Decker
COMMUNICATIONS

Client Interaction in a Virtual World

Transform your communication experience
with competence, connection and clarity

IMPACT
PARTNERSHIP

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Competence: Own the Experience

Principle: It's up to you to master the remote experience.
You're the host of the party—before, during and after.

Practice

Before: Party Prep—Think through what your audience needs up front for a successful touchpoint.

1. Include all the info up front.
   - Lay out key questions, discussion items and the agenda as part of the invitation. Attach any supporting documents.
   - Make sure the login information is clearly visible and activated for easy click-through.
   - Even if it's part of the invitation, send a proposal or deck in advance via email. Let your client review, absorb and come up with questions.
2. Set up polls and prepare your chat questions if it's a large group.
3. Lay out expectations for how you'll use the technology. Encourage use of video for additional connection.

During: Be a great host.

1. Make hospitality your focus.
   - Don't let conversation or connection lag during the login phase of the meeting. Discuss (if it's a team situation) who is owning the meeting and handling the opening or introductions. Use this time for checking in, greetings, keeping tabs on who is left, asking questions, etc.
   - In today's environment, this is a key time to ask how people are doing or faring. Use this time for real connection and care.

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2. Rock your platform.
   - Know your platform and be ready to educate your clients on how to use it.
   - Encourage the browser version for those less familiar with your platform—most will find it easier.
   - Give everyone an orientation on where to find key features.
   - Set expectations for how you'll use the tools. For example:
     - Gallery view is the best way to see all the players at any given time.
     - For groups over 10 people, chat is a great way to handle Q&A.
     - Encourage video for connection (and the ability to read the room).
3. Engage to win.
   - Passive players are rarely as engaged as those who are part of the conversation from the get-go. Create voluntary engagement.
   - Interact with your audience in the first 60 seconds.
     Give the "all give thoughts" approach a try.
   - Check in every two minutes, minimum. Integrate input, get real-time feedback, ask questions, probe, and discover throughout to make the conversation feel like a real dialogue.
4. Visual support.

   Your slides are key to engagement, but every time a visual is up you're competing for your audience's attention. Use slides strategically to clarify complex ideas, take a deeper dive, demo a product or navigate a system.

   And then:
   - Take them down. Drop the screen share and commit to connection.
   - Keep the flicker factor high. Change what the viewer sees every two minutes (or take down the slide).
   - Keep your slides simple and focused. What's the *one* key point of the slide? Only include the essential information that backs it up.

After: Be intentional about what you can do to build on the experience.
- Get creative—send meals, support a local organization they care about, fund an experience for the community, etc.

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Connection: Build Trust

Principle: Seeing helps believing. Video boosts connection with your clients and customers in the remote environment.

Show connection and credibility at every touchpoint.

- *Eye Communication:* Commit to connection—look directly at the camera. Follow the 80/20 rule, looking at the camera 80% of the time.
- *Facial Expression:* Leverage the smile for warmth and likability. Make sure both your listening *and* speaking expression is open, and consistent with the message.
- *Vocal Variety:* Keep your audience tuned in with energy—project with volume. Make your voice naturally authoritative and decisive by ending sentences at the same or lower tone than they begin.
- *Pausing:* Learn your non-words and replace them with a pause. Control the discussion with confidence, don't rush from point to point.

Practice

1. Frame up on video.
   - Make sure you're centered in the frame—not just at the top, bottom or with lots of space on one side.
   - Check your lighting. Make sure there are no light sources behind you.
   - Take a look at your background—anything distracting?
2. Record yourself using your platform of choice. Play it back to understand the experience you create.
3. If you can't record on video, try audio as a start. You can also find an accountability partner to take a screen shot of you as a reference point.

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Clarity

Principle: Your clients and prospects have less listening bandwidth than ever before. It's more critical than ever to communicate with total clarity.

Practice

1. Answer these four questions to ensure listener-focus for your message:
    - *Listeners:* Who are you talking to?
    - *POV:* What's the one thing?
    - *Action:* What should they do?
    - *Benefits:* Why should they care?

2. Be intentional about the experience you design based on where you are in the process. For example:
    - *Current Clients:* Focus on reassurance and relationship.
        - Map out agenda and key questions in advance.
        - Start off the meeting with a clear Point of View that focuses on them.
        - Prioritize connection: Use video.
        - Keep introductions friendly and engaging.
        - Few (if any) slides: Focus on relationship over content.
    - *Workshops and Seminars:* Balance relationship with information.
        - Decide about sending decks in advance for review.
        - Toggle between Gallery View and using Share Screen.
        - Only share key visuals: Summary slides, diagrams, schematics, finances, etc.
        - Remove screen share for connection and dialogue.
    - *The Three Appointment Follow-up Process:* Focus on dialogue.
        - Introduce subject matter experts/implementation team.
        - Only share key visuals: Timeline, summary, next steps.
        - Primarily use Gallery View for discussion and Q&A.

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About Decker Communications, Inc.

Put simply, our mission is to **transform business communications**. The Decker Method™ prepares anyone in any situation to move their message from one of **information to influence**.

In our 41-year history we've consulted with, coached, and trained more than 100,000 senior executives and managers. Our forward-thinking team continually evolves our programs to meet new business challenges. After all, in today's business environment, "presentations" reach far beyond the lectern. While formal presentation skills are critical, we're far more challenged to make an impact in less formal settings—team meetings, one-on-one reviews, sales pitches, and even across the globe on a conference call.

We enhance the content of what you say and how you say it, so that you close the deal, launch an initiative and motivate action. The best part is that we motivate self-propelling change in each person so that you're more effective the very next day, and continue getting even better.

Our core programs pair video feedback with private coaching to ensure that each participant receives personalized feedback and customized improvement plans. We offer group training programs in our San Francisco and New York training facilities or at a client site. Group training programs may be customized for specific organizations, roles, and responsibilities. Our Platinum Executive Coaching offers one-on-one executive coaching with members of Decker's executive team.

For more information, please contact us.

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