

Five Steps for Hosting a Successful Virtual Happy Hour

Video calls aren't just for meetings anymore. We've all been cooped up long enough that we've taken to socializing on Zoom, Skype and Microsoft Teams. A good number of our social activities have found their way back into our lives as virtual activities.

Hosting a virtual happy hour is a great way to lift team morale, encourage networking or even just hang out and relax for a while. While many of your event planning skills will transfer into the virtual world, there are a few tips and tricks that will make sure your online drink date is a success.

1. Recruit (or be) a Bouncer: Always make sure you're taking adequate precautions to [prevent Zoombombing](#). If you're hosting an open public happy hour, have your attendees contact the bouncer for login details. That way you can vet folks before letting them into your online event. The bouncer can also act as the point person for troubleshooting tech problems!

2. Tell Folks What's Expected: Is this a formal networking event or just a time to hangout and chill? Will people be drinking on camera? Do you have a signature drink or snack everyone should try to make (or riff on)? Make sure to set expectations so no one shows up in a Hawaiian shirt with a pitcher of mai tais when you were just going to sing happy birthday to the head of human resources.

3. Don't Forget to Be a Host: When the screen starts filling up with Brady Bunch style video screens, it can be easy to forget that you still need to greet everyone as they come in. As host, don't forget to check in with the quiet attendees. Some people aren't as outgoing on video as they are in real life, but you don't want to miss out on their contributions.

TECH TIP: If you plan on making a toast, find the "mute all" button and utilize it, but be sure to warn folks five or ten minutes ahead of time. Again, it's all about setting expectations.



4. Prepare a Few Questions: Prepare a few questions ahead of time, just in case you find yourself suffering through an extended lull in the conversation. Don't feel the need to inject these into already lively discussions. Instead, keep them in your back pocket. One piece of advice on questions: avoid binary yes/no-style questions. Conversations don't develop from one-word answers.

5. Commemorate the Event: Take screen shots the way you would take photos at an in-person happy hour. Get everyone together to arrange a funny picture or catch them unaware. Share them via the chat program of your choice, via email, or even on social media (assuming you have everyone's permission).

Even if the event is virtual, it's important to remember that the memories and connections we make are real.

BONUS TIP: [7.5 Tips For Looking Good on a Video Call](#)

BONUS BONUS TIP: Try hosting a [virtual watch party](#) with your team

TRIPLE BONUS (hattrick?) TIP: [Play a party game online](#)