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2021 Edition

VIDEO INTERVIEW HANDBOOK

Video Interview Handbook

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, video interviews have become a mainstay and an essential component of the hiring process for many jobs. Online interviews eliminate the need for travel and tend to be far less stressful than your normal interview.

Preparing for an online interview is similar to preparing for an in-person interview with a few small adjustments to accommodate your surroundings.

Video interviews today are being done through free software platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Cisco or Webex.

With the help of our expert recruiters, we have created this handbook to guide you through the process of getting set up and prepared for a video interview. We'll have you going into your interview calm, composed and entirely stress-free.

Video Interview Preparation

Fail to prepare, prepare to fail.



Software

Depending on the company you are dealing with, they will be using different applications to carry out the interview. Normally they will email you the link in advance and specify what software you'll require, if you are unsure what platform you require, just ask. The most common video software apps used are Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Webex, Google Hangouts and Cisco. It is important that you familiarise yourself with the application in advance and run some test-runs with a family member or friend (or yourself).

Webcam

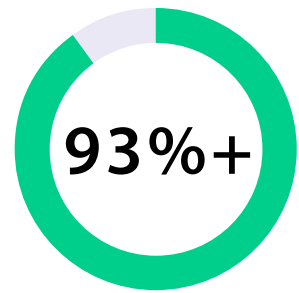
Most laptops come with an in-built webcam. You may need to grant access to the application you are using to use your webcam (there will usually be a prompt for this). However, if you are on a PC or don't have a webcam on your laptop, you will need to purchase one. It is a major red flag for recruiters if they cannot see your face during the interview.

Once you have your webcam, it is important that it is correctly positioned. The interviewer should be able to see your full head right down to your shoulders. It is vital you avoid your webcam cutting off your face. Testing is once again imperative here. If your camera is too low on your laptop and is cutting off bits of your face, it is a good idea to stack some books underneath. The last thing you want is to be perched down looking at your laptop throughout the interview, you may leave with a good interview, but you will also leave with a bad neck. Make sure you are comfortable.

Audio

Most laptops have an in-built microphone and they tend to be of decent quality. What you must remember is the in-built microphone can pick up the sounds when you move or shift in your chair. Avoid erratic movements and background noise if you plan to use the microphone.

Alternatively, you can use a headset. If you buy the right headset, they come with mufflers on the mic which can make your voice sound very clear and eliminate any background noise.



Over 93% of interviews in 2021 have been video interviews.

*As of March 2021

Video Background

We have seen many companies out there recommend that you should have a fully clear, if not blurred backgrounds. We disagree. The reality is, it is your home, and your personality should come across in the interview. Obviously, have a clean background. It should not look messy but do not hide your personality either.

In the thousands of interviews we have done in the past year we have seen some super interesting backgrounds such as bookshelves, framed jerseys, portraits and drawings. What you may find is the interviewer may ask about something in your background before the interview begins. Talk about an easy icebreaker!

Tip:

Avoid using Phones and Tablets for interviews. The microphone quality tends to be weaker and the smaller screen does not produce a perfect output on your interviewer's PC on the other end. Notifications may also keep popping up if you are using your phone which will only distract you from the objective at hand.

Lighting

It is important to adjust the lights in the room to suit where you'll be sitting during the interview. If you appear dark or dim on your screen, it is probably a good idea to bring in an extra light source such as a desk lamp or try and adjust the lights in the room.

Tip:

Have a glass of water by your side during the interview. Even the most confident of people get dry throats.



Internet Connection

When its time for your interview, its best you close all tabs on your browser and ensure there is not downloads or updates running on your computer.

If you have family in the house and they are streaming or playing the PlayStation that may cause a loss of quality to your internet connection.

Tip:

Print out your CV and any other notes you may need. Have them by your side during the interview. If you are going to have to share your screen at any point, make sure the documents are open and ready to go. You will look unorganised if you have to start searching for files during the interview.



Video Interview Checklist

On the day of the interview, go through this checklist as you are setting up.

- Ensure that you will not be interrupted. You can do this by closing/locking the door of the room you are in or simply alerting other people living with you that you cannot be disturbed.
- Clean and clear your desk. Only keep a notepad & pen, your CV and a glass of water on your desk.
- Double check your webcam is working and clean.
- Double check your audio is working.
- Make sure your lighting is correct.
- Close all tabs on your browser and any unnecessary applications.
- Check your internet connection and ensure that you are not downloading anything in the background.
- Turn your phone on silent.
- Ensure your background is clean.



If Things Go Wrong

If someone enters the room unexpectedly

If a family member, housemate or even a pet walks into the room during your interview, just apologise to the interviewer, ask for a couple of seconds and then turn off your microphone and camera and deal with the interruption. When the unexpected visitor has left the room and you are confident that they will not return, turn back on your camera and microphone and resume the interview.

The key is not to panic if an interruption occurs. Recruiters are well used to interruptions and they have become a normal part of interviews from your own home. Our own recruiters have seen it all from dogs jumping on tables in the backgrounds to roaring kids entering the room, it is called parts and parts of life.

If your video or audio stops working

Before the interview begins you should ask the interviewer for their phone number so that if you run into any technical difficulties, you will be able to call that number. If it reaches that point and you have to ring them, ask if you can continue the interview by phone or if you can reschedule.



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What to wear

The simple answer is to dress professionally. You should dress as you normally would for an in-person interview. Do not even think or risk dressing from just the trousers up. From the shoes to the shirt, dress professionally. Our own recruiters have witnessed people only dress half professionally meaning smart-casual from the waist up and looking like they are heading to a football match from the waist down.

Dressing appropriately all over will focus yourself on the task at hand. What you wear will communicate the level of professionalism to which you hold to the interviewer, so do not take shortcuts.



Body Language

Eye Contact

One of the unfortunate setbacks of doing a video interview is the challenge of making eye contact. You will need to look into the webcam, not your screen, when you are speaking. Remember to smile and sit up straight throughout the interview as they are the only body language cues the interviewer will be able to spot.

Hand Gestures

Using hand gestures when you speak will make you come across as confident. If you have ever watched a teacher or politician up close, you will notice how much they use and move their hands when they are explaining a point. In fact, hand gestures are also linked to speech and by gesturing while you speak, it will actually help you form clearer thoughts. You will come across as more articulate and more confident. Avoid fidgeting with your fingers when the interviewer is speaking to you as it can be very distracting.

It's Not A Race

What we see a lot in interviews is candidates speaking at a million miles an hour to try and showcase their knowledge. There is no need to do this. The main thing that will impress an interviewer is your articulation. The best way to be articulate is to take your time answering questions. Do not be afraid to pause for a second or two before answering a question that is posed to you. An interviewer will appreciate a clearly structured answer over a million bits of information thrown at them every day of the week. Taking a slight pause when making a point also shows you are confident and in control.

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