
SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Shifting to virtual Scouting—whether unit meetings, virtual roundtables, or other types of BSA gathering—means Scouters have to be more active in managing how online events, activities, and meetings run. It's understandable that people have limited time to plan them, but don't use that as an excuse to push meeting planning to the bottom of your list. Conducting a successful virtual meeting isn't hard, and making meetings easy is something everyone values.

If online events fail to meet expectations, it is most likely due to a lack of planning and adherence to best practices and standards. You'll find best practices all over the internet if you search, but this guide emphasizes delivering a good Scouting event that provides focus, information, and fun.

PRE-EVENT

- Schedule meeting early, with as much detail as possible
 - Implement proper meeting security measures (learn more about [Setting up Registration for a Meeting](#), [Securing Virtual Meetings for Scouting](#), and [How to Prevent Recording in Zoom](#))
 - Clear start and end times
 - Access information (e.g., Zoom link, dial-in info, etc.)
 - Expectations on meeting type (e.g., lashings, Adventures In Coins activity loop, event plan, roundtable)
 - Any items needing preparation beforehand
 - Confirm that your conference system is available and accessible
 - If you are relying on another's account, make sure they are going to be available or that you have access without their involvement
- Plan out event duration carefully
 - Easy for participants to be distracted and discussions to drift
 - Break session into bite-sized sections (use meeting planners or roundtable formats appropriate to your program or purpose)
 - Aim to keep on schedule but know what you can cut/adjust as needed
- Review and rehearse
 - Don't "wing it"—know what you will be saying and what you need to have on hand
 - Prepare an outline of your topic and have it on hand
 - Collect and stage any items you will need during the meeting
 - Have a "Plan B" ready in case something goes wrong
- Check your tech and presentation space
 - Review your "stage" and make sure you're able to work and present comfortably
 - Expand or contract the area as needed for maximum focus on topic
 - Make yourself look good! Are you well lit?
 - Consider buying a right light, external light source, or set up indirect lighting that reflects off plain white paper on the desktop
 - Light your face directly, but from behind the camera to avoid shadows
 - Check to see if your light is reflecting off glasses or your brilliant white smile and causing distractions
 - Use natural light if possible

- Look at “virtual camera” options for additional features beyond a single-camera view
 - Products such as ManyCam, XSplit, OBS and Streamlabs allow for multiple cameras, easier screen sharing, picture-in-picture, and more
- Including others? Review and practice with them as well!
 - Know what they will present and how they will present it
 - Have any slides or other documents collected and ready
 - Review the script and presentation order to avoid confusion or awkward pauses
- Publish agenda ahead of time if appropriate
 - Give your audience an idea of what’s going to happen

MEETING TIME!

- Check your camera and systems
 - Is there a clear view of you or the presenters? Do you have a nice background?
 - Is your mic working? Is your camera working and focused? Are you well lit?
 - Can you hear clearly? Are your speakers/headset turned on?
 - Make sure wireless devices (e.g., keyboard, mice, etc.) aren’t about to die
- Manage your computer environment
 - If possible, use dual-monitors. Host the screen sharing on your primary display, and move windows—such as your participants list, chat, Q&A, and polling—to a secondary monitor.
 - Close out any other program you don’t need to have running to avoid distractions and conserve bandwidth
 - Have any files you will be presenting ready and in a single location
 - Have your agenda in an easy-to-view area. Consider using a whiteboard to post behind your camera so you can see it while maintaining eye contact.
- Consider “virtual camera” software to expand capability
- Open access to the meeting 10–15 mins early
 - Do discussion and chit-chat up front
 - This is a good time to set that custom background!
- Start on time with a clear opening
 - Mute all participants
 - Welcome everyone and thank them for their time
 - Starting with the Pledge? Have a flag on hand or a graphic you can display.
- Waste no time getting into your content
 - Quickly move past housekeeping and other info bits and push to the interactive activities or interesting discussion
 - Spread out announcements to avoid an info-dump (and have people tune out)
 - Control interruptions from others (use that MUTE button) to avoid drifting off topic
- Avoid “death by PowerPoint”
 - Move quickly through slides if possible
 - Include live props, video, or other materials
 - More pictures, fewer words—visualize your content to create a more lasting impression
- Encourage discussion and use frequent and varied interaction
 - Draw participants into the event

- Pay attention to their video feed—they're watching you, but you can be watching them, too—make eye contact with your audience (look at your camera, not the screen)
- Mix up interaction—have participants type a response in chat, interact with a poll, or ask for a thumbs up/thumbs down response on camera to see if people are understanding
- Watch the time, and stay on track
- Come to a clear ending/conclusion, and leave with a call to action
 - What do you need participants to do next?

POST-EVENT

- Review the chat to see if any questions were left unanswered
- Provide a summary of the meeting to send out
 - Restate any important announcements
 - Review what was presented
 - Answer any questions not covered
 - Restate the call to action or next steps
 - Let them know when the next meeting is
- Review your performance and make adjustments as needed
- Check with others to get their impressions and suggestions on how to improve for next time