

Recommended Audio Gear for Recording Meetup Talks

Clear audio matters more than camera quality. A modern phone can produce perfectly usable video, but a phone or camera placed across the room cannot reliably capture a presenter over HVAC noise, audience movement, and room reverberation.

Our minimum recommendation

Use one microphone close to the person speaking.

- Give the presenter a wireless lavalier microphone, or place a wired lavalier microphone on their shirt.
- Connect the receiver directly to the phone or camera recording the talk.
- Put the microphone about 15–20 cm (6–8 inches) below the presenter's mouth.
- Monitor the first recording with headphones before recording the remaining talks.
- Keep the original camera audio enabled as a backup and synchronization track.

If presenters hand off rapidly, a handheld wireless microphone is a good alternative. The important part is keeping the microphone close to the current speaker—not buying an expensive camera.

A practical meetup kit

For most chapters, the following is enough:

1. A two-transmitter wireless lavalier system with a receiver compatible with your recording phone or camera.
2. Two lavalier clips and windscreens.
3. The correct USB-C, Lightning, or 3.5 mm adapter for the recording device.
4. Closed-back headphones for a short sound check.
5. A small power bank and charging cables.
6. A phone tripod or stable camera mount.

Choose a wireless system that records a safety copy on each transmitter when possible. This protects the talk if the room has wireless interference or the receiver cable is disconnected.

When the venue has a sound system

Do not assume that recording the room speakers will sound clean. Ask the venue for a direct output from its mixer and record that feed as an additional track. Continue recording the close microphone and camera audio as backups.

Avoid connecting an unknown mixer output directly to a phone or camera without the correct cable or attenuator; a line-level signal can overload a microphone-level input.

Five-minute sound check

Before the event:

1. Put the microphone on the presenter in the position they will actually use.
2. Ask them to speak at normal presentation volume.
3. Record 20 seconds while the room HVAC and audience noise are present.

4. Listen with headphones—not only through the phone speaker.
5. Confirm that speech is clear, does not distort on loud words, and remains much louder than the room.
6. Confirm that the device is still receiving the external microphone after locking the screen or changing camera modes.

Common failure modes

- Camera across the room: understandable in person, distant and reverberant in the recording.
- Microphone on a table: captures typing, handling noise, and reflections instead of direct speech.
- Clipped audio: input gain is too high; loud words become permanently distorted.
- Silent external microphone: wrong adapter, disconnected receiver, dead transmitter, or the camera app switched back to its built-in microphone.
- No backup: a single cable or wireless failure loses the entire talk.

The simple rule is: put a working microphone close to the presenter, listen to a test recording with headphones, and keep a backup track.