

Virtual Job Interviews

Written by Steve Marr
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In the past, final job interviews were conducted face-to-face. It often included travel when filling key positions. Today, because of COVID-19, more final selections are based on online interviews. Given this reality, many of us need to prepare for Zoom or Skype interview opportunities differently.

Consider what God said to Samuel: "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. *People look at the outward appearance* , but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7, NIV, italics mine) However, since your interview is with another person, the reality is that physical details matter, and there are several things you can do to prepare for an online job interview to assist you in landing an offer.

I'm not going into detail about preparing for an interview. This includes finishing good research on the prospective employer and preparing good questions that demonstrates your understanding of the position and the company. Instead, I am going to cover other aspects of an online interview.

1. Invest in a quality lapel microphone.

This will improve sound quality. Make sure the microphone is unobtrusive. While headsets are functional and I use them frequently, I don't use them during important meetings. Your goal is to make a favorable impression. Sound quality from unobtrusive equipment is a small, subtle difference you can use.

2. Eliminate distractions.

Disconnect your home telephone and turn off or remove your cell phone from the area. Any ringing will cause a distraction during the interview. Additionally, make sure children understand

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the importance of the interview and are not allowed where the interview happens. Also, place pets where they will not be heard. Close out all tabs, including email and texts. You must avoid the possibility of a computer ding or videos that start to play on their own.

3.□ Dress conservatively as if you were making an in-office visit.

Sometimes we consider online meetings less formal. Instead, consider how your attire will look on a computer screen and make sure that what you wear doesn't create a distraction. Depending on the position, you may want to wear a jacket and tie. However, casual dress may also be appropriate.

4.□ Consider the background you use.

Avoid unnecessary clutter and junk. For example, if there is a table with knickknacks on it, remove all or most to make sure they do not cause a visual distraction. Recently when I conducted an important virtual meeting, I repositioned my computer camera using my bookshelf as a backdrop.

5.□ Consider lighting.

Make sure your face is well lit without shadows. Be careful that bright lighting from a window doesn't affect your appearance.

6.□ Think about your posture.

Give extra thought to your posture and how you will look. Practice to see how you come across. Experiment with the right placement so that your face is what the interviewer sees easily. Maintain eye contact with the camera. Don't let your eyes wander. It sends the message that you are disinterested.

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Virtual interviews can become your friend. They can help you focus on the most important part of the interview: your communication. Let this be a skill that COVID-19 allows you to add to your tool chest.