

## **Tips for a Successful Virtual Interview:**

There are also things you can do during the Virtual interview to make sure you are professional:

Download the software at least a few days in advance of the interview.

Create a professional username. So people can search for you by your first and last name. Make sure you don't use any unprofessional nicknames in your name. Your best bet is to use your first name and last name, first initial and last name, or some similar variation.

Do a test call or two with your friends or family. Make sure you can easily make and answer a call. Check to see that your microphone and camera work. Practice getting comfortable looking at the camera for long periods of time.

Adjust the lighting. Be sure you have enough lighting to avoid any heavy shadows. However, make sure the lighting is not too bright either because that can wash you out or even blind the interviewer. You can troubleshoot lighting issues during your practice interview.

Check the background. While you are the focus of the video, remember that the interviewer will also see whatever is behind you. Before the interview, select your backdrop. Pick a bare wall to ensure there are no distractions or colour clashes with your attire. You may also want to take advantage of a feature called background blur. You can turn it on in your settings. It will blur your background so that the main focus is your face.<sup>3</sup>

Check the sound. During your practice call, check that your audio is working properly. If you need to be in a public space, find the quietest area and be sure to wear a headset to help block out background noises. At home, you'll also want to be in a quiet place, far from sirens, kitchen noises, barking pets, and so on.

Test everything again an hour or two before the interview. Make sure the microphone and camera work to ensure everything is in order.

Know who is contacting whom. Before the interview, make sure that you know whether you are supposed to reach out to the interviewer or vice versa. If you are supposed to reach out, ask for their name ahead of time.

## **Dress to Impress:**

Just because you are interviewing in a casual setting does not mean your attire should match your surroundings. Wear what you would wear to an in-person interview. This will help you feel more confident as well.

### **Bring Notes, Paper, and a Pen:**

It's useful to have a few brief bullet points in front of you about what you want to highlight during the interview. Sometimes, conversations can go in unexpected directions, and it can be easy to forget your talking points. This way, you can scan your notes without losing direct contact with the interviewer.

However, make sure to practice answering interview questions in advance, so that you don't stare down at your paper. Remember that eye contact is important.

Keep blank paper and a pen handy to jot down anything you'd like to comment on later in the conversation.

### **Avoid Interruptions:**

If you live with other people and are doing the interview in your home, tell everyone you live with not to interrupt you during the interview. Try to keep pets corralled in another room, too.

### **Exit Your Other Applications:**

Another way to focus is to exit out of any other applications on your computer. You don't want any pop-up windows distracting you during the interview. As with any interview, you'll want to make sure that your phone is on silent too. Now's not the time to get alerts about emails or social media posts or to have the phone buzz with a text or call.

### **Smile and Focus:**

In many ways, a Skype/WebEx/Teams interview is just like any other interview. For example, whether you are interviewing in person or virtual, remember to smile!

Smiling will ensure that you look engaged and enthusiastic about the position you are interviewing for. Remember to focus your eyes on the camera—not on the person's face—to make it look as if you're making direct eye contact. Scanning the room or looking away from the camera too much can make you appear untrustworthy or indifferent. The interviewer deserves your full attention, so stay focused and friendly. Smiling can also help you remain calm.

You might also keep a glass of water handy in case your throat gets dry. However, don't keep it too close to your computer—you don't want to spill and have a technical malfunction!

## **Be Aware of Your Body Language**

You do not want your interviewer to assume that his or her screen has frozen at any point during the interview. Therefore, make sure your body language expresses that you are engaged:

- As the other party speaks, subtly nod your head to express your understanding or agreement.
- And as you speak, lean forward and use subtle hand gestures to add enthusiasm to what you are saying. But don't overdo it.
- To avoid looking blurry on screen, don't make any dramatic hand gestures or nod your head too quickly.
- Also, be sure to sit up straight. This will not only make you look more professional, but it will also help you feel more confident.

## **Don't Panic if Technology Fails:**

- With any technology, there is the chance of a glitch. When you start the interview, you might want to make sure the person can see and hear you. If anything goes wrong during the interview, don't panic. Remain calm and friendly. You might suggest hanging up and trying the video call again.
- Make sure you have the person's email address or phone number so you can contact them in case you completely lose each other.