



Next Phase
Life Science Solutions

Video Interviews:

How to make the best
impression when you
can't meet face to face



This guide is a companion to our “Advanced Interview Tips”, which you can find here. If you are having a video interview, we strongly recommend that you read both sets of tips, because we have tried to avoid duplication. You are welcome to call us any time on **01403 216216** if you have any questions or would like advice. We also like to share useful information on our Next Phase website and our social media pages including **LinkedIn**, **Twitter**, **Instagram** and **Facebook**, so please follow us for the latest guidance and support.

INTRODUCTION

Video interviews always used to be just one part of the recruitment process, if they even happened at all. In a post-coronavirus world, video interviews have become far more prominent and are, in many cases, the only interview you might have. We are all used to having video chats with friends and family on WhatsApp, Skype, Facebook Messenger, House Party or other apps; but what about having an interview through video? What should you wear? Where should you be? What is the etiquette for taking it in turns to speak, especially when it is a group interview? How long will it last?

Whilst some interviewers are very tech-savvy, for most people it is still a novelty to conduct an interview via video. You may be feeling slightly uncomfortable being in front of a camera; but equally your interviewer might be uncomfortable conducting the meeting in this way too. Many of our clients have said to us recently that video interviews, and indeed the lockdown as a whole, have been something of a leveller across all people, removing some of the formality and the distinction between “candidate” and “hiring manager”. In many respects, this is a great thing for the recruitment process and for people building rapport with each other. However, you must also be wary of falling into the trap of becoming too informal. Remember that the interviewer is still your future manager / superior; and your manner in the interview needs to reflect this, just as much as it would in a face-to-face meeting.



TECHNOLOGY

There are so many different video platforms which can be used for interviews, including Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, Starleaf, Bluejeans, Skype, Skype For Business and many more. Some require you to download some software or an app first, whilst others can be accessed through simply clicking a link. The interviewer will decide on the format and it is our job, as your representatives, to make sure you are fully aware of what to do.

The most important thing is to ensure you are 100% clear on the format, plenty of time before the interview. If you are not sure what to do or what to expect, please ask. There is nothing worse than the first few minutes of a video interview being taken up with technical issues, especially when you want to make a strong first impression.

Laptop, Tablet or Mobile? We recommend that you use the biggest screen you have available, and one that is not going to move. We would only suggest using a mobile if you either don't have a computer or larger device to hand, or if the audio quality on your other devices is poor.

You will need to have a good **internet connection** with a bandwidth speed of at least 1 megabit per second. Try to place yourself close to your router as well. If you have unreliable WIFI, it is best to turn off all other devices (including TV, Alexa, Sonos speakers and any other WIFI-enabled technology) to help your interview run smoothly.

What is the best background? Generally, you want a fairly plain background that is not going to detract from you. This doesn't mean it needs to be a plain wall - it can sometimes help to have something pleasant in the background. But we would recommend something that it is quite neutral and which is unlikely to provoke too much judgement from the interviewer. Some software, such as Teams and Zoom, allows you to superimpose yourself on a different background; but be wary of novelty.

Practice beforehand. A lot of people like to do a test run of the commute before driving to an interview. Testing out the software for a video interview in advance is similar - it means you know what to expect and will have one less thing to think about on the day. We can help you with a test run to make sure everything works, give feedback on your chosen background, and ensure you can be seen and heard correctly - please just ask.



CHECKLIST HAVE THE FOLLOWING TO HAND

- A drink, in a plain mug or glass
- Copies of your CV and the job description
- Pad of paper and a pen
- If your interview is going to require you to share your screen (which you will be told in advance), then it may help you to have a second monitor if one is available. This way, you can still see the interviewers' faces on one screen and it may help you to gauge their reactions if you are giving a presentation





BODY LANGUAGE

Eye Contact? One of the challenges with video calls is that when you look at the other person's face in the middle of your screen, to them you appear to be looking slightly away from them (this is because of the positioning of the camera). Similarly, the interviewer may not seem like they are looking directly at your eyes; but from their side they are. It can be hard to know whether to look at the camera, or to look at the face(s) of the interviewer(s).

There is not a right or wrong place to look; but whichever you choose, stick to it. It can be distracting to others if your gaze jumps around too much.

Sit up straight. Not only will you appear more confident and professional with your shoulders back and head up, but it will help to improve the clarity of your voice.

Microphone positioning. Most people in an interview situation may prefer not to wear a headset, even if they have one. If you are using the built-in microphone on a laptop, remember that it is a directional microphone, meaning that it only picks up sound directly in front of it. If you move your head to the side, the sound may cut out – so keep looking straight ahead.

Smile and nod. Non-verbal clues such as smiling and nodding (more frequently than you might in person) will also really help with building rapport and show that you are engaging well with the interviewer.



OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Warm up. Vocal exercises can be a really good idea. If you are on your own at home, you could even break out your inner Pavarotti for a few minutes! Perhaps call a friend or family member 20 minutes before the interview, partly to warm up your “interview voice” and partly to get you in the right mindset for talking about yourself without feeling self-conscious. If you are at home, try not to go straight from silence to the interview – you will feel much more prepared if you are physically warmed up.

Reflecting language. A very subtle, but effective, trick is to study the wording of the job description before the interviews, and perhaps have a copy of it to hand during the call. The chances are that the interviewer had some involvement in writing the job description; so if you see a phrase such as “pragmatic approach to continuous improvement”, “promoting a quality culture”, or “demonstrating accountability”, don't be afraid to say these words yourself in your answers. In a subtle way, it will help you and the interviewer(s) to use the same language and build rapport, in the absence of face-to-face contact.

Allow short gaps. Even with a fast internet connection, there is often a very slight time delay on video calls. Make sure you give the interviewers enough time to finish their questions before you respond. Not only will it give you time to think of a coherent response, it will also mean you don't speak over the person you're trying to impress.





AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Video interviews are often limited by strict time constraints. Hopefully you will know in advance how long the interview should last (video interviews can sometimes be as short as 20 minutes, or as long as an hour or more), so bear this in mind throughout. If you come off the call feeling unsure how it went, with your head spinning and a multitude of questions still unanswered, this is often a GOOD sign! There is no way you will be able to cover everything you would like to cover in such a short time, so do not try to cram it all in. Respond carefully to the specific questions that you are asked.

Please call Next Phase as soon as possible after the interview on **01403 216 216** so we can talk through your feedback. We will then pass this feedback on to the interviewer(s) and ensure that this crucial part of the interview process is handled in the most informed, appropriate, accurate and professional way possible.

Next Phase Ltd.
2nd Floor, 7-8 Sterling Buildings, Carfax,
Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1DR

Telephone 01403 216216
Email info@nextphaserecruitment.com
Website www.nextphaserecruitment.com

ABOVE ALL, BE
YOURSELF.
THOUGH YOU
SHOULD NOT NEED
IT, GOOD LUCK!

Now, where's that
charger....?

