

HOW TO ACE AN ONLINE INTERVIEW

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This article highlights the changes that took place in our working lives because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the hiring process is of great importance to any employee, the focus of our attention is online interviews. In this article they are understood as job interviews that rely on video technologies to make the discussion take place remotely. Our aim is the revelation of ways to pass online interviews without any difficulties. To achieve the aim we discuss the advantages and disadvantages of online interviews, conduct a questionnaire revealing the most popular video conferencing applications and hold a mock interview. After the interview common mistakes are analysed. On the basis of our mock interview we make a list of recommendations for anyone preparing for online interviews.

Key words: online interviews; video conferencing applications; mock interview; interview questions; list of recommendations.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic our working lives have undergone a number of changes. Flexitime, online internships, and, most importantly, online interviews have become the order of the day.

An online interview is a job interview that relies on video technologies to make the discussion take place remotely. As modern businesses regularly take on new employees, knowing how to pass an online interview will definitely be an advantage.

The aim of this work is the revelation of ways to pass online interviews without any difficulties.

To achieve the aim the following tasks have been put forward:

- To identify the advantages and disadvantages of online interviews,
- To carry out a questionnaire revealing the most popular platforms for holding online interviews,
- To conduct a mock interview,
- To analyze what employers look for in online interviews,
- To make a list of recommendations for students preparing for online interviews.

The main advantages of online interviews are that they are cheaper and more time-saving than face-to-face interviews. In addition they are contact-free and the interviewee can choose any location he or she likes. The main disadvantages are that some candidates don't have the necessary technical skills to take part and that eye contact is limited.

To narrow the study and to find out which video conferencing applications the students of our faculty used we turned to the method of questioning. 72 students were involved. We revealed that Zoom (41,7%), Skype (40,3%) and Google Meet (18,1%) were the most frequently used platforms.

Then we went on to conduct a mock interview in Zoom for the fictive position of a tour guide. 15 people volunteered to take part. They were asked the following questions: Why do you want to do this job? What is your background? What personal qualities make you the best candidate for this position?

Although everyone's answers were different, we managed to rate them using the following criteria:

- Completeness of the response,
- Coherence of the response,
- The candidate's reaction to the questions,
- The candidate's attitude,
- The candidate's organizational skills.

The table below shows how many students gave perfect, flawed and unsatisfactory answers.

Table

Question	Perfect response	Flawed response	No response
Why do you want to do this job?	8	5	2
What is your background?	4	10	1
What personal qualities make you the best candidate for this job?	3	8	4

At the end of the experiment we 'hired' 3 candidates, whose responses to all three questions were perfect (table). They passed our mock interview due to the fact that their answers were informative, accurate and logical. They thanked us for every question and demonstrated great confidence while answering. Their organizational skills also assisted them. Successful candidates had their equipment prepared in advance so as to avoid any problems with their Internet connection or their cameras.

Those whose responses were flawed gave relevant arguments and were polite, but displayed poor organizational skills (table). Whenever they wanted to write something down they started searching for their notebooks. Some of them had difficulty tuning in.

The third category is full of unsatisfactory answers (table). Either the candidates' responses were short or there was silence. Snappy and arrogant responses were also added to this category.

Therefore, it can be stated that employers look for candidates who are able to give full and accurate answers to any question, take the initiative and rise to the challenge.

On the basis of our mock interview we were able to draw up a list of recommendations for everyone preparing for online interviews:

- Set up your space in advance
- Having a stable Internet connection, uncluttered background and a notebook can play a part in making a good impression on the hiring manager. This also demonstrates how responsible the candidate is.
- Practise answering interview questions in front of the camera
- One of the difficulties of online interviews is that candidates have to answer questions without seeing the reaction of the hiring manager. Being ready to respond while looking at the camera is a skill that has to be mastered.
- Work on your intonation
- Some candidates fail because of the fact that they sound discouraged and reluctant. Employers want to hire those who will thrive under pressure, not those who will quit right away. Improving one's intonation can be vital in this case.
- Dress smartly
- Even though it is not a conventional interview it is equally important to dress formally. This is a perfect way to impress the interviewer and prove that you are a diligent employee.
- Be punctual

Being late for an online interview could cost the interviewee his or her job, as the employer will not wait. It is essential that candidates should tune in about five minutes in advance.

In conclusion, we would like to say that the aim and the tasks were achieved. We tried to understand not only theoretical aspects of the problem, but also to conduct our own experiment. As a result, we worked out recommendations for everyone preparing for online interviews.

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