

8 Skype Interview Tips: Ace Your Virtual Job Interview



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Know What You Need to Succeed When a Firm Handshake Isn't Possible: 8 Skype Interview Tips

Online Job Interviews More Common Than Ever

Organizations interested in reaching a diverse applicant pool are finding it easier than ever to search well beyond their backyards for ideal employees. Thanks to technology, a growing number of companies are using virtual interview software and applications to screen the field of contenders without spending loads of time and money on travel. A virtual interview allows employers and candidates to “meet” and interact using video, instant messaging programs, and web-conferencing services. More and more, people are looking for Skype interview tips to help them ace their virtual interview.

Whether you're participating in an in-person or virtual interview your goal is the same — to make a lasting impression that earns you a subsequent interview. Yet virtual interviews present unique challenges, including use of technology, management of setting, and the ability to effectively show enthusiasm and interest, sell your qualifications, and send the right “vibe” in the absence of in-person interaction.

This article shares eight Skype interview tips that will help you navigate the virtual interview, putting you in the best light instead of making you look like a deer in headlights.

8. Get Your Technology in Order

Be sure the technology being used for the virtual interview is installed and working before your meeting.

Test the Internet connectivity, as well as the microphone and camera to ensure you'll be able to proceed without a hitch. Technology glitches on the day of the interview send the wrong impression, casting doubts on your interest in the job, your technological savvy, and your ability to problem solve.

Also, try to avoid jokes about the online part of your job interview. Don't talk about how weird or surreal it is to interview with someone virtually, because it makes you look inexperienced. Especially if the job is in a technical field. In a nutshell, act like you've been there before.

7. Prepare Your Environment

If possible, position your computer and webcam so there's a blank wall in back of you. If that's not possible, manipulate the background so it appears you are in a professional setting. Think bookshelves in the background, rather than your unmade bed or vintage Cheryl Tiegs poster.

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Turn off the television, radio, or other noise before beginning, and make sure pets and children are situated so they don't make unannounced — and unappreciated — guest appearances.

6. Dress for Success

Dress for a virtual interview the same way you would for an in-person interview. If you're unsure what attire the situation calls for, ask the human resources professional what is appropriate. Avoid wearing bright or distracting colors, or jewelry that is remarkable.

You want the interviewer to focus on you, not on your outfit.

5. Position Yourself to Win

Because you won't have the benefit of a face-to-face connection, your body language becomes even more obvious — and important to manage — in a virtual interview.

Sit up straight, maintain the illusion of eye contact by looking at the webcam and not at the image on your computer screen, and don't slouch, yawn, or fidget. Some virtual interview software programs allow the employer to rewind, meaning bad moments can be viewed over and over again.

4. Go for a Practice Run

Enlist the help of a trusted friend or family member — someone who will be honest with you — and ask them to run through a mock interview with you using the virtual interview technology. In addition to testing the technology, your trusted advisor can tell you whether you are adequately seen and heard, how the lighting is, how you appear on the camera, and whether you come off as professional, prepared, enthusiastic, and interested.

At the very least this should ease your mind about how you look and sound, giving you the freedom to focus on the things that really matter.

3. Show AND Tell

During in-person meetings, an interviewer may get a sense of how a person will fit into an organization based simply on their presence and the "vibe" they throw off. Not so in virtual interviews.

It's extra important to do some research on both the company and the job, and tell the interviewer in detail why your qualifications, experience, and skill set makes you deserving of a second interview.

Because the miles between you won't allow the interviewer to "feel" your enthusiasm, make sure you convey interest using voice intonation and facial expression.

2. Take Your Time, Get It Right

Practice managing your responses to potential questions so they are clear, succinct, and highlight excellent verbal communication skills.

Eliminate "um" and "uh" from your sentences, and pay strict attention to grammar. If you are sharing a screen and/or asked to type during your virtual interview, make sure you type carefully and read your answers before hitting send. No grammatical errors or typos!

1. Be Yourself

Think of virtual interviews as the "speed dating" of the work world.

Organizations want to get a quick sense of who you are, so they can determine if they will advance you to the next round. Instead of trying to be the person you think the interviewer is looking for, be yourself. Being true to yourself is the best way to highlight what you can offer, and will make it easier for the organization to determine if you're a good fit.

Don't Sweat It

For most organizations, the virtual interview serves as the first step in the job recruitment process, allowing the company to cast a wide net, screen potential applicants, and narrow the field to the most qualified candidates. It's easy to get thrown for a loop at the prospect of interviewing for a potentially life-changing job from your living room without ever actually meeting another human being, but rest assured there are ways to stay calm and in control.

Follow the tips outlined in this article, and you'll be that much closer to a coveted in-person meeting and an eventual job offer.