

## PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

# 3 keys to a purposeful video chat

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May 12, 2020 | Jerry Soverinsky

I would probably love video chatting, except for the fact that I hate it. And therein lies a minor hitch for those seeking to bridge the isolation caused by social distancing. Because until health conditions allow a return to conference room gatherings, movie outings and group exercise classes, FaceTime, Skype, et al. remain the best ways to assuage those craving interpersonal connection.

Don't get me wrong — I, too, am craving interpersonal connection. And it's not that I frown on video chatting per se. It's just that I'm uncomfortable with the way that it's commonly used. For instance: I'm binge-watching *Hunters* (very good). I'm in my living room; the door is closed. I can hear my spouse in the next room FaceTiming her sister, who is a loud talker. So loud, in fact, that I just missed a key Meyer Offerman (Al Pacino) monologue. Ugh. Rewind. *Again*.

Well, you get the drift.

## Rule 1: Set expectations

Which brings me to the first rule of video chatting: eliminate the spontaneous. Look, did you ever like pop quizzes in school? Finding a bug in your carryout sandwich? Discovering a dent on the passenger side of your car? Not that any of those are any more appealing

with advance notice, but it's the surprise that accentuates the anxiety. If you are conducting a video chat, give a quick heads-up to your friend or colleague. Depending on your relationship, it can be as simple as a short text ("Are you up for a FT?") or a more formal calendar invite.

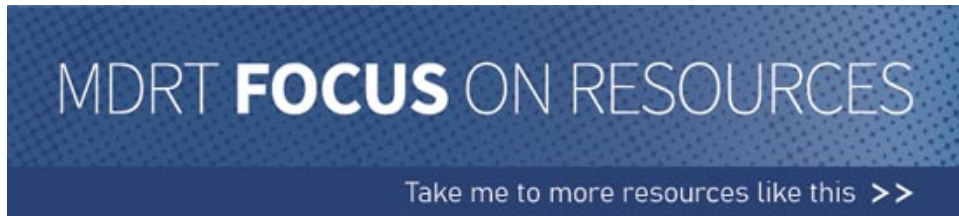
## Rule 2: Be considerate

Why do most personal video chats seem to take place on speakerphone, no matter the surrounding? I've been to stores, restaurants and even theaters (not recently of course) where people video chat on speakerphone. ("Is this the cereal you mean?" they say while browsing the grocery aisles.) Stop. The. Madness. Headphones, headsets, AirPods — they're ubiquitous. If you're around others who are not knowingly or voluntarily joining your call, plug them in or turn them on. And keep your video chat private.

## Rule 3: Leverage the technology

OK, despite all of the above, I'm still a huge proponent of video chats, especially when it comes to maintaining and developing client contacts. Yours is a business built on relationships, and building face-to-face interactions, even digitally, helps build trust and confidence. Use the technology liberally during this health crisis. It's an important way to manage your connections and reassure your clients of the steps and strategies you're taking to minimize the financial damage.

*For more about video chats, read "[Building a better videoconference](#)."*



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