



The Webcam Survey Exhausted or Engaged?

Meeting on Camera During the Pandemic

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VIRTIRA

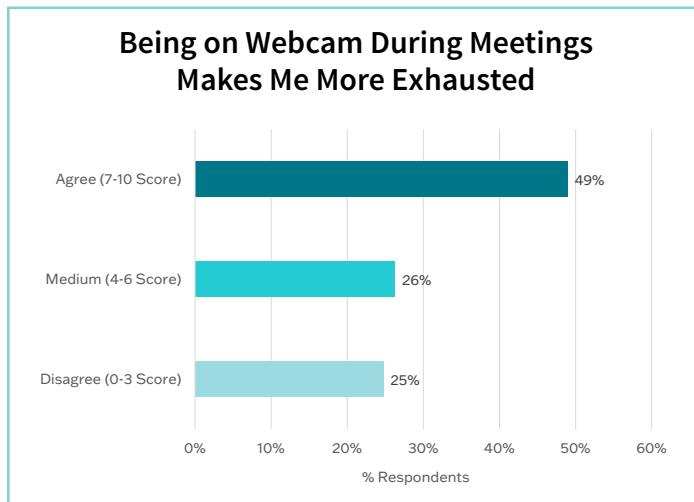
The Webcam Survey - Exhausted or Engaged?

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Introduction

Over a year into COVID-19, “Zoom” has become synonymous with “meeting on camera”. Stories about “Zoom fatigue” abound, but what’s really causing it? Is it too many meetings a week, is it an introvert/extrovert issue, too many hours online, people working from home who would be better in an office, or too much time meeting on camera? Who is it impacting the most? Who is thriving and why?

In this cross-industry survey and analysis conducted in January and February 2021 of more than 1700 employees, managers and executives, we explore just how exhausting meeting on video is, and the key factors driving it. In addition, we examine how company and management policies are impacting the situation.



Finally, we recommend solutions businesses can implement to improve things moving forward. Given that up to 80% of businesses¹ report that they will move towards a fully remote or hybrid/flex model in the future, understanding what creates effective and productive WFH and office-based employees, is going to be critical moving forward.

Key Findings

- Over 49% of individuals report being exhausted due to being on webcam during online meetings. Survey results indicate that requiring employees to be on video during meetings may be good for engagement, but not great for productivity.
- 61% reported that video is mandated for all meetings they attend.
- Over 65% responded that being on camera is best used for team engagement and connection, however, only 11% reported that the camera was used for team engagement purposes.
- Over 60% reported that the number of meetings they attend has increased significantly since the pandemic. Most say that the ad-hoc chats they had at the office have been replaced by formal meetings, which indicates that many are not using collaboration tools for informal updates.
- Looking at personality types, 58% who self-reported as “introverts” reported that being on camera made them exhausted, while 40% of “extroverts” indicated this.
- The younger the worker, the more severe the feelings of exhaustion.
- Over 25% feel peer pressure to turn on their cameras even if this was not a requirement.

“ It is unnecessary and distracting to have webcam on unless the person is the presenter of the meeting. It feels like I am being spied on other people and I have to constantly be careful and on edge in front of the camera and not do anything unprofessional.

(Age 25-34, Female, \$75K-100K/yr, Introvert)

¹ <https://www.hrdiver.com/news/gartner-over-80-of-company-leaders-plan-to-permit-remote-work-after-pande/581744/>

“ If I could, I would never turn on my webcam. I am typically far more productive when it’s voice & screen sharing only.

(Age 35 to 44, Male, \$150k+, Introvert)



Recommendations

To unlock the potential economic gains from remote work, businesses and professionals have to embrace policies that enable remote work, not hinder it. Data, not assumptions, should be driving remote work policies, especially with the majority of managers being new to this work style.

The results of the survey present an important lesson for businesses on how the use of video conferencing tools is going to impact the wellbeing of employees, whether they are commuting or staying at home.

Training for managers will also be key to increasing productivity and workplace engagement. Managers need to pay attention to who really needs to be in meetings as opposed to providing a recording of the call. They also need to learn to encourage collaboration tools as a substitute for informal chats that occur in offices, instead of increasing the number of meetings.

- Video is best used to connect employees in small groups, one-on-one meetings or for the first 2-3 minutes of larger meetings for everyone to say hello. Even in this context, many people are still uncomfortable with being on video, and managers and HR should work with them to determine root cause and adjust their work situation where possible. Being on camera should be up to the employee.
- Beyond the presenter or the leader of the call, there is no indication that large meetings, with a screen of

talking heads, has any advantage over audio and may increase distraction and participant anxiety.

- Recognize that peer pressure is a key driver of camera use, especially in younger workers, even where it is not required by management or the organization. Training and communications need to be introduced to make staying off-camera a personal choice when possible
- Meetings are not a substitute for informal office chats or a “water cooler”. Businesses need to introduce and train managers and employees on the use of collaboration workspaces so they can do informal updates synchronously, and asynchronously.
- Packing extra people into a call when they don’t need to be in attendance sucks time and productivity. Invest in good meeting notes with a meeting recording so they can quickly update themselves on what they need to know and have more uninterrupted work time.

The Survey

[Virtira Consulting](#) surveyed over 2,500 executives, managers, and employees in various WFH, commuting, and flex work styles between January 21st and February 8th, 2021. We also tested for introversion/extroversion to understand if this is a factor. Respondents were from public and private companies across all age ranges and incomes through two third-party independent online platforms. Follow-up surveys were sent to over 500 respondents to further clarify some responses. Overall margin of error of $\pm 2.37\%$ at 95% confidence level, on the basis of 1710 net responses.

For the full survey, including extensive charts and detailed discussion on results, click [here](#).

“ PLEASE LET ME GO BACK TO THE OFFICE!!

(Age 25 to 34, Male, \$50k-75k, Introvert)

“ In my opinion, it distracts from the meeting’s objective. As soon as someone moves, your eyes go there to see what they are doing.

(Age 55 to 64, Female, \$50k-\$75k, Extrovert)