

# Best Practice Guide for Virtual Moderators



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### Know Your Platform

- Practice in the same environment and same device that you be using when we record/go live
- Test your connection and devices
- Do a dry run on that platform – preferably with the panellists
- Make sure the audio and video work
- Learn the platform capabilities e.g. chat box or polling features
- Connect to a strong and stable internet connection. If possible, connect your device directly into the router using an ethernet cable.
- Ensure you test any equipment you'll use on the day, e.g. headphones, microphones
- Laptop should be plugged to a power source
- All running unnecessary applications running in the laptop should be closed
- Disable any notifications to avoid any sound or pop-up alerts
- Turn off any cell phones, tablets, or desktop notifications

### On the day

- Choose a well-lit, quiet space
- Mute every device including your mobile phones
- If you are using a laptop, ensure the charger is plugged in
- Use the same audio/visual equipment as in your rehearsal
- Have a glass of water and your notes nearby
- Speak in a clear, positive, and enthusiastic tone of voice to ensure you keep your listeners engaged

### Panel discussion: Preparing the conversation

- Clarify if the panelists will make brief formal statements or presentations at the beginning or if you will ask a “softball” opening question to give them a chance to weave in their initial statements.
- To the extent possible, let panelists know the questions you will ask (or topics you will raise) so they aren't caught off guard.
- Clarify if the conversation will flow freely or if panelists will be expected to keep a certain schedule; if the latter, let panelists know how they will be notified about the remaining time (e.g., a “5 minutes” card).
- Identify potential overlap and seek panelists' agreement to not be duplicative.
- Decide what you want the tone of the panel to be: should everyone agree, or should some views conflict? » A little conflict between panelists is ideal; no conflict is boring, and too much conflict is uncomfortable to watch.

### Opening the panel

- Set the tone, agenda, and focus from the beginning. Explain the panel's purpose and goal. This helps ensure that key points from panelists and questions from the audience focus on the topic at hand.
- Do not read long prepared bios of the panelists. Either (a) briefly introduce all panelists or (b) invite panelists to introduce themselves.
- Keep the introductions short; 1–2 sentences each.
- Try to convey excitement, energy, and an eagerness to learn. Such a mood is infectious and will keep the audience more engaged than a more laid-back attitude.
- Start on time (even if all the panelists are not there), and end on time (even if some audience members' questions are not answered).

### Audience Q&A

- Encourage participants to ask their questions in the question box
- Form a "queue" and put forth the question to the speaker to answer
- Make sure you prepare questions in case the audience does not have any
- Share your questions with panelists so they can prepare
- Written questions from the audience (physical or online) may allow you to edit or reframe the question.
- Feel free to move back and forth between audience questions and moderator questions

### Wrapping up

- Use the final moments to summarize and reflect to the main points.
- Let the audience know as you near the end of the panel so people are prepared for the discussion to end.
- Thank speakers/panelists for their time and input

### Have any questions? Contact us

Please reach out to us should you have any queries by sending an email to [afhcongress@informa.com](mailto:afhcongress@informa.com).