



Interviews: Via Virtual Venue

Are you ready for your close up?

The reality of virtual recruiting.

From entry-level to executive positions, online job interviews have become widespread. Today's technology now makes it easy, convenient, and cost-effective for companies to screen job candidates virtually anywhere in the world.

Virtual interviews may be live, offering real-time visual interaction, or recorded for further evaluation and comparison. They may take place in your dorm, home, company location, or at any public facility that offers video conferencing. Whether via Skype, Gmail, or a professional service, virtual interviews offer real opportunities for you to connect, project, and impress well beyond a printed résumé or even the telephone interview.

An interview by any other name is still an interview.

Interacting via Webcam and microphone is not the same as an in-person interview. For one thing, there's no initial or concluding "firm handshake." Still, a video interview IS a real interview, and subject to interview rules and guidelines. It also has its own unique set of requirements.

So, how do you handle yourself virtually for real life success?

Preparation is key. Position the camera to be even with or slightly above eye-level to focus on your face, not your chest. Lighting should be even to avoid dark shadows or silhouetting. Check sound quality. If using a video conferencing application on your computer, close all unneeded programs. Use your picture-in-picture ahead of time *only* to see how you appear to the interviewer, *not* during the interview. Focus on maintaining eye contact with the camera; that's where your interviewer is.

Conduct mock interviews. Record and monitor yourself so you see how you appear to others. Practice and view yourself on a friend's computer; have family and friends offer suggestions. You might be surprised by your personal tics, expressions, or behavior. Practice will bring confidence. Get a good night's rest before the day of the interview so you look your best, and use the restroom beforehand.

Minimize all distractions. Use a neutral or plain background. Choose a quiet spot with little or no background noise (ex: pets, children, TV). Mics are sensitive and can pick up tapping fingers and rustling paper, jangly jewelry and ticking clocks. Turn off phones, screensavers, and any alerts. Wear conservative and neutral colors—no stripes or patterns to hypnotize the interviewer—you and your message should be the focus.

Suit up. Wear proper interview attire from head to toe for greater confidence and to minimize accidental malfunctions.

Ready for your close up. Frame yourself to focus on a head/shoulder/desk top shot; look personable and pleasant.

Posture. Sit up and lean forward slightly to open up your diaphragm.

The eyes have it. Look into the camera to connect with the interviewer and hold their attention. They'll appreciate looking at your face rather than your roots. Also, when thinking, look down rather than up. Otherwise, you may look like you're rolling your eyes.

Minimize movement. Don't wave your hands around. Don't move too much or too fast. Otherwise, you may come across as "jumpy" and distracting. The interviewer *does* see you, so watch your body language.

E-nun-ci-ate. Speak clearly and succinctly to avoid dropouts and audio distortion. Breathe to calm and pace yourself, and pause to emphasize a point. Most important, ANSWER the question.

And "Cut!"

Make sure both camera and mic are OFF when done to avoid transmitting unintended comments or activity. Finally, remember to send a personalized thank you card, letter, or email promptly to the interviewer and to follow up.



i n a nutshell:

Virtual interviews are as critical as in-person contact:

- Use a quiet location with a neutral background
- Practice. Practice. Practice.
- Wear full interview dress for maximum effect
- Focus on the camera lens
- Triple check all technical issues, including lighting
- Sit up, speak slowly and clearly; pause if needed
- Minimize hand movements
- Inquire about the next step; follow up with a thank you

The focus is all on you, so make sure your appearance and what you bring make the final cut.