

THE POLYCOM GUIDE TO VIDIQUETTE



with Polly Calm



Polly Calm

What is vidiquette?

Vidiquette is like etiquette, but for videoconferencing and collaboration. More and more, video is part of our work lives.

But compared to ubiquitous social technologies like cell phones, e-mail, and text messaging, video conferences today lack universally-accepted rules of engagement. There are no cross-cultural standards such as saying “Hello?” when you pick up the phone or replying “LOL” when you find something humorous. Most standards have been inherited from the audio conferencing world, where muting, not interrupting, and paying attention to the speaker are

accepted courtesies. But as real-time and on-demand visual communication increases, standards for video etiquette are developing. In addition, being on video can feel uncomfortable for newbies, so a little guidance can provide some comfort. Here are a few key fundamentals to follow today that will make video conferences positive experiences for you and your colleagues.

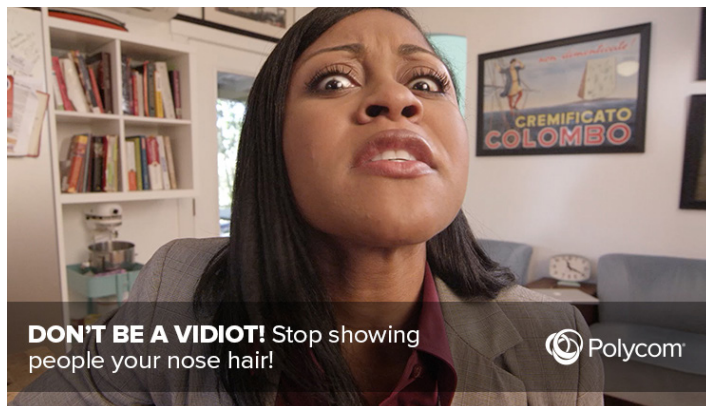
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simple tips for better video conferencing

Before you start

Polish your image

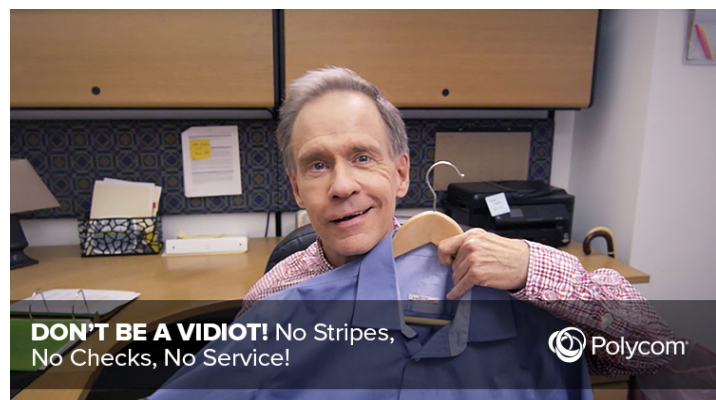
Prior to the call, check to see how you will appear to those on the far end. The key? **LEAP**—Light, Environment, Attire, and Portrait. Make sure you have **LIGHT** in front of you, not behind you, so you can truly be seen. Pay attention to your **ENVIRONMENT**, and make sure you don't have any distractions in your background. **ATTIRE** actually matters—take your cues from television professionals who are on camera all the time. Not a lot of pinstripes, complicated patterns, or checkered designs. You want the technology focused on transmitting your words, expressions, and ideas, not choking on how to encode and decode your paisley print. And, lastly, check the Picture-in-Picture to ensure that you're visible in the frame, with the right **PORTRAIT**. You don't want the far side focused only on your forehead or up your nose.



This is particularly important when you are using a personal device to connect to a video conference. Laptops frequently contribute to the nose-hair view. Optimal typing level isn't necessarily optimal viewing level, so raise your laptop to give you a more direct view. Group video systems, like those in a conference room, tend to have better lighting and camera angles already, but make sure you are visible—and not a teeny, tiny figure at the far end of a long table—to help ensure that human connection.

If you are in an Immersive Telepresence environment, these variables are nearly all accounted for, so simply try not to slouch! If you're in a near-side room with multiple participants, make sure everyone is visible in the frame while avoiding the distant "fish eye" effect by zooming the camera to an acceptable angle. This may mean that people all need to sit on one side or near one end of the table.

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Yes, I can hear you now

Next, you'll want to make sure the volume is set to the right level, so that when you connect to the far end or conference bridge, your voice(s) are clearly audible and you can hear the far end. With a personal device, this means testing the microphone you'll be using—whether one connected to a headset, built in to your PC or tablet, or through a secondary dial-in on your phone. There's nothing worse than a first-time video interview where you end up using gestures rather than words to indicate your audio challenges. Test it first.

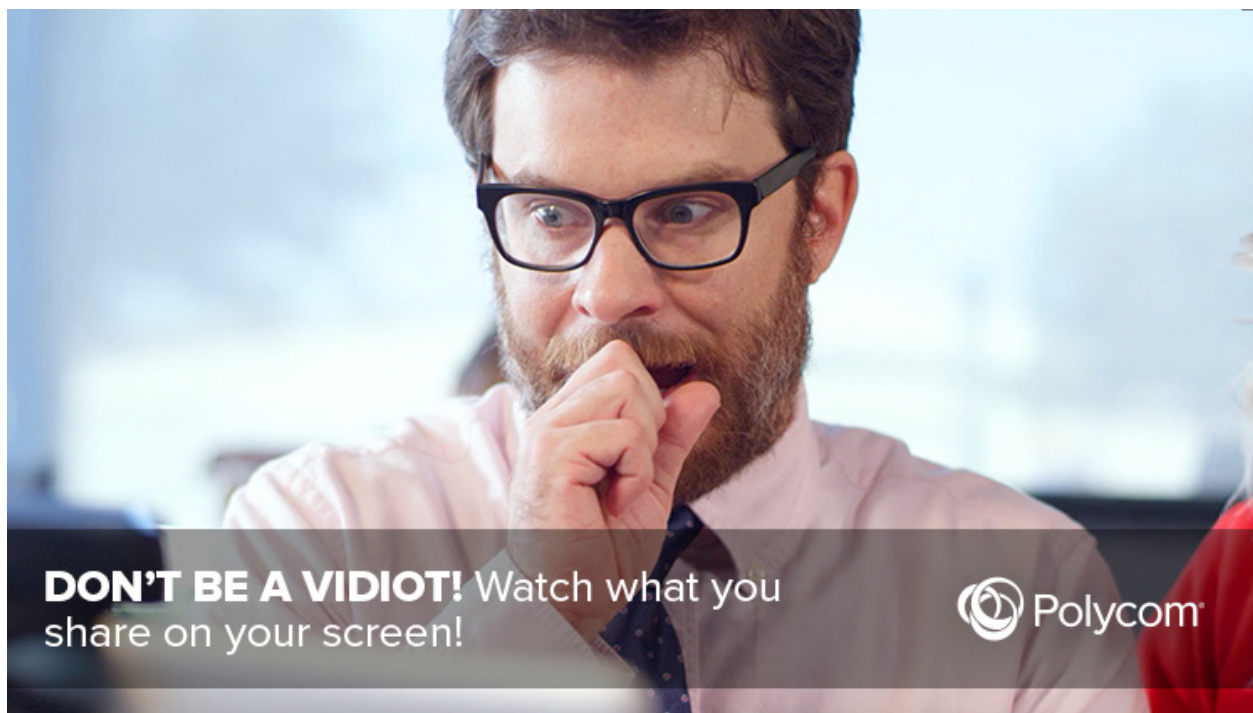
Test it first.

If you are in a conference room, remember that those who were in the conference room before you may have lowered or raised the volume for their far-end participants, or may have even set the near side to "Mute." As a rule of thumb, a volume set at its mid-level or slightly higher than mid-level should enable you to clearly hear and be heard.

Have your content ready

If you are going to be sharing content, make sure you have your slides or documents ready to share. The "can you see my content yet?" question is the new "can you hear me now?" and it's frustrating! Be prepared and you can save you and your colleagues from time lost and irritation.

Remember, though, when you share content, to be conscious of what you are sharing: most content sharing modes will let you choose between sharing a specific document, an application, or your entire desktop. Choose wisely.



In the call

Remember, you're on camera

After years of doing audio conference calls, you may have become accustomed to multitasking during long meetings. On video—the fact that you are filing your nails, checking your twitter feed, or making faces when others talk can actually be seen. Constantly looking at your computer display, talking on your cell phone or to someone off frame, typing on your keyboard, carrying on IM conversations, and similar multitasks are the video conference equivalent of speaking too loudly on your cell phone in a public space. Video conferences are much more interpersonal and interactive than telephone calls or emails; attentiveness, non-verbal cues, and facial expressions matter. If you wouldn't behave that way in a live meeting, don't behave that way in a video conference.

Avoid unnecessary adjustments

Once the video conference begins, make as few alterations to your camera angle as possible. Certain modifications might be necessary in response to environmental changes (for example, room lights may automatically turn on or off, background or ambient noise may suddenly increase, a presenter in your room may need to be brought in for a close-up) but on the whole, correcting and fine-tuning video settings repeatedly during the conference can be quite distracting to far-end participants, and it's disruptive to whoever is speaking. More modern tracking and production technologies that are built in to enterprise-grade video conferencing solutions automate necessary transitions.

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Not speaking? Mute!

While our solutions include our patented Polycom® NoiseBlock™ technology, which mute non-verbal background noises, other technologies inside the microphone(s) on your video conference system won't distinguish between relevant and irrelevant sounds, barking or vacuuming versus making valid points. And all technologies will hone in on side-bar gossip just as readily as the core meeting points, so if you're in a conference with three

or more parties, it's generally productivity-enhancing for everyone if you mute your audio when you aren't speaking.



When you want to speak, simply press or click on the "Unmute" button and make your point, then, when you've had your say, return to Mute mode. Note: Muting is particularly critical if you've called into a conference over audio from your cell

phone, where the signal is prone to static and background noise. Everyone will appreciate your consideration.

It really is “just like being there”

As with any face-to-face meeting, stray noises and side conversations can sidetrack a video conference from its primary purpose. The result can be a virtual assembly that veers off course and into the weeds of anarchy. With the pre-existing near-side/far-side divide of a video conference, the danger of side topics dominating is particularly acute, so if you're the host of a video conference, just as with an in-face interaction, provide a meeting objective, agenda, and content to all participants beforehand to keep people focused. If you're a meeting participant and an agenda hasn't been provided, request one from the host at the outset of the call, and then extend to them the courtesy of your attention.

Common challenges

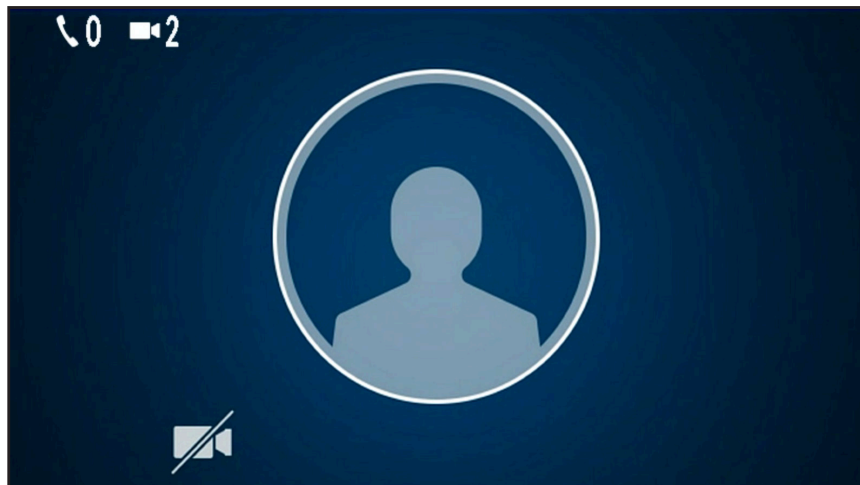
Chewing and video collaboration don't mix

As we've said before, if you wouldn't do it in person, don't do it on video. And this is particularly true of non-verbal noises and expressions, like chewing. This is not to say that you can't have a “working lunch” via a video meeting, but if you are wearing a headset, that microphone right by your mouth can be particularly effective at picking up chewing sounds. Do everyone a favor and be particularly attentive to the mute button when snacking.



Look at the camera

A key value of video conferencing is that you get visual cues that lead to stronger communication. One of the most critical contributors to credibility in communication is the ability to make eye contact—so make sure you are looking at the camera. After you've used the picture-in-picture to make sure your view is as it should be, turn it off so you aren't distracted by seeing yourself on the screen. Be thoughtful if you are looking at both a video monitor and a computer monitor—it can be distracting for others when you are presenting a profile view. Try to keep your plane of view more constant.



Don't cheat and do audio only

Everyone has “off” days, but that doesn't mean you should hide. If you are a remote worker, apply the “what would I do if I was in the office” test. If you were there in person at HQ, would you hide in your cubicle and not attend the meeting in the conference room with everyone else? A bad hair day shouldn't keep you off video, just as mismatched socks don't keep you from joining the team brainstorm. The power of videoconferencing gets lost if you opt out.

... but there are, of course, exceptions

If you are joining a video meeting from a remote site that has limited bandwidth, like an overbooked hotel or a vacation home at the beach (lucky you!), turning off the video and going audio only can make the experience better for everyone. Video is more demanding on bandwidth than audio, and if you turn off your video in those situations with poor connectivity, you'll still be able to see others, see content, and be heard.

Working from usual and unusual locations

Working from home

Teleworking and working from home have certainly grown in popularity in recent years, offering benefits for both employers and employees.

For the home-based worker, rolling out of bed and jumping right into your work with that first cup of coffee can be a productivity boost, even if you do it wearing bunny

slippers. But as the day wears on, domestic interruptions can impact your video meetings and the image you present to others. Your home office is an extension of the workplace, and you should give that due consideration. If you wouldn't want your personal business shared around the water cooler, you should avoid having it on display behind you in your home office. The same goes for family members, of both the two- and four-legged variety. Most everyone loves the occasional surprise when loved ones drop by the office, but if they visited every day, they would become a distraction. This is especially important

**Presenting Live.
Do Not Disturb!**

when making presentations to customers, executives, or partners. A simple cue card (Presenting Live, Do Not Disturb) taped outside your work area can help set the right, professional tone when you need it most—and

if your dogs or cats can't read, remember to let them out to play prior to that presentation to the board.

One last point—and this is important—

if your video connection is using the same internet that supports all the other devices on your home network, make sure your family knows how to support you. Avoid large downloads (games, music, movies), avoid streaming, be careful about online gaming—especially multiplayer games, and don't choose work time to check "yes" to update your smart devices (phone, tablet). In some neighborhoods where cable companies provide much of the internet service, a "snow day" can be particularly challenging if everyone is trying to work from home and entertain themselves all at once.



Planes, trains, and coffee shops

Remember that public environments are, well, public. That person sitting next to you on the train really does not want to know your business. Really. So use your headset, and keep your voice to a conversational level. And, of course, if you are dealing with sensitive information, be thoughtful and think before you share!

Internet speeds in airports and in airport lounges vary in quality, so be prepared to go audio only to preserve sound and content quality. Airports also have a lot of ambient noise—announcements of gate changes,

Vacation or holiday work

A certain well-regarded executive has shared that he has done his quarterly business reviews from a fly-fishing cabin—he just put a shirt and tie on over his waders and made sure his fishing tackle was out of the video frame. Ubiquitous internet connectivity and personal devices have made it possible to join video conferences from almost anywhere. (But just because you can doesn't mean you should.) Vacations are meant to give you a break to recharge so you can be more productive when you return, and when senior leaders set the example of always working while on vacation, it sets a tone for the



boarding details, etc.—so keep yourself on mute as a matter of course unless you are speaking. Try to be stationary while you are on video; having the team try to focus on you with all the hubbub in the background can be very distracting. As a special note, the security detail does not appreciate video conferencing during metal detection process. Clear security before you begin!

rest of the organization that work/life balance is a myth. But this is a guide to vidiquette!) Pay attention to the quality of your connectivity and lighting in particular, and be sure to be sensitive about your background. As with work from home, many people trying to use the same internet connection at once can be very challenging.

How Polycom makes vidiquette easy



Polycom's purpose-built video technology is optimized for processing audio and video streams, while consumer-grade devices have internal hardware that is optimized for data. The difference is visible. Polycom also leads the industry with support for *H.264 High Profile* across all of our video solutions for both video and *content sharing*. While this won't fix your stripes, it does give you up to 2X the video quality and any bandwidth, so we'll do a better job. *Polycom's solutions* are also designed to adapt to different lighting conditions with face-brightening technology.

We make it easy for you to check what your far end will see with self-view. This allows you to make sure you look your best prior to the call—and gives you a chance to adjust your camera or seating if needed! enabled or with our patented *camera innovations* such as *auto frame and zoom*. And using our video solutions for interviewing candidates can save your company a lot of money! You can also invite people outside your company to join your calls from the comfort and familiarity of their own PC or mobile device with *RealPresence® Web Suite* or *RealPresence® Mobile*.

“Everyone who isn't talking, please mute.” is something we hear a lot. The patented *Polycom® NoiseBlock™* technology does the muting for you, automatically.

In addition, our *Polycom® Concierge* solution for BYOD gives you the ability to mute the offender on the far end as well from the familiar interface of your personal device. And when your team members actually do remember to go on mute, our systems are smart enough to prompt them when they try to speak again with the “you are muted” on-screen indicator.

Using our video solutions for interviewing candidates can save your company a lot of money!

Polycom makes it easy to know what content you are sharing—whether it is your desktop, a specific application, or a specific file. What's more, Polycom offers a number of solutions enabling effortless *content sharing* capabilities, including *Polycom Concierge*. And, we have the highest quality in the industry with the ability to share full HD 1080p media at a 60 frames per second for incredible

motion handling—BTW, that's over twice as fast as your local movie theatre! We also delivered the first solution to find the active speaker with *Polycom® EagleEye™ Director*. Check out more of our innovations.





Polycom's innovation and leadership in packet loss management also ensure you get the best audio and video experience—even when your network is not at its finest. *Polycom® Lost Packet Recovery™* results in fewer dropped calls from network problems and ensures you look and sound your best—even when losing up to 50% of your bandwidth.

Learn more at www.polycom.com.