

ONLINE CALLS

Preparing for a Zoom, Skype or other online call where you will be interviewed or will deliver a presentation? Think of your onscreen time as a commercial for Kiwanis. Follow these tips to make sure you — and your background — give a great first impression.

If you haven't participated in an online call and are unsure of what to do, watch [this video](#) on how to set up Zoom.



CLOTHING

- If this is for a Kiwanis event, consider wearing properly branded Kiwanis apparel. If you're wearing a button-down shirt, make sure it's pressed and not wrinkled. If you're wearing a polo shirt, make certain the collar is straight.
- If you are presenting, consider dressing up. Men can wear a jacket and tie, and women can wear a blouse and jacket. Remember, you are representing Kiwanis and want to appear professional.

APPEARANCE

- Sit up straight.
- Try to use a rigid chair, such as a kitchen or dining room chair, to avoid rocking and spinning; avoid a chair with a high back or wings.
- If you are using notes or a script, make sure your document is narrow so you can read from a contained area and not the entire screen. This prevents your eyes from moving across the screen.
- If you open a document on your screen and it is colored, the reflection will color your face. Avoid that if possible. It's best not to open and close documents or windows while presenting or recording.



CAMERA

- Make sure your camera is at eye level. If you are using a laptop, you can stack books, boxes or a small shelf under the laptop to raise the camera so it's aimed at your head and not up your nose. This will also prevent "ceiling shots," where the viewer sees a head and a large expanse of ceiling.
- If your computer doesn't have a camera, and that's preventing you from joining an online call, check local and online retailers for small add-on cameras and microphones. Prices vary; many are available for less than US\$75.
- Use headphones or earbuds if you wish. If you use these devices, the sound quality will be better than that captured from your laptop. Don't worry about the appearance of cords on the headphones.
- Lighting is important. Ring lights are available at retailers; some smaller versions attach directly to your laptop. Others are larger and sit on a pedestal. They are not required — you can achieve good lighting by having a light source in front of you (behind your camera) to illuminate your face. You can also position another light behind you, to the side of your head and shoulders.

BACKGROUND

- Putting your camera at eye level helps avoid the ceiling shot.
- Make sure your head and shoulders are the centerpiece of the shot. Situate the camera at least 12 to 18 inches (.3 to .5 meter) from your face.



- Avoid sitting in front of a bare wall or a door.
- Make sure your background is clean and not cluttered. While everyone is working from home, you can avoid showing a messy kitchen or a cluttered dining room table. Your background can include some personal items such as books, a plant, framed art or photographs. Experts who use Zoom, Skype or other programs suggest positioning the camera so it shoots behind you through a room, adding layers and depth.
- Many of the programs used to make video calls offer backgrounds. Try a few but be careful: Some will make you look pixelated or give a halo effect. Don't let your background overshadow your message.

Follow these examples:



INTERVIEW TIPS

- Mute your microphone until you are asked to speak.
 - Remember to smile, as that is conveyed in your tone of voice.
 - Be positive and upbeat.
 - Prepare your key messages and practice your delivery before you turn on the camera. Your discussion should be conversational; avoid reading a script or notes line-by-line.
 - Avoid using jargon or excessive data.
 - Keep your head level and make eye contact as close to the camera as possible.
 - You may have to enunciate your words and project your voice more than in a one-on-one conversation. Practice first.
- More [interview tips](#) are available online.