

Video Interviews:

BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERVIEWEES

When it comes to video interviewing, it's important to understand the nuances of the experience and how it differs from in-person interactions. Like any interview, you'll want to be as prepared as possible so you can focus on having a great conversation. The guide below compiles the best practices from our 20-plus years of video interviewing expertise into a reference we hope you'll find helpful.

SETTING THE SCENE



Use a plain background with a light color and full lighting to prevent unnatural shadows or highlights on your face.



Avoid using the digital backdrops offered in some video conferencing tools as they can put extra stress on your bandwidth and cause technical issues.



Frame the shot, making sure to find a static, solid background like in a home office or area free from appliances, beds, couches, or other cluttered spaces.



Frame yourself appropriately for the camera by allowing participants to see your head, shoulders, and a portion of your upper torso – avoid close-ups or being too far from the camera.



Close the door to the room you'll be using and make certain that pets, children, and other possible distractions are managed.

WHAT TO WEAR



Dress in solid colors like blue, gray, or yellow, if possible. Avoid stripes and patterns.

Dress appropriately from head to toe. Wearing shoes while attending a video interview or working from home helps get you in the right mindset.

Be prepared to stand up. During the interview, you may need to get up for some reason, such as to adjust lighting. You don't want to be caught wearing a suit jacket and tie or nice blouse with your sweatpants and tennis shoes.

TECH CHECK AND PRACTICE



Before the meeting, do a pre-check of audio and video. Most programs allow for this without actually signing into the video conference. If possible, connect via hard-line cable to the internet and be sure to have a phone and the number to call as a backup to video.



Establish a comfortable camera/eye contact.



Think of the camera as the person. Don't let your eyes wander or turn your body away.



Move your camera as close to the monitor as possible. People see you from the camera, not your screen, so look at the camera even if it does not feel natural. It can help to enlarge the screen of the person you are speaking with as much as possible – maybe even place a small post-it on your screen or near your camera to remind yourself to look in that direction.

BE MINDFUL OF YOUR PRESENCE



Refrain from side conversations, whispering, instant messaging, or checking your phone or email.

Keep the audio muted until the meeting begins. Know how to mute and unmute to handle unexpected interruptions like a cough, a sneeze, etc.

Call out off-camera actions. If you are taking notes, be sure to verbally acknowledge that you'll be doing so. This will avoid any misreading of your actions.

Talk naturally – clearly, slowly, and at a normal volume.

Act naturally – avoid too much gesturing, which can distract from what you are saying.

Don't interrupt people; wait for a natural break in the conversation, and be sure to offer pauses and natural breaks knowing that it takes a couple of extra seconds in this format for others to chime in.

Don't forget that you are on camera at all times even if you can't see others or the meeting hasn't officially begun. Mute and disable the camera, but assume you are always on regardless.

Be yourself. Smile and engage, just like you do in person.



Making a personal connection via video conference isn't impossible. It's just a bit more challenging.