**Westbrook High School**

**Career Connections**

**Tips for Virtual Interviews**

Virtual interviews have become more and more important to business and industry as a time- and cost-saving move as well as to protect employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many companies plan virtual interviews for the initial rounds of candidate reviews before bringing potential finalists to the office for in-person interviews.

Preparing for any interview is tough enough. After you have taken time to research information about the company and the requirements of the job, follow these tips from A. R. Mazzotta Employment Specialists[[1]](#endnote-1):

**Tip #1: Log in a few minutes early.**

* You don’t want to keep the hiring manager waiting because you are running late. Not only does this look bad, but you will also be less focused, distracting you from your interview answers.
* Take the time in the virtual waiting room to clear your mind and to make sure your video and audio are working well.

**Tip #2: Look the part.**

* In addition to dressing for success, you are going to want to present yourself and your surroundings in a professional manner. Your setting says as much about you as your appearance. See the tips below to set up a professional atmosphere for the interview.

**Tip #3: Be mindful of your body language.**

* Even on screen, before you open your mouth, the hiring manager is going to be reading your body language. You want to come across as confident.
* Smile and look into the camera when speaking. Make sure you continue this throughout the interview.
* Speak clearly.
* Avoid fidgeting.
* Make “eye contact” through the camera lens.

**Tip #4: Be concise and thorough.**

* The first question you answer is going to set the tone for the rest of your responses. So, make sure you are both concise, as well as thorough when answering it.
* Don’t ramble or repeat yourself.
* At the same time, don’t be so brief that the hiring manager doubts your ability or expertise.

Take time to prepare for your interview by making sure your surroundings look professional. Use the following tips to set up your device for the most professional virtual appearance:

**Tip #5: Find flattering lighting.**

* Try to find a virtual meeting space with diffused lighting.
* ****Face the window. Putting the window behind you causes you to be shadowed, and the hiring manager will not see your face well.

**** Window behind the job candidate.

Same room but facing the window.

* No window? Try placing a lamp behind your laptop (or phone) rather beside it. When the light is behind your laptop, it will shine on your face and reduce unflattering shadows.

**Tip #6: Think about your camera angle.**

* Set up your laptop (or phone) so that the camera of your device is at or slightly above eye level. Place your laptop on top of a box to lift up the camera angle. Avoid placing your laptop (or phone) on your desk or table because this causes you to look down into the camera making your eyes look closed. Thinking about the camera angle also keeps hiring manager from looking up your nose!



Device setting on desk with camera below eye level.

Device setting on a box with camera at eye level.

* Adjust the camera angle so that you have only about an inch or two of space above your head on the screen. This is more flattering and fills the screen with you rather than your ceiling or distracting backgrounds.

**Tip #7: Keep distractions to a minimum.**

* Look at the background. A white wall works well, but you may want to consider the “bookcase” background. Remember, you want hiring manager to focus on you and not the objects you have hanging on the walls behind you.
* Minimize touching your face during the presentation.
* While hydrating is important, try to void drinking during your interview.
* If you must speak with your hands, think about making slower movements which will remain more in focus for the hiring manager.

**Tip #8: Look at the camera when speaking.**

* **This is a difficult one since it isn’t natural!** In virtual meetings, you may be drawn to look at the hiring manager’s image projected on the screen while you are speaking. Making eye contact at both in-person and virtual interviews is important, but during a virtual interview, making eye contact means you need to look at the camera while you are speaking.
* If your vision is focused on the hiring manager instead of the camera while you are speaking, it may look like you are paying attention to things on your desk, your phone, or other distractions. Instead, make a deliberate effort to look at your camera while you are speaking, since that is where the hiring manager actually is!



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Watching the hiring manager while speaking.

Looking at the camera while speaking.

1. *How to Set the Tone for a Virtual Interview*. (2020, April 13). A.R. Mazzotta. https://www.armazzotta.com/blog/ [↑](#endnote-ref-1)