OpEx Africa Conferencing tools

Zoom/Ring Central

Both Zoom and Ring Central are video conferencing tools. Ring Central is a company that licences the Zoom tool so they all have the same functionality that is explained below.

Whiteboard/Annotate

In a face-to-face session, you may use flip charts to write things down or even have people add thoughts or ideas. With these tools you can either have people write on a whiteboard or even write directly onto a slide you have shared. People can draw, type and add icons to the slides or whiteboard depending on how you want them to contribute.

Raising hands

To manage questions, or even to do a quick vote, participants have the option to raise their hands. This is viewed in the participant list so you can see who has raised them.

Polling

You can run polls by sharing a question that will appear as a pop up on participants’ screen. They pick the answer they want from the options provided and then the results will be displayed after. This is a great tool for getting quick input from the group on a subject matter and also encourages fast and easy group participation.

Breakout rooms

Small group discussion is an integral aspect of a participatory session. This is still possible in the virtual world using “breakout rooms”. This tool will send participants to separate virtual rooms in groups (you can choose the number of participants in each group). While in the breakout rooms, you can broadcast messages to participants with topics you want them to discuss and you can bring them back at any time (with a 60 second countdown so they can close their conversations). The group can then nominate a lead to share back what they talked about or the answer they came up with if it is a question that was posed. Either way small groups are just as possible in the virtual space and add a valued element of engagement and participation.

Chat

The “chat” function is unique to the virtual meeting space and provides participants the ability to both comment in writing and ask questions to the presenter through the chat button. This communication tool is managed by your session “producer” so you won’t need to feel distracted while presenting. Before the session, you and the producer will discuss
how and when you want the chat questions to be addressed (for example, when they are asked or at the end of the session.)

MentiMeter

MentiMeter is another polling tool that allows for additional presenter/participant interaction. By entering a code via a URL on their phone or computer, participants answer a prescribed question which allows for the presenter to gain opinions and data. The difference with this polling tool is increased availability of options and the real time nature of the tool: as more people enter responses, the graphics change live on the screen.

Here is a layout of additional graphic polling you can use to bring some more energy to the room.

- **Multiple Choice:** This option presents the outputs as a bar graph. You can pose the question and give them a specific set of responses to choose from. The graph can present this as a count or percentage. A sample question is: “How well do you think the sector is doing at presenting a collective response to Covid19?” Answers: “We are doing well”; “We could be doing a bit more”; “We aren’t doing very well.”

- **Word Clouds:** Ask the group to input a word (they can submit more than one) in relation to the question posed and watch the word cloud appear in real time, growing on the screen as more people submit. A sample question might be: ‘What inspires collective action in the sector?’

- **Open Ended:** The participants can share an answer or opinion and these responses then scroll through on the screen as more contributions are made. A sample question: “Why do you think collective action is so important at this time?”