

Strategies for Supporting Advancement and Development

Thoughts *for* Advancement

The Video Interview

Tips and Tricks.



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The Video Interview

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The Video Interview – Tips and Tricks

Try revisiting all of your old VHS tapes and have a look at yourself. Every pore, every extra pound, weird coloration --- do we really look like that? Think of extending the concept to a video interview, and it won't take long to develop a little apprehension, even dread.

Best not to worry, since you still have the same skills, ability and job history that you would bring to a conventional interview. You just have to work the process a little differently.

All of the same interview techniques and prep work still apply. Make sure you do your homework, study the organization you're interested in etc.

Even though it's a video interview, you still want to bring copies of your resume and other relevant materials. These interviews take place at a business location, and if someone on the other end needs a copy of something, it's easy to fax it to them immediately. Helps demonstrate your preparation.

Get there 15 minutes to half an hour early.

You'll typically be in a room with 2 monitors, one with the hiring organization's staff and a second monitor where you'll be able to see yourself. This can all seem a little surreal at the start, but keep your confidence up.

There's usually a technician present. Don't be afraid to ask them to try adjusting the lighting in the room to achieve better color definition for transmission. It's surprising what a minor adjustment in lighting can do to improve skin tones and other colors. If the room has a window, adjust the blinds and try to sit where you can take advantage of the most natural light. You want to be well lit, but not to the point of glare.

Sit down and review the camera angle and amount of zoom. Remember that an hour or more of just your face is not necessarily the best way to present yourself, since it doesn't show any variety to the viewer on the other end. The field of view should be large enough to allow you to use hand gestures and other body movements, but not so far back that the viewers have a difficult time seeing your face.

Adjust the angle of the camera so that you're centered in the monitor. You don't want to have the top of your head cut off.

Understand where the camera is, and how to make "eye contact" with the interviewer. Try not to be distracted by the monitor you are viewing yourself on, since every time you look at it you will lose eye contact and be presenting a profile view of yourself. (Which depending on your profile could be good or bad.)

It's instinctive for us to want to look at the monitor with the interviewer to try and get a sense of body language, but remember, every time you do this, you're also breaking eye contact since you're not looking directly into the camera. Actors are taught never to look directly into the camera, but you should in an interview.



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Eye contact is more difficult if there is more than one person at the other end. Remember to acknowledge them by name, and use hand gestures towards where they may be sitting.

Even with fast bandwidth, there are slight delays between the synchronization of sound and actions, and this differential can be more pronounced for overseas interviews. Don't let it throw you. Try and be concise in your answers, and when anticipating a question, pause a little longer than usual to help compensate for the delays. It's like working with walkie talkies. The delay is shorter, but it's not the same as a normal 2 way conversation.

When answering questions don't run on too long. Although this might be more acceptable in a face to face interview, the video interview may be recorded. Long answers can get quickly stepped through with the fast forward button.

Most of us are aware of standard interview etiquette. Should you ask if the interview is being recorded? Probably an important consideration because of the confidential nature of information being exchanged. Are they simultaneously broadcasting the interview to other staff members? This may be more common where participants are geographically disbursed. It probably doesn't hurt to ask if you think either one of these situations might be important in your consideration of your interactions with the interviewer.

Try and simulate the conversation the best way you can. Technical difficulties can throw us all off, but if you're having them, they're also having them on the other end so the playing field is more level than you might think. Pretend you're sitting across the table from the interviewer.

Try not to read notes, since you typically look down when you do, and this doesn't look good on camera.

Unfortunately, most of us have little experience in trying to appear professional in front of a camera. As organizations work at lowering costs, video interviews will become more commonplace. It doesn't hurt to do a little practicing. Practicing helps you control your body language, facial expressions and other characteristics.

It helps to practice timing. If you and a friend have Internet access and web cams, it's a good way to start. Most web cam software has the ability to record sessions, which you can use to further evaluate your performance. Practicing this way also prepares you very well for in person interviews.

What to wear. Just wear what you usually would. Consider lighting and the role it plays. Conservative colors work better than bright ones. Do a search on the Internet for video recording tips and colors so you can get a better idea of what works well technically.

Don't be afraid of getting "made up" for the session. Actors do it all the time and a good facial and makeup job can do wonders for your on camera appearance. It's worth the effort.

Don't forget to thank the technician and other staff. They may end up being an important contact with the interviewer, and after all, you want to leave everyone with the best impression.

Hardly our "15 minutes of fame", but for most of us, just as important. Be confident and remember that the video interview is only one part of the overall hiring process which can be much more



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involved. It's one of your feet in the door, and once again the reason you're there in the first place is because of your background and experience.

You won't be the only candidate going through all of this, and the others will be facing the same challenges.

Now, just sit back and wait for the phone to ring.



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