Video-conferencing etiquette and good practice – top tips

This paper is part of a video-conferencing toolkit developed by the Connecting Advice in Dorset project. Other tools available are:

- *Guide to using new technology to deliver advice*
- *Video-link pilot FINAL REPORT*

Introduction

It is expected that, by 2016, video conferencing will be the world's most preferred way of collaborating, ahead of email and telephone voice calls. In the business world, video conferencing is a way of life with 96% of business decision-makers believing that video conferencing improves productivity between teams in different locations and 56% of business decision-makers participating in at least one video meeting per week[1].

Whilst the advice sector is lagging behind, the pilot carried out by the Connecting Advice in Dorset project between April and September 2015 proved the concept of using a video-link to deliver advice or to communicate with staff in your own or other organisations. Whilst initially holding a conversation by video-linking may seem strange and new, it should quickly become straight-forward and natural. In general, you should act in the same way as if you were in a face-to-face conversation but here are a few hints and tips to help.

Hints & Tips

1. Be polite and respectful to other participants – If the call is pre-arranged make the call, or answer the phone on time, introduce yourself by name and use other people's names when you speak to them.
2. Speak clearly and don't shout
3. Maintain eye contact by looking into the camera and minimise body movements.
4. Use the picture of yourself to check how you appear to others – ensure your face is in the centre of the picture and stay a good distance from the camera (but not out of range of the microphone) rather than taking up the whole space
5. Concentrate on the call - don't carry on side conversations, check your emails, use your mobile phone or carry out other tasks during the conversation
6. Do not eat or drink during the conversation
7. If possible, consider your clothing – avoid clothes with patterns or stripes. Light coloured clothing is desirable
8. Remove any jewellery which could be noisy or distracting

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[1] Global View: Business Video Conferencing Usage and Trends", October 2013, conducted by Redshift Research and commissioned by Polycom.

9. Be aware of your background – keep it clear and uncluttered and take steps to minimise background noise. Ensure the lighting is adequate for other callers to clearly see your face.
10. Check that there are no confidential conversations taking place in the same room, or sensitive information on the wall behind you
11. Make sure you know how to turn on the audio and video, adjust the volume and how to share files and screens

In group conversations
- Designate a chairperson who can manage the conversations and indicate when participants should speak
- Don't interrupt other speakers
- Raise your hand if you wish to speak
- Mute your microphone until invited to speak