Top Tips for Virtual Meetings

We mentioned in our recent blog about moving to remote working that we have adopted Zoom as our video conferencing tool of choice, but this is not the only option for your organisation.

All the major software packages have their own 'how to' guides that cover the technicalities of the systems, but here are some general top tips for managing your virtual meetings.

Prepare your environment

- Join the session in a private room if possible, if you have other people in your home let them know you are participating in an online session.
- Clothing – This may sound silly but do consider what you are wearing for a video call, especially if it's a formal meeting. It's about common sense!
- Lighting – This depends on your webcam too but to get the best possible picture you need to consider your lighting. You should focus more on side lighting as it offers better clarity. You can also use overhead lights to brighten up a room. Natural light is great but consider any glare from windows etc.
- Your camera needs to be positioned properly. It should not be too high or too low. Consider tilting your laptop screen to help with this. Weird angles aren't just unflattering to you but they can also be distracting. Ideally try and get your camera to match your eye level if possible.
- Close down programmes you're not using – it won't just stop you being distracted but it will help your laptops performance and help the meeting run smoother.

Avoid distractions

- Post a sign on your door or the back of your laptop screen so people know not to disturb you. If you have young children a nice idea is to involve them and task them to design something so they know when not to disturb you.
- Remove all distractions from nearby (as much as possible – this may include your pets!)
- Turn off email and instant messaging tools. It's really easy to get distracted with incoming tasks.

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- Put your mobile phones on silent.
- Some people find using a headset or headphones helps to improve their sound quality as well as minimising any distractions.

Follow guidelines for online etiquette

- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking. It prevents background noise.
- Participate and be prepared to be called on by name.
- Raise your hand if you have an immediate question or comment. You can do this physically or use your platforms virtual tools such as emoji buttons.
- Provide your name when participating and respond using a person's name.
- Be patient - wait to be invited to speak or for a response to your chat message.
- Please try not to interrupt other speakers; and allow time for transmission delays. The Wi-Fi can let people down at times!
- If you must leave the meeting, send a message via the chat or if your tool has one there may be an away button / feedback icon.