

Impressing on a Video Interview

The Zoom boom experienced during the pandemic has altered how people work too. Video interviewing often takes place in lieu of an in-person meeting. You should have installed on your computer and test out *before* the interview time the virtual meeting application that the interviewer will be using. One minute before the interview starts is not the time to turn it on for the first time. Your face should be seen in the video and your voice should be heard.

Do a practice call with someone first to be certain the conference app or software works. It should have enough bandwidth for the video to work well. Your lighting and sound should be bright and clear.

The top takeaway: using lighting and location to your advantage. You'll want to access your computer in a room free of distractions like loud noises, running children, and cluttered background. Should you be interrupted remain calm and poised. Apologize quickly, then return to the talk.

The light in the room should be in front of you. Not behind you. You want to avoid shadows while the interview is taking place.

Dressing in formal business attire from head to heel will set the tone for how you interact with your potential boss or actual supervisor and coworkers. No pajamas from the waist down please.

Look into the camera not down. You want your face to be visible. It should appear that you're making eye contact with the other person. Again, practice looking into the camera. Get well-versed in doing so.

Resist uploading a photo as a background. Ideally, the view of the room behind you will be of a white wall with minimal bright or other objects in the room. A well-lit space will be okay when it doesn't feature an element of your life that you wouldn't want an employer to see. In other words, you might want to take down that Iron Maiden poster.

Close all other apps on your computer or device. Keep open only what you need for the interview. Turn off email alerts or anything else that "dings."

Experiment beforehand to adjust the lighting and background. Verify that your computer video and audio and webcam are working properly. You want others to see your face as well as hear you speak.

It's okay to have notes on your desk or table. Keep your cover letter, resume, and job description on hand too. Refer to them for a few seconds if you must. Yet refrain from reading them directly from the page.

Again, smiling appropriately will go a long way as well as speaking in a clear slow voice. Rushing through your presentation will be obvious. People will comment among themselves afterward that you were talking too fast. They might not tell you this. Your voice should be loud enough—not too low and not too loud just right.

Brushing up on your public speaking skills can help you do well with video conference platforms online. One thing no one else has talked about is what happens when the session has ended, and people start to click Leave. Some coworkers at a virtual staff meeting will stay on the video and chat informally among yourselves.

Keep this “off-the-record” conversation professional. You can use this chat to talk about common interests you share with your coworkers outside of the job. Refrain from divulging sensitive information here that others shouldn’t be privy to. Maybe you want to talk about a new recipe you’re going to cook for dinner.

I’ve stayed online with two coworkers after a Microsoft Teams meeting. This is the modern day equivalent of gathering at the water cooler in the office. Some companies offer Zoom online “Happy Hours.”

One last tip: You don’t have to click on your webcam’s icon on your computer desktop beforehand to turn on the webcam to join an online meeting. Simply click “Join” on the link you’re given to the MS Teams or Zoom or other conference. Your face should then appear in the video. On Zoom if your face doesn’t appear try hovering the cursor over the lower left of the video screen. Click on the start video button.