

## Video vision

How can leaders  
communicate  
effectively  
through video



*“Video communication is here to stay; now is the time for leaders to develop their presence properly and lead by example.”*

Audrie Woodhouse, Founder, Honestly Speaking

## Video vision

**How can leaders communicate effectively online through video? At TALiNT Partners’ recent webinar, Audrie Woodhouse, Founder of Honestly Speaking, shared her advice on how leaders can use video to connect with staff, clients and customers online**

The usage of video platforms has exploded over the last few months, whether it be keeping in touch with your boss and colleagues or your family and friends. For most of us it has become a vital component in how we have coped with lockdown and for some it has literally been a lifeline.

And as lockdown begins to ease, no one thinks we will give up on these new channels, which gives rise to two important questions: how embedded will they become in our future working patterns and how proficient do you need to be in using the technology?

We’ve all had a lot of fun in peering into other peoples’ private lives, perhaps remarking at their curious choice of wallpaper and often having a laugh at their inability to use the mute function or basic camera angles even after three months. Our particular favourite has been observing lockdown hairstyles, although Ken Brotherston, MD of TALiNT Partners, says, “My own experiment with hair clippers will give me nightmares for years to come!”

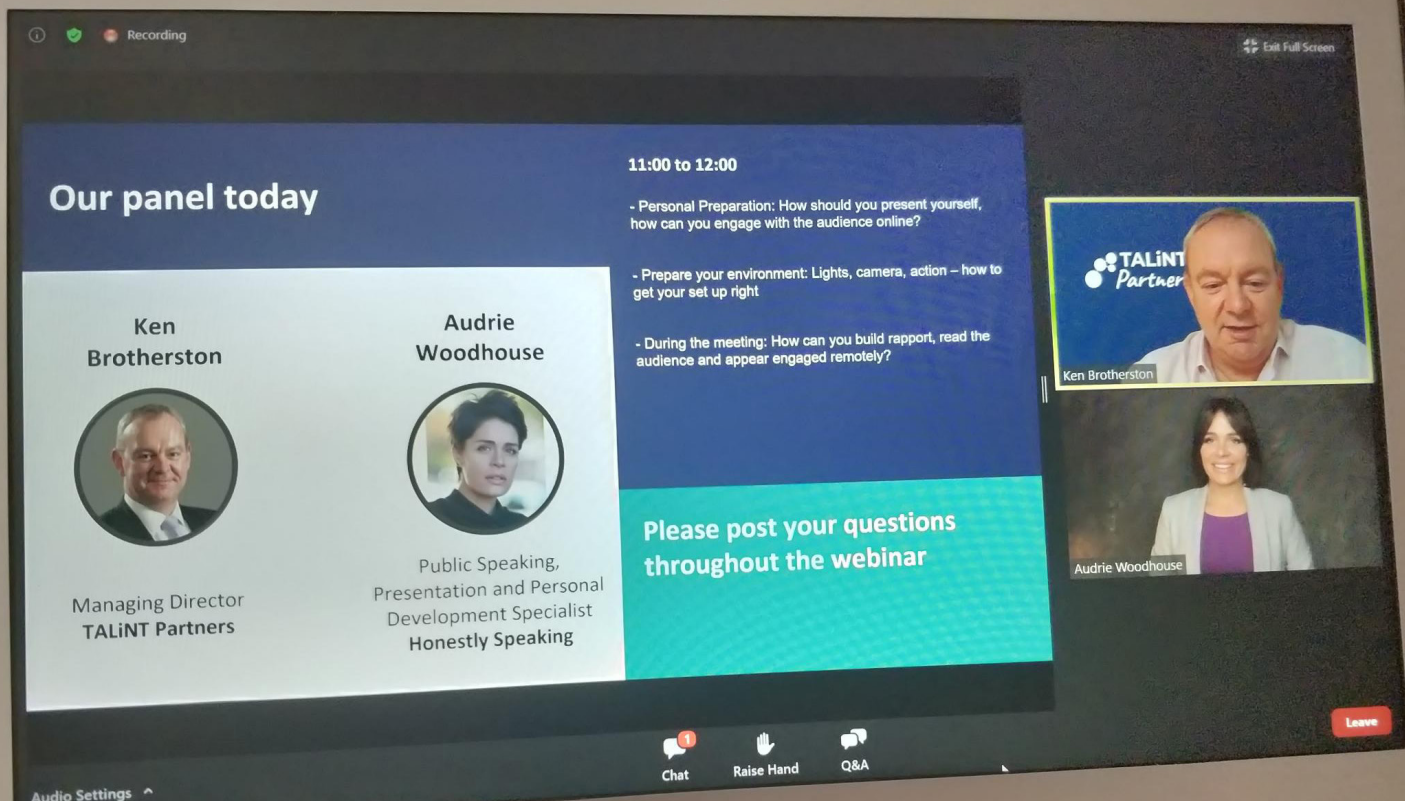
But now we know that this technology is here to stay, isn’t it time to up our game? This is especially true for people in leadership roles or indeed, anyone trying to deliver a difficult or complex message.

This was the key theme we explored in our webinar with Audrie Woodhouse, founder of Honestly Speaking, and an expert on personal presentation.

Audrie explained three key components of effective online communication:

### **PREPARATION**

- **Backdrop:** Decide what you want to show, but make sure it won’t distract other people on the call. If you’re using a green screen, make sure it’s good quality.
- **Lighting:** It’s important to look as natural as possible. You should have a light shining on you from behind your device. Ideally a hoop light although a desk lamp can also work.
- **Sound:** Consider an external or desk mic – this is no good if you move around. A lapel mic needs a cable, so can be distracting if you move too much. In-ear microphones cancel out sound and no one else can hear what’s being said on the call – “You’ll be speaking to people about sensitive issues, so keeping them private is important.”
- PowerPoint can interfere with sound; use it sparingly.



## THE MEETING

- Go onto the platform first to see what you look like and check everything's in place. "What you look like in the test is how you will look on the call."
- Keep presentations simple and succinct: 10-20 mins worth of presentation should involve no more than five bullet points.
- Treat online meetings like live ones and keep everyone connected and engaged – make sure everyone has their cameras on and involve people.
- Eye contact is really important for engagement. **Learn how to do it.**
- It's okay to have notes but have them in front of you so you don't have to look away from the camera.
- Use post-it notes to stick to your screen to write key bullet points.
- For pre-recorded messages, teleprompters can be great. Most are free but you must practise and plan your presentation beforehand. Learn how to read and smile at the same time.
- Think about your location whilst working from home and ask people to stay out of the room – you need to have privacy.

## OTHER KEY TIPS

- Don't address an issue regarding one person on a group call.

- Wear clothes you would wear to a meeting.

- If there are other people in your room, let the audience know.

- Own interruptions. "As long as we're doing the best we can, we've got to give ourselves a break."

There are competing arguments about whether to be 'professional' or 'human' in how you come across but the key point is to make a conscious choice.

As a general guideline, clearly for purely social interactions do whatever you feel is right. For day-to-day team and existing contact interactions, then the virtual equivalent of 'smart-casual' will most likely work.

For important and/or complex interactions, it is crucial you look as if you have made the effort to be as professional as possible.

To find out more about how to present effectively on video, contact Audrie Woodhouse: [audrie@honestlyspeaking.co.uk](mailto:audrie@honestlyspeaking.co.uk)

