

Tips for a Successful Video Interview

Prior to the COVID -19 pandemic, JacksonStone & Partners often used video interviews for interviewing offshore candidates or candidates in a different location from the interviewer or panel. During the pandemic, interviews via video became the norm and it seems that they remain part of the recruitment landscape for some time.

There are some simple guidelines that will ensure your interview goes well and that you feel as confident as you would if you were in the same room as the interviewer or panel. Remember that a video interview is usually very similar to a face-to-face or phone interview – it is only the medium that is different. So, prepare in the same way as you would for a face-to-face interview i.e.

- do your background research on the organisation
- work out how you can clearly and succinctly explain why you want the role and why you are the best person for it
- prepare answers for the likely questions you will be asked to test your experience relative to the requirements of the role
- think about what questions you want to ask the interviewer or Panel.

The following guidelines for video interviews will also help you prepare.

Setting yourself up

You'll need:

- a quiet and well-lit room where you won't be interrupted by other people, pets or noises. A *Please Do Not Disturb – Interview in Progress* notice on the door can be a good idea.
- ensure you have a neutral background that's free from clutter and distractions.
- a good internet connection with bandwidth of at least 1 megabytes per second
- a laptop, tablet or desktop with a webcam. If you don't have access to any of these devices, a smartphone is also an option, but make sure you set it up on a solid surface
- headphones with a built-in microphone are fine if you want to use them, but if you are certain there won't be any background noise in the room you are in, it does look and feel more natural *not* to use headphones
- dress professionally - the same way you would for an in-person interview. Avoid bright colours and patterns as these can be distracting on a screen.

Getting ready

Give yourself enough time before your interview to check your set-up and settle in.

- set your mobile phone to silent mode
- position the camera so that you are looking up slightly and centred on the screen.
- it's likely that the interviewer will only see your upper half in the screen, but make sure you are dressed professionally from head to toe in case you need to stand up for any reason during the interview
- adjust the lights in the room. If things appear dark or dim, bring in an extra desk lamp to brighten the room
- if you wear glasses, adjust the lighting to reduce glare from the lenses
- check that your computer's audio is working
- test your computer's webcam
- close any unnecessary web browser tabs and applications to ensure they don't interrupt the interview or slow the internet connection
- have a pen, paper, a copy of your resume and any notes that you want to refer to on your desk
- have a glass of water on the desk
- be on time logging into the interview or answering the video call.

During the interview

Try and be as natural as possible and let your personality come through.

- In lieu of the usual handshake that occurs when you meet the interviewer/members of the Panel in person, say hello to each Panel member and refer to them by name. "Nice to meet you, [their name]".
- Eye contact is very important during a face-to-face interview, and you want to ensure the same level of connection during a video interview. Here's how: When you are answering a question, look directly at the camera and avoid the instinct to look directly at your interviewer. Try to imagine the interviewer is behind the camera lens. When you are listening, it's fine to look at your interviewer.
- If you are being interviewed by a Panel, maintain eye contact (by looking at the camera) with the person who asked you the question, with quick glances at the other members of the panel.
- When you are listening, nod and smile to show you are engaged.
- Just as you would in a face-to-face interview, use hand gestures when it feels appropriate.
- Avoid fidgeting or letting your gaze drift away from the screen.

Practice and tech set up

If you are unfamiliar with video interviews, it can be useful to do some practice video calls with friends or family. Ask for candid feedback on your eye contact and body language. Run through it a few times until things start to feel natural.

Practice can make a real difference to your interviews - you'll find your confidence will grow as you become more comfortable in front of the camera.

If things go wrong

With technology, there's always a chance that things might go wrong. Here are some backup plans just in case.

- If the video or audio stops working or the quality of either is poor: Before the interview, exchange phone numbers with the interviewer and agree who will call who, if there are technical difficulties. The best option is usually to continue the interview by phone, rather than reschedule.
- If noise (alarms, sirens, construction, etc.) interrupts the conversation: Apologise for the interruption and ask for a few moments until the noise has subsided. You may want to mute the microphone if the noise is loud.
- If someone or a pet enters your room unexpectedly: Apologise to the interviewer, ask for a few moments, mute your microphone and turn off your camera, and then deal with the interruption.

JacksonStone support

Your JacksonStone consultant is here to support you during the interview process, so don't hesitate to let them know if you are feeling uncertain about any aspect of your interview with them or a Panel. We usually use Zoom or Microsoft Teams for candidate interviews with consultants and Panels. In either case, we will send you a meeting (interview) invitation that you simply click on to enter the meeting/interview. You don't have to download any software in advance.
