

# HOW TO WIN YOUR VIDEO INTERVIEW





The paradigm shift in the workplace has always been inevitable as we move deeper into the digital and information age. The pandemic definitely helped boost the speed of this transition. Working from home has become the new normal. In fact, hiring remote resources has become the new strategy used by most business owners to scale their business and mitigate the risks of operating a physical office at the time of a pandemic.

In this handout, we break down the steps you need to take to prepare for a video interview. This includes the preparations you need to make in the environment and the tools you need to use. We want to make sure everything works together to make you look prepared and confident for this virtual meeting.

## What are pre-recorded video interviews?

Pre-recorded video interview is a way of interviewing where there are sets of questions that come either in a recorded video or text format. Regardless of the question comes in a text or video format, candidates will be required by the interviewing platform to answer the questions in a recorded video format. Normally you will be given a think time and a retake opportunity. There are very rare instances when think times and retakes are not allowed.

**Think time** is the number of seconds or minutes that is provided by the interview platform so you can gather your thoughts before answering the question. A **retake** is an option given to the candidates so they can change their recorded answers before submission.

Tip: Research the interviewing tool. There are a lot of video-interviewing tools out there. It doesn't hurt to prepare for the pre-recorded video interview by researching the interviewing tool the recruiter uses. You will know which tool this is from the instruction link they will send you as you move through the application process.

## What are live video interviews?

A live video interview is very much like a pre-recorded video interview in the sense that everything is done in the comforts of your home or your chosen space. You have control over the environment and how you look like on the screen. One major difference between a live and a pre-recorded interview is the level of spontaneity. In a live interview, the recruiter or hiring manager can ask you follow-up questions based on your previous answer. This is why it's important that you are true to yourself and you consistently give honest answers.

## How to look professional and prepared for the video interview?

Now that we know the difference between a pre-recorded and live video interview, let's deep dive into the preparations you can do to make sure you leave a great and lasting impact to help the hiring managers with their decision to include you in the shortlist and ultimately to pick you for the role.



## THE TOOLS



**A laptop or phone.** A lot of times, it does not matter whether you're using a laptop or a phone as long as it is compatible with the video interviewing app that your prospective employer is using.



**Camera.** Another consideration is the clarity of the camera. If your phone camera will make you look better than your computer would, go with that. Otherwise, you don't need any crazy expensive device to do this interview.



**A noise-canceling headset.** Especially if you are not in a sound-proof room, it is best to use a noise-canceling headset with a built-in microphone. It does not matter how good you look or how confident you are if the sound quality is bad or there is background noise that will overpower your voice and distract your interviewer.



**Ring light.** You need one if you are in a room with no access to natural light.

## THE ENVIRONMENT



**Mind the noise.** Find a place where there is not a lot of background noise. An enclosed room is best. If you must be outdoors, a noise-canceling headset will be your best friend.



**Mind the lighting.** If indoors, do it near a window or anywhere accessible to a natural source of light. If you must be outside, make sure you're in an area where brightness is at a level that will allow you to still see your device's screen.



**Mind your background.** The best background is not virtual. If possible, your background should be real. If indoors, a plain wall, a library, or office cabinet works. If outdoors, any place against a wall or nature works. Just make sure you're seated where no other people will be captured within the video frame. If neither indoor nor outdoor offers you a great background, then you can definitely use a virtual background. But pick something that's not attention-grabbing. You want the interviewer's focus to be on you and you only.

## ENERGY LEVEL AND MOOD

We don't know for sure if first impressions last, but we do know it impacts how the interviewer will perceive you and eventually affect whether you will come off as a good or bad fit for the job.



**Fit** is a common recruiter jargon to express if a candidate is a good match for a job.

You want to come off as warm and amiable. Your goal is to make a connection with your interviewer. This is extra challenging in a pre-recorded video. But it can be done and the best way to do this is by being authentic in the way you answer. Mind your voice, make sure you're looking at the camera as you talk, and move your shoulders and hands naturally.

### What's the right sound of voice?

This is one of those instances where balance is key. You don't want to sound monotonous, you also don't want to sound overly excited or hyper. We want just the right mix and to achieve this, you need to practice modulating your voice. Use appropriate pitch (high, low, fast, slow) in every instance. There really is no right or wrong way to do this. There's only what's comfortable and not. If you're not comfortable, it will show.

### Where should you look?

The thing about a recorded interview, the other person does not see your entire body language unless your video shows your whole body. Looking at the camera (and not at yourself) as you talk will make it easier for your interviewer to feel your sincerity. It is also one of the easiest ways to stand out as the majority of people tend to look at themselves while talking in a recorded video.

### Shoulder and hand movement

Your camera should be able to capture not just your face, but also your shoulders and ideally your hands. As you speak, you'd want to show an open stance. Do not slouch.



## COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Here's the reality. No matter how capable you are, no matter how strong your KSA is (knowledge, skills, and ability) if you are unable to convey them properly to the hiring manager, it will be hard to be picked. There's a huge chance you are competing with another candidate who is less knowledgeable and skilled but if they are eloquent or articulate in presenting their skills and abilities, they will most likely get the job. Make sure you have a strategy on how you will communicate your strengths. Note that communication skills are something we can't improve overnight. This is more than speech or sentence construction. Do not get overwhelmed and think that you need to have amazing communication skills to give a great interview. You simply need to master how to respond to the interview questions and sell yourself the right way.



## HOW TO NOT BE NERVOUS

This is probably the most common problem that job applicants want to overcome. You're nervous because you're not confident. You're not confident because you're not prepared. You're not prepared because you don't know how. Here are some tips on how to overcome nervousness.

### **Be calm & centered.**

Believe me when I say that your nervousness has a lot more to do with your nervous system than your environment, knowledge, or skills. We want to resolve this by dealing with the nervous system. One way to achieve calm is by getting connected to the space where you're in. Look around you. Ground yourself by breathing and noticing your body and the environment.

### **Be comfortable.**

Notice what you wear and check the mirror for how you look. Look at where you are standing or sitting. Check your jaw, neck, and shoulders, are they stiff or relaxed? Check your spine, is it straight or slouched?





**Prepare your stories and responses in advance.** Think of the questions that will be asked and practice how you'd respond to them. In the next few chapters, we are going to share with you some commonly asked questions so you can prepare your responses for them. The goal is not to give a scripted answer to all those questions but to understand why these questions are being asked and what the interviewer is really looking for.

**Be ready with your “sales pitch” or career statements.** We will discuss this in Chapter 4. Not to say that you need to memorize them. But it helps to have an outline and remember the keywords. This way, whatever question they throw at you, you are able to go back to defining to them the value they're getting if they hire you.

**Practice in the mirror.** Talk to yourself in the mirror. Practice until you reach the level of comfort you want to achieve with the way you talk. Remember the pitch of your voice. Is it too high? Low? Monotone? Slow or fast?

**Practice your answers on camera.** Prepare for it like a sales pitch. You will be selling yourself. Prepare for it like you would a report in school. Record yourself and study how you can improve. If you are the hiring manager, would you hire yourself?



Overall, video interviews can work for you or against you. Just like in anything, it has pros and cons. The key to winning interviews is preparation regardless of platform or medium. In ITS, we use pre-recorded video interviews as part of our preliminary application process. For final interviews, we do live in-person interviews or live video, depending on where the candidate and the hiring manager are located. Regardless of the position or the location, we want to make the interviewing process as smooth and as comfortable for our candidates.