

Steps to success for your

VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

01 Test your technology beforehand

At least a day before your virtual interview, check all of your technology to ensure it works effectively. In the 10 minutes before your interview, check your internet connection and sign in to the video or phone meeting the HR representative or hiring manager has provided. Turn on the sound and video to ensure everything is in working order in time for your conversation.

02 Limit distractions

While testing your technology, determine where to take the interview. Find a room with optimal lighting, preferably near a window or a blank wall to guarantee you're the focal point of the conversation. Try to place your computer on a table or desk instead of your lap or couch. Make sure to tidy up your surroundings. Once settled, eliminate all distractions. Turn off the TV, silence your cell phone, and close any nearby windows to muffle neighborhood traffic. Tell people you are sharing space with about the area you'll be using for your interview, the time of your interview, and that you and your quiet space will be off-limits during that time.

03 Wear professional attire

In a virtual interview, you should dress the same as you would in a face-to-face interview. Doing so not only makes you appear professional and excited about the opportunity, but it will also make you feel more prepared and confident. If you're unsure, business casual is a good standard to follow.

04 Use professional body language

You can't firmly shake a hiring manager's hand or as easily exude enthusiasm via video. But what you can do is monitor your body language. The main way to communicate confidence is to sit up straight, smile, and keep the camera at eye level. Research shows that employers are more likely to remember what you said if you maintain eye contact, so keep your focus on the camera when talking, not on the image of the hiring manager.

05 Prepare in advance

You want to appear focused and ready to answer any questions without the help of the internet. Research the company ahead of time and jot down notes for easy reference. Print out a copy of your resume, so that you don't forget key talking points. It's also best to come prepared with answers to common interview questions. Avoid memorizing each response, so you don't sound overly rehearsed. Instead, write some high-level thoughts down on Post-it Notes that you can stick to your computer. You should be prepared to ask the interviewer questions as well.

06 Build rapport

Establishing rapport is important in any business relationship because it allows you to separate yourself from other candidates by building a personal connection with the interviewer. When communicating virtually, it's still necessary to find ways to establish rapport. You can do this by being prepared to talk about a common interest, asking how your interviewer's experience has been with virtual interviews or by finding some other neutral topic with which to learn more about your interview.

07 Be authentic

When interviewing virtually, you have the rare opportunity to speak in a relaxing, familiar environment and show the interviewer who you are and why you're the best person for the job. Recruiters will look for how you express yourself to understand whether you are a good fit for the company. Use tools such as your body language, facial expressions and interview preparations to convey your confidence and personality as it relates to the position.

08 Follow up

Within 24 hours of the interview, send an individual thank you email to everyone you met. Not only will it show you value their time, but it provides you the opportunity to resell yourself and express the unique strengths you bring to the role, or share any talking points you forgot to address. Just keep the email concise; you want your note to leave a lasting impression, not immediately end up in the trash.

Ultimately, the key to acing a virtual interview is proper preparation. From ensuring your technology is working to conducting research before the meeting, sitting down at your computer poised and ready for any and all questions will help set you apart from other applicants.