

10 INTERVIEW TIPS

The pandemic has changed how we work, and how we interview for a job. Your virtual presence now plays a huge role in your ability to be successful.

Here are 10 Tips to help you Rock that Interview!

TIP #1. Know your virtual platforms. In order to look and sound your best for a virtual interview, you've got to know how to use the platform to your greatest advantage. Be sure to add a high res profile picture to your free Zoom account.

Establish your audio and video settings in Zoom. Some of your choices will be dictated by what kind of a computer you have. I'm a Macbook Pro user, and in the "My Video" section, I've checked off:

- Enable HD
- Mirror my video
- Touch up my appearance

In the audio section, the settings are dictated by the speakers and microphone built into your computer. Keep in mind that the mic in your computer is worth about 2 dollars. If you want to sound better than anybody else, invest in a separate microphone.

Here are (2) suggestions:

- a wireless USB Adapter Headphone set with a detachable boom microphone. This is plug & play and it allows you to look like a pro and be more animated. (\$79.99 on Amazon)
- the Blue Yeti. It's a multidirectional, USB condenser microphone, with a nice, full sound and it's also plug and play. You do need an adaptor. \$149.00 on Musician's Friend.com

Always test your connection and your equipment before the call starts.

TIP #2: Look like a pro. Dress like this interview matters to you. Wear a power color that compliments your complexion and your hair. Avoid stripes and patterns because they can affect the camera.

Attention Ladies: WEAR MAKEUP! Harvard professor Nancy Etcoff did a study that shows conclusively that wearing the right amount of makeup increases the perception of a woman's competence, trustworthiness and likability.

Tip #3: Staging & Lighting. Create a spot where there is eye candy: a book shelf, a fireplace with a mantle that has interesting objects on it. A great background is a reflection of your personal story.

- Side lighting and lighting that comes from the upper front is best. Avoid back lighting.
- Elevate your laptop so that you are not looking down at the screen. This can be as simple as stacking some books underneath it.
- Shut the door to keep noise to a minimum.
- Silence your phone...and never look at your phone during an interview. Stay engaged and focused.
- If you've got notes you want to bring with you, tape them to a wall at eye level in front of you.

Tip #4: Body Language. It only takes 5 seconds to make a first impression.

- Become a student of body language by watching people closely for signs of how they are feeling. Then, become very self-aware of the messages you are sending out into the world.
- Check yourself before the interview begins by sitting up straight with your shoulders back and your chin up. Good posture is a sign of positive self-esteem. When the interview begins, don't look at yourself, look at the camera. Maintain good eye contact which is an easy, steady gaze.

Tip #5: Your Smile. When we smile, our facial expression automatically changes. In fact, when we smile at someone, and they smile back, your brains secrete dopamine and an instant connection is made

Tip #6: Your voice is a powerful communications tool. While Body Language makes up 65% of a first impression, verbal ability makes up 35%.

- Most people only use a few notes in their vocal range, and it makes them boring to listen to.
- To sound more interesting, THINK about what the words you are saying actually mean. When you do this, you give your brain the chance to color or emphasis certain words to heighten their meaning. This is called Vocal Variety and it is the key to being a better communicator.
- If you want to up your interview skills: practice using vocal variety. Check out episode #5 of The Speaker Coach for a full tutorial.

Tip #7: Eliminate Filler Words. What are filler words? Umm, ahh, like, you know, so, sort of, okay, hmmmmm. Filler words are our brain's way of filling space while we try to find the next word to say.

- Filler words undermine our credibility because we sound like we have no idea what we are talking about.
- How do you break this bad habit? Learn the power of the pause. Pausing gives our brain the chance to retrieve the word we are looking for. When we pause, the listener leans in to see what we will say next and suddenly, we have their attention.
- It takes 30 days to break a bad habit. Here is my trick for losing your filler word: grab a package of sticky notes and a black Sharpie. Write down the filler word you say the most on 4-6 sticky notes and put a big X through that filler word. Post the notes within your eye view. Every time your brain sees that word with an X through it, it gets the message: Don't say that word!

Tip #8: UpSpeak? UpSpeak also known as UpTalk is when we end each sentence on an up note. The result is that we sound like we are asking a question instead of making a statement and we lose credibility.

- To stop using UpSpeak, be mindful that the words you are saying are coming out of your mouth straight ahead, with no up note at the end of the sentence.

Tip #9: The 3-C's of Communication.

1. Be Clear
2. Be Concise
3. Be Conversational

Tip #10: Belly Breathing.

- If you want to lower your cortisol (the stress hormone) and raise your endorphins (the happy hormone) do 2-minutes of belly breathing before your interview starts. Belly breathing is a valuable skill that can help you in any stressful situation. Breathe in through your nose and out your mouth, slowly. Belly breathing can be done sitting, laying down on your back, or leaning forward against a wall with your arms out in front of you. The key is to close your eyes, and breathe from your belly, slowly. Your shoulders should not rise. Done correctly, belly breathing will calm you and help you rock that interview!
- For a tutorial on belly breathing download Episode #1 of The Speaker Coach.

Remember: No matter how you sound, I can make you sound better.