



PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWING ONLINE

Interviewing for a job has changed since the Covid-19 pandemic. Recruiters and jobseekers are going to have to adapt to the new way of doing things. Although we have always been taught how to conduct face-to-face interviews, we might lack knowledge regarding the tips and tricks of conducting interviews in front of our cameras. Here are some tips for the online interview process.

1. Make sure all the Technology is Working

Make sure the technology is working properly as the interview will not even get off the ground if you have a dodgy internet connection or are not familiar with the necessary programmes to communicate effectively with your potential employer. A virtual interview requires tools like a camera and microphone on your computer, a software programme such as Google Meets, MS Teams or Zoom and a reliable internet connection. Tip: At least a day before your virtual interview check all of your technology to ensure it works effectively and can be used to communicate effectively. In the 10 to 15 minutes before your interview check your internet connection, sign into the meeting a few minutes early, and turn on the sound and video to ensure everything is in working order in time for your conversation. Another tip: Use the laptop/PC speaker and microphone or discreet wired headphones that have an inbuilt microphone. Avoid Bluetooth headphones which can lose connectivity.

2. Set the Scene

Be conscious of your background. Try to choose a space that is clean and professional-looking so the interviewer can focus their attention on you and not what is around you. If you don't have a space like this you can also use a neutral virtual background. Place your computer on a stable surface like a table or desk instead of your lap. You might sit the laptop on a stack of books so that the camera is at face level to avoid unflattering angles. Make sure the lighting is bright. Ensure there are no interruptions and your phone is on silent. Ensure it is not noisy in the background even if this is hard to achieve if you live in a house with family or flatmates. Noise will definitely add to the stress and may distract your concentration. Set yourself up and be live online five minutes early.

Once you are all set up smile and try to relax. Remember the CV has done its job if you are invited to interview, so it is an opportunity to expand on what you know or can bring to the company. Bear in mind for most companies the interviewers are adapting as well to new ways of working.

3. Dress to Impress

It takes about 7 seconds to make a first impression. As you cannot shake hands, the first point of judgement becomes the way you are dressed, meaning that facade assumes a higher value. You only need to frame your face and the upper part of your bust, so establish that these parts are presentable.





Dress the same formal way you would if it were a face-to-face interview. Do not wear striped clothing, as the lines might look moving all around your outfit. Remember this is the first impression an interviewer will get of you. The formality of a remote interview can actually help you, as it not only makes you appear professional and excited about the opportunity, but it will also help make you feel more prepared and confident.

4. Prepare Properly – Research the Company and Prepare Interview Questions

In much the same sense as a conventional interview, it is all about preparation. It is important to know the role requirements, research the company, and be clear on the value that you would bring to the role.

Re/ interview questions - It will be important to anticipate the sort of questions you might be asked so you can prepare answers. There are many sample interview questions available online, so you should gather a bank of interview questions for yourself. Use the STAR framework to answer competency-based questions [see our Guide to Competency-based Interview Questions]. Preparing for interviews in this manner will give you confidence and help to alleviate nerves. Do not rely on a written script or post-its pinned around your screen that you can read from directly. Prepare so that you are able to have a natural conversation without clicking around or reading directly from paper, which can seem rehearsed and unnatural.

Tip: Practice your answers. Do some practice calls via Skype or Zoom with friends and family, and get feedback in relation to your eye contact, body language and audio. Some topical questions you might consider preparing answers for include how you handle your work-life balance in a pandemic. What's your work-from-home set-up like? Have you learnt any new skills in the past couple of months? You could talk about new hobbies you have picked up rather than focusing just on professional qualifications. Another tip: Keep a log of any questions which come up in interviews so you can use this information to prepare for the next one

5. Be Prepared to Ask Topical Questions

Prepare a couple of questions of your own to show you are engaged with the ethos of the Company as well as having a healthy curiosity as to how it all works. You could enquire about how the Company has changed since the pandemic struck. What have they learned as managers from the crisis, and how do they manage their teams? What are the strategic priorities of the organisation, and have these changed due to the crisis? How does the role you are applying for help in achieving them? You could ask the interviewer what the Company does for its employees, and how it supports them. How do they ensure employees are able to work in an adaptable and agile way in the future? What is their management style when leading hybrid teams, and how do they ensure the organisational culture is maintained when working in a hybrid way?

