



## Tips & Tricks for Virtual Meetings

### Small Group Meetings, Pupillage Teams, Welfare Checks and more!

These tips are generally applicable to any virtual meeting, but some are specific to virtual Inn activities. If you have more tips to share, please email them to [education@innsocourt.org](mailto:education@innsocourt.org).

#### Platform Considerations

- **Price:** Many free options have limitations (on time, the number of people, or engagement features), but they are certainly budget-friendly. Sometimes law firms have a virtual meeting platform subscription; will anyone's firm or organization allow the Inn to use their account?
- **Purpose:** Some platforms are better suited for small group meetings, such as mentoring groups or pupillage team discussions, but cannot accommodate a full Inn meeting.
- **Usability:** Does anyone in your Inn already have experience with a virtual meeting platform?
- **Versatility:** What features will the Inn need most? For example, will it be more important to have a chat feature than to be able to record the meeting? Will the ability to mute everyone automatically trump a "raised hand" option?
- **Support:** Some platforms come with the option to hire a meeting facilitator who manages the "technical" components. Regardless, it is advisable to designate someone to monitor a chat box or provide back-up support to the main presenter.

#### Planning Considerations

- **Roles:** Who will act as meeting moderator? Who will be the technology contact? Who is the content lead?
- **Attendees:** Will the Inn open the meeting to any American Inns of Court member, to members of another specific Inn, or only to your Inn's members?
- **Scheduling:** Will attendees need to plan ahead to engage in pre-work? When will you hold the meeting? When will attendees need to log in? How long will each segment of the meeting take?
- **Content:** Will the program be presented live by members, or pre-recorded by another organization?
- **Meeting type:**
  - Will the entire meeting be live?
  - Will portions of the meeting be pre-recorded (perhaps from a program from the [Program Library](#) or existing [INNOvation Education program](#))?
  - Will members watch the program on their own time (pre-recorded) or live?
- **Resources:** Will you distribute handouts prior to or during the meeting? Do members need to complete an assignment prior to the meeting? Do you require an assessment for CLE or certificate of participation?

#### Sharing Information

- **Timing:** Contact all participants *at least* a week prior to the meeting with information; if they will need to complete pre-work or networking activities, give them two weeks' notice.
- **The basics:** Date, time, topic, and speakers and link to platform.
- **Login information:** Provide clear, step-by-step instructions on how to access the program and resources. Provide the name and email of a technology point-of-contact in case things go wrong.
- **Technical requirements:** Will members need to download something in advance to access the meeting? Will they need a webcam? A microphone? Headphones? Who is the contact person for technical problems?
- **Resources:** Will you distribute handouts prior to or during the meeting? Do members need to complete an assignment prior to the meeting? Do you require an assessment for CLE or certificate of participation?
- **Be prepared:**
  - Ask members to review materials in advance of the program and come prepared with one question to ask about the program during the discussion period.
  - Work with your presenters in advance:
    - Have a step-by-step, timed out outline and try to stick to it; it really helps everyone stay on topic and keep to the time.
    - Practice, if possible! Presenters need to know how to turn their webcams on and off, and you will want to know ahead of time that their audio connection is clear.
    - The more you practice, the smoother it will go.
- **Be tech savvy:** Members should log in and test their connectivity and audio at least ten minutes before the program.
- **Be relaxed:** Things may not go smoothly the first time, but that is completely normal. Encourage members to relax and try something new. If technology completely fails, send them a copy of the program and hold the discussion later.

## Meeting Logistics

- **Roles:** No one can do everything behind the scenes...get some help!
  - Who is the content lead? Don't have more than two people at any given time (three with a moderator or facilitator.)
  - Who will act as meeting moderator?
  - Who will be the technology contact?
- **Attendees:** Will the Inn open the meeting to any American Inns of Court member, to members of another specific Inn, or only to your Inn's members?
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- **Be considerate.** Encourage members to view the program in a quiet space and, when they are not speaking, to mute themselves to avoid any audio feedback, echo, or background noise.
- **Audio is everything.**
  - **Mute, please.** Background noise is distracting and can negatively affect others' experience of the meeting.
  - **Testing 1, 2, 3...** Are you a presenter? Test your phone connection or microphone before the program starts.
  - **No speaker phone.** Never use speaker phone when presenting on a webinar.
  - **Avoid the forever reverb.** Never use your phone AND computer audio at the same time.

- **To webcam or not to webcam?** Webcams really add an element of connection and perhaps participation. However, with large groups, it can get complicated and chaotic; you can also use a lot of bandwidth which may lead to glitchy video.
- **Smile – you’re on camera!** If you are going to use webcams, everyone should remember that they are visible to everyone else.
  - **Look your best...at least from the waist up!** Be sure to comb your hair and look as professional as you would if you were meeting in person.
  - **Backgrounds can be distracting.** Make sure your background is a lovely landscape, a plain wall or a decorative screen.
  - **Watch the lighting.** If you are sitting outside or in front of a window, the light should be shining on your face and not from behind or no one will be able to see your face.

Questions? Email [Libby Bingham](#), Director of Education and Mentoring Programs, or your [Director of Chapter Relations](#).