

Zoom

QUARTZ MEMBERSHIP

How to give a virtual presentation

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End Meeting

The virtual conference reboot

The coronavirus pandemic has transformed the virtual conference from a stale format to an experimental theater for exchange and networking amid a global health crisis. The medium has its own tricky tech and rules of etiquette. As the world rethinks the standard meeting format, we've surveyed the landscape and gathered the best guidance on how to give a virtual presentation.

\$6.4 billion

Market size of global video conferencing industry by end of 2020

\$5.5 billion

Market value for virtual reality, one of the fastest growing segments by 2023

77%

People who use a laptop or desktop for their calls as compared to 31% from their mobile device

Conferencing by the numbers

Traditionally, online conferences were largely structured as a back-up plan or add-on to a live event. The “lift and shift” mentality of transposing live events online without consideration for the specific parameters of the medium made them clunky, boring, and ultimately forgettable. They have never been the main stage that they are now.

\$1.07 trillion

Global spending on
conferences in 2018

1.5 billion

Number of participants
across 180 countries
involved in business events
in 2018

\$1,294

Average amount a person
spent to attend a conference
in person prior to the
pandemic

It's not just you

If you find watching online presentations and sitting through virtual meetings particularly onerous, you're not alone. Scientists have theories as to why they can be a strain.

They require more focus: Our brains have to work hard to discern meaning from scant non-verbal cues on the screen, tone and pitch of a speaker's voice, body language, clothing, or personal effects in the background.

We know we're being watched: The pressure to perform can become a burden.

Plausible deniability: Our minds struggle to reconcile the idea that we're in the same space with others in a virtual conference.

“One study we ran at Stanford showed that when people are exposed to large virtual faces, they flinch physically. This may be part of the reason Zoom is so exhausting—for every minute we are in Zoom, we have staring faces inches from our own. But if we move too far back from the screen, our colleagues might think we are disengaged.”

Jeremy Bailenson, founder of Stanford University's Virtual Human Interaction Lab.

Spurring the brain

Mental fatigue also comes from seeing the same visual for too long, Jon Levy, a behavioral scientist and founder of a consultancy called The Influencers, tells Quartz. Citing a neurobiology study titled “Pure Novelty Spurs the Brain,” he explains that finding ways to break the monotony of seeing heads on a screen stimulates a part of the brain called the substantia nigra/ventral tegmental area, which results in improved retention.

Tips to keep your brain engaged

Avoid multitasking

- Switching tasks can reduce productivity by 40%.
- During video chats, close tabs and programs that can distract, put phones away, and be present.

Switch things up

- If you're running a meeting or presentation, consider introducing elements such as quizzes, intermittently cutting to new speakers, or even playing a quick online game with participants.

Be mindful

- Give your brain a break by looking away from the computer for a few minutes regularly. During longer calls, schedule breaks and allow people to turn off their camera for parts of them.

Alternate between video and phone calls

- Keep video calls small when you can and for less formal calls, consider implementing walking meetings.

Learn the lingo

One of the first steps to mastering a new skill is learning its parlance.

Common video conferencing terms

Brady brunch view: A setting on Zoom where you can see all the participants on the screen, derived from the opening credits of the 1970s American sitcom.

Mirror effect: To flip one's appearance on a video call. This is useful if you are flashing text meant to be read or using your hands to convey instructions.

Virtual presence: A meeting setup that allows participants to enter and explore immersive environments.

BYOD: Bring your own device. The practice of using personal computers, tablets, and phones for business purposes.

Synchronous: A live session where presenters and participants are encouraged to interact.

Telepresence: A meeting setup designed to make participants feel like they're all in the same room.

Ring light eyes: A lighting rig popular with YouTube makeup tutors. Smaller versions exist for smartphone cameras.

Asynchronous: Self-paced learning mode where participants can parse pre-recorded content at their leisure.

zWarDial: An automated tool used to find the unique meeting ID of open Zoom calls. Without a password, meetings are susceptible to hackers.

Pick the right platform

In many parts of the world, the pandemic has caused nearly all aspects of life to become virtual, from 5,000-person concerts, yoga classes, and Sunday church services to intimate therapist appointments and dates. Here's a sample of the livestream and video platforms that have cropped up to meet this demand (access the [full list here](#).)

Video platforms rivaling Zoom

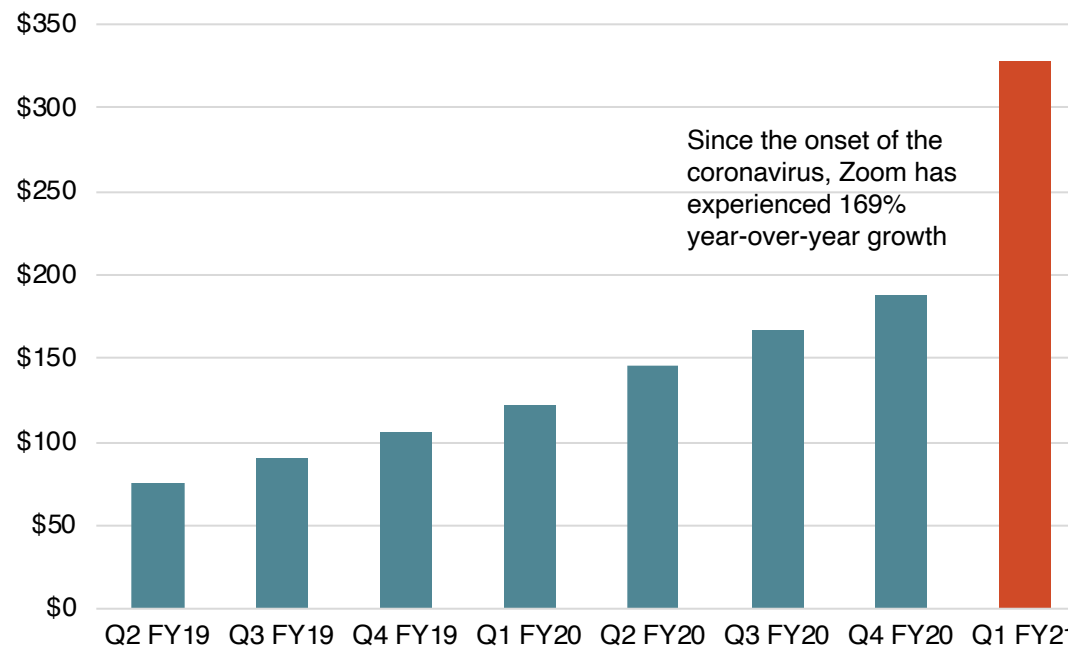
Platform	Monthly cost	Maximum participants	Fancy features
Adobe Connect	\$150 - \$370	1,500	Templates, timers, word clouds
Google Meets	\$0 - \$25	250; Live streaming for 100,000	Cloud storage is included; data archival system
Amazon Chime	\$0 to \$15	100	Security features. Visual attendance sheet
BlueJeans Events	\$10 to \$14; More for enterprise subscribers	15,000 joining via web or smartphone	Clean, intuitive interface; standby music
Cisco Webex Meetings	\$14 to \$27	1,000	End-to-end encryption
Facebook Workplace	\$0 to \$8	Unlimited	Polls and fancy meeting invites

Made for a pandemic: Zoom's success

Zoom has remained a top choice for many participants in virtual meetings. In the last five months, the platform's daily meeting participants* have increased by 2900%. In addition to being a leading video conference platform, Zoom is also active in 90,000 schools across 20 countries.

Founded	2011
HQ	San Jose, California
People	Eric Yuan (founder, CEO)
Company type	Public
Market valuation	\$73B**

Zoom's rapid revenue growth in millions



Get yourself ready

Even if people aren't seeing you on a big, high-definition screen, you can still get yourself camera ready. For women, celebrity makeup artist Vincent Oqueno recommends a bright blush. Men can prep their faces too, says YouTuber Joseph Linaschke.



“

Here's the thing about FaceTime and Zoom calls: although they're HD, you can look sort of washed out...adding warmth to your cheeks will make you look like you have more life.”

Vincent Oqueno, celebrity makeup artist



“

If you do nothing else, blot out all the extra oil from your face with some oil-absorbing sheets. Oily patches on the temple, nose, and chin or T-zone register as distracting 'hot spots' on camera.”

YouTuber Joseph Linaschke aka PhotoJoseph

Tara Well, an associate professor of psychology at Barnard College, prescribes “mirror meditation,” a daily habit of staring in the mirror for 10 minutes. Mirror meditation “doesn't mean engaging in a bunch of ‘woo-woo’ affirmations,” writes Quartz reporter Sarah Todd. Rather, it's to help you “channel a generous, nonjudgmental feeling toward your own image.”

Get your environment ready

Don't forget to check your lighting. "A little bit of glow" is [easily achievable](#)—anything that would light you up from the front—says celebrity portrait photographer, Matthew Rolston. Then, take a minute to add visual interest to your background. Next, check how you're framed on screen. Many professionals abide by the "[rule of thirds](#)." For visual examples, visit [Room Raters](#), a Twitter account with 271,000 followers founded by self appointed virtual meeting design critics.

Where would you score on the Room Raters scale?



Presenting tips

Keep it short: “The burden of having to sit down for a 60-minute meeting is exceptionally high.” If there’s a lot to go through, consider grouping content into sections or even pre-recording videos that participants can view on their own time, advises Maegan Stephens, an executive speaker coach at Duarte. Plan PowerPoint slides in advance.

Stand while you present: “This allows you to leverage deep breathing and even gestures and movement,” says Matthew Abrahams, lecturer at Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

Speak directly into the microphone: Position it a few inches from your mouth and position it slightly lower.

Be aware of uptalk: “It can rob you of your authority,” says Nicole Lowenbraun, a San Francisco-based speech pathologist and executive speaker coach.

Embrace your accent: but remember to articulate.

Vary your intonation: The best way to put people to sleep is to speak in a monotone.

Give yourself a pat on the back: “Assume you’re crushing it,” says Stephens. “You did your homework, you’ve got good content. Keep going.”



Want to know more? Read Quartz coverage of presenting online.

- [How to sell a presentation](#) – The most persuasive speakers sell their ideas well before the presentation.
- [How to give an effective presentation](#) – A complete illustrated guide to making a presentation that isn't terrible.
- [The trick to public speaking is to stop memorizing](#) – To remember more, memorize less.
- [Learn the seven signature moves of TED Talk hands](#) – A guide to the hands that go with ideas worth spreading.
- [The 5 biggest lies you tell yourself before giving a presentation](#) – Learn how to dismantle mental blocks.

You'll also enjoy our member-exclusive field guide [on the virtual conference reboot](#).

Have questions about this presentation, or suggestions for us?

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