

How to Master your next Virtual Interview

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Under the lockdown, pandemic fear, and the current call for social distancing, it's likely that your next interview could be a video or a telephone interview. The Nearly 75 percent of executives surveyed by organizational consulting firm Korn Ferry use real-time video to interview leading candidates, while 50 percent leverage it to narrow down their applicants. Post the COVID phase there will be a large shift of companies who will encourage virtual work setups, hence during your interview, you are not only being evaluated for your skills, competencies, your past achievements, and future capabilities but also your ability to contribute virtually and the ability to showcase the same if you are hired. Here are some tips on how to prepare for that online interview:

1. Check if your devices are technically sound

When you agree to a virtual interview, test your technology to ensure you are set up for success. Check your internet connectivity, and confirm your camera and microphone are working. If the picture is grainy or you're experiencing an echo, you might need to buy a mini webcam with a built-in microphone—which is hard to do five minutes before the interview, so do not procrastinate.

2. Minimise the Distractions

Find a room with optimal lighting, preferably near a window, or a blank wall to guarantee you are the focal point of the conversation. Whether you sit on your living room couch or in your home office, tidy up your surroundings. It's hard to convince employers you are detail-oriented and organized when there's laundry visibly piling up in the corner. Keep in mind that whatever sound you create near the system gets magnified and reaches the other end with a greater intensity. Therefore do not move much during the interview and avoid handling objects near the system.

3. Preparation

Being on a computer does not mean you can search the web for answers mid-interview, so avoid clicking around. You want to appear focused and ready to answer any questions without the help of the internet. Research the company ahead of time and jot down notes for easy reference. Also print out a copy of your resume, so that you don't forget key talking points. Prepare your subjects in the same way you would have done in case of an offline interview. Speak confidently to show your command and confidence in the subjects. Avoid memorizing each response, so you do not sound overly rehearsed.

4. Body Language

There are no firm handshakes with a hiring manager or a way to exude enthusiasm via video. However what you can do is monitor your body language. The main way to communicate confidence is to sit up straight, smile, and keep the camera at eye level. Research shows that employers are more likely to remember what you said if you maintain eye contact, so keep your focus on the camera when talking, not on the image of the hiring manager.

5. Be presentable

Just because you are participating in the interview from comfort of your bed room does not mean you should sit in front of the screen in your linking park tees and shorts. Dress in the same way, how you would have dressed in a face-to-face interview. For men, that could mean a button-up shirt, blazer, and chinos, while women should consider a dress or skirt and blouse. Professional clothing will show you're serious about the position, but there are personal benefits, as well: Studies show that people feel most trustworthy, authoritative, and competent when they are wearing formal business attire.

6. Leave a mark

You never know how many interviews a company may be conducting for the position you are aiming for. You might be at the end of a long list of people the hiring manager spoke to that day. This is why it is important to make a connection. Do not be afraid to have a short aside about a common interest. The recruiter might enjoy the break from the routine questions they have to get through. Making a connection is a crucial part of a virtual interview. You want the interviewer to be able to remember a personal story you told or a common interest you share. This is the best way to prevent yourself from blending in with the other applicants.

A key task for a recruiter is determining whether you would be a good fit for the company's culture. Some people will be able to tell if your vibe fits their company from the get go. Give them a reason to push you through to the second round of interviews by shining a light on how you can help the organization.

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