

SESYNC's Tips and Best Practices for Virtual Collaborations

Tips for Team Leaders/Meeting Facilitators

- Set a regular recurring day/time for virtual meetings (rather than having tons of polls going around) to keep momentum going.
- Be sensitive to time zone differences when scheduling meetings. Using a scheduler (such as <https://whenisgood.net/Create>) might help for geographically dispersed teams.
- Scheduling all-day virtual meetings on occasion allows the team to make more dedicated progress than just check-in calls.
- Make sure all participants will have the technology necessary to participate virtually (including downloading the meeting platform in advance, knowing how to connect and use the platform, having a Google account if using Google Docs, etc.).
- Designate a facilitator and a note taker, and have these responsibilities rotate (e.g., switch roles between a.m. and p.m.).
- Designate a “tech” person to troubleshoot any meeting technology glitches (especially if a SESYNC IT person isn’t on the call), and to manage participants’ technology.
- Make an agenda ahead of time and send it to participants (including technology platforms that will be used for video conference and note-taking, etc.); stick to the agenda during the meeting for equity (don’t let a strong personality derail the meeting) and efficiency (get through what you planned to do).
- Using the “breakout room” feature available on some virtual platforms (such as Zoom) can help teams focus on specific tasks/topics, and then come back together. Using the chat window in your virtual platform, the facilitator can make sure to field and answer questions/comments from all participants.
- Use screen sharing during the meeting to help “give the floor” to participants.
- Plan in pauses strategically to let participants who don’t jump in to have a chance to contribute.
- Be clear about how you will manage the flow of conversation virtually (e.g., using hand raising, comments, etc.).
- Periodically pause to rephrase/repeat key points from discussion or tasks to make sure all participants continue to be on the same page and feel included.

Tips for All Team Members/Meeting Participants:

- Try to rephrase/repeat key points from conversations or tasks periodically during discussion. As a participant, this can be useful to make sure you continue to be on the same page as other participants.
- Don’t sit with a bright light or window right behind you.
- Minimize background noise and/or mute your microphone when not speaking.
- Test your technology and call software ahead of time (e.g., make sure your audio is working, etc.).
- If possible, use an ethernet cord for a smoother internet connection during video calls.
- Remember the time lag, and don’t talk over others.