



VIRTUAL ATTENDEE PERSONAS

Attending a virtual meeting is a very different experience than attending an in-person one. In person, for example you may be more outgoing, whereas in a virtual setting, you may be more distracted. The same is true for your event attendees. They likely take on different personalities in a virtual setting.

Understanding your virtual audience is key to delivering a successful event that resonates and drives behavior change. As our organization has been hosting our own virtual and hybrid meetings and helping clients with theirs, we've noticed some common themes among attendees. We've categorized them into personas, or general characterizations, that you can use or adapt for your organization.

Without further ado, we're pleased to introduce you to the seven most common virtual attendee personas and how to best engage each one.



Many factors can influence one's virtual attendee behaviors or persona including culture, audience size, whether the meeting is being recorded, and familiarity with the topic, presenters, and fellow attendees.

THE A-STUDENT



This is your ideal attendee. They are super engaged and professional. They willingly participate in all polls and surveys, always have their camera on during video conferences, and ask thoughtful questions.

How to engage: Be punctual and respectful of their time. Share related content before, during, and after the meeting because A-students are hungry for more information. Reward them for their participation with recognition or through the use of leaderboards. They enjoy being involved, so consider them for advocate roles or as a speaker for future sessions.

SLOW TO WARM UP



Like the A-student persona, this attendee is paying attention. As the name suggests, though, they won't be the first to raise their hand. Once they feel comfortable, this attendee will engage and contribute to your meeting. Their engagement will be more focused on quality vs. quantity. When they speak up, fellow attendees will want to listen.

How to engage: Create a welcoming environment for this attendee by asking for engagement early. Since they won't be the first to contribute, you will need to give plenty of opportunities for others to lead the way. Develop seed questions, prompt your A-student attendees, and offer a variety of ways to engage such as polls, a live Q&A, surveys, etc. Possibly develop or offer a follow-up or one-on-one with these types of attendees to offer a safe space for them to interact and understand the content.

MULTITASKER

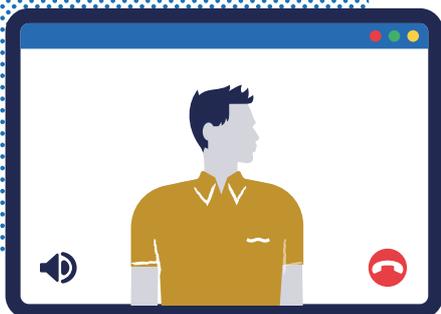


These attendees have good intentions to participate, though struggle to stay focused on the virtual meeting. Their typical behavior is to join a virtual meeting, then minimize the window and work on something else. Their curiosity might lead them back to your meeting if they see or hear something interesting or unexpected. They will participate in some polls and group discussions but largely only retain the headlines.

How to engage: Constantly reclaim their attention with engaging speakers, an emcee, snappy and concise content that has been prerecorded, polls, gamification, and live Q&As.

Encourage the audience to be on video to help hold Multitaskers accountable. Also watch attendee size; the Multitasker is more likely to engage in a smaller session.

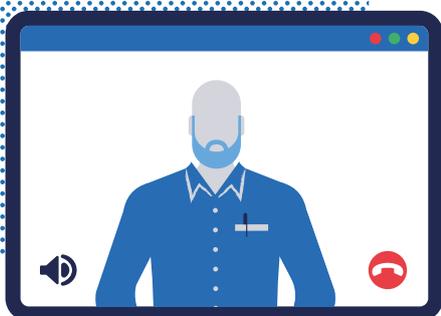
SILENT PARTNER



This attendee is paying attention and engaging, though in a different way than most. Think of them as a mentor or good friend. They have the meeting owner's back and will not hesitate to send a direct message with a polite correction or additional example to support the topic being discussed.

How to engage: More than other attendees, the Silent Partner utilizes the direct messaging feature of the virtual meeting platform and mobile event app. Make sure to keep an eye on the chat and Q&A to acknowledge their feedback or responses. While they don't want to be the center of attention in a group setting, they are usually willing to engage one-on-one. Go to them for honest feedback on your meeting and for ideas for future meeting content.

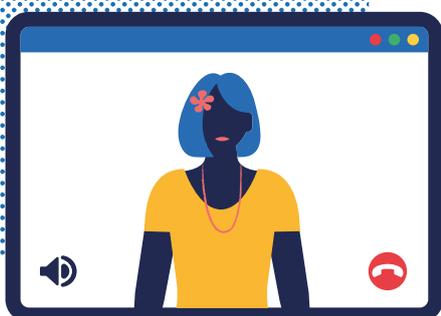
I HAVE TO BE HERE



Let's be clear: while this attendee might seem like the A-student persona at certain points of your meeting, they are not. They're more like C-students doing the bare minimum to pass the class. If everyone is on video, they will be as well, doing bare-minimum head nodding and half-hearted chuckles to float under the radar.

How to engage: The good thing about the I Have to Be Here persona is that they have potential to advance to an A-student. They feel obligated to attend your meeting and are mostly a captive audience, so you have a chance to win them over. Include a surprise element or something that will make them laugh. Develop your content with this persona in mind and you will likely reduce the total meeting duration. Speaking of duration, end a few minutes ahead of schedule. The I Have to Be Heres of the world will thank you.

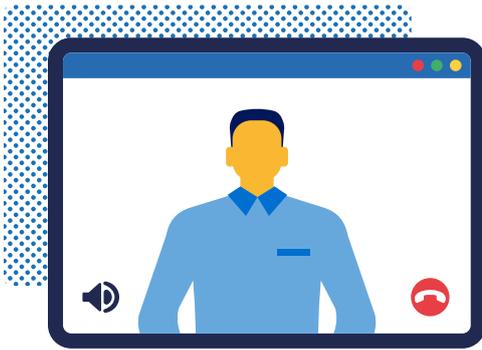
FUSSY FRIEND



This attendee has attended a lot of virtual meetings and considers themselves an expert. They are engaged and have high expectations to be "wowed." They'll be the first to let you and everyone else know if there's a typo or someone is on mute. They ask a lot of questions, some of which have a negative tone, though they really do mean well.

How to engage: Invite Fussy Friends to join your meeting planning council or encourage them to participate in pre-event surveys. They will appreciate the attention and acknowledgment of their expertise. Also, have a plan to transition away from their questions or topic with grace.

OUT TO LUNCH



This attendee has zero plans to pay attention or engage in your meeting. They attend your meeting because they have to, but they work on something else the entire time or step away from their computer entirely. If video is a requirement for the meeting, theirs will be on and they will be faking engagement. They cannot wait for your meeting to be over.

How to engage: Unfortunately, it will be challenging to convert this type of attendee. If you want to weed them out, you could have a pop quiz or some other surprise element to determine which attendees are engaged and which ones are Out to Lunch.

PERSONAS FOR YOUR EVENT

1. **ANALYZE** YOUR LIKELY ATTENDEE BASE
2. **CREATE** PROFILES (OR ADAPT OURS!)
3. **PERSONALIZE** THE EXPERIENCE

