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Hints and tips for Candidates preparing for telephone and video interviews

If you've never been asked to participate in a video or telephone interview for a job opening, you will be soon. That's because they can save time and money for both a business and its job candidates.

Even if you're a tech-savvy person, you should prepare as thoroughly for online job interviews as you would in-person meetings. Conversely, if you have years of traditional interviewing experience under your belt, don't get too anxious about video interviews or view them as scary. Yes, there are distinct nuances to understand but with some practice and the right mindset you can put yourself in a position to shine.

- **Test your technology**

A few days before the interview, do a technical trial run to make sure your equipment is working correctly. Download any apps or plugins you'll need. Whether you're using Skype for Business or another video interview platform, make sure you have a user name that's professional, just as you would with your email address or social media handle. Check that your computer's camera, microphone and internet connection are working. Do a trial run with a friend or family member, if possible, so you have ample time to adjust if any of your equipment or software is malfunctioning.

- **Charge it up**

If you're using a phone, laptop or tablet, make sure it's fully charged on the day of the interview. And pick a spot that has strong Wi-Fi. If you're using a tablet, find a way to keep it stationary. Otherwise, the screen may appear shaky if you're holding the device. Avoid using a smartphone for video interviews if possible.

- **Still dress to impress**

Although it's tempting to just be wearing casual clothing on a telephone interview, or only bother with your upper half for a Skype/video interview, it's best to dress to from head to toe in formal work attire in order to feel the part as well as look the part. Your confidence will increase if you feel you are dressed for the role being discussed.

- **Prepare your surroundings**

Whether you have a telephone or video interview, do it in a quiet businesslike setting, with no disruptions. If the interview is via video, make sure the background of where you are is not disorganised and/or untidy. Have a look behind and around you before you begin, to assess if there's anything distracting or that could give the wrong impression.



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- **Act as you would in a face to face interview**

Video/Skype calls sometimes feel a bit awkward for those not experienced with them. Remember to still maintain eye contact with the interviewer, by looking at the camera (not the screen), particularly when they are speaking, and use hand expressions as you would talking to someone normally. A Skype interview gives less time to make a positive impression, so make sure your tone is clear and confident, your posture is formal, and your body language gives the interviewer the right impression of you. Remember to smile too!

- **Make sure you get your key points in**

The bonus of a telephone or video interview is that you can have some bullet points written down with things you want to mention or ask. Of course, you don't want to appear as if you're reading off some notes; so make sure you do your research and planning in advance, and then have some concise points that you can give a quick glance to should you wish.

- **Close other programs on your computer**

You don't want any audible alerts going off when speaking to the interviewer, let alone anything that would distract you from listening or from what you are saying.

- **Address any connections problems immediately**

Make sure your video connection works beforehand, or that you have sufficient signal via the telephone. If you are having problems with a connection or with hearing the interviewer properly, then it's best to say so as soon as the problem arises. You don't want to give an inaccurate answer because you couldn't hear them properly. Try and solve the problem first, and, if need be, offer to call them back.

- **Close the video interview by sharing your appreciation**

Just as you would with an in-person interview, thank the interviewer for the opportunity. And follow up with a post-interview thank-you note within 24 hours. In your note, briefly reinforce why you're interested in the job and why you'd be a great match for the role and company. Think about adding something that you and the employer discussed while getting to know each other that will make the thank-you message more personal.