

# How to look your best and keep clients engaged during virtual meetings.

**A guide for Cresa by Dave Roberts**  
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**Social distancing.** It's the latest buzz term being used in our society after COVID-19 forced nearly all of us to stay at home. Lucky for us, technology has advanced to a point where face to face contact is possible digitally. Unfortunately, this opportunity can create an awkward feeling if we don't understand the basics of on-camera presentation.

**Not everyone is expected to have the talent of a news anchor, but some basic preparation before your virtual meeting or face-to-face will help you engage your clients more effectively. Here are some basic dos and don'ts when engaging clients with live video.**

## Lighting



It is extremely important to have light on your face. Whether it's a desk lamp or a window, the light you're facing should be brighter than the light behind you. If the light behind you is brighter, there's a good chance you'll look like you're in the witness protection program.

Also, overhead lighting is not flattering. The same can be said for the opposite extreme. Lighting directly over your head will darken your eyes and make it look like you just got out of the ring with Mike Tyson. Lighting from under your chin will give the impression you're climbing out of a hot tub at night. It's best to use flat, soft light at a 45° angle. Windows work fine because the sun in North America provides light at an eye pleasing angle. Just don't use direct sunlight. Reflected light or filtered light through a curtain is best.

Finally, pay attention to the color temperature of your lighting. Unlike your eyes, cameras don't have the ability to distinguish changes in the lighting spectrum. I'm sure you've all seen the color temperature gauge when you buy an LED lightbulb. It is important that the lighting in your room is all the same. If your workspace is predominately lit with 2700K warm lightbulbs, don't use any natural light in your shot. Believe it or not, sunlight is blue. The clashing colors will either give you the darkest tan ever, or make you look like a smurf depending on the computer or camera. Same goes for the opposite. If you're facing a window, turn off the lamps in your workspace.



## Quick Tips

- Light your face
- Avoid overhead and low angle lighting
- Attempt to use one lighting type
- 2-3 feet from microphone
- Remove all additional noise sources
- Avoid echo by being close to soft surfaces
- Align camera at eye level

## Sound



You will likely be using the microphone on your computer for virtual meetings. While the sound will not be perfect, it will be much better if you take a few simple steps to improve the quality. First, make sure that you are 2 to 3 feet from the microphone/screen on your computer. Second, turn off any fans, TVs or anything that would create background noise. Last, try to hold your meeting

in a room with soft surfaces, such as carpet. Rooms with lots of angles, such as bookshelves, also help. Hard flat surfaces will echo and make it sound like you're holding your meeting in a restroom. If you don't have a room with soft surfaces, draping a towel or two over something off camera will help absorb some of the echo. If you really want to improve your audio, a simple USB lavalier microphone purchased from Amazon, eBay, or your favorite retailer, will greatly improve your clarity.

## Camera Angle



It's human nature to want to look your best. Camera angles can make or break the best meeting. When we meet with each other face-to-face, our brains are wired to subconsciously find eye level contact the most pleasing. Looking down or up on someone creates a distracting fault in our brains that creates an awkward feeling. The

least flattering position is a camera below your chin. Let's face it, nobody wants to look like Tommy Boy when working on a deal. This is why many of us feel the most comfortable at lunch meetings and happy hours (and you thought it was the cocktails). Whether you're using a laptop or a desktop, it is important that the camera is placed at eye level. If you're using a laptop and don't have a stand, find some books and stack them underneath. If your camera is on a desktop monitor, don't forget to adjust your chair and the monitor to achieve an eye level position. Not only will this put your client at ease, but it will be more comfortable for you to speak with them.

**This is a great opportunity to perfect your virtual meeting skills. These are only a few tips out of the many I can share if requested. For questions regarding this information, please don't hesitate to reach out to me via email or a phone call. I hope this information helps us as a company engage our clients and customers better than our competitors.**

## About the Author



Dave Roberts is a former studio lighting designer, photographer, director, investigative news reporter, and anchor, now working with Cresa as a Senior Advisor and Marketing Director in the Omaha office. He also specializes in media engagement and branding.

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