



VIRTUAL INTERVIEW



INTERVIEWING VIRTUALLY

More employers may choose to conduct an interview using video conferencing software. This is because it tends to be more convenient for remote positions or initial screening interviews. Since this type of interview is a bit different than a traditional in-person interview, it's important that you consider a few factors of this format. Popular virtual platforms included Zoom, Skype, MS Teams, GoToMeeting, Recruiter, Modern Hire, Interview Stream, Spark Hire, Breezy, MyInterview, JobVite, and Google Hangout. These virtual interview tips can help you master this video software and show employers you're a qualified candidate:

- Use the mute button
- Look into the camera while speaking
- Choose a professional background
- Find a brightly lit room
- Pick a quiet space
- Silence your phone
- Maintain your focus
- Turn off notifications
- Use a laptop or desktop computer
- Charge your laptop
- Update your computer
- Find a good internet connection
- Communicate with your household
- Wear professional attire
- Keep your screen clear
- Practice using the application
- Use appropriate body language
- Ask your interviewer questions

PRESENTATION TIPS

Look into the camera while speaking

During an in-person interview, maintaining eye contact with your interviewer is a sign of confidence and respect. Video chat makes this a bit different, because if you were to look them in the eye on your screen, it may not look like that on their end. Instead, look into the camera as you are speaking. This creates the illusion that you are looking at them rather than yourself or the screen.

Choose a professional background

When setting up your computer, choose an area that is tidy and free of clutter. Make sure your background is sparse rather than busy and only has professional-looking items or decor in the background. You certainly want to avoid broadcasting from your bedroom while sitting on an unmade bed. And be sure your profile name is professional (not a nickname or novelty tag).

Find a brightly lit room

Your interviewer needs to be able to see your body language and facial expressions during your virtual interview. Choose a room with good lighting, so they can easily see you. Setting your interview space facing a window that lets in a lot of natural lighting is a great way to make yourself more visible. Setting up with a window behind you can cast shadows on your face and make you appear to look like a silhouette.

Pick a quiet space

Choose an area that is quiet and free of distractions. This way your interviewer can direct their full attention to what you have to say. A room where you can shut the door is an ideal space to interview. Limit other noises by closing windows and turning off your music or the television.



VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION

A virtual interview is an interview that takes place remotely, sometimes over the phone, but often using technology like video conferencing and other online communication platforms. During a time when organizations are utilizing virtual formats to a greater degree, it's become essential for candidates to learn how to perfect the virtual interview process. Virtual interviews are often conducted much the same way as face-to-face interviews. That said, virtual communication requires special considerations and adjustments due to the limited ability to read body language and facial expressions.



TECHNICAL TIPS

Use a laptop or desktop computer

Although most virtual platforms have a mobile app, it's better to use it on a desktop computer or laptop. Having your computer on a table creates a more stationary view of yourself while holding your phone in your hand could cause camera shake. Your computer camera also gives the interviewer a better view of yourself and tends to come in clearer.

Use the mute button

Most platforms have a feature where you can mute your audio. This is a great feature to use while your interviewer is speaking for long periods. While using the mute button, they cannot hear anything on your end. This is useful when there are loud sounds in your household such as dogs barking or children playing. Keeping yourself on mute as they speak can help your interviewer feel more focused on what they want to tell you.

Silence your phone

Before your virtual interview, silence your phone and put it away. This way, you can focus on the interview rather than a text message or phone call. It may be a good idea to put your phone away awhile before your interview, so you can clear your mind and focus on preparing before you start.

Turn off notifications

Along with turning off your phone, you should also turn off any notifications on your computer. Close out of any social media websites or anything else that could become a distraction. Set the Zoom meeting to full screen so that your interviewer is the only thing you can see.

Charge your laptop

If your interview space doesn't have an outlet, make sure to fully charge your laptop before your interview. Ideally, you should choose a spot where you can leave your laptop plugged in during the entirety of your interview. This way, your device can last throughout a lengthy conversation.

Update your computer

Get the newest edition of the software prior to your meeting. Likewise, also do a full system update on your computer well in advance. If you were to accidentally click on the install update notification during your interview, this could cause your computer to restart mid-interview. By doing these updates a few hours before the interview, you can ensure your device is at its best.

Find a good internet connection

Prior to your virtual interview, make sure you have a strong internet connection. Test out your connection where you plan to sit during your interview. If you can stream video or video chat with other people, then you are likely to have a solid connection during your interview.



BE AUTHENTIC

There are some challenges associated with interviews that are not conducted in person. So it is important to compensate for the limitations of a virtual meeting, especially with regard to your personality and presence and your ability to build rapport.

Be aware of your posture and body language. Sit up straight and ensure your camera is placed so your face is in the middle of your screen (not too much blank space above your head). In in-person interviews, you would typically shake hands with your potential employer. Instead, find other ways to express friendliness, confidence and enthusiasm, like smiling and giving a wave with eye contact. Use hand gestures as needed for emphasis and to exhibit energy.

Ensure, even in a virtual setting, that you establish a personal connection with the interviewer. When interviewing virtually, you have the rare opportunity to speak in a relaxing, familiar environment. Use that advantage to present yourself in a friendly and positive light.



PREPARATION TIPS

Arrange your screen presence

Pay attention to the composition of your screen shot. Be sure to arrange yourself in front of the camera so that you are at an optimum distance for clear facial expression. Center yourself on the screen so that there is little to no space above your head. Typically your screen image is a bust shot. Arrange yourself so that your eye-line is level with the lens, not looking up or down at the camera.

Communicate with your household

If you live with other people, let them know when and where you are interviewing. Right before your interview starts, remind them to give you space and keep a quiet volume until you are done. It is best that those you live with remain in a separate room than you, so you can stay focused.



INTERVIEW TIPS

Maintain your focus

While your interviewer is speaking, keep your focus on the screen. Like you would in an in-person interview, show them that you are paying attention to what they have to say through active listening. You can do this by affirming what they say, nodding as they speak and asking questions based on what they say.

Wear professional attire

Dress exactly how you would during an in-person interview. This means you should wear your best business attire, at least from the waist up. Even if the interviewer cannot see your legs, still wear professional attire, like a suit, formal shirt or blouse, tie, blazer, or formal dress.

Use appropriate body language

One benefit of using video chat rather than a phone call is that you get to see each other's body language. During your interview, sit up tall with your hands in your lap and your feet on the floor. While you speak, you may gesture with your hands if that's natural for you. As your interviewer speaks, use nonverbal cues such as nodding and smiling to show that you are listening.

Ask your interviewer questions

As you learn more about the role, take a mental note of what questions you want to ask at the end of your interview. You can also prepare questions you have prior to the interview, so you definitely have something to ask. Make sure to listen throughout your interview so you only ask questions about topics the interviewer hasn't covered yet. Appropriate questions could be about the company's culture, this role's responsibilities or what the interviewer enjoys most about the company.

Keep your screen clear

In the event that you need to use the screen share option, it's a good idea to close out of everything on your desktop before your interview. This can also prevent video or audio from suddenly playing in the background. Closing out of all websites may also help your call load more efficiently.

Test the technology beforehand

Prior to your virtual interview, test your tools, including your camera and microphone. Check the quality of the visual and audio feed. Inspect all of your technology in advance to ensure it works effectively and can be used to communicate effectively, including having a functional computer that meets technical specifications.

Practice using the application

Get to know the application and all of its capabilities. Test out the software by having video chats with friends and family. You could even do a few mock interviews to get a sense of what this type of interview feels like. Have your friends and family ask you typical interview questions and give you feedback.

