Preparing for a Video Interview

Video interviews are a common means of selecting candidates for jobs these days. And why not? They're an efficient, cost-effective way to judge communication skills, professional appearance, and even proficiency with technology. But video interviews shouldn't be cause for nervousness, even if it's uncharted territory for you. Check out these tips and suggestions below to help you feel more comfortable and prepared for your next video interview.

1. ## Test Your Equipment Beforehand

Nothing starts an interview off on the wrong foot quite like having equipment or internet connection issues at the start of your scheduled interview. Take time in advance to ensure your camera is working properly, your internet connection is solid, and to familiarize yourself with the meeting software. Many of these programs require regular system updates, so make sure all updates are completed so none are required at the time of your interview. Once you get all of these components together, perform a test run to make sure the operation is flawless on your side. If your interview involves a presentation, take extra precaution by testing the screen share function as well.

2. ## Check Your Background

Be aware of what will show up in the camera shot, both behind and around you. Choose an area that will provide a clean, simple, and conservative background.

Note: If you have an all-day video interview with stretches of time between interviewers, TURN OFF YOUR CAMERA AND MUTE YOUR AUDIO during these down times. If an interviewer joins the call early or unexpectedly, you don't want to be caught unprepared or seen milling about, speaking with family members, checking your phone, taking a personal call between interviewers, etc.

3. ## Dress Appropriately

Don't let the casual feeling of interviewing from the comfort of your home fool you into dressing down. Dress just as you would for an in-person interview. And although it can be tempting to dress professionally only on the upper half of your body, we caution strongly against this. Dress professionally from head to toe, in the event an unforeseen circumstance might require you to stand up during the interview. Besides, dressing professional will help you to feel and act professional.

4. ## Close Off Outside Distractions

If you are conducting your video interview from a room in your home, such as your home office, do your best to close yourself off from distractions in the house. A ringing doorbell, a wandering or noisy pet, TV noise, a family member talking, a phone ringing, etc. Do whatever you can to minimize the risk of these distractions infiltrating your interview space.

5. ## Turn Off Your Cell Phone

Don't make the mistake of leaving a silenced cell phone on your desk. The vibration will get picked up by the microphone and cause a distraction. For the duration of your interview, turn your phone off or put in "do not disturb" mode, or remove it from the room completely.

6. <u>Minimize Distractions on Your Computer</u>

Distractions can come in many forms, so it's best to close out any other applications or programs running in the background on your computer. Also, closing out all other programs will help prevent your meeting application from running slow or lagging.

7. <u>Make Eye Contact</u>

A common pitfall of video interviews is to spend the entire interview looking at your screen instead of the camera itself. After all, it's only natural to want to see the face of the person you're speaking with. But try to alternate between looking at the camera and looking at the screen. A good tip is to treat the camera as the "eyes" of your interviewer, so when you're speaking to your interviewer, look directly at the camera to give them the feeling of virtual eye contact. This will help to establish a better connection between the two of you.

8. <u>Prevent Your Eyes From Wandering to Your Notes</u>

One disadvantage of a video interview versus a phone interview is that you lose the ability to keep your notes handy and refer to them often during the interview. With your face on screen, it will be even more noticeable to your interviewer if you are constantly staring down at notes. But hope is not completely lost! For important information or items you need help remembering, try adding Post-It notes to the side of your monitor or just above the camera, areas where it will be less obvious if your eyes stray.

9. <u>Now, Go Get That Job!</u>

Video interviews are common to our industry, but can be new to some. With these tips, no one should feel behind the curve any time they're invited for a video interview. It only takes a little practice and fine-tuning of your video interview skills to help you separate yourself from the rest of the candidate pool!

And don't forget to smile!