

Ace Your Virtual Interview

How prevalent are virtual interviews?

Almost 90% of employers are adopting Virtual Interviews as a result of COVID -19. Until further notice, companies like LinkedIn, Facebook, Amazon, and Google - along with many small and mid-sized companies and organizations - are not conducting in-person interviews.

3 key factors needed to create a positive impression:

Room | Technology | Interview Tips

4 important principles to keep in mind

1. Define your top three strengths. Consider what big picture challenges you'd like to tackle.
2. Focus on what you CAN control.
3. Become your own producer – the quality of the technology and how you use it, along with the room set up are as important as the quality of your interview.
4. Act as if you are meeting in person – *if you would not do it during an in-person interview, do not do it in a virtual interview.*

Remember, everything counts in an interview!

Room Set-Up: What is behind you?

- **Background**
 - Try to have a *neutral background*. Why? The focus of the interview should be on YOU and the content of what you are saying, not what is behind you.
 - Do not use a virtual background. (It may result in unnecessary technical issues.)
- **Lighting**
 - You want to be in a well-lit room. Relying on a ceiling light alone will create shadows and the room might still look dark. If possible, add a desk lamp on the right and left sides of your screen to balance the lighting and mitigate any glare and shadows.
 - Do a “tech check” with a friend or a member of the Career Connection Team to make sure you have minimized the shadows.

Technology

- **Use a laptop or desktop and not a phone**
 - Phones lack the same functionality as your laptop for most video conferencing platforms.
 - More importantly, using a mobile device can make you feel more casual, and this could come across negatively during the interview. In addition, interviewers can see you touching your phone screens during an interview, which also looks unprofessional.
- Do not ask if you can record the interview: *you would not do this during an in-person interview; therefore, it is also not appropriate during a virtual interview.*
- Test your mic, applications, and camera – do a “tech check” with a friend or a member of the Career Connection Team

- **Use a high-quality microphone**
 - The earbuds that come with your phone may work very well.
 - Relying on the computer mic may not be a good choice because it may pick up ambient noises or sounds.
- **Using the webcam on your laptop effectively**
 - Raise your laptop up using a stack of books or a box so you are **eye level** with the webcam (otherwise the interviewer is looking up your nose!)
 - Do your best to mimic how you sit in a face-to-face interview.

Interview Tips: Attire, Focus, Etiquette

Video interviewing is now the norm. Do not forget that **this is a formal interview** and therefore your appearance, surroundings, and dress should reflect that.

- **Dress the part as if you are in an in-person interview**
 - Wear solids and choose colors that work best with your skin tone and do not give you a ‘washed out’ appearance.
 - Avoid wearing stripes or complicated patterns, which create weird optical illusions on a video camera.
- **Focus: Where should you look?**
 - Look at the webcam (the dot at the top of your screen) and not at the screen so that you have the best eye contact– it is important to practice doing this prior to the interview. Practice with a friend or a member of the Career Connection Team. More practice = better presentation in a real interview.
 - Close any other applications and silence your notifications. You do not want things “dinging” during your interview.
- **Etiquette**
 - Avoid typing and multi-tasking. The interviewer will interpret this as an inability to focus and it will reflect poorly on you. Typing is also a distraction. Typing on a laptop or phone can easily be mistaken for multi-tasking.
 - In order to take notes – go “old school” with a notebook and pen. Simply tell the interviewer in the beginning of the interview “If I am looking down, I am just writing some notes.”
 - Remember – tech mishaps happen sometimes! Remain calm and remember the **3 F’s**: **Fix** it. **Forget** about it (don’t dwell on it later!). **Focus**.
 - Standing can definitely be done during both a phone interview and a virtual interview. It is always the best option for a phone interview because your energy levels are higher and it positively affects the way that you speak. The same can be true in a virtual interview – you would just need to practice and feel comfortable standing. If you stand during a virtual interview, watch out for ‘swaying’ and other “ticks.”
 - Take no more time to give your answer than you would during an in-person interview. Be aware that pauses feel longer on a virtual interview.

Practice! Practice! Practice! – The Career Connection Team is here to help!