

- If someone requests information from you that will require a lengthy explanation, you can respond by letting that person know that you will respond by email in order to more effectively communicate your thoughts on the issue. Do go ahead, however, and give a brief synopsis by text. *Example:* “In a nutshell, yes. I’ll follow up by email to give you our rationale.”

Videoconference/Skype/Facetime Etiquette

I think the invention of videoconferencing, facetime and Skype are the best things that could have happened for businesswomen since the invention of pantyhose! As a result of these tools, we are able to have face-to-face discussions without having to leave our families to fly halfway across the country to conduct business. Videoconferencing and Skype also enable members to serve on international teams without having to spend tons of money on travel. Of course, like everything else, rules of etiquette apply when using these tools. Here are a few:

- If you are on Skype, but do not wish to talk, take yourself offline. This prevents someone else from thinking they can jump into a conversation with you while you are busy.
- Conversely, if you want to talk and you see someone online with Skype, always ask for permission before ringing. Send a quick message asking if that person is available for a session. Sometimes people forget to make themselves invisible, but they really can’t talk or are unprepared for a face-to-face session. Jumping into a video Skype discussion with someone without asking permission first is a bit like barging into someone’s home without knocking. Just be sure to ask, first.
- Use proper grammar and punctuation when using Skype’s IM or chat tool, as you would with an email. While some laxity is okay, don’t take it too far. Using cutesy letters and words can make you look childish and unprofessional.

- Always sign off, even if you're in a hurry. This can be as simple as "Got to run to a meeting. See you soon."
- For pre-planned videoconference and Skype meetings, always make sure you are ready a few minutes before your session. Check your equipment, software and documents before the call to make sure everything works properly. Turn off your pagers and make sure there is not a lot of background noise or activity that can distract your callers.
- Ask the people on the other end if they can hear you clearly, when introducing yourself.
- Try to wear clothing that will not be distracting, including bright colors like red, busy patterns and lots of shiny jewelry, especially jewelry that makes noise, like bangle bracelets.
- Lead or participate in your videoconference/Skype meeting as you would a face-to-face session. Have a prepared agenda, provide introductions, and make sure not to talk over anyone.
- Don't engage in side conversations.
- Use the "mute" button when you are not speaking.

Teleconference Etiquette

*I*t happened two years ago, but one of my colleagues still clenches her jaw when she talks about that call. "It was supposed to be a 30-minute teleconference," she said. "We started late, since a lot of people didn't call in on time. It felt so disorganized with people talking over each other. A couple of them hadn't read the materials, so we spent a lot of time going over things they should have already known."

The 30-minute call lasted for an hour and 15 minutes.