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video interview to evaluate job candidates. The format offers firms a host of benefits, including cost savings, access to remote job seekers and speed.

Paul McDonald • Sep. 27, 2017



With advances in virtual-meeting applications, many companies are turning to the video interview to evaluate job candidates. The format offers firms a host of benefits, including cost savings, access to remote job seekers and speed. In a tight labor

market, [accelerating the hiring process](#) offers another advantage in landing [highly](#)

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unique set of challenges to consider. Here are seven tips to help you be camera-ready and take full advantage of the benefits of video interviewing:

1. Do your homework

Aside from the technological aspect, the art of the video interview is similar to the method used in an in-person interview. You must do the homework.

Pro tip: Reread candidates' cover letters and resumes, and write down specific questions you have about their work history and industry expertise. Have on hand a range of [general questions](#) ("Why do you want to work for our firm?"), as well as ones for specific roles, such as tax accountant and auditor.

2. Iron out the details in advance

Different from an in-person meeting, which primarily involves coordinating the place and time, a video interview depends on the [technology](#) working properly.

Pro tip: Whether you use Skype, Google Hangouts or a proprietary virtual-meeting platform, send out the meeting invite several days before the interview and recommend candidates download any necessary applications in advance. You could also go more casual by using a video messaging app like Facebook Messenger or WeChat. In that case, establish who will initiate the call.

3. Be mindful of time zones

Video interviews simplify the process of evaluating candidates in far-flung locations. This can be helpful when you're hiring remote accountants or recruiting potential hires for international offices.

Pro tip: A time that seems reasonable for you may be the middle of the night for candidates. Use a time zone converter to make sure the suggested meeting times

work.

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The background also makes a big difference. Aim to sit in front of a neutral-colored blank wall, which will help the candidate focus on you.

5. Do a trial run focusing on the tech and location

If you're a video interview newbie, especially, it's vital that you do at least one trial run of the system before using it.

Pro tip: Make the setup as real as possible. After you install your preferred platform, send a coworker an invite with the embedded link. At the appointed time, conduct a mock video interview and have the other person evaluate the sound quality, image, lighting and background.

6. Know where to look

The eyes are windows to the soul, but that's not where your focus should be during a video interview.

Pro tip: You're used to making eye contact when speaking to others face to face, but that doesn't work well during video chats and interviews. Instead, look into the webcam, not the screen. Otherwise, it'll appear you're looking at their nose or mouth.

7. Expect the unexpected

When working with technology, there's always the possibility that something will go awry — for example, candidates can't enter the video interview, there's an annoying echo, the system freezes or you have video but no sound.

Pro tip: Have a Plan B. If quitting the app and re-entering doesn't work, have candidates' telephone numbers handy so you can conduct a phone interview

instead.

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