

PREPARING FOR A VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

1. TEST YOUR EQUIPMENT

As soon as you have a date and time for a virtual interview, test your equipment. Check your internet connectivity, and confirm your camera and microphone are working properly. If you are experiencing problems with getting a clear picture or having issues with the sound, you might need to buy a mini webcam with a built-in microphone. On the day of your interview, test your equipment and internet connection again. Fumbling around with your audio or lighting during the call, may give the interviewer a reason to question whether you're the right candidate for the job.

2. FIND AN INTERVIEW SPACE AND MINIMIZE ANY DISTRACTIONS

Determine where to take the interview. Find a room with good lighting, preferably near a window, or a blank wall to guarantee you're the focal point of the conversation. Wherever you sit, tidy up your surroundings. Having a tidy space is a good indicator to employers that you are a detail-oriented and organized individual. Once you've selected an interview spot, eliminate all distractions. Turn off the TV, silence your cell phone, and close any nearby windows to muffle neighborhood traffic.

3. BE PREPARED

Research the company ahead of time and jot down notes for easy reference. Also print out a copy of your resume, so that you don't forget key talking points.

Here are some common interview questions:

- Why are you interested in a position with our company?
- What do you have to offer our company?
- What do you know about our company?
- What are your biggest strengths/weaknesses?
- What do you consider to be your biggest professional achievement?
- Tell me about a challenge at work and how you dealt with it.
- What are your future career goals?
- Why are you leaving your current role?

4. PRACTICE, DON'T MEMORIZE

You don't want to sound robotic throughout your interview—whether answering or asking questions, or giving your elevator pitch. It's easy to tell if you aren't being genuine, so it's a good idea to run through a few practice rounds with a friend or family member. This will give you a chance to rehearse with different personalities and answer a variety of different questions. While it may be awkward, you'll have a safe atmosphere to make mistakes and learn from them, so you're better prepared for the real thing.

It's important to keep things simple. Don't feel like you have to give a long-winded answer if the question doesn't warrant it. Being clear and concise is one of the most important things in a job interview.

5. MONITOR YOUR BODY LANGUAGE

The main way to communicate confidence is to sit up straight, smile, and keep the camera at eye level. Research has shown the importance of keeping your focus on the camera when talking, not on the image of the hiring manager.

6. INTERVIEW ATTIRE

Dress as you would for an in-person interview. For men, that might mean a button-up shirt, blazer, and chinos, while women should consider a dress or skirt and blouse.

8. BE YOURSELF

A key task for a recruiter is determining whether you would be a good fit for the company's culture. This can be challenging during a virtual interview because there is a physical disconnect. It's more difficult for the interviewer to understand your enthusiasm through the screen, so make sure you're expressive when answering questions.

9. 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.

If there was something specific you bonded over, mention that in the email so you stay top of mind. Or if an interviewer brought up a particular business challenge, use the follow-up as a way to propose potential solutions. Just keep the email concise; you want your note to leave a lasting impression, not immediately end up in the trash.