

How to make your Zoom call a success

If you're new to Zoom then you may be uncomfortable about the combination of a new technology and the ability to make a mess of things whilst being seen by others, but using Zoom can be an eye-opener for many businesses, helping create connections, saving on travel, sharing information, etc.

All the issues you might have with Zoom are perfectly understandable many people who are used to 'traditional face-to-face' networking have a lot of apprehension to using Zoom to network or collaborate, however the principles of networking still apply and the skills you probably already have apply directly to Zoom too, so here are some top tips on how to make your first Zoom call a success.

Top Tips – Creating a Zoom Strategy

1. Let's go back to base principles.

All marketing activity should tie into a proper marketing strategy where you have clarity of purpose, you understand who you are looking to sell to, why they might want to buy it and what language and channels to use to convey your message. If you've not already got this, then perhaps you should rethink your approach to marketing and get this in place first!

2. Working out your Zoom call

If Zoom is new to you then work it out first ... it's not actually that complicated!

- ✓ Set up an account: - simply visit <https://zoom.us> and follow their sign up procedures. This stage is free and, unless you're planning on hosting large meetings, the free account is normally good enough for most people.
- ✓ Set up your profile:- it is helpful if your display name is that which you wish others to call you rather than 'F. J Bloggs' or 'tweetyie'. Also add a professional mug shot. Go to <https://zoom.us/profile>
- ✓ Test your audio and video:- it is essential that you do this NOW, not once you're supposed to be in a Zoom meeting! The good news is that Zoom provides easy to use settings to do this:- both being able to hear and be heard and see and be seen can be tested at <https://zoom.us/test> Generally mics and cameras simply 'work' on smartphones, tablets and modern laptops but desktops often don't have built-in microphones and you will have to find a solution to this.

- ✓ Get used to the Zoom screen interface. The main things to look for are the mute/unmute (which stops your microphone but not the incoming sound), video on/off, gallery view/speaker view, chat (everyone and individuals), etc.

Zoom provides lots of tutorials and online help – but there is also a lot of other help available to you – just search on Google with your query.

3. Important things to NOT DO on your Zoom call!

Remember that if your video and audio is on then whatever you do is heard and/or seen by everyone else on the call. So, don't take a Zoom call into the toilet, pick your nose, scratch your bum or do anything else inappropriate. It's also important to keep children, pets and partners away if you're supposed to be on a business Zoom call ... let them know, close your door, put a "Shhh!" sign up, locate yourself somewhere away from the distractions, etc.

4. Branding is part of the Zoom strategy.

How you present yourself and how you appear to others will massively impact their perception of you and your business.

- ✓ Let's start with your personal presentation – you need to choose what you should be wearing – as a rule of thumb, pyjamas or extremely casual 'house clothes' are not appropriate ... but neither, generally, is a suit and tie. Be comfortable and professional. Also, think about personal grooming ... do you need a shave or to sort your hair! Finally, remember to smile and remember to look at the camera lens when you are speaking and not your screen ... put a post-it note next to the lens with a big arrow on it as a reminder.
- ✓ Now, think about your background ... most Zoom calls are made from a home environment – a home office, dining room, kitchen, etc). What can be seen behind you ... check using your own Zoom meeting room on your profile (<https://zoom.us/profile> and the Personal Meeting ID is shown). Check also that you are 'framed' appropriately ... not too close and not too far away. A good head and shoulders composition is normally 'about right'.
- ✓ Zoom does offer a virtual background tool but you do need a fairly decent amount of processing power for this to work well. In the old days, you would need a special green backdrop to enable this but now, Zoom is capable of working out the human foreground to the non-human backing. However, as well as needing decent IT equipment, the following comment on lighting is also relevant.
- ✓ Zoom is incredibly clever and will try to adjust the lighting to present a decent video to the others, but the more you help the better and more stable the results. Don't sit with a window behind you as this will force you into silhouette, instead get as much light pointing at you – ideally from as many angles as possible; the more light, the better is the basic rule of thumb.

- ✓ Also, think about your audio – is the room you are in echoing (plants and soft furnishings/coverings stop this), should you use a microphone to isolate your voice and cut out most of the background, can you simply stop some of the background noise by closing doors, etc?
- ✓ Finally, think about enhancing your business branding further as an integral part of your Zoom presentation ... displaying your business card, putting up a banner stand behind you, getting a branded virtual background (see above) prepared all can help to enhance your visual branding.

5. Remember the basics of networking!

If you are attending a Zoom networking meeting where you are going to make a short 'presentation' (elevator pitch) then you need to remember the basics of presenting a quality pitch

6. The networking follow up discipline

Don't forget the 'follow up' after your Zoom meeting ... remember to connect to new people on LinkedIn or social media, send further details to people who attended, book yourself in again, post on LinkedIn/Social Media and comment on other posts from the same meeting and write testimonials for the benefit of other speakers or the organiser, etc

Zoom meetings are clearly going to become more of our 'normal' way of doing business in the future and it's probably best to accept this rather than fighting it. The more comfortable and relaxed you can become the better you will come across and this only really comes with practice so.

It might seem a lot of effort to prepare, but making professional Zoom calls a success doesn't need to be difficult. Just plan, prepare and make sure it's part of your strategy and it's hard to go wrong.