

Zoom/Skype/FaceTime Video Interview Tips

In a world that is ever changing thanks to Covid-19, we are all having to settle into a new “normal.” The world of hiring and recruiting is not an industry or business process that has ever been immune to market changes. If you haven’t done it already, it’s only a matter of time that you will need to embrace the concept of more Zoom, Skype or Facetime video interviews.

Phone interviews have always been a part of many firm’s hiring processes and you can see some additional thoughts and ideas on that topic [HERE](#).

Here are some quick Do’s and Don’ts for the video interview process as we strive to continue to help you advance your career through these uncharted waters.

1. Let’s start with the simplest things here:
 - a. Make sure that the device you are using is completely charged and has great reception! No excuses for having things fall apart before they even start.
 - b. Have a copy of the resume you had sent to the company in front of you.
 - c. Ensure that your resume’s information - including exact dates - mirrors your LinkedIn profile.
2. Make sure that you are comfortable ***IN ADVANCE*** with the technology that you are going to be using. If you have an iPhone or iPad, you already have a Facetime app/option on your phone and more than likely, have used it a time or two. On the other hand, Skype or Zoom may be a little foreign to you. Here are links for each app if you have an Apple or Android device:
 - a. [HERE](#) is a download link to the Zoom app for iPhone
 - b. [HERE](#) is a download link to the Zoom app for Android
 - c. [HERE](#) is a download link to the Skype app for iPhone
 - d. [HERE](#) is a download link to the Skype app for Android
3. My experience is that most of these platforms are easier to work with and operate on your phone or your iPad – or another tablet device. With most computers, you would need to ensure that you have a microphone – not just a headset - or you would need to call in using a separate number versus internet audio. On your phone or tablet, you would conduct the video call just like you would any other call using your headset of choice and using internet audio. Most people find this much simpler, cleaner and easier to navigate the process.

4. Have a friend, relative, family member arrange a call with you using the chosen platform as well as the same geographic area you'll be in for the call. I have had several interviews in today's video interview world come to an end after the initial interview fell flat due to bad reception, inability to get the technology to work usually driven by operator error. This simple step:
 - a. Ensures you are comfortable with starting a call and getting it to work
 - b. Ensures that video quality is good
 - c. Tests the audio on your headset (**see point on this below**)
 - d. Makes sure the background is not distracting (**see point on this below as well**)
5. **Background Area** – Make sure that you know exactly where you are going to be when the video call takes place. If you're at home, you'll hopefully have more control over the area. If this is the case, sequester yourself from kids, dogs, cats, birds or any other house "pets" that may have a tendency to run into the room while you're talking. Few things can sideline a call quicker than having your cat jump up on your desk, knock over your phone or iPad as he attempts to get away from Rover!
 - a. If you're going to be at work and will "excuse" yourself to take the call in your car, please, please, please do yourself a favor and let the interviewer know the situation as soon as the call begins so that they will understand why you are in your car. If you can manage that expectation even before the call begins, **DO IT!** A simple text or email to the interviewer stating "Joe, I will be stepping out of my office during my lunch hour so that we can have our Zoom Video call at the time suggested. I will be in my car – sitting still NOT DRIVING – I hope that will not be a problem. If so, let me know and we can look at other time options. Thanks."
 - b. Make sure the background area is clear of anything distracting. A plain wall with a neutral, soft color would work best if at all possible.
 - c. Try not to do take the call in front of a window that may have a lot of activity outside. If you're in your car, make sure you're parked in an area that doesn't have a lot of activity going on outside the windows.
6. **Phone or Tablet Placement** – For all things good and decent, make sure you position the device in a secure, stable and consistent location. ***DO NOT PLAN ON HOLDING THE PHONE OR TABLET IN YOUR HAND DURING THE CALL.*** The person on the other end of the call may feel like you're in the middle of an earthquake during the call if you do this! Regardless of how hard you try to be still, you will still shake the phone or tablet during the call. Position the device on a holder that is ideally at eye level. If you have to place the tripod or holder on some books to accomplish this, then do it. You ideally want to be eye to eye during the call.

- a. Make sure you are making eye contact with ***THE CAMERA*** and not just the screen during the call. Just like talking to someone face to face, it's important to find the balance between looking away and making eye contact. If you are always looking at their face on the screen, you are never making eye contact. If you're only looking at the camera, you may seem somewhat strange since you're never breaking eye contact. Remember ***BALANCE***
7. **Headset/Headphones** – Let's start with the Do's:
 - a. Best rule of thumb – simple is better with this point. Use your headphones that came with the device if you have them available.
 - b. If you have a high-quality Bluetooth device such as Air Pods or some other device that you know without a doubt works 99.9% to 100% of the time without fail on your phone, then feel free to use that.
 - c. If the device you're using is wireless and Bluetooth, make sure they are fully charged
 - d. **DO NOT USE YOUR SPEAKER!!** Using your speaker allows 100% of the background noise to flow through onto the call and is not the best for you to hear. You will find yourself saying “can you repeat that” more times than I typically say that to my wife and kids!
8. **Consider the Lighting** – Make sure that the lighting is adequate, and you can be seen clearly without shadows, dark spots or any glare from light sources. This may seem like a minor point, but once again it is another factor to consider in today's electronic interview world we live in. It's one of those “non-verbal” forms of communication that could impact someone's perception.
9. **What to Wear?** – Keep in mind, this ***IS*** an interview. First impressions do matter – even on a video interview. If the thought of dressing appropriately above the equator while wearing your beach wardrobe down south crosses your mind, ***DON'T!*** Business casual at the least and formal business attire if you can do it without creating any questions at the office.
10. **Turn it Off** – Before your call begins, make sure that you have disabled notifications, turned off the ringer and any vibrate function. With that said, make sure you are looking at your phone at the appointed time of the video call since you won't have any ringer turned on.
11. **Give and Take** – Just like you prepare by doing research on the firm, position and the interviewer, make sure you have well thought out questions that show you are engaged, listening and interested. Have questions written out on your notepad so that you are not having to spend precious seconds trying to think of questions.
 - a. Keep your questions at a high level. This is a get-to-know-you step in the process. Think of it as a blind date. Your desire is to get to know them, their company, particulars of the position, what it takes to succeed in the firm, the

role, etc. You aren't looking for a marriage proposal at this stage – just a second date.

- b. Stay away from salary, bonus, benefits, time-off, ability to work from home, days you can take your pet to work, etc.
12. **Wrapping It Up** – Make sure that you articulate your interest. You will probably still have questions that need answering, but keep in mind that this is the first step in the process. Your goal is to get to a face-to-face interview to gather more information and determine if the role, the company, the leadership is right for you and your career. The best way to let them know you're interested is by telling them! Don't leave this to chance or "hope" they see/hear your interest. A simple statement of "Jill, thanks for your time. Based on the research I did prior to our call – and what I've learned today from you – I am definitely interested in moving forward. What are typical next steps in your hiring process?"
13. **Follow It Up** – Make sure that you get the interviewers email address before the end of the call. Simply ask "Do you have an email address that I could contact you at if any additional questions come to mind?"
- a. Once you have the email, follow-up with a Thank You email before the close of the day.
 - b. Have a friend or colleague read your Thank You email to ensure it is clear, concise and grammatically correct. I'm a firm believer in having another set of eyes review anything like this that is making a statement of who I am. Don't simply reply on spellcheck. It doesn't always work.

If you speak to 100 different recruiting professionals, you'll get 100 different ideas on ways to hit a home run during this process. This is not an all-encompassing list but is a good starting point. Please feel free to email me directly at jr@benaiahcg.com if you have questions or need additional interview tips as you navigate the waters of career-change in these chaotic times we face today.