



one community now

CONNECTIONS

EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS

Effective Remote Interviews



A growing number of companies are using remote interviews to screen job applicants. Whether you're participating in an in-person or remote interview, the goal is the same — to make a positive impression that earns you a subsequent interview or even the job. Remote interviews do, however, present some unique challenges, including use of technology, management of settings, and the ability to effectively show enthusiasm and interest.

This workshop covers:

- **Remote Interview Overview**
- **Preparing for Success**
- **Phone Interviews**
- **Video Interviews**
- **Following Up**

Remote Interview Overview

In today's fast-paced, digital world, many preliminary interviews are done remotely. This allows hiring managers to quickly eliminate candidates and create a "short list" of high interest potentials who are invited for a second face-to-face interview. As a candidate, you should still treat remote interviews as your opportunity to make a great first impression.



What to Expect in a Remote Interview

1. The interviewer will ask basic questions about your professional life.
2. The interviewer will expect your focus, so eliminate all distractions.
3. You and the interviewer will participate in back and forth dialogue, so be prepared to listen.
4. The interviewer will ask some of the standard job interview questions.

Prepare for Success

You should prepare for a remote interview as you would for an in-person interview. Research the company, their brand, their social media presence and their mission and be prepared to incorporate that information into your answers. Print out your resume, the job description, and any notes or questions gathered during your research. This information should be readily available for your reference during the interview.

Know what questions you would like to ask the interviewer and know how your background and skills will be a great fit for this company. Make sure you get rest before the interview and set aside the time to prepare prior to your scheduled interview time.

Effective Remote Interviews

Eliminate All Distractions

In order to be effective in your remote interview, you need to focus completely on the interview. This means you must intentionally eliminate all distractions from the room. Turn off the television. Even keeping the television on mute can be a distraction, so it is best to just turn it off. Silence your cell phone and background music. Make sure to get rid of any distracting sounds that could possibly take your focus away from the interview or interviewer.



Find a place where you can sit for your interview which is comfortable and where all of your materials can be spread out and at hand. It is preferable to use a desk or a table and chair. Do not slouch or lie down on a couch. Do not try to multitask during the interview. Put the dogs outside and get someone to watch the kids. It is critical that you are fully focused and professional from "Hello" to "Goodbye."

Dress the Part

The way you dress can change the way you think and act. In fact, it can change your entire attitude and level of confidence. When you are dressed casually, you give off a casual vibe. This may impress your potential employer. To give off a professional vibe during your remote interview, you should dress professionally. Give yourself enough time in the morning to brush your teeth, do your hair and makeup, and get yourself up and put together before your interview. For video interviews, make sure that the outfit you choose looks good on camera, and against the background of the room you will be in. Your outfit shouldn't blend into the wall.



Effective Remote Interviews

Actively Listen

In order to demonstrate that you have good communication skills, make sure you *actively* listen to what the interviewer is saying. Actively listening entails letting the interviewer guide the conversation. You will want to answer the questions asked but be sure to not go on and on. Do not dominate the conversation. When the interviewer starts to ask a question, do not stop listening and immediately start thinking of your answer but give them your undivided attention. Make sure you completely understand the question before answering it. Incorrectly answering a question or answering the wrong questions conveys that you are not a skilled communicator. Do not interrupt the interviewer. Wait until they finish their questions, then add in some details of the question in your answer. For example:

Interviewer: *"Why do you want to work here?"*

Candidate: *"I would love to here at X company because _____."*

Make sure to take your time in answering questions and **enunciate** your responses. If the connection isn't very strong, it is even more important that you refrain from mumbling so you can be heard well.

Phone Interviews

Tone is Everything

When you interview with someone over the phone, the interviewer is not able to read your body language. Therefore, you will need to project your confidence and capability audibly. This also means you will need to show your enthusiasm for the position right from the beginning of the interview.



Start the call by thanking the interviewer for taking the time to meet with you. You should be smiling while you are talking throughout the interview and your tone should be warm and upbeat. While the interviewer cannot see your smile, the tone of your voice will be friendly.

Video Interviews

Test Your Tech



Before your interview, it is best practice to find out what technology the company will be using. There are a lot of different video conference options such as Skype, Apple's FaceTime, Google's Hangouts, Zoom, SparkHire, HireVue and more. Once you find out which method will be used for your interview, test your camera setup and internet connection to make sure that it works properly.

Run some test chats with friends to make sure that you are being heard well and that there are no problems with the set up. Your voice should come through without any echoes, hums, or buzzing noises. If the sound quality is poor, you should consider investing in a headset microphone. It is better to wear a headset microphone than to have poor sound quality detract from how you are perceived by your interviewer.

Note that some cameras will have a transmission delay. You should be aware of this when you run a test to find out if you need to give the interviewer a couple of additional seconds to respond.

Prepare the Room

Part of your setup process is positioning where your camera will go. The computer and the camera should be set on a flat and level surface. This will allow you to move freely without bumping your equipment and ruining your set up. Set up your camera to frame your face and chest, roughly in line with your heart and about a hand's width above your head. This will ensure that you are visible, but not overcrowding the video. Be mindful of what is in the background of the video. Remove anything that is not professional and make sure that your outfit works well with the background. Make necessary adjustments prior to your interview.

Effective Remote Interviews

Play with different lighting sources, orientations and strengths to ensure that you look healthy and friendly. The lighting direction may cast shadows under your eyes and be unflattering. You want your skin tone to appear natural. You may need to make adjustments to your camera settings as well.



Outfit Considerations for Video Interviews

Video interviews require additional considerations. Do not only dress on the top. You do not want to accidentally show your interviewer that you are wearing shorts or pajamas on the bottom. Avoid large plaids and prints that may be overemphasized on the computer screen. Consider colors or pastels instead of white because white may cause a glare. If you decide to wear white, add a dark jacket to cut down on a possible glare.

Avoid heavy or sparkly jewelry as it may catch the light and create a glare. Avoid lots of red tones as they can “bleed” on camera. If you wear glasses, you need to be aware of the possible glare that may hide your eyes or reflect off of your computer monitor. Adjust the angle of the monitor, or remove your glasses if possible to eliminate any chance of having an issue during the interview.

If you wear makeup, test the makeup you will apply to see how it looks on the camera. You may need to apply slightly more or slightly less to look good on camera.

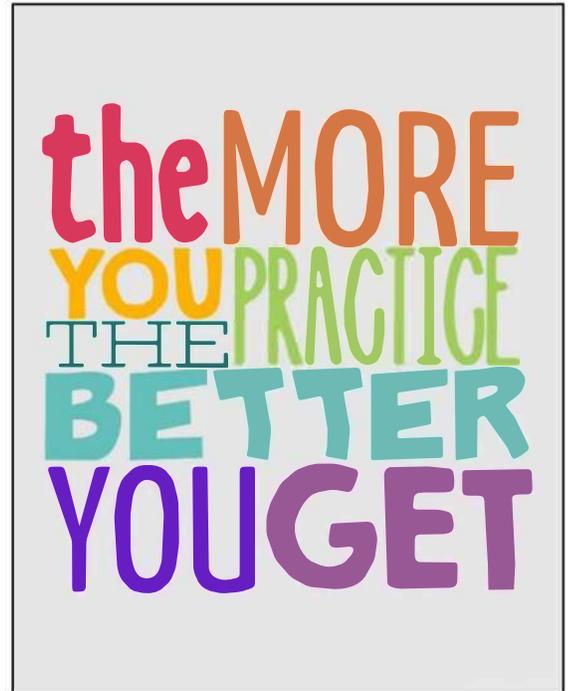
Effective Remote Interviews

Rehearse Your Interview

Practicing your interview skills on camera is a great way to get feedback. Have a mock interview with a friend when you are testing your equipment to find out how you will appear on camera. Provide them with a list of prepared questions that you expect to be asked and have them run through them with you to review your answers. Get comfortable talking to the camera and find a position where you look the most confident and professional.

Be Aware of Your Body Language

Make sure to sit up straight and make eye contact. Focus on the webcam, not the monitor, which will give the interviewer the impression that you are looking directly at them. Lean forward and be engaged in the conversation.



One-Way Video Interviews

A new method of screening applicants is a One-Way Video Interview. Typically, this is done at the beginning of the interview process as a replacement or supplement for the phone interview. In this type of remote interview, applications are asked to record themselves responding to a series of provided interview questions with a deadline to submit the recording. The employer will watch the recording at a later time.

This type of interview can be beneficial to both the employer and the job seeker. For the employer, this process is more efficient as it reduces the manpower hours needed to schedule and conduct interviews. It also cuts down on follow up calls from the applications since they do not know who will be reviewing the recording. For the job seeker, this can be beneficial as it allows you to review questions and prepare your responses in advance.

Effective Remote Interviews

However, the disadvantages can be significant. The applicant loses the opportunity to interact with a real person and collect information about the employer. In many cases, the task of using unfamiliar technology may cause additional stress to an already stressful process.

Top Tips for Success in a One-Way Interview

1. Read and follow the instructions with care.

When you are invited to interview, you will receive an email with a URL that will take you to appropriate website for participation. There may be ID and password information which you will need. Have that information available and ready.

Following the instructions carefully allows you to not only be more successful, but also demonstrates your ability to work carefully and thoroughly at a task. Glossing over the instructions may disqualify you even before the process begins, so avoid making any assumptions and read over the directions carefully.

There will be a specific deadline to submit your answers. You will have the freedom to record your answers at your convenience before the deadline. The ability to pick and choose the best time for you to do the interview is one of the benefits of this process. Choose a time that works best for you, keeping in mind the deadline date. Above all, do not miss the deadline!

2. Ensure you have and can use the right technology.

Find out from the interviewer what kind of devices you need to use for the interview. Typically, a computer webcam with a microphone and speaker you will make a better impression as the picture and sound is superior and clearer. But if that equipment is not available, you may use your smartphone. In either case, prior to the deadline, make sure that your devices work and that you are comfortable using it.



Effective Remote Interviews

3. Do your homework.

As in any interview, research the company, know the job description and highlight where you meet or surpass the position requirements. Knowing the company's mission and goals and how you align with those is a surefire way of impressing the hiring manager.

4. Have your answers prepared.

If the potential employer gives you the questions in advance, then use the available time to prepare your answers. Take the time to write out your answers and remember to tell stories that give clear and concise examples of your accomplishments. If they don't give you the questions in advance, then be prepared to answer the standard interview questions. Focus on the challenges you have faced in the past, what actions you took to successfully face them and how the results that you attained benefitted your company and team.

As you are writing out your answers, practice speaking your answers. Your responses should appear natural. This means not only memorizing your answers, but practice saying them out loud as many times as it takes for you to own them. If you have a time limit for your interview, have a clock near by when you are preparing your answers. Make sure to allow yourself enough time to answer each question without rushing through them.

5. Project Success

Just as you would for any remote interview, choose a quiet location where you can focus. Eliminate all distractions and control the lighting and background. Dress from head to toe, including styling your hair and makeup. Avoid any distracting prints or colors and reflective or noisy jewelry. Keep the focus on you and your answers.

When you are answering the questions, watch your body language, sit up straight and lean into the conversation. Speak clearly and loud enough to be heard. When you speak, speak to the camera, not the screen. This gives the appearance of talking with the interviewer eye to eye. Practicing will help you feel more comfortable and overcome issues like fidgeting. A good idea is to record yourself as you practice so that you can identify any problem areas prior to the actual interview recording.

Following Up

Whichever method of remote interview in which you are participating, the end of the interview is similar to a face to face interview. Thank the interviewer for their time and express your interest in hearing from them regarding the next steps. If you have not yet met the interviewer, this would also be a good time to express your interest in meeting with them face to face.

"Thank you once again for the taking the time out of your day to have this conversation with me. I know that based on my skills and qualifications, I would be a wonderful addition to your organization. I look forward to the next steps in the hiring process and meeting you in person to continue our discussion."

If you have the name and contact info for the hiring manager or recruiter, send them a thank you email or handwritten note. This extra touch helps you stand out and will bring your name back to the mind of the interviewer later.

