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Test all your equipment

Your gear is essential to the success of your livestreams. Testing each piece of equipment before you go live gives you reassurance that everything is working properly.

Mic and camera test

Let's be brutally frank here: many people hate the sound of their own voice and blame themselves. But it's important to consider that people generally are more tolerant of bad visuals opposed to bad sound. Luckily, you have choice in this department: from USB mics, lavalier mics, condensers, etc. that will dramatically make your audio sound better than coming from a laptop or computer. To ensure you sound your best, always conduct a mic and camera test prior to going live. For smartphones or tablets, you can create a quick video using your device's camera. On a desktop computer, we recommend making a quick test video in a few minutes. If you can clearly see and hear your recording, your mic and camera should be good to go live.

Microphone:

Need a recommendation: I use the Shure MV7 and a Rode NTG3

Camera:

Need a recommendation: Webcam logitech Brio is great or Sony A7c Mirrorless camera (both will improve the picture quality immensely)

Headphones

It is very important to use Bluetooth or wired earbuds or headphones to listen to the program. This will help avoid echoes and unpleasant audio feedback (please make sure they are fully charged so they don't power down during the broadcast). If you have an external microphone (USB or one on your earbuds or headset) that's great. If you don't have an external microphone or one built into wired headphones, you can use the microphone on your phone or computer. Please do not use the microphone built into Bluetooth earbuds.

Camera Position

Keep camera eye level or just above the eyebrows, angled towards the eyes. Lower will have viewers looking into your nose. Higher and they will have a creak in the neck among other things. If they have to use a box or a stack of books, encourage it unless it's impossible — Watch the head space. Keep the top of your head with about 3-4 of their fingers below the frame. You can eyeball it or literally have them put 3-4 fingers above their head and set their laptop screen or webcam in that space. Or you can use pan and zoom to help the video image. This will keep your face centered and in focus.

Lighting and Positioning

What do you call a virtually meeting without lighting? Ans a podcast! But seriously folks lighting is another crucial factor in the success of your broadcast/livestream/virtual meeting.

After all, what's good video content if your audience can't see you? Before your connect, make sure any lights you're going to use are plugged in and working properly.

It is incredibly important, that your position the light to the front or the side avoiding being back-lit as this casts a shadow making you look more like a convict than credible. Watch out for over exposure. Most computer camera or even webcams will attempt to expose the subjects. If the room is dark, it will try to "light" the room which may leads to an overexposed image. Select lighting that compliments your environment, there is no need to overboard with lighting if it will dominate your room.

Have talking points

One of the things we find terribly difficult during virtual meeting is the ability to stimulate spontaneous dialogue without sounding nervous. The same is true when livestreaming, many people speak of feeling fake and wooden, when being authentic is key consider entering any virtual session with some clear talking jotted down in advance.

While it's not recommended to write a script of your live video content, it is helpful to create a rough outline or a bulleted list of talking points if you plan on being on camera. This can also come in useful when the dreaded technical challenges occur, and they will - you know they will.

Outlines or lists of talking points can help keep you on track and remind you to cover important topics while still providing that unscripted experience that your viewers want to see.

Stay hydrated

The fear of choking live on air is real for many, having a drink by your side will help reassure you and serve as a good way to slow the tempo to regain composure. No one wants to have cotton-mouth while speaking to a live virtual audience, and you wouldn't want to risk any of your viewers leaving the livestream because you had to excuse yourself to grab a drink from another room.

Do yourself a favor and keep your beverage of choice next to you during your livestream, just in case you end up needing a drink. Avoid hot drinks, fill only half way and use heavy base cup/glasses to avoid impromptu spillages live on air.

Be Confident: Take Back Control

To put it simply, your mood and energy should match the content of your delivering – especially if you plan on being on camera in your livestream. There is nothing worse when listening to a webinar when the speaker's energy levels, body language and tone of voice does not match the subject matter. Somehow, this is worse for me than listening to a monotone speaker in person, it just feels more offensive when done virtually. For example, think about the different mood you'd want to be in when discussing yoga compared to a kick-boxing class. For yoga, you'd likely want to feel calm and relaxed leading up to your livestream. For kick-boxing, you'd probably want to feel energized and amped up.

Depending on the mood you want to be in, take the necessary steps to get in the right state of mind. That could include stretching, listening to music or a podcast, doing a quick workout, reading a book, dancing, drawing, etc. There's no set list of what you should do to mentally or physically prepare for a livestream, but do what works best for your personality and the content of your live video.

Mobile device or Tablet Considerations

Please activate the “Do Not Disturb” feature to keep other calls, texts and notifications from interrupting your interview. (Use the moon symbol on an iPhone and the circle with a line in it on Android.) Choose whatever is stronger, a WiFi signal or your cellular data plan. If you have a weak WiFi signal, TURN OFF WiFi on your phone so it doesn't automatically connect or try to connect to the weak WiFi instead of using mobile data during the broadcast Please do NOT hand-hold your device during the broadcast. Place it in the LANDSCAPE (wide) position on a stable surface or in a gimbal, tripod or other device.

Stop household members from streaming or downloading

What you don't want to happen during a livestream is for someone in your home or on your Wi-Fi network to start streaming Netflix or downloading the latest operating system on their iPhone. Large downloads and even streaming live TV or video games can decrease your Internet speed, which can ultimately reduce the quality of your livestream.

To avoid this from happening, let others in your house or office know when your livestream is going to start and around what time it will end. For maximum effectiveness, be sure to ask them nicely to refrain from streaming or starting large downloads while your livestream is going on.

For Livestreamers and Hosted Webinars

Test streams are the perfect way to check and make sure your livestreams will run smoothly without any hiccups. They're especially important when you're streaming from a new location, using a new livestreaming service, or streaming to a new social media platform for the first time.

Since test streams are private, you won't have to worry about your audience seeing them. You can set up private test streams on Facebook, ECAM, Streamyard, MS Teams, Restream and Zoom meet etc, or you can create a private gated unlisted stream on Youtube.

We recommend conducting a test stream about 30 minutes prior to your livestream or the day before if you are hosting a focused Live Event. Share your streaming link with your remote guests, give them plenty of time to trouble shoot and feel comfortable with the equipment and running order.

Share your test stream link with guests

If you plan on having remote guests join you on your livestreams, you'll want to make sure they're prepared too. Sharing your test stream links with remote guests will give them an opportunity to identify any potential connection or equipment issues on their end.

Put your devices in Do Not Disturb mode

Interruptions during your livestreams aren't ideal. Whether you're using your mobile device or tablet to livestream from, or it's simply sitting next to you while you're livestreaming from a laptop or desktop computer, you'll want to avoid getting phone calls or notifications that interrupt the flow of your stream.

Putting your mobile device or tablet in Do Not Disturb mode can prevent any unwanted notifications or interruptions from occurring – which can help you from looking unprepared or unprofessional to your viewers.

Mute your computer

Similar to mobile devices and tablets causing interruptions, trying to monitor or watch your livestream on a desktop computer or laptop while you're streaming can also create unwanted distractions if you don't mute your computer.

If you leave your computer sound on during a livestream, you and your viewers will hear yourself playback—creating an unpleasant echo-like sound. If you want to keep your viewers tuned in and engaged, be sure to mute your computer or laptop.

Hopefully you have taken something positive from this guide to help you present with confidence on any live streaming situation. Check out the highlights to print and keep beside your devices - hope this a muted subject

More Hints and Tips

Want more tips check out our [Media Training package](#) where we go into more depth with equipment and share even more best practice tips. Recap below!

Restart all devices and equipment

Stay hydrated

Testing the quality of the internet connection

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Make sure others in your house or location aren't streaming or downloading

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Headphones

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Camera Position

Mute your computer mic until ready to speak

REPEAT!

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GOOD LUCK HAPPY STREAMING

