a Porsche in first gear!

Whether in daily communication, meeting organization, travel planning, calendar and address management, destination planning, document management, use of the

cloud - everywhere new technologies and tools help to save time and energy. And Thorsten Jekel shows us how this works. Not in love with technology like a nerd, but from the pragmatic perspective of a manager.  
By Thorsten Jekel. Order at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).