



Cameras On, Cameras Off

The Virtual Meeting Dilemma

In 2020, the way we conduct work meetings changed forever. The immediate demand for a video call communication platform brought us the rise of Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet. Many companies heavily rely on these platforms even as we are emerging out of the pandemic lifestyle due to hybrid environments or company-wide shifts to fully remote work. What does the reality of virtual meetings look and feel like to the employees? Meeting fatigue, lack of productivity or participation, and scrambling to look presentable at a moment's notice. The question is, should we require cameras to be turned on during every virtual meeting? Referencing the SHRM.org article by Kylie Ora Lobell, here's what needs to be considered when faced with this dilemma.

When Cameras Aren't Needed

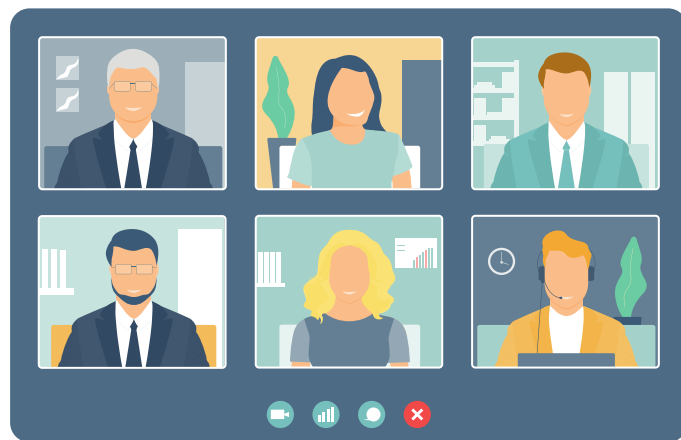
- **Someone is ill or not feeling well**
- **Distractions in the background**
- **To avoid delaying the call when you're not "camera ready"**
- **When eating**
- **To focus more on ideas rather than faces or appearances**
- **During large meetings where there is a presenter or main speaker**
- **Screen sharing is the main focus**

When determining virtual meeting policies, make it a collaborative effort so that all employees know and understand the proper practices. Company values are essential, and looping your employees in on the decision-making process for new policies can help leaders understand what works best for them. The important thing is to set expectations at the top of the meeting, don't leave anyone guessing. Sometimes employees need a break from being on camera, consider having the meeting host specify if the meeting calls for cameras on or off beforehand, instead of demanding one or the other all the time.

Rather than always meeting on video, try opting for a phone call or a walking meeting once in a while to help ease the pressure and boost morale.

Why Keep Cameras On?

- **A way to still have face-to-face interactions**
- **Ability to better observe body language and expressions**
- **To be heard and seen in a more impactful way**
- **Appear more trustworthy**
- **Avoid distractions and stay focused**
- **Build better connections with your team and clients**



It's important for teams to meet with their cameras turned on at least once a week to check in with each other and establish community and connection.