

How To Prepare For A Virtual Interview

1. Test Your Technology

Check your internet connectivity, and confirm your camera and microphone are working. On the day of the interview, test your equipment and internet connection again. [Technical savvy is one of the top 10 traits employers are looking for](#), and by fumbling around with your audio or lighting during the call, you give the hiring manager a reason to question whether you're the right candidate for the job.

2. Set the Scene and Minimize 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. Whether you sit on your living room couch or in your home office, 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 and make sure kids and pets will not be making guest appearances.

3. Sit Down Prepared

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

4. Practice, Don't Memorize

You don't want to sound robotic throughout your interview—whether answering or asking questions. 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. Make sure your answers are clear, concise and highlight your communication skills.

5. Monitor Your 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.

6. Dress the Part

Dress as you would for an in-person interview. When you research the organization, determine the work culture and dress accordingly or one step up. No sweatshirts or jammies!

7. Make a Connection

Don't be afraid to share a personal story or a common interest with the interviewer. This is the best way to make a connection and prevent yourself from blending in with the other applicants.

8. Be Your (enthusiastic) Self

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. Be authentic. Be yourself.

9. Immediately 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.

Edited and excerpted from the Harvard Business Review and Salary.com