

How To Do A Virtual Interview If Employers Delay Onsite

Throughout this complex time of rising rates of COVID-19, self-quarantines, travel restrictions, and social distancing, we don't have to halt everything (even though it may feel like we do). The truth is, companies are still hiring and we need physicians and those in healthcare more than ever before. So, how do you hire when the employer delays onsite visits? You go virtual. Luckily, it's much easier than you'd think.

In fact, going virtual has multiple benefits. For one, organizations can search well beyond their backyard for the perfect candidate. Opportunities broaden without the restriction of geography. Virtual interviews allow employers and candidates to interface using video, instant messaging systems and web-conferencing programs. Platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype and FaceTime make it easy to conduct the same kind of interview you'd do if the candidate were three feet away, only without the added costs of travel and potential health strain while the coronavirus continues to spike. The goals are always the same: set the right tone, see if the position is a fit on both sides and leave a lasting positive impression.

Platforms

Cloud-based platforms like [Skype](#), [Microsoft Teams](#), and [Zoom](#) allow you to set up accounts and download software applications for free. If you and the interviewee are both Apple users, you both already have [FaceTime](#) on your computers and smartphones. Almost all the platforms function the same way. You create an account, set up a username, also known as a handle, and install the software on your computer. You will need a strong internet connection. If other family members are home while you are video chatting, you may want to ask them to refrain from watching videos while you are conducting a meeting. To initiate a call, type in the information for the person you'd like to connect with; this may be an email address, username or handle, or telephone number.

Virtual Interviews are on the Rise

Even before we learned the term "social distancing," we knew the workforce had been changing. According to [one Gallup poll](#) from 2016, 43% of employed Americans report that they enjoy at least some time working remotely, away from their coworkers. This is a 4% increase over the number of Americans who reported the same in 2012.

Flexibility is an increasingly important priority for employees. So much so, work flexibility is now one of the most important aspects of a job—ranking just behind competitive pay and benefits. This means many employers are prioritizing a positive work-life balance. Some employers are hiring people to work remotely exclusively; they may never meet face-to-face. Other times it can be to save the company money. Rather than flying candidates out for their second interview, employers can opt to conduct a virtual interview instead.

The Many Benefits of Virtual Interviews

When we're dealing with the important issue of social distancing to protect ourselves and others from the spread of COVID-19, virtual interviews increase the health and safety of ourselves and those around us. Teleconferencing is more than just a phone call. Did you know it's estimated that [55% of communication is body language](#)? 38% is the tone of voice, and 7% is the actual words spoken. This can whittle down a hiring manager's shortlist for second-round interviews pretty quickly.

Virtual Interview Tips and Tricks

Your interview will seem less personal at first but if you give it a few minutes, you might find this is only temporary. Also, your candidate will be nervous! The hiring process is nerve-wracking enough. Adding in the element of being on-camera can heighten the anxiety for some, so consider taking a few extra minutes for small talk at the beginning to help you both settle in.

Once you get going, you might want to make the box of your face smaller. A lot of video chat users find looking at themselves distracting. If you make the box smaller and push it off to the corner of the screen, it'll be easier to focus your attention on your candidate. Also, look directly at your camera when you are speaking. This creates the effect of eye contact.

1. Do a practice run to get set on—be sure the technology being used for the virtual interview is installed and working *before* your meeting. Test Internet connectivity and your microphone and camera. Leave time to troubleshoot.
2. Dress for success. We all love the laid back dress code when working from home, but step it up a notch when conducting video interviews.
3. Minimize distractions. Think about crating your puppy or turning off a radio. If little ones are around, let them know you need a certain amount of time to conduct your interview, uninterrupted.
4. Set the scene: try positioning yourself in front of a plain wall to minimize distractions for the interviewee.
5. Check your lighting. Sitting near a window is ideal, especially if you can keep the light in front of you.
6. Remember the importance of body language! Keep arms by your sides (not crossed) and smile.
7. Have questions ready nearby. You can create a document on your computer or keep a notepad on your desk.
8. Create actionable next steps. Just as you would in person, inform the candidate of your actionable next steps and when to expect them.
9. If possible, take photos of the employer facility and send them to the candidate. If they'd like a walkthrough and it's safe for you to still be on-site, you can use video conferencing apps, as long as you're connected to WiFi, to show the potential employee the grounds. In this case, you'll want to use your phone or iPad instead of a laptop or desktop computer.