Cutting Edge *Connect* ™

Making a Visual Difference in the Recruiting Industry

Video Conference/Skype Interview Preparation Guide

Interviews conducted with the use of a computer can offer the best of both worlds. They offer face-to-face meetings with potential employers, while omitting the travel. As with any interview, preparation is key. The following are tips to make sure you are prepared and succeed in your video conference/Skype interview. First impressions cannot be changed, so make a great one!

Environment and Equipment

Be sure that you have the necessary equipment working correctly. Test it with another person before your scheduled appointment.

Environment:

- Your background must be a neutral, white or grey wall. You don't want the background to distract an interviewer. Do not use a sheet as your background, unless it is ironed and flat.
- The webcam should be **eye level** so you are looking straight into the webcam. Imagine a person is directly behind the webcam and you are speaking to them.
- Make sure that your face and body takes up two thirds of the video image. Adjust the webcam to show white space of 1/8 of the screen above your head.
- Ensure the room is well lit and quiet.
- The most common problem is too much light on one side of your face. A floor lamp can help balance the lighting.
- Unlike a face-to-face or phone interview, your first impression during a video or Skype interview doesn't actually involve you. The first thing your interviewer will see is your Skype username and picture, so double check that they are both interview appropriate. **Keep your profile professional.**

Audio Requirements:

- Be familiar with audio settings and volume (in Windows Control Panel or Macintosh System Preferences).
- Be familiar with the screen setting and brightness.
- Avoid the "can you hear me now" dialogue during the interview with adequate preparation.

PC and Network Settings:
You will be using a large amount of bandwidth during the interview. It is recommended to:

- Turn off all programs except Skype and your internet system. Email programs and browsers use bandwidth at uncertain intervals – they disrupt video and sound transmission.

- A hard connection to your internet connection is best, such as an Ethernet cable or USB connection to your router. Wi-Fi will work well if you are close to the access point with an "excellent" connection / signal quality.
- Put anti-virus software into a silent or sleep mode. Turn off any background scans.
- Ask family members to stay off the internet for the time you interviewing.

The Interview

- **Look at the camera, not the screen**
  It can be tempting to watch yourself or the interviewer, but looking directly at the camera is the only way to maintain direct eye contact with your interviewer.

- **Dress for the interview**
  When it comes to what to wear, treat your video conference/Skype interview like a face-to-face interview. Dress professionally from head to toe. There is that old saying, if you are dressed professionally, you will act professionally.

- **Use notes**
  Don't be afraid to have notes or a copy of your resume handy when you interview. Another benefit of having an interview online is that you can have a cheat sheet in front of you so that you don't have to memorize everything you want to mention. The notes should be in outline form or quick bullet point reminders, not a script. Relying too heavily on them can cause awkward pauses during your interview. An interviewer won't be impressed if you are looking down and they only see the top of your head during the interview.

- **Avoid interruptions**
  If you are interviewing with multiple people or pets nearby, be sure to let everyone know ahead of time that you will be in an interview. Be sure to secure any animals away from your interview space.

- **Watch your body language**
  It is important to have good posture and avoid fidgeting in the chair. If you are standing, make sure to give yourself a wide base by spreading your feet. A practical public speaking tip is to place your left foot slightly in front of your body and to the left while your right foot is directly behind you.

Although it is important to be prepared for the technical and general aspects of a video conference/Skype interview, the next step is to prepare for the actual question and answering period during the interview. Please refer to the Face-to-Face Interview Preparation Guide located on the Cutting Edge Connect website (www.ceconnectinc.com) to assist you further with your interview preparation. Remember, you only have one chance to make a great first impression!