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Ace your video interview in these unprecedented times

By: Randi Lewis ◉ March 24, 2020

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, while some businesses and law firms have rescheduled interviews, others are taking the opportunity to get ahead of the hiring curve by conducting their interviews by videoconference. I have been preparing lawyers over the past week for video interviews and thought I would share the tips in this column to help you present your best from home.



Location, location, location. If you have a home office, choosing the location for this video interview is easy. Use your office. If not, choose a location with the least distractions. Make sure your children and pets will not be able to distract you or disturb the interview. Limit other distractions such as turning off the ring on your home and mobile phones and turning down the sound of music and TV.

Download and test. As soon as you receive the videoconference link, download the program on the computer you will be using. Then test it to make sure it is working properly. Ensure your video and sound are turned on. If you need help, go to the website of the videoconference you downloaded. If you are asked to create a user name, it should be a professional name.

Check your camera position. Determine where your web cam is positioned on your computer. Keep it as close to eye height as possible. This may mean raising or lowering your chair.

Lighting. Keep in mind that lighting is important. The ideal lighting is slightly above you and in front of you and the camera. Avoid placing lights behind you and check to eliminate bright light shining through a window. Both can create a glare.

The eyes have it. During your interview, please look directly into the camera and not at the screen or below. You don't want to appear to be looking down or away. Eye contact during a video interview is as important as it is during an in-person interview. And remember to smile appropriately.

Check your desk and the background. Notice the surroundings your camera will transmit to your interviewers. Make sure your desk is neat and clean. Remove any personal items in your background and, if possible, close the door to a room or an office.

Dress for success. Look your best. Even though you will be at home, dress up. Looking great will help you project confidence and competence.

Prep like a pro. Prepare for a video interview in the same way you would prepare for an in-person interview. Research the organization. Read bios and LinkedIn profiles of the interviewers. Place three things neatly on your desk for your easy reference: your resume, the job description, if any, and a note pad with neatly written questions or bullet points to which you can refer if necessary.

Connect early. On the day of your video interview, sign on 30 minutes before the scheduled time to make sure you are connected and ready to go. This way, if there is a problem you have more time to fix it.

Follow these tips to help ace your video interview and maximize your chances of landing your job of choice.

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