ZOOM READY
etiquette tips and reminders

1000feathers

If you weren't already an avid Zoom user before 2020, chances are you have come to love (or hate) the platform that has become second nature for everyone from major corporations to small businesses and local nonprofits. But, it's not enough to just be *using Zoom*, we need to be high-functioning consumers of the online platform. Here are a few tips to make sure you are Zoom ready.

STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN CASUAL AND PROFESSIONALISM. Come as you are, but you will feel better if you prepare like you are heading to a face-to-face meeting. Dress professionally...whatever that means for you. Wear your logo or branded colors as much as possible to display your organization, and do what you need to do to be comfortable on camera. For some, this means putting on make-up or ensuring every hair is in place. Look your best and be ready to give 100%.

ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS. As facilitators, we feed off the audience's energy. If most participants mute their lines and turn off cameras because they are checking email, dealing with family, or answering phone calls, it's difficult to have an engaging conversation. Do everything in your power to eliminate the distractions around you. While we can't avoid every distraction, we can certainly minimize them.

- **Background Noise.** Many of us are multi-tasking as we juggle kids, home, and work all in one space. But, before we connect to Zoom, we should reduce our distractions. Is your pet in a space where he or she won't be able to crawl in your lap? Did you put a note on the door so the Amazon delivery person won't ring the doorbell? Is your phone on silent? Do your kids have an activity that will keep them busy?
- **Sound:** background noise can also be very distracting for a facilitator. Be sure to mute yourself when you are not speaking, but when on mute, there are non-verbal cues you can take to stay involved. For example, thumbs up, head nods, and virtual high fives are all strongly encouraged.

KNOW THE PLATFORM. Zoom continues to improve and expand its features as more people utilize its platform. Be sure to download Zoom updates as soon as they are available so you don't get left behind. Here are some of our favorite features to use.

- **Chat function.** Allowing participants to use the chat function gives those who don't feel as comfortable speaking out loud the chance to be involved in the conversation. It also gives the facilitator the ability to pull out thoughts and ideas from the group and expound upon important topics.
- **Breakout groups.** Use these when you need to ensure that every voice is heard. In large groups, there are voices that are louder than others, making it difficult for everyone to participate. Breakout groups allow greater participation from everyone and can allow for multiple conversations to happen simultaneously, thus increasing productivity.
- **Share screen.** We may not have flip charts, handouts, and jumbo screens with our PowerPoint slides, but we can share whatever we pull up on our own computers by using the share screen button. Just be sure you are sharing the file you are intending to share and not your personal emails or shopping list.
- **Privacy.** You can avoid Zoom bombers by using the waiting room or password-protected meeting features. And, never put the link to your Zoom on social media where anyone can access it.