



8 Tips for a Successful Virtual Interview

What is a virtual interview?

A virtual interview is an interview that takes place remotely, sometimes over the phone, but often using technology like video conferencing and other online communication platforms. Some virtual interviews are conducted in real-time. Others are pre-recorded using online software such as Hirevue or Jobvite. An employer may send you a link asking you to record your answers to interview questions using your phone or webcam before a specified deadline. Whether you pre-record your questions or have a live video conference with the hiring manager, virtual communication can feel awkward. Here are a few considerations to set yourself up for success:

1. Create a professional virtual identity

For prospective employers, your email address or username is often your first impression. Do not give the hiring manager a reason to question your professionalism before they even meet you. Keep your email and usernames simple. Try different combinations of your first, middle, and last name. Also be sure to select a professional looking photo for your profile on Zoom and other video conferencing platforms.

2. Test your technology beforehand

A virtual interview requires tools like a camera and microphone on your computer, a software program (such as Skype, Zoom or Cisco WebEx) and a reliable internet connection. Test all of your technology to ensure it works effectively at least one day prior to your interview. This includes making sure your internet connection is strong enough to sustain streaming video.

On interview day, re-check your equipment at least 10-15 minutes ahead of your appointment time. Sign into the video or phone meeting using the information provided by the recruiter or hiring manager. Turn on the sound and video to ensure everything is working properly. Contact the meeting host immediately if you need help troubleshooting any technical issues.

3. Set the scene and limit distractions

While testing your technology the day before, determine an appropriate location for your interview. Find a room with good lighting, preferably near a window, or a blank wall. Whether you sit at your desk, dining room table or on your living room couch, be mindful of what is in the background. It is hard to convince employers you are detail-oriented and organized when they can see piles of laundry or other clutter behind you.

Eliminate all distractions. Turn off the TV, silence your cell phone, and any notifications on your computer. Close nearby windows to muffle any noises outside. If possible, put pets in another room during your interview. Also be sure to let roommates know when you will need quiet time.

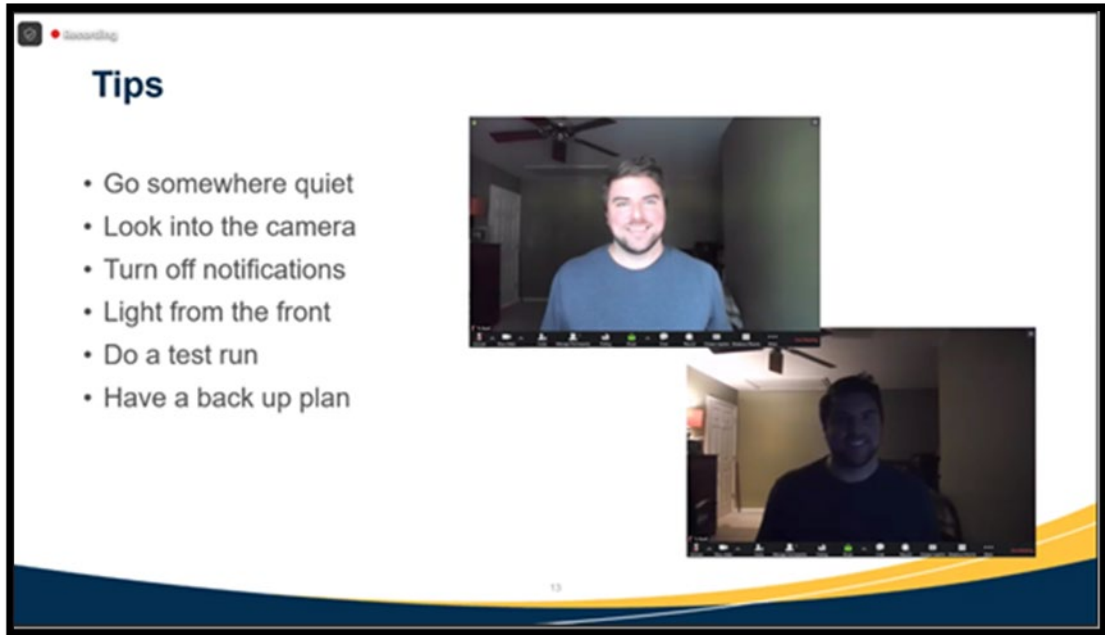


Image Courtesy: Northwestern Mutual

4. Dress for success

Expect your virtual interview to be just as formal as one that takes place in an office. Dress the same as you would for an in-person interview – from head to toe! Doing so not only makes you appear professional but could also help you feel more prepared and confident. If you are unsure of what to wear, conservative business professional attire is always appropriate. A great outfit example for men and women is a button-down shirt and blazer with slacks. Wear solid colors. Avoid busy patterns or clunky jewelry, as they can be distracting.

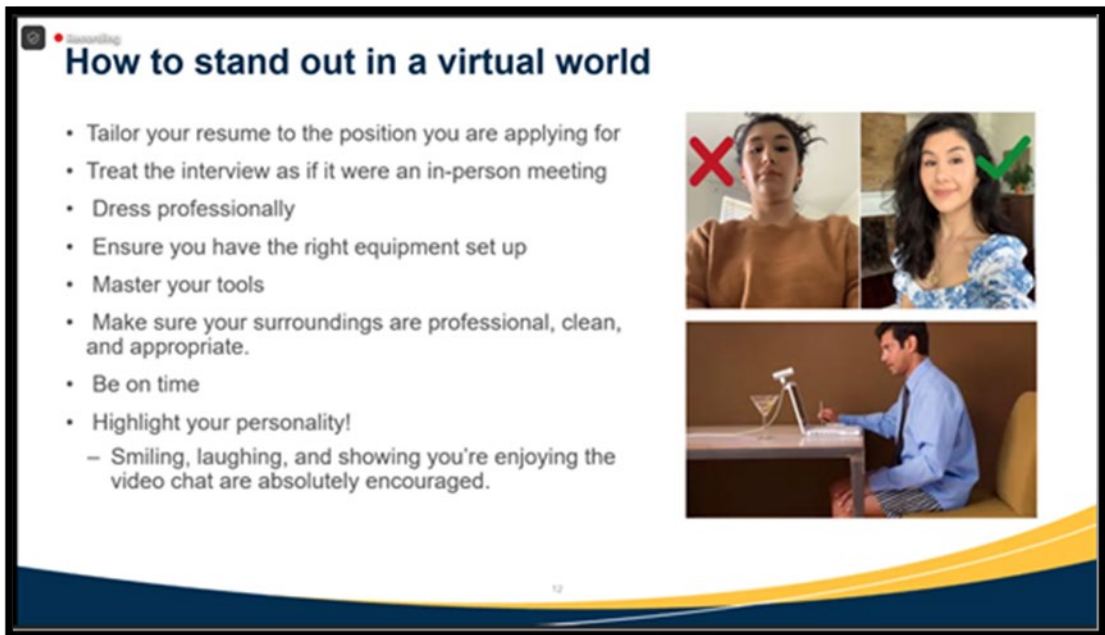


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5. Prepare in advance

Schedule a mock interview with a Career Coach to practice your answers to [commonly asked interview questions](#). Research the company ahead of time and jot down notes for easy reference. You could put a few key points on Post-Its and place them around your computer out of camera view, on the day of your interview. Avoid memorizing each response, so you do not sound overly rehearsed. You may also want to print out a copy of your resume and keep it nearby for reference.

6. Use professional body language

Sit up straight and ensure the camera is pointed directly at you. Your face should be in the middle of your screen (not too much blank space above or below). You will not be able to shake hands during a virtual interview so you will need to find other ways to greet the employer and exude enthusiasm. This could include smiling and giving a confident wave with eye contact, nodding your head, or providing other welcoming gestures where appropriate. Look directly into the camera. It will make you look more engaged. **Pro Tip:** If you get nervous seeing yourself on camera, minimize “self-view” so that the interviewer’s image is all that you see on your screen.

7. Build rapport and be authentic

During a virtual interview, you have the rare opportunity to speak in a relaxing, familiar environment and show the interviewer who you are and why you are the best person for the job. Use tools such as your body language, facial expressions, and interview preparations to convey your confidence and personality as it relates to the position.

When communicating virtually, it is still necessary to find ways to establish rapport. You can do this by being prepared to talk about a common interest, or by discussing some other neutral topic. Just be sure to keep things professional. No politics, religion, or controversial issues, please! This is an opportunity to showcase your personality while also getting to know more about the interviewer and/or the position.

8. Follow up

Send a follow-up email within 24 hours of your interview. Thank the interviewer for their time and let them know you are available if they have any additional questions. Reach out to the HR recruiter or hiring manager you have been speaking with prior to get a list of your interviewers’ emails. Sample thank you email templates can be found in the [Professional Networking Communication](#) handout on the Career Resources section of the OPD website.