Remote collaboration

Remote meetings can be challenging in terms of inclusion, air time and technical equipment. Here are some recommendations for our remote meetings and how we can run them more efficiently.

Every meeting needs a facilitator
The facilitator manages air time, makes sure that everyone is heard and listened to. Invites attendees to speak and is the referee in this interactive game.

Test your hardware in the lobby
Can you hear me now? The most time wasting question in these meetings. Try to join the meeting 2 minutes before starting and configure and test your hardware in the lobby before clicking the join button (click the three dots in the corner -> settings).

Mute when not speaking
It is considered best practice and also remote etiquette to mute your microphone when not speaking. This allows for the least amount of background noise and disturbance in the meeting. By unmiming yourself, you are also indicating to the group and the facilitator that you would like to be heard. CMD + D (Mac) or CTRL + D (Win) is the shortcut to toggle your microphone.

Keep the volume down
If you are connecting via laptop, the microphone and speakers are usually quite close together. If your volume is set to too high, it might result in a feedback loop where people speaking will hear their own echo. This can be very disorienting to the people speaking. Even better, use headphones and eradicate that issue completely.

Hand raise
Having trouble being noticed? Please use the comment section in the meeting to raise your hand. This will let everyone in the group know that you would like to jump in. Even better, we now have a timeline and sequence in which people want to be heard.

Contextual comments
If you would like to build context on a topic but do not wish to disrupt the speaker or the group as you deem it is not of the highest importance, feel free to write it down in the comment section. The facilitator will read it aloud for the group and make sure it is noted.

We would love to see you
Communication can be stressful, and humans communicate as well as interpret communication in many ways. Seeing you over video along with your reactions, body language and expressions can help all of us understand this important. Background and impact can be used to add to the discussion which can operate on more understanding and empathy. Need to turn this camera off for a private moment? No problem, you can toggle it on and off anytime.

Use collaborative tools
Jotting down something on a virtual whiteboard can be quite powerful for creative teams. I suggest that we expand our investment in Miro.com and enable visual expression and collaboration.

Closed captions
Google meet has a great feature which enables live transcription of captions. It works really well in English, other languages might be supported with time. But if you would find it easier to follow by reading along, give it a try.

Keep yourself hydrated and engaged
Keep your body well hydrated and always have a glass of water or bottle of water handy. This will help you stay focused during the meeting and remove the need to walk away from the meeting to hydrate.