



TIPS FOR VIDEO AND PHONE INTERVIEWING

Search committees are opting often to conduct initial interviews via teleconference or videoconference. From a candidate perspective I hear some misgivings about this, especially about video interviews:

“I feel like I am up on this big screen for them to see, but I can barely make out who is in the room.”

“Its difficult to get a read on how people are responding – I can’t get much visual feedback or see facial expressions.”

“The glitches with technology sometimes eat up the first ten minutes of the interview – geez!”

Misgivings aside, video or phone interviews make sense and do save time and money that can be better spent further into the process. Perhaps, the time savings benefits you as well. So, rather than stress about it, my advice to candidates is to accept it and do your best with whatever format the interview takes.

In that spirit, here are a couple things to keep in mind. Mind you, these suggestions are apart from preparing yourself for the content of the interview, which is separate preparation.

Test equipment in advance. Often the hiring organization will do a quick test with you to test software or to test a link. If that is offered, do it. If you want to ask for a test, ask for a test or arrange one with your Summit contact or with a friend. The test enables you to check sound, lighting, camera position, etc. You want your webcam to be a bit elevated (above your face a bit vs. looking down into it). In terms of lighting, test it out and play with it ahead of time. Make sure to avoid glare if you can.

Have a dial-in back up number in case the video technology malfunctions. When you are given the link to the video call, be sure there is a dial-in alternative. If you don’t see one, suggest that a number be set and agreed to as a backup.

Prepare for the comfortable use of your voice. For any interview, live, phone, or video, you want to make sure your voice is projecting well. Usually you don’t need to yell to be heard, but you do need to speak loudly and clearly. Filler words are just that – they fill in during natural pauses. You don’t need words such as “like” or “um”; a pause in the conversation is perfectly acceptable. Also try to avoid interrupting the other person, a nervous laugh, or lacking verbal inflection.

Create a peaceful area in which to conduct the interview. Take steps to ensure that you will be interruption free and in a quiet place with no distractions. Make sure you have both your current CV/resume and other critical papers right at your fingertips for quick and easy reference. If you get a little panicky, it's perfectly okay to put the interviewer on hold to take a deep breath or change position. Just don't leave the interviewer(s) hanging for more than 10 to 15 seconds.

Remember the nonverbal cues you're sending. Dress for your phone interview. Your voice will reflect the fact that you're psychologically prepped for the interview. Try also to match your rate of speech to the interviewer's. If he or she is speaking slowly, for example, don't speak too quickly or you'll sound overwhelming. On the other hand, don't speak so slowly that you make the interviewer wait for every word. Try to let your personality come through. Smile. Show warmth. Express enthusiasm if you feel it. Be yourself.

For more preparation suggestions, I find this internet site helpful:

<https://biginterview.com/blog/2014/11/video-interview.html>