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Five Practices for Making Virtual Meetings Successful

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I've been telecommuting for Winning Workplaces, which is based in the Chicago area, from a home office in Los Angeles since last August. Until a few months ago, we connected for staff meetings every two weeks or so via phone. Since then, we've used Skype and it's been great in terms of communications team building.

We actually held a staff meeting today – here's a screen capture I took of it:



Because everyone's time is more valuable in a down economy, and because growing organizations must increasingly manage well over distances, it's extremely important that virtual meetings deliver ROI. But what goes into making them successful?

Based on my own experience, I have five general/employee engagement practices to share:

1. **Double check your Skype or other software connection before the meeting starts.** This includes testing your webcam, as well as settings in Skype (or other programs) such as microphone and computer speaker connection/volume, webcam view of your office or workstation (you may need to zoom in or out with your webcam), and Internet connectivity level.
2. **Dress appropriately.** This might go without saying in an office setting, but it's a more important consideration for folks like me who, in working from home, dress more casually during other times.
3. **The meeting leader should make a point to check in with the one or more people who are connected virtually if they have not been given a chance to speak up.** This can happen if the group in the room together gets going on a tangent and the discussion quickly veers in a different direction. Sometimes audio quality issues coupled with this can hurt productivity if they lose the chance to contribute at an appropriate

point.

4. **The leader should also be clear at the end of the meeting about next steps for virtually connected employees.** The tendency can sometimes be to do this for people on site, and then simply say goodbye to those connected via Skype, et al.
5. **As with other tools and processes, don't assume that the virtual meeting solution you have in place now is necessarily the best one moving forward.** The meeting leader or another senior person in the company should check in with the appropriate team members twice a year, at [Provigil pharmacy](#) a minimum, to assess whether the solution you currently use is delivering maximum effectiveness for all parties. You may find this leads you to evaluate new communications tools that will save your business money.

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