



VIDEO CONFERENCING & SKYPE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Being able to interview comfortably over a web camera or on Skype is an essential skill to have.

Besides practicing in front of a web camera, how else can job seekers prepare for an online interview? We spoke to some of the world's top employers and hiring managers who offer these expert tips to help you score that virtual interview.



SURROUNDING

Get Rid of Distractions

Find a quiet, business-like setting, ideally in a room with a door. Check what will show up behind you on the screen - a blank or neutral background is best. Inform anyone else at home about the meeting so you are not interrupted. Make arrangements for pets and young children to be taken care of by someone else.

Light Yourself Kindly

Set up two task lights on either side of the computer. Test the lighting angles to ensure you are not shrouded in shadows. The light should be flattering to your skin tones and not make you look washed out.

Prepare to Listen Actively

Keep a notepad and pen or pencil handy to take brief notes during the interview, so that they are accessible but still subtly out of camera range.

Never Assume the Camera is Off

Do not use the camera as a mirror to fix your hair or makeup before the interview, in case the interviewer can see you priming yourself. Likewise, wait until you are sure the camera is off before you relax.



APPEARANCE

Consider Your Username

Think about the impression your Skype name will create. Will you come across as professional?

Dress for Success

Dress professionally from head to toe, in case you have to stand up halfway through the interview. Dress the part 100 percent, just like you are going into a real interview, which this is.

Dress Dark with A Touch of Colour

Dark colours are best for video conferences. Wear a dark suit and pastel shirt or blouse; stark white shirts or blouses are not as appealing on camera. Avoid large areas of red, bright whites, as well as plaid, stripes and overly busy patterns. Men should wear a tie and women should wear a comfortably fitting blouse with a modest neckline. High gloss lips and glittery jewellery are distracting.



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PREPARATION

Plug In Securely

You want hard cable internet access because it's far more stable than wifi, and have headphones plugged in to avoid noisy feedback from the speakers.

Avoid Technical Difficulties

Test the camera immediately before the interview starts, and double check that your microphone and speakers are working properly.

Make Eye Contact

Have the camera as close to eye level as possible so that you are looking into the camera, not at the monitor, to give the impression of eye contact.

Body Language Counts

Centre yourself in the screen and at a medium distance rather than at the end of a long conference table. Make sure the upper halves of your arms are showing, and that there is some free space above your head so that the interviewer can see your body language as well.

Be Ready to Offer Information

Have a copy of your resume printed, your email box up and running, and easy access to electronic versions of your resume and reference files in case the interviewer doesn't have it.



DURING THE INTERVIEW

Look into The Camera

Some people focus on themselves on the computer screen – don't do that. Look straight into the camera to give the impression that you are looking into the interviewer's eyes.

Know Proper Web Cam Etiquette

Sit up straight and avoid leaning to one side. Leaning forward slightly towards the camera helps increase eye contact and allows the interviewer to read your facial expressions better.

Gauge Your Speed and Tone

Be prepared for a slight delay in the audio and video, so avoid moving or speaking too quickly. Speak naturally - the microphone will pick up your audio without you having to raise your voice. While a smile will also come through in your tone, adding listening sounds ('hm' or 'yes') will reassure the interviewer that you can hear them.

Manage Technical Issues

If you experience a technical glitch (e.g. a weak connection, interference or garbled signals), ask the interviewer to repeat the question. If the problem continues, politely mention it and redial.

Use Your Notes, but Focus on The Interviewer

Don't look down or away to read your notes. Prepare your notes as bullet points for quick reference, then look into the camera, not into the screen, to make 'eye contact.'



FINISHING THE INTERVIEW

Summarise your main points, thank the interviewer for his or her time and ask about next steps. Pay attention to the time without obviously glancing at your watch and follow the interviewer's cues that the session is drawing to a close.