

[In the Know] Best Practices for Virtual Event Speakers

The growing popularity of virtual events has forced many marketers and communicators to develop [new skills](#) and checklists.

When [planning](#) a virtual event, it's important to consider [audience acquisition](#), [monetization possibilities](#) and [engagement](#). But much of that engagement comes by way of the people who are the face of your event: the speakers. Good speakers can literally make or break an event experience.

This presents a question: how can a remote presenter resonate with an audience as effectively as an in-person presenter? And if you're a presenter used to speaking in front of live crowds of people, delivering a message to a remote audience might feel awkward and unnatural (to say the least).

In the latest episode of In the Know, I've outlined several best practices you can adopt as a virtual event speaker. These tips and tricks will help build your confidence as a remote presenter and give you the tools necessary to resonate on screen and engage audiences!

Watch the full episode below.

If you'd like to learn more about hosting, planning, or speaking for virtual events, be sure to download [The Ultimate Virtual Events Playbook](#), where we cover:

- Creating the event strategy and goals
- Monetization and sponsorship
- Content and programming
- User experience and design
- Audience engagement
- On-demand strategy

[Download the playbook for free](#) today!

Transcript:

Dana Miller: Hi there, and welcome back to In the Know with Intrado Digital Media.

Today, we're talking about virtual events. And I know we've talked about them *a lot* recently, but trust me when I say it's necessary and important. The world is increasingly relying on virtual events, not only in response to COVID-19, but as a means to reduce costs and carbon footprints as well.

And with this rise in popularity comes many questions on how to plan and execute successful virtual events that can replace their in-person counterparts.

One of these questions comes from the people we go to live events to see – the speakers. For people used to presenting to in-person crowds, speaking to a 100% virtual audience can be challenging. You

can't make eye contact or read body language. You're simply staring at the small circle that is your webcam (like I'm doing right now).

But, despite the initial discomfort associated with presenting to a virtual audience, there are a few ways to stand out as a remote speaker, and that's what I'll be sharing today.

First, embrace and understand the nature of LIVE. You don't have to strive for perfection. Mistakes make you relatable. Keep your tone natural and real to connect with your audience, and *please* avoid reading directly from your slides.

Second, embrace your NERVES. Your nervousness shows that you're human. This is a good thing! It shows you care about doing well, and that will come across while you're speaking.

Third, remember that you are the expert. You were asked to be a presenter because you have important, valuable information to share with others. You know the material better than anyone else, so use that fact to boost your confidence.

And fourth, be your authentic self. Let your true colors shine through. Be expressive and energetic. Nervous laughter shows that you are a real human. If you fumble a word, don't call attention to it or let it interrupt your flow. Just keep going. Chances are, your audience didn't even notice.

Now, with all that being said, there are a few practical actions you can take to improve your overall delivery and appearance while presenting, and that's what I want to cover next. You can be as real and authentic as you want, but if something is off about your video feed, it may still fall flat.

First, consider your framing. Try to center your webcam and leave less head room. This might seem unintuitive, since most people position their heads in the center of the screen when using webcams. However, this will make you look small and insignificant. Conversely, too *little* headroom will make it look like your head is sticking to the top of the screen. The best solution is to raise your laptop or tablet so that your eyes can peer directly into the webcam.

Next, think about the lighting in the room where you're presenting. The only thing worse than a bad camera angle is not being able to see someone at all. This can happen when a window or bright light is behind you – you become backlit. If possible position your computer so you're facing a window to take advantage of the natural light coming in. And if it's dark, make sure you open some curtains or turn on a few lights.

Then, try to simplify your background. You want people to focus on *you* while you're presenting, not the cluttered bookshelf behind you. Choose a clean, bright wall, avoid busy prints and decorations, and close any doors that might be behind you.

And finally, be sure to look the part. As a rule, try to wear blues and cooler colors in shades that flatter your skin tone. Avoid small, busy patterns and high contrast colors, and reduce the number of accessories you wear, as all these things can be distracting. Tie back long hair so you're not forced to adjust it while presenting. Opt for contact lenses, when possible, to eliminate glare from glasses. And

don't be afraid to use a bit of makeup. This is for everyone – some light foundation will help you avoid looking too shiny or washed out.

I know it can be intimidating to present to a virtual audience. Speaking alone to a camera in an empty room is... *weird*. And I do it all the time. However, despite challenges, it is absolutely possible to resonate with a remote audience as well as you can with a live crowd of people. Jot down a few of these suggestions, and if you want to learn more about how to plan and host a successful virtual event, download *The Ultimate Virtual Events Playbook*. This comprehensive eBook outlines all the steps necessary to create a great virtual event, including a lot of what I covered today! It's available at the link in the video description below.