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Video Interviewing Tips - How to Make a Great Virtual Impression

Dress for Success

- Dress professionally as if you are doing a face to face interview – top to bottom. Not just top, torso & head – don't forget about pants/shoes. You never know if you may have to get up to grab a phone to call your interviewer back on the land line!
- Don't have bare shoulders – especially if you are only viewed shoulders up on screen – it will look like you have nothing on!
- Stay away from patterns. Solids work best.

Environment

- Noise levels – turn off radio/TV/cell phone – even white noise like fans, Zen-like waterfalls, loud air conditioners, space heaters, dehumidifiers, etc.
- Put pets away, close the door, and make sure roommates and family members are aware of the importance of quiet!
- Consider putting a note on the door to keep delivery people, sales people, etc. from ringing the doorbell that may trigger pet noise or background chaos.
- If you have the option, set up your computer in a room in which you're least likely to hear outdoor noise – from trucks, kids, etc.
- Think about what is in the background – a neutral wall with minimal background elements is best. Keep pictures / equipment to a minimum. Move toy bins, adjust angle so your unfinished ceiling insulation isn't showing.
- Check yourself out on screen – you should be the focus of the video capture – not your stereo equipment.
- Create optimal lighting. Turn on lights in the room so you don't have a floating head or shut blinds to avoid harsh glare and shadows on your face.
- No eating or chewing gum – and if possible, try to avoid drinking. If you must take a sip – apologize and sip, then put the drink aside.

Technology

- Test your microphone sound level and video well in advance of the actual meeting. And again 15 minutes before!
- Adjust the focus of the camera. Most cameras have the capability to fine tune the crispness of the video. It's best to have a friend "connect" with you via webcam to tell you how you appear as you adjust the settings.
- Close ALL other programs not necessary for the call – email, instant messaging, office products such as Word, Excel, and close internet browser windows. Not only are these potentially a distraction, but it could also affect your connection quality.
- If possible, hard wire your computer vs. using wireless. If you do use wireless, try to be as close to your router as possible for the strongest connectivity.
- Sometimes firewalls can impact your connection / speed. It may be helpful to temporarily disconnect from VPN or firewalls.
- Look at the camera, not at the screen when YOU are talking. It's tempting to look at yourself on your computer screen but this not only will appear as though you are looking away to the interviewer, but will also likely cause you to fidget with your hair and lose focus. You would never look at yourself in a mirror if you were interviewing in person – so think of the camera as the interviewer's eyes and look into it / them!
- Adjust your chair so the camera is at eye level – don't look down at the camera. Not only does it appear poorly on the other end but that angle is very unflattering for most people.
- If you wear glasses, make sure you don't have glare on them from the camera; lose the glasses or wear contacts if either are options.
- If your camera has the option of using effects (bunny nose & ears, cowboy hat, pink hair, etc.), don't use them.

Movement & Pace

- Careful with TOO much movement. If you do experience delays or any choppiness during the connection - heavy movement further accentuates it. If you are a heavy gesture person – be careful! Clasp hands in lap – hold on to the sides of your computer – SOMETHING to keep it under control.
- Reactions translate differently when onscreen so it's important to compensate with extra enthusiasm and concise answers.
- Speak succinctly – and pause for a few moments before talking after being asked a question to compensate for the slight time lag.
- Watch body language – it's easy to forget they can see you! Don't look bored (chin resting on your hand), slouchy, don't look away from the camera when answering questions (remember – think of it as the interviewer's eyes), careful with stretching & scratching.
- If you have a high desktop and rest your arms on it, it's extra-important not to slouch, so that your shoulders aren't at your ears.

General

- Login 10-15 minutes before the call, in case you have technical problems and / or to ensure you are ready when the interviewer is!
- PRACTICE! Find someone that will practice with you using ideally the same video technology you will be using during the interview if possible. That person should point out background & environmental distractions, give you honest feedback on how you appear (including where you are positioned in the screen, annoying movements, sound levels, etc.). You may also consider recording yourself on a site such as YouTube so you can see YOURSELF and make adjustments. You should be prepared for the types of questions you are likely to get, so practice the answers so you can judge for yourself how you will appear.
- At the conclusion of a call, be sure the call is fully disconnected before you 'relax.' You're still on camera until the session truly ends.