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7 Tips for Acing your Virtual Interview

Virtual interviews in many ways provide the same experience as in-person meetings. During the interview, which typically lasts 45 minutes to an hour, a candidate's presence, personality, experience and understanding of the job become evident. The difference is that they are also getting insight into your knowledge of technology. Success and moving forward favors a virtual sharp candidate.

So, let's talk about what will make you a virtually successful candidate!

Test your Technology

Once you confirm you are having a virtual interview, make sure you have the proper technology to participate in the interview. It is especially important to:

- Make sure you have the software downloaded. (Zoom, Skype, Google Hangout etc...whichever app the employer told you to use.)
- Confirm your computer has a camera and microphone ...AND they work
- Check your internet connection
- Make a test call with someone

On the day of the interview be sure to run through this list again a few hours before your interview. If you have technical difficulties or have to fumble around with your camera or sound during your interview, it may send the signal that you aren't prepared.

Set the Scene & Reduce Distractions

After testing your technology, find a space in your house to take the interview. The space should be well lit and void of any shadows, especially around your face. You want your interviewer to be able to clearly see your face at all times.

Make sure the area around you isn't busy or messy. Sitting against a blank wall is a great option to ensure your interviewer is focused on the main event... you!

Before the interview starts, get rid of any potential distractions such as:

- Turn off the TV or music
- Ask friends and family (and pets!) to stay out of the area during the interview
- Silence your cell phone
- Close nearby windows to avoid traffic noises or outside distractions

Come Prepared

Come to a virtual interview just as prepared as you would an in-person interview. Before sitting down, go through common interview questions and think about your answers. Common questions include:

- Why do you want to work at this company?
- What interests you about this role?
- How will this role help you achieve your professional goals?
- What is your greatest strength/weakness?
- Tell me about a challenge and how you overcame it?

Be sure to practice your answers to these questions, but don't feel pressure to memorize them. You want to come off naturally, and most importantly, you want to be your authentic self!

Monitor Your Body Language

Unfortunately, you can't impress your future boss with a firm professional handshake in a virtual interview, but that doesn't mean your body language doesn't matter. In fact, it's even more important!

Make you sit up straight, smile and keep the camera at eye level. It is tempting to look at the picture of the interviewer, but try to focus on looking at the camera, so it looks like you are maintaining eye contact throughout the conversation.

Dress the Part

Yes, you are in the comfort of your own home, but that doesn't mean you can be in the comfort of your pajamas! Dress just like you would for an in-person interview. Men should wear a button-up, polo or blazer, and women should wear a nice sweater or blouse.

Professional clothing is not only important to show you are serious about the position, but studies also show if you look professional, you are more likely to act professional as well.

Make a Connection

Let's be real, virtual interviews can be kind of awkward—especially if you haven't done one before! To make up for the physical distance try and make a personal connection with the interviewer. Don't be afraid to share a short personal story or make casual conversation. You want the interviewer to remember you and connection is one of the best ways to make sure you don't blend in with the other candidates.

Follow Up

Just as you would for an in-person interview, be sure to follow-up with the interviewer within 24 hours. Use this note to thank them for their time, reiterate your interest in the role or share any information you left out during the interview.

Also, if you did make a connection in the interview, maybe mention that in your note. This will be even more helpful in staying on the top of their mind when they make their hiring decisions.