



Webinars, video conferences and other online meetings are now a regular part of everyday life for many of us. They make it much easier to connect, collaborate, share knowledge and learn new skills.

Distance or other difficulties are not important. Relationships established in the virtual world are more and more often replacing traditional face-to-face meetings.

For many companies and organizations, on the one hand, and employees or students, on the other, this is an excellent opportunity for further development. Modern online communication platforms, such as ClickMeeting, make it possible to establish valuable contacts and use innovative multimedia solutions, which make everyday work and learning more effective. On the other hand, their participants still encounter problems and doubts - and these are not limited to technical aspects - more and more often, in connection with the growing interest in remote cooperation, **they refer to the issue of behavior during webinars, videoconferences and meetings.**

Although it may seem that etiquette has long lost its importance, the reality is quite different. Everyone expects communication to be not only efficient but also enjoyable, and online meetings to allow for the satisfying development of relationships between co-workers, teachers and their students, or trainers and their listeners.

Although there is no universal catalog of behaviour in the world of virtual events, it is worth spending some time thinking about how an ideal meeting should look like: what we expect from speakers during webinars or colleagues during team meetings. On the

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other hand we should also take into account what demotivates and causes the greatest difficulties. Developing a catalog of basic etiquette norms and putting them into practice is not difficult at all, and can significantly improve everyday communication and ensure higher efficiency

We want your online meetings to be as satisfying as possible, so we have prepared this guide. Previously, we also conducted a survey in which we asked participants of various types of online events to indicate the situations that bothered them the most, as well as their habits and expectations. We hope that this will make future meetings more enjoyable and productive.

ClickMeeting Team



Why do we need savoir-vivre? Setting the rules for online meetings

Business meetings, conversations with clients, educational classes or important exams. Each of us knows very well what they require, how to prepare for them and what our partner expects from us. Issues such as appropriate dress, punctuality or hierarchy do not raise any major objections. Today, most of these matters have largely or fully moved to the virtual space. Although online communication has been with us for a long time and we can use more and more advanced tools, the most common doubts concern precisely how to behave during webinars, videoconferences and meetings. This is not surprising, especially in the case of organizations and individuals who, during the pandemic period, had to rapidly switch to remote collaboration, without having a system of good practices to support online communication in place.

Many users wonder whether the rules of etiquette that are in force during traditional meetings should be applied in the same form also to online events. Some of them assume that working from home has its own rules and you can afford to be much more relaxed.

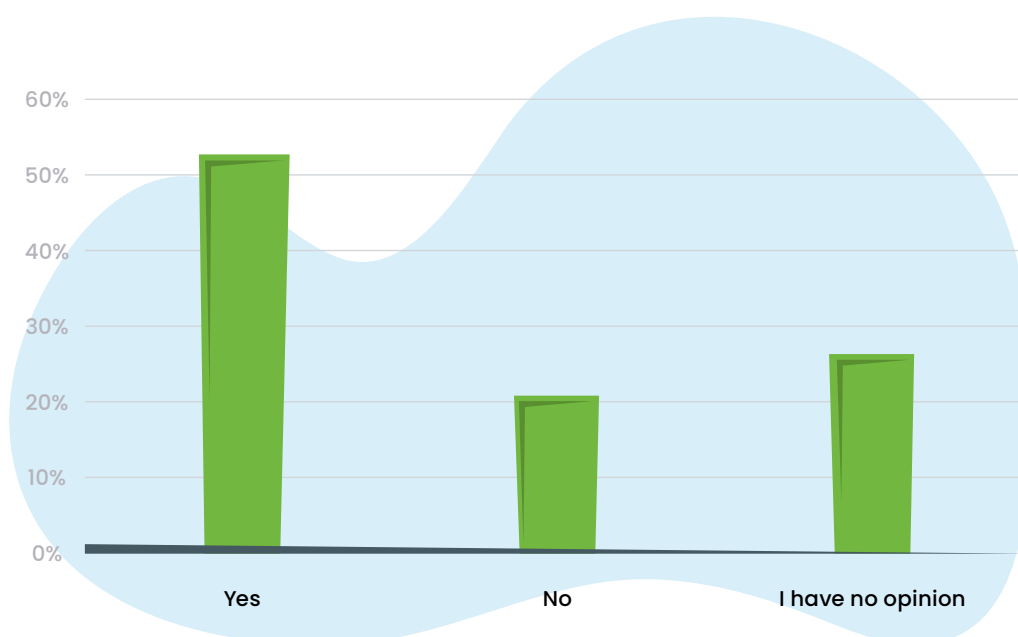
First of all, as shown by our surveys, it is clear that most of us would like to establish clear rules for participation in various types of online events. Before proceeding to the practical part, it is worth considering what is savoir-vivre and how it can be useful during video conferences or webinars. Learning the norms and putting them into practice can easily solve many crisis situations and have a positive impact on the course of everyday meetings.

Here's what you can gain by implementing the right rules:

- Improved communication,
- Increased efficiency,
- Reduced meeting stress,
- Shortening of events,
- Reduced risk of image crises,
- Easier planning,
- Support in building a professional image.

One of the most common misconceptions about savoir-vivre is the lack of flexibility. In fact, the rules of etiquette can be adapted to any situation, including the virtual one.

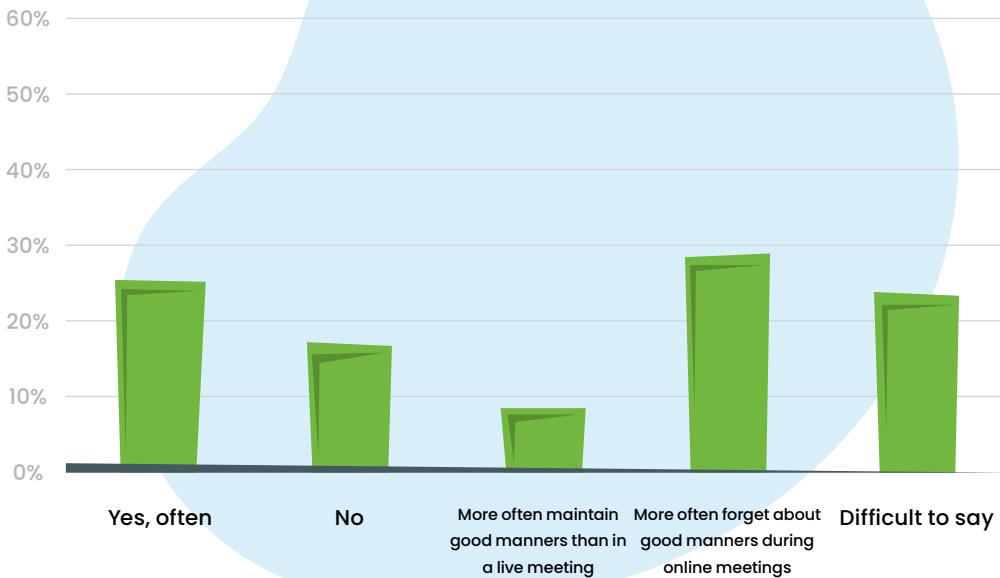
Do you want clear etiquette rules for online meetings?



How do we perceive the behavior of others in online meetings?

Many people notice various types of problems related to the behavior of participants in online meetings. Very often it affects the course of the meeting and hinders proper cooperation. The good manners still apply, even if you're sitting in your favorite chair or taking care of a child or pet while you work.

Do you think that attendees of online meetings have the same good manners as when meeting in person?



In fact, in many cases, small changes and common sense are enough to significantly affect the way you are perceived by your superiors, colleagues, customers or your students. This can directly translate into effective meetings and overall team satisfaction.

* The survey was conducted by ClickMeeting in June 2021 with a sample of 405 online event attendees.

Finding your way in the world of online meetings will be much easier if you follow a few simple tips. We have prepared a set of guidelines that will help you avoid stressful situations, feel confident and work much more efficiently.

1. Learn about the tool for the meeting



Effective online communication is very simple. However, it would not be possible without the right tools and knowledge of how to use the available features. Therefore, in the case of virtual contacts, **traditional etiquette should be supplemented with scrupulous familiarization with the platform for meetings and webinars.**

What should you pay attention to?

- **Technical requirements** - before the meeting, check whether the platform requires installation on your computer or downloading an additional application. Also check whether there are any limitations which could make it difficult for you and other people to use it.
- **How to log in to the room** - especially before important meetings or trainings, it's a good idea to find out how exactly the whole logging path looks like before joining. This will help you avoid potential problems.
- **The view of the room** - also take a moment to familiarize yourself with the room window where the meeting will take place. Study the placement of the items you will be using.
- **Key features** - find out what capabilities the software gives you: whether you can use chat, turn the microphone on and off during a meeting, or raise your hand to speak.

Learning is easy. For example, ClickMeeting users can take advantage of a knowledge base where they can find answers to key questions, a blog dedicated to the platform, and video tutorials.

It usually takes only a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the software and solve many problems that may emerge during the event. In turn, this means far less stress and more efficient communication.

2. Check the devices before the meeting

Nothing stresses us out more than an unexpected connection breakdown or sudden loss of video or sound. Although not everything is within our control, it is impossible to predict for example the failure of the Internet services, but it is fairly easy to prevent many undesirable scenarios.

→ **Start by testing your devices, such as webcam or audio equipment.**

The appropriate meeting software plays a key role in this case. ClickMeeting provides an intuitive device tester that will allow you to quickly and easily see if your video and audio quality is good, and whether your webcam or microphone is working as intended.

After positive verification, you can proceed to the room window without any worries. The test itself takes only a few moments, but it is worth being prepared for any scenario and run it in advance. This will give you time, for example, to replace faulty headphones and avoid the risk of being late.

3. Be prepared for the unexpected



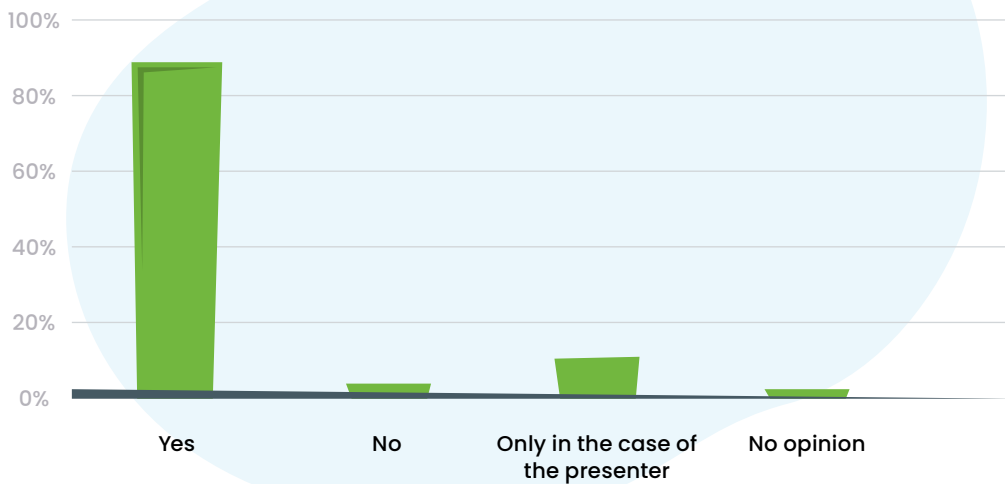
As we mentioned, not everything can be predicted. A network failure can interrupt a meeting when you least expect it. **Therefore, it's worth preparing for unexpected problems** (even if they seem relatively unlikely) and, for example, have a smartphone on hand that will work as an alternative router in a crisis situation. This is especially important in case of important meetings. This way, your absence will not last too long. When you return to your room, you should of course apologize for the situation.

If you're experiencing frequent problems with your connection, look for a place with the best signal quality before the meeting, or swap wi-fi for a wired connection.

4. Punctuality matters

Punctuality also plays a key role during online meetings. It shows, above all, your professionalism and allows you to show respect to your colleagues or participants, whose time is extremely valuable. Of course, **being late is an even more serious faux-pas for presenters and speakers.**

In online meetings, do you think punctuality and being present until the end of the event are important?

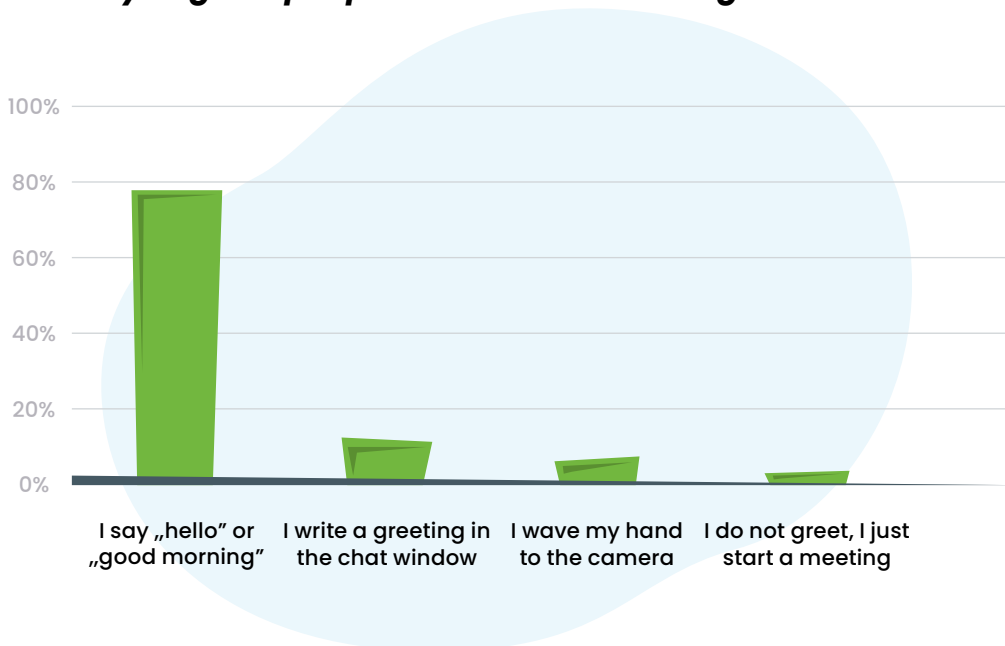


It is therefore worth being ready some time in advance, allowing you to comfortably join the room or start the event. If you are participating in a conversation with a superior or a person who is higher in the business hierarchy, on the other hand, you should calmly wait for him/her to appear in the room and for the meeting to start. The same dependence also applies to exams or job interviews.

5. How to greet in online meetings?

There are also some doubts about how to greet other participants in online meetings. Some people prefer not to be noticed, others write a short message in the chat window or limit themselves to waving their hand. Of course, **the best form of greeting is saying „hello” or „good morning” and making eye contact with other event participants.** As you can see, this option is also chosen by the vast majority of respondents.

How do you greet people in an online meeting?



The same pattern applies to saying goodbye as well. Addressing other people directly will not only be the most polite thing to do, but it will also allow transferring behaviors known from traditional reality to the virtual world.

6. Prepare the meeting venue

Traditional meetings in an office or lecture hall are much simpler in this respect: we don't have to worry in any way about a setting that will look professional and ensure full engagement of your audience. In the case of online events, on the other hand, what happens behind the presenter's back is very important. It also shows your attitude towards the attendees and the situation as a whole. And while many elements cannot be predicted, there are a few that you have a direct influence on.



6.1 What should appear in the background?

Webinars, video conferences and other meetings can successfully replace traditional face-to-face contact. In each case, however, the goal is to ensure optimal interaction between users, so eye contact should be the goal.

The primary dilemma in such a scenario concerns what should be in the background. According to the experience of our respondents, very often during online meetings we witness situations that we ourselves would not like to present to others. It's not always necessary to organize, for example, professional meeting walls (although it shouldn't be a big problem, so it's worth considering if you run a large number of events). **All you need to do is make sure your event space looks neat and tidy.** Presenting against a plain wall is also a good option.

What else should you pay attention to?

- **Light sources:** make sure that during the meeting there is no intense light source behind your back (e.g. a brightly lit window). This can significantly affect the image quality,
- **Control the image:** In the AV preview window you can check what the other participants in the meeting see. This allows you to quickly make the necessary adjustments and maintain eye contact.

6.2 Virtual background

Of course, the virtual background, that you will find in some webinar, video conferencing and online meeting platforms, remains an interesting alternative. It allows you to easily hide what is behind your back. You have several options to choose from: you can move to a lecture hall, an office, place your own images, or just use a blurred background.

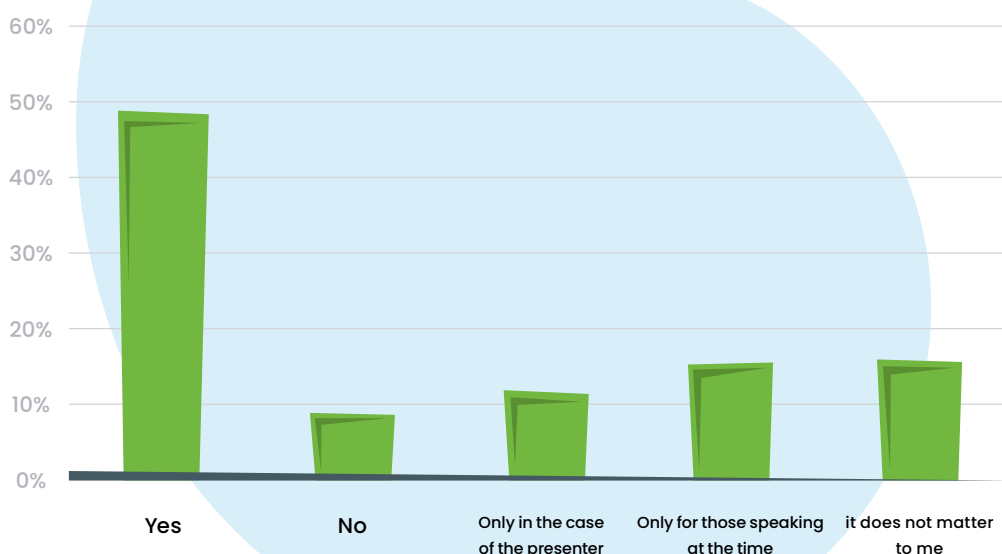
A virtual background can work well in many situations, especially in the case of casual meetings among close associates. It is worth to treat this option with some moderation. Presenting yourself in exotic, virtual scenery will not always be well received. So during formal conversations it is better to either resign from this function or use a blurred background. Keep in mind that during intensive movement the virtual background may deform.



7. Do I need to turn on my camera?

Modern online meeting platforms allow you to turn off the camera at any time. Many people like to take advantage of this feature and limit themselves to speaking only. While this is the most effective way to hide a mess or inappropriate dress from co-workers, students or superiors, it is also a breach of etiquette. If you arrange a video conference, it becomes necessary to share both audio and video. In this way you show respect to your interlocutors and take care of relations that often suffer due to the lack of standard contacts. As you can see, the participants of our survey are of a similar opinion:

Do you think that turning on the camera in an online meeting is a sign of respect towards the other participants?



8. Dress code during online meetings



In the world of online meetings, nothing stirs up such emotions as the dress code of the participants. While most of us know how to dress for a formal meeting with a client in a company's headquarters or for an exam at school or university, the home atmosphere is often a bit lazy. On the other hand, dressing too formally is not always ideal for establishing contact online. Therefore, it is much easier to make a mistake.

How to dress for an online meeting? **This issue should be handled with a healthy dose of common sense.**

So in the vast majority of cases, a standard set of washed, pressed and well-groomed clothes will suffice. If you are attending an important meeting, e.g. with a client or a superior, it is worth wearing a shirt instead. Wearing a jacket at home, especially in the summer, is unnatural and will not always work in the virtual reality.

Of course, a lot depends on the environment you are in.

Normally we demand more from the dress code of speakers during webinars. On the other hand, if the meeting takes place in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, they can also appear in less formal outfits.

8.1 Is make-up compulsory?

Definitely more dilemmas arise in the case of women. **Wearing makeup, obviously, is not mandatory:** this applies to traditional meetings as well as online ones. So, if you want, you can do a light business makeup, but there is no obligation to do so. A professional image simply requires neatness. In the case of both men and women, it is therefore necessary to take care of the hairstyle (messy hair also shows a lack of professionalism). Once again, timing and common sense are the best advisors.

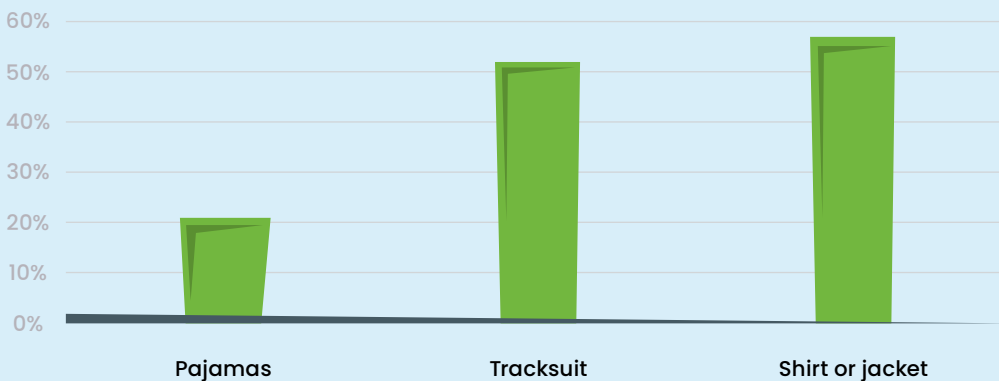
8.2 Treat your participants like guests

When attending an online meeting from home, it's a good practice to treat your co-workers or webinar attendees like the guests you are going to host. After all, in such a situation, cleaning your home and dressing neatly are standard. At the same time, if you know people well, you can allow yourself a bit more (with a sense of taste, of course!), while during more formal visits you are obliged to keep a little more distance.

- Who are your audience?
- How well do you know them?
- What do they expect from you and the meeting?
- Is the situation formal?
- What norms are provided for in your organization or industry?
- What do you expect from speakers and attendees in meetings of this type?

Adapting your dress code, the space around you, and your behavior to the specific situation is not difficult. However, each scenario should be approached with common sense and moderation. After all, **a little more professionalism is certainly better than overstepping the boundaries** unacceptable to coworkers or event attendees.

Within the last month, did you ever dress in:



8.3 Incomplete outfit



The Internet is full of memes in which a person working remotely is dressed in an elegant shirt or jacket, and combines such formal outfit with comfortable shorts or sweatpants. Seemingly there is nothing wrong in such a situation: after all, the participants of the event or co-workers are not able to see what is outside the frame. On the one hand, we provide ourselves with comfort, on the other – we take care of our professional image.

However, it is certainly not the best idea. We can easily imagine a situation in which it will be necessary to suddenly rise from a chair. This, in turn, means that the entire plan will be exposed and undoubtedly perceived as a serious faux-pas. So it's always a good idea to dress in a well thought out and consistent manner.

9. Problems during the meeting

There's no denying it: various types of disruptions to virtual meetings are a regular part of everyday life for many people. However, we do not mean technical problems, which, as we have shown, can be easily solved in most cases.

They are definitely more often related to what is happening around the meeting participant. The list of potential crisis scenarios is very long. Some of them can be easily predicted (and thus either avoided or well prepared for), while others, unfortunately, are beyond our control.

Surely, as a participant of a meeting or a speaker, you have encountered a situation in which someone suddenly breaks off to open the door to the courier, eats lunch or forgets to mute the microphone, so that everyone can hear a fragment of a private conversation. Of course, it is easy to conclude that these types of situations disrupt cooperation and are not only tactless, but also negatively affect the effectiveness of meetings or training.

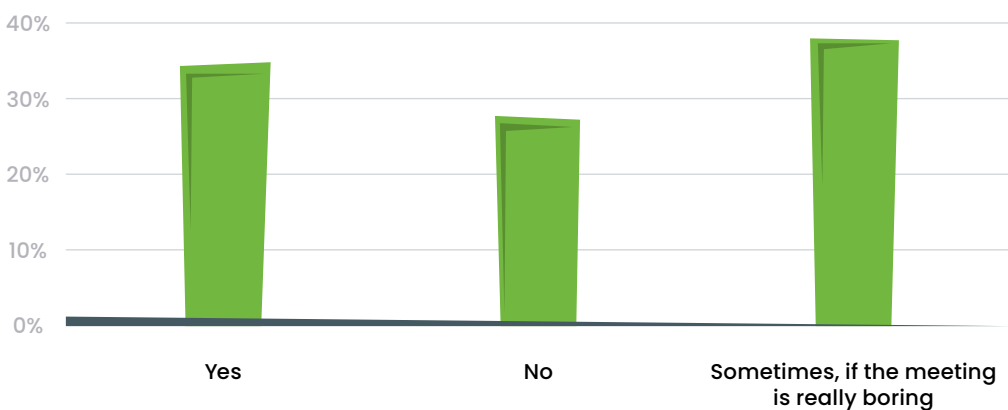
We have prepared a list of some common scenarios. Even before joining the event, it is worth considering how you can overcome them and take certain measures in time.

9.1 Household responsibilities

Remote work makes it much easier to combine private and professional life. Unfortunately, **not everyone knows how to keep them separate**. During online meetings, it happens that their participants, for example, hang up the laundry, empty the dishwasher or clean. These activities not only create noise that distracts other participants, but are also a sign of disrespect towards the interlocutors.

During an online meeting, you should focus solely on the meeting and its participants. Simply schedule your day so that your home responsibilities do not interfere with your business ones. Standard working hours, defined for example in the contract between an employee and the employer or in other arrangements, also determine your availability for your supervisor and colleagues. During this time, your business concerns should take priority over your personal needs.

Do you find yourself doing other things while meeting online, such as eating, cooking, cleaning, answering emails, checking social media?



Of course, the activities we focus on during meetings are not limited to household chores. We often do other things (including work-related tasks), browse the Internet, or check social media profiles. Obviously, the etiquette approach is also clear in these cases: the focus should be on the meeting and its participants, and other activities should wait until after the meeting.

9.2 Picking up a package during a meeting

Another situation that we often face during online meetings is about a courier showing up. Undoubtedly, remote work makes online shopping much easier: we no longer have to ask a neighbor to pick up the package or order it to the company's headquarters, which may involve various complications (and is not welcomed by every organization).

Unfortunately, it often happens that the courier calls at the least appropriate moment, i.e. during a meeting. What to do in such a situation?

- The best solution is to **set a time of delivery that does not interfere with scheduled meetings.**
- It is also worth thinking about an **alternative place of delivery:** for example, a parcel machine or a point where you can pick up the parcel yourself at any time.
- If the courier's visit cannot be avoided during the meeting, **it is worth informing the other participants about it.**

Of course, much depends on the rank of the meeting. In the case of standard team meetings, in most cases a courier's visit will not cause much controversy (as long as it does not happen very often).

However, if it's a formal meeting or you're conducting a webinar, simply don't plan to pick up the parcel at that time. Just in case, it's also worth remembering that the sound of an intercom can bring a lot of chaos to an online meeting. To avoid problems, simply mute it.



9.3 Eating and drinking

Another regular part of many meetings is the consumption of food and drink during the meeting. **It is easy to conclude that this is simply rude.** Besides, it distracts other participants and makes it difficult for them to focus on the content presented.

Of course, almost everyone is well aware of this inappropriateness. Therefore, it often happens that participants try to hide by turning off the webcam while eating. However, this behavior is also not acceptable. First of all, as we have already discussed, sharing video during a videoconference is one of the basic norms, proving professionalism and improving cooperation. Besides, in such a situation it is also extremely easy to unmask. Sudden „calling to the board“ or being asked to speak will be even more uncomfortable. Eating in secret is not only inelegant, but also unhealthy. Therefore, better to plan meals so that they do not interfere with meetings.

Of course, drinking water, coffee or tea during various types of meetings is perfectly acceptable and understandable. You should, however, be sensible about it: choose moments when you don't speak, and remember to mute your microphone so you don't distract others.

These rules apply to online meetings and webinar speakers. Attendees who are just watching and listening to the presentation are free to eat.

10. Unexpected situations



Not everything can be predicted during online meetings. Participants need to be aware of this fact and handle emergencies with understanding.

So if, for example, your child or four-legged friend suddenly disrupts the event, **apologize to the others and ask for some time to calm them down**. A similar rule should apply, for example, if there is an unannounced knock on the door when no one else can open it.

11. Muting the microphone

Nothing distracts as much as background sounds, suddenly resounding in the headphones of all participants. Cars passing by, noise from other rooms, and even seemingly quiet hum can disrupt your work and make it difficult to focus on the issues at hand.

Fortunately, there's a very simple way to avoid many of these problems: **just mute your microphone when you're not speaking.** Most advanced platforms, such as ClickMeeting, allow you to turn the sound on and off efficiently. You don't have to worry about this being perceived negatively by your colleagues: everyone is well aware that it makes it easy to control chaos. So it's worth using this option regularly.



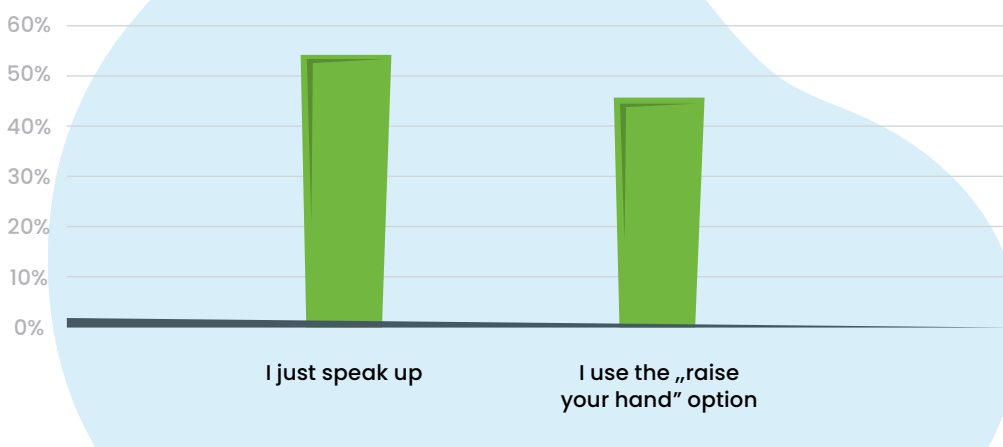
12. Speaking up and raising issues

Active participation in a meeting requires speaking up (this can also be an important part of a webinar). On the other hand, we know from experience that this can be a bit chaotic, especially when several people start speaking at once. This is not surprising: such situations happen very often during standard meetings in larger groups. Almost everyone has ever started speaking at the same time as someone else. This not only makes it difficult to work constructively, it's also uncomfortable.

However, **online meeting platforms make it easy to solve this problem.** Proper discussion moderation can definitely be more effective in the virtual world. All you have to do is use the option of raising your hand when you want to speak. This makes it possible to control the chaos, and the person who, for example, is leading the meeting, knows who would like to speak.

It is also worth using other elements that improve communication, such as live emoji. Thanks to multimedia icons you will be able, among others, to announce the willingness to speak, support a given idea or indicate a problem. As you can see, many issues can be addressed without disrupting the meeting and involving all participants.

Do you use the „raise your hand” option in online meetings, or do you simply speak up?



Preparing for an online meeting? With this short list, you'll have everything under control in a flash.

Before the meeting

- Familiarize yourself with the online meeting platform, including technical requirements, room layout, and available features.
- Check camera and microphone performance. Test your equipment.
- Dress appropriately for the situation.
- Prepare a suitable place – pay attention to connection quality, silence and comfort. Choose an aesthetic and non-distracting background.
- Sign in some time in advance to start the meeting punctually.

During the meeting

- Turn the camera on if you are participating in a video conference.
- Greet the other participants. Also remember to say goodbye after the event.
- Focus on the meeting – put off chores, meals, etc.
- Maintain eye contact with other participants.
- Request to speak by raising your hand. Mute the microphone when other attendees are speaking.

Have an enjoyable and productive online meeting!
The **ClickMeeting** team

* The survey was conducted by ClickMeeting in June 2021 with a sample of 405 online event attendees.

