



My Top 15 Tips on Hosting Virtual Meetings

Using Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional



~By: Jacquie Beck~

Before the Meeting: Close all other programs such as Instant Messaging applications or email and ensure you are not on a VPN connection or anything else that may adversely affect your bandwidth or latency. If possible, do not use a wireless connection as a broadcaster!



Tip 1

Large or high importance meetings warrant special attention with how you manage and run them. First & foremost is to conduct rehearsals with the same equipment and some distant end participants you will be using for the actual event. It is also a best practice to have several well versed co-presenters and hosts in the room with you. Use the presenter only area for collaboration amongst fellow presenters leading up to the start and during the meeting.



Tip 2

It is ideal to have two or three computers so you can split up tasks. For example, on one computer you could be broadcasting VoIP and flipping slides, another you could be streaming video, and on another logged in as a participant to monitor exactly what the participants are seeing. Using a single computer will also work, however having dual monitors will help you visualize what participants are seeing. Capabilities such as broadcasting VoIP and video are processor intensive.



Tip 3

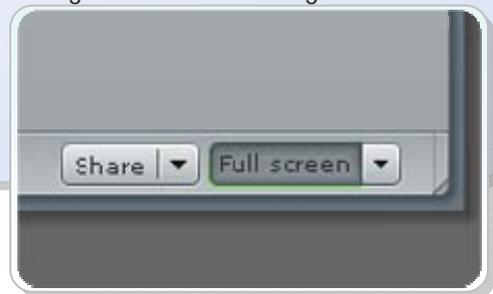
A USB headset is preferred for broadcasting VoIP and running through the audio setup wizard will help ensure your audio levels are properly set.



**Tip 4**

Your content should be pre-loaded into pods and various layouts so you can easily flip to content as you need it. Remember that when you flip to another layout or bring up another pod with content, there will be a few seconds for each participant's view to load it. Tiling pods with content on top of each other is a good tactic because the content will have already loaded for each participant and when you unhide it they will immediately see the content. **Enable Full Screen Toggle for Participants** is also a best practice for content or screen sharing.

The default pod and layout arrangement works well for most meetings. Large meetings in the several hundred to over a thousand participant range benefit from hiding the **attendee list pod** in the **presenter only area** and linking the **chat pod** to a **Q & A pod** that is also in the **presenter only area**.

**Tip 5**

Only use screen sharing when you have to, as it is the most bandwidth intensive capability. Instead you should load slides or other content in pods. For non-supported file formats for the share pod, print them to FlashPaper so they can be brought into the share pod and viewed in a very bandwidth light format. If screen sharing must be used, set your desktop screen resolution to 1024x768 and move all clutter from your desktop. Setting your desktop background to a single color as opposed to an image will also help with bandwidth.

**Tip 6**

If recording, the best practice is to keep your recordings under 1 hour. For a long event this may mean making several recordings for each portion. Also keep in mind that the indexing provided with an interactive Connect recording is based off of layout titles.

 **Tip 7**

Tip 7: Finally you should have a good strategy for the minutes leading up to the meeting start and then that closing. Having a lobby layout is helpful in letting participants know they are in the right place and that the meeting will be starting soon. Revolving slides built with Adobe Presenter or Captivate work very well. Music or other engaging content enhances the virtual experience. Loading in a custom background is also a nice touch. There are SWF files of engaging content available for free download on the Adobe Connect exchange at: www.adobe.com/cfusion/exchange/index.cfm?event=productHome&exc=14&loc=en_us.

These files are sometimes referred to as custom pods and they can be loaded as ZIP or SWF files into a share pod.

 **Tip 8**

Tip 8: Prior to the meeting starting you should have your co-presenters present. You can elect to set the room to **Place Participants on Hold** and set an appropriate message, allow all guests to come in to the lobby layout you have created, or a combination of the two.

 **Tip 9**

Tip 9: Ending the meeting smoothly is something often overlooked. Best practice is to have some takeaway content already loaded up into file share pods and some ending polls for feedback. Using the weblinks pod you can also push participant's browser to a page or you could also use the **End Meeting** capability to do that same.



Tip 10 Bandwidth Tips

Bandwidth management and monitoring is critical for a large meeting and is the single most important topic for ensuring your audience has a good experience. The **Optimize Room Bandwidth** setting should be set to DSL/Cable if it is not already and the presenter's **My Connection Speed** should be at DSL/Cable.



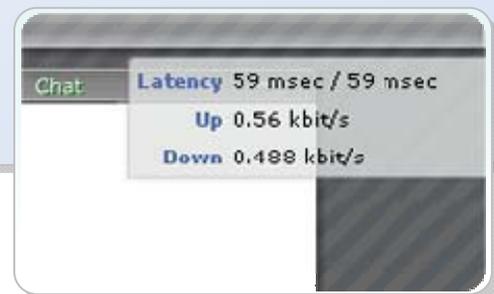
Tip 11

Monitoring the uplink and downlink bitrate helps you see what you are 'asking' each participant's connection bandwidth to be able to handle. These stats are directly related to the capabilities you are using and quality settings on those capabilities. For example, with a VoIP stream going out and slides, the downlink (or uplink if since you are the presenter) should not go above 20 kbps. If you add a single webcam feed at a quality setting of **Fast Images** then the downlink for each participant would double. This is why it is very important to use high bandwidth capabilities very judiciously, especially in very large meetings. Unless you are in smaller meetings or you know that each participant has decent bandwidth, you should aim to stay below sending out greater than 100 kbps to participants.

Unless constant streaming video is a necessity for your session, pause it. Many organizations SOP (say S-O-P) is to have individuals start up their webcam and then pause it until they speak.

In meeting management for large meetings can be a significant task of its own, apart from presenting the content. The presenter only area is invaluable in collaborating behind the scenes with your fellow presenters. It also allows you to pre-stage content prior to dragging it onto the main stage where all can see.

Show host cursors is an option that you may decide to use, however it can be distracting if shown to all and a best practice is to show only to other hosts.



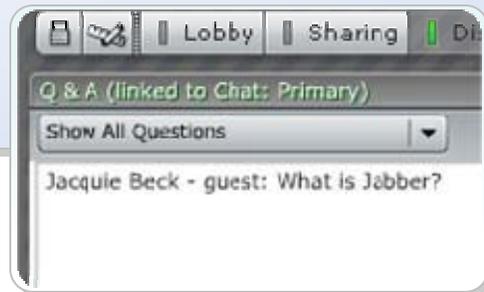

Tip 12:

The **preparing presenter** mode allows you to manipulate content and layouts behind the scenes while the meeting is in progress. This is a more advanced feature and should be used when last minute additions need to be made. A best practice for this feature is to have various topic presenters be in preparing presenter mode on their layout. When the audience is brought to their layout then they will see what the topic presenter has done. For screenshares this works especially well and doesn't require a few seconds for a topic presenter to start up their share...they are already sharing when the audience is taken to their layout.



Tip 13:

The Q&A pod should be the pod of choice to manage chat & keep questions and answers right on top of each other. With properly defined co-presenter roles rehearsed, there should be a presenter in charge of responding to chat that comes into the Q&A pod and also be able to delegate the questions out to other presenters. Remember that a Q&A pod should only be shown in the presenter only area and it requires linkage to a chat pod on the main stage.



Tip 14:

If any participants need to speak with VoIP or perform any other capabilities, give out rights very sparingly and at the least level possible. For example, if a participant needs to annotate some items with the whiteboarding tools, don't promote them to presenter but rather use the enhanced participant rights option to give them share pod privileges.



 **Tip 15**

Rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse!!! You want to be able to speak smoothly and confidently about the content you are presenting. You should know the material inside and out. Record your rehearsal and then watch yourself in the recording to see your weaknesses and where you struggle...then rehearse a few more times. ☺ GOOD LUCK!



Jacquie Beck is an Adobe Certified Solution Expert and Certified Adobe Connect Trainer. She has worked with many of Adobe's largest clients to teach best practices and provide coaching for new virtual training teams across the country. Jacquie has developed custom training and written job aides to fit the best practices of Adobe Solutions into the standards of organizations like Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, Department of Defense, Patent and Trade Office, US Navy, Vanguard, Crocs Footwear, Apple Computer and many other large organizations with diverse training initiatives.



Solution
PARTNER

Jacquie can be contacted at:
jbeck@brookwood.com | 215-717-2784.

Which way is your business going?



The best direction is with a solid eLearning partner.

Consulting, Development, Support
www.brookwood.com

BROOKWOOD
connecting people with knowledge