How to Prepare for a Skype Interview
By Isabel Sperry   Vault Guide

While you probably have experience with in-person and phone interviews, Skype interviews may be uncharted territory. A video interview may seem daunting, as it poses many potential obstacles—from a shaky internet connection to your roommate accidentally barging into your room. Here are some tips we've compiled to help you have the most seamless, successful video interview possible.

1. Dress in business attire
Unlike a phone interview, you need to pay attention to how you visually present yourself in a Skype interview. That means everything from smiling, to using appropriate body language, to dressing in business attire. Even though the interview may take place from the comfort of your own home, you still need to project a professional image. And don't think you can get away with only wearing business attire on your top half—you never know when you might have to get up in the middle of the interview to adjust technical equipment, and you definitely don't want to be caught wearing your pajama bottoms!

2. Choose an appropriate setting
It's important to select a distraction-free setting that will be conducive to your interview. Choose a quiet space—ideally a room with a door—and ask any roommates you have to give you privacy during the interview. Be sure to silence any noisy devices that could go off in the middle of the interview, such as your phone or Amazon Echo. You also need to consider the aesthetics of your Skype interview. Set up your computer in an area with a minimalist background, such as a plain wall. You want your interviewer's attention to be on you, not on what's behind you. Lastly, you need to make sure the space has everything you need for the interview, such as a strong internet connection.

3. Test out your tech equipment
The day before your interview, test out the video conferencing platform beforehand. Download any plug-ins you may need—such as Skype for Business—and test out the video and microphone functions to make sure everything is working properly. Tech issues are bound to arise over Skype—we've all experienced a weak connection or time lag before—so do everything in your power to prevent them from happening on your end.

4. Practice the interview with a friend
If you're new to video interviewing, take some time to do a run-through of the interview with a friend the day before the real thing. You need to get used to talking while looking at the camera, rather than the computer screen, as it's the only way to make direct eye contact with the other person on the call. Ask your friend for feedback after the practice interview, to make sure everything ran smoothly.

5. Prepare notes
One of the benefits of a video interview is that you can prepare notes for yourself in advance to use during the interview. Of course, you want to be discreet when looking at notes during the interview—i.e. you should never be reading them word for word. But if you want to jot down a couple key talking points or questions and reference them, that's totally fine. If you choose to do this, create a sticky note on your computer with notes so you don't have to look down at a piece of paper. Even just knowing that you have notes available to reference can give you that extra boost of confidence you need to ace the interview.

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