

Video Transcript Mark Bernheimer

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By Mark Bernheimer

Mark Bernheimer 00:05

Hi there, Mark Bernheimer here. You may remember back in March of 2020, I produced a short video of Zoom mistakes. It was called, "Watch My Terrible Video." Turned out to be the most-watched and most-shared video I've ever produced.

Mark Bernheimer 00:28

Of course, at that time we thought zoom was going to be a temporary substitute, a stopgap while we got through the pandemic and then everything was going to return back to the way it was. Of course, what we know now is that Zoom is here to stay. It's the way many of you communicate every single day to your colleagues. And it's the way a lot of news outlets continue to conduct their news interviews.

Mark Bernheimer 00:39

I've done hundreds of media trainings via Zoom since I made that first video and I've noticed a lot of mistakes. I've seen it all. Some of these mistakes are so commonplace and so easily addressed, easily repaired, that I wanted to show them to everyone, not just my clients. So let's call this watch my second-most terrible video or top five ways to ruin Zoom.

Mark Bernheimer 00:59

No. 5 is probably the least egregious of all of these but I still wanted to call your attention to it. Anything that results in strings coming out of your head, whether it's the iPod, earbuds or whether it's the copilot's headset with a microphone is distracting. Look, it's not a clean, professional look if you're trying to give an important presentation or do a news interview. Now there is a carve out to this rule of don't wear these things and that is if there's a lot of distraction in your environment. If you're hearing noises, a lawnmower, kids or dogs barking, you might want to have your earphones in. You might want to have a microphone that's closer to your mouth than the one that's built into the laptop, but in general you're better off finding a quieter location and not using things that are stuck to your head.

Mark Bernheimer 01:37

In fourth place, it's all about the seating. Any chair that's comfortable enough for you to spend the entire day working in it. ie a desk chair, is usually not a good choice for doing a Zoom interview or presentation and the reason is obvious. It's because you're going to move around if the chair allows you to do that. I find that the less comfortable a chair is, the better it is for Zoom, meaning that if you're at home, use a dining chair not your desk chair, preferably one that doesn't have arms so you're not going to lock yourself down into those arms. If you're at the office, don't use your desk chair, use a guest chair or go to the break room and get one of those plastic chairs next to the microwave. The less

comfortable, the more you're going to be forced to sit up straight, look straight ahead and perform the task at hand.

Mark Bernheimer 02:15

On the Roman coin. Look, we've all seen this one before. It's hard to have a conversation with someone when you're looking into their ear. This typically happens when the person on the other end is using more than one monitor or one very large monitor and their Zoom window isn't close to their camera. This is so easily remedied. Look back onto the main screen and put that zoom window as close to the camera as you can. What's more, don't look on the screen at all. You'll still see everybody on the Zoom screen through your peripheral vision. If you look right into the camera, you'll see people nodding, laughing, shaking their heads, but by looking right into the camera to give the illusion of eye contact, which creates a real sense of confidence and professionalism. It's the simplest thing you can do on Zoom that makes the biggest difference.

Mark Bernheimer 02:54

I call this one indecent exposure and it has nothing to do with any cable news pundits you may be thinking of. This one has to do with the exposure happening behind you, the light that overexposes your image because there's a window behind you and not enough of a light source in front of you. Like so many other tips I'm presenting in this segment, this one's an easy fix. Turn it around; get that light source in front of you instead of behind you. Now you'll have nice flat natural light and nothing behind that is overexposing the shot.

Mark Bernheimer 03:20

And that brings us to the No. 1 way to ruin Zoom--at least the most common way to do it. I see this one all the time: the severed head. Not only is it not aesthetically pleasing to see the speaker's head just floating on the bottom of the Zoom frame, but it really deprives the audience of any sort of nonverbal communication. Sixty to 80% of what we derive from a speaker comes from nonverbal cues, including body language, and you really can't see any body language if you can't see anybody. This one is so easy to remedy. Just bring the laptop lid down or tilt down the webcam so that you have 60 to 80% of the frame taken up with head and shoulders, with your eyes in the upper third of the frame. Not in the middle, not below. Here's a hint. If you can see a ceiling fan or ceiling lights behind somebody, you know their camera angle is wrong. It's pointed up.

Mark Bernheimer 03:59

I hope you've learned something from this little lesson. If you know anybody, a colleague, maybe a boss who's a violator of one or more of these rules, send the video along to them. I'll be the bad guy.