



# VS



## VIRTUAL

## FACE-TO-FACE

Less "small talk". Often, forced pleasantries and small talk can be awkward. Without these unnecessary exchanges, meetings can stay on track and be more focused.

Taking your "turn" in a discussion can be difficult, especially if your position in the room is compromised, or if the chair hasn't got you in their eye line. Virtually raising your hand can get you heard quicker.

Virtual meetings can make you more explicit in your communication. The fact you can't always see who is being addressed with questions or comments, forces people to be more specific.

Minutes of a meeting are not always the best summary of points made and subtle suggestions can get overlooked. Having a recorded video of the meeting can be much more useful at ensuring all points have been considered.

Virtual meetings tend to be shorter as long screen time can be quite draining. Having a tighter agenda can lead to more efficiency and keep people engaged for the full duration of the shortened meeting

It's easier to "say no" to meetings that you don't really need to be part of. Therefore, in theory, meetings are more likely to only contain those who want and need to be involved, meaning less disruption.

Screen sharing information can be very useful, particularly when demonstrating how to do something or reviewing documents.

Having a chat functionality makes it less disruptive to ask questions that may interrupt the session, although this can also lead to distraction from what the speaker is saying.

The advent of cloud-based technology has made video conferencing software much more accessible in recent years. In order to fully participate in meetings, people only need a mobile device and a decent Wi-Fi connection. This means remote participation from anywhere in the world.

Recording the meeting allows you to share important content with those who were unable to attend the meeting in real time.

People generally prefer to be "shown not told". It's very difficult to provide highly detailed information verbally and the various sharing tools on most platforms make visual learning easier.

Seeing team members and senior colleagues in their home environments can be a good "leveller" and break down hierarchies and barriers to communication.

Participating in a secure and comfortable environment (our homes) can lead to feeling more at ease and more confident than you might otherwise be in a formal setting.

The ability to reduce "office politics" on virtual calls can avoid awkward encounters which could make staff feel uncomfortable when communicating with individuals.

Reducing the amount of time spent on the logistics of face-to-face events can mean more quality time spent on actually engaging participants and informing company strategy.

You can break down large business objectives into smaller meeting objectives on more regular virtual calls. However, there is something to be said for the urgency of focus that a larger, one-off event can bring.

Clearly distance is not an issue with virtual meetings with the ability for people to dial in from anywhere in the world.

Travel, accommodation and catering logistics can add significant time and cost to organising an event. Finding a central location that fits the brief and is easily accessible by road/rail/air can be difficult.

Delegates with accessibility requirements may often be prevented from attending a residential conference if the venue is not able to cater for all their physical or dietary requirements.



### Communication

Access to non-verbal cues like body language - When we have a physical presence in a room, we express ourselves with far more than just our words. Subtle cues that aren't picked up on a webcam allow audiences to fully understand the speaker, and for the speaker to know the message is being understood.

The way you listen, look, move, and react tell the person you're communicating with whether or not you care, if you're being truthful, and how well you're listening. When your non-verbal signals match up with the words you're saying, they increase trust, clarity, and rapport. **When they don't, they can generate tension, mistrust, and confusion.**

Misunderstandings are much less likely.

It's very hard to have meaningful exchanges with someone who is on mute!

During face-to-face meetings, outside distractions are minimised - the opportunity to go and do something else, to pop on the radio, put the dishwasher on - are removed making it easier to focus and be more interactive/proactive.

The ability to move around and make use of the space, to sketch ideas on a whiteboard, to vary the format of the meeting, is far more engaging. Being fixed to one screen can be far more fatiguing and lead to significantly decreased participation from delegates.

Having breakout spaces that change the environment can hold people's attention for much longer periods. It also breaks the session down into more memorable chunks, meaning people retain more "takeaways" from the session.

We've all experienced virtual meetings go wrong when a participant's Wi-Fi connection turns them into a buffered robot! Wi-Fi speeds in dedicated meeting venues are usually very fast and very stable.

Whilst there can always be a technical hitch waiting to disrupt your face-to-face meeting, rarely do they completely ruin your ability to communicate in the way that video calls can.

Most conference venues will provide technical support as part of your booking, meaning that you don't have to worry about things going wrong and can concentrate on the more important aspects.

In our recent research report on the 'Future of Face-To-Face Communication', it's very clear that one of the main advantages is networking opportunities that help build relationships with team members and/or peers in similar fields. Over 84% of delegates cited networking as the main benefit of face-to-face meetings.

88% of conference organisers rate group interaction as the main benefit of face-to-face meetings, with 92% rating networking time that builds relationships.

Over 50% of respondents gain more value from face-to-face meetings than video calls, with 51% saying it enhances their job satisfaction to have such relationships with colleagues.

Face-to-face meetings allow for easier communication of goals and objectives because it's easier to read facial expressions & body language. With face-to-face the chat is more to the point, meaning conversation will flow more naturally, allowing us to be clearer with objectives and come up with ideas that lead to more business opportunities.

Working with experts at dedicated venues has major advantages. Tapping in to their experience and communicating the objectives of your conference/meeting makes the event more likely to be a success for both the company and the delegates.

The effort involved with attending a face-to-face meeting or event can give the event larger significance. Delegates are likely to maximise their time, experience and outcomes if the company have invested large amounts to send them there.

A central gathering of colleagues/peers who have travelled long distances can provide much more significant networking opportunities than a virtual meeting. Often, the best conversations happen in the bar afterwards, or at the coffee station between sessions.



### Engagement



### Technology



### Relationships



### Objectives



### Travel