Video Interview Tips

Given recent global developments, virtual job interviews have become increasingly common. It's erroneous to believe that these interviews require any less preparation than traditional face-to-face interviews. Indeed, there are unique challenges intrinsic to the video interview setting that need to be considered. Here at HireForce, we have compiled **11 key tips** to ensure you flourish in a virtual interview setting.

1. Test the Technology

Once you receive notification of your interview and the software that will be used, begin testing your technology. You will need to have a computer with a working camera, speakers, and a microphone. In addition, you need a strong internet connection. On that point, having both a WIFI connection and the ability to hotspot from your mobile device is recommended.

Both you and the interviewer are aware that technology can be temperamental so it's expected that you have considered what could go wrong in advance and taken steps to mitigate the risk of technological faults.

Your interview calendar invite or email link will indicate the video conferencing software to be used. It could be Microsoft teams, Skype, Zoom or an alternative system - all will have their own intricacies. Practice using this software with a family member or friend before the interview so that you're comfortable with adjusting volume, turning the camera on, blurring your background and so forth. Oftentimes it's better to download the desktop app rather than use the browser extension for a more secure connection so do this ahead of time. Furthermore, use a computer instead of a phone for the interview as it gives a more professional impression.

2. Have a Dress Rehearsal

Treat this as you would any other interview and practice. Recording yourself answering questions is one of the best ways to check for any recurring filler words and idiosyncrasies such as saying 'um' and 'like' too frequently or looking down repeatedly. It also will help you judge whether you're speaking too softly or too hastily. You need to appear confident, warm and relaxed on video but this can be practically impossible to judge without watching a recording of yourself.

3. Ensure Your Profile is Professional and Appropriate

In a traditional interview your first impression is made when you shake hands upon greeting the hiring manager. In a virtual interview the first impression is made from your account profile photo and username. It is vital that these are professional. It's advisable to create a separate account for the express purpose of interviewing particularly if your personal account is in any way linked to your social media accounts.

4. Consider Your Environment

In a traditional interview the environment is out of your control. You walk into an office building you have probably never been in before and you're told where to go. Whereas, in a virtual interview you are responsible for setting the scene. Consider what the hiring manager will see in frame. Try to remove distractions in the background such as photos as you want to keep the focus on yourself.

Consider which room is the quietest with the least distractions but also close enough to your WIFI router to ensure your signal is stable. Ensure those you live with are aware what time your interview begins so that they can limit their WIFI usage during this time and also to avoid accidentally disturbing your interview. Placing a sign on the door to remind them is also advisable.

Pay attention to the lighting. Ideally, you want to position yourself in front of a window if possible or with a lamp if not. Be wary that backlighting can result in you looking like a silhouette. Naturally, due to the connotations you want to avoid looking down at the interviewer. Stack books beneath your laptop so that the camera is at eye level. Place a glass of water on your desk in advance in case your voice gets horse. You don't want to have to excuse yourself from the table to get yourself a drink.

5. Create a Cheat Sheet

One of the advantages of a virtual interview is that you can have notes on your desk. Have your CV printed and any questions you wish to ask and place them off to the side. You may also want to consider printing prompts or key points. Add annotations to your CV as you don't want to be tempted to read directly from it. Hopefully, you'll find that you don't even need these supports but having them just in case may settle any nerves you have.

6. Dress Appropriately

You need to build a similar connection that you would make in person. For this reason, dressing professionally is a must. Just because the interview is taking place from the comfort of your own home does not mean you should dress casually. It may seem futile to wear business attire and not even leave your bedroom but it's about making a positive impression.

7. Log-in Early

It's customary and recommended to arrive to an in-person interview early and the same is true of virtual interviews. Ensure that you have logged in to the video call at least 10 minutes in advance. The interviewer will see you in the waiting room and admit you into the video call. Only have the software application you're using to conduct the interview open so there are no unwanted distractions. Similarly, you should ensure there are no scheduled updates and be

certain to turn off any notifications. Finally, ensure your laptop is plugged in and charging so that it doesn't lose power during your interview.

8. Don't be Passive

It can be harder to demonstrate attentiveness over a video call than it would be in person. Demonstrate active listening skills by nodding occasionally, making eye contact, smiling, and using other facial expressions.

9. Remain Conscious of Your Body Language

Looking directly at the camera is equivalent to making eye contact so be cognisant of just staring at the screen. If you get easily distracted by your own image on screen you can typically change the settings to just see the interviewer or if not, consider putting a post-it notes to block out the portion of the screen that your image encompasses. Remember to keep good posture and smile to convey confidence and enthusiasm.

Be wary of appearing lackadaisical or nonchalant. When you're at home the comfortable surroundings can create a false sense of security resulting in you doing something foolish such as checking your phone during the interview or unwittingly using profanities.

10. Remain Composed

Even with all the time in the world to prepare it is possible that something will go wrong on the day. Come to terms with this fact and prepare yourself for potential time lags. If your internet connection is disrupted and you are presented with a delay between the hiring manager speaking and you hearing them, do your best to avoid speaking over them. Wait until you are certain they have finished speaking and avoid long-winded responses.

It's important that if you do experience technical difficulties that you don't let them unnerve you. Keep calm as how you react when things don't go to plan will be noted by the interviewer.

Have backup technology at the ready. Having a mobile hotspot you can use if your internet connection is disrupted or even an alternative laptop will ensure you're prepared for any issue on the day. Provide your mobile number to the hiring manager in advance of the meeting in case you get disconnected at any point. At least this way you can continue the interview albeit not in the ideal circumstances.

11. Follow Up Afterwards

After the interview, send a concise email via your recruiter to thank the hiring manager for the opportunity. Mention that you enjoyed learning more about the role and the company and that you look forward to hearing from them. This small act will emphasise your interest in the position available and will further demonstrate your professionalism.