



Executing a Successful Webcam Interview

With budget cuts occurring at the same time the world is getting smaller via technology, a natural progression toward the use of webcams for interviewing candidates is taking place. Many companies simply don't have the budget to send staff to universities to conduct on-campus interviews. Instead, these companies opt for phone interviews, and increasingly, webcam interviews through services like HireVue, ooVoo, and Skype.

When preparing for a webcam interview, in many ways, you will follow the same steps as when preparing for an in-person interview. (Those steps are described on the Interview Preparation Checklist document.) There are a few additional techniques to consider for creating an effective digital presence. Follow the tips below to have a successful webcam interview.

Manage Your Online Image

Since you will use your personal Skype account, or an account with a similar vendor, during a webcam interview it is very important to evaluate the professionalism of your online presence. Consider the picture included in your Skype profile: Did you upload a picture suitable for the workplace or use one where you are making weird faces or hanging out with friends? What is your Skype name? If it is something like bornabuckeye1990, it's time to make a change. Career services recommends that for your Skype name you simply use your first and last name with whatever number Skype attaches to it during the account set up process.

Now is a good time to also evaluate your general online presence. Use Google or another search engine to find out what employers will see if they run a search on your name. Make an effort to clean up anything they might find unbecoming or unprofessional.

Act Professionally

A webcam interview might feel more casual than an in-person interview, but it isn't. Good posture, eye contact, and minimal fidgeting are just as important as when being interviewed in-person. Remember that the interviewer will be able to see most of your upper body. If you are fidgeting – playing with a pen, checking your cell phone, reading notes, twirling your hair – they will definitely notice such behavior, and often evaluate it negatively. Turn off your cell phone, iPod, and all electronic devices. Set your icons to away or offline for your instant messengers or other web based applications. Have only the webcam program (e.g., Skype) open during the interview.

Dress Professionally

Just because the interviewer can't see your entire body, it doesn't mean it is okay to wear a blazer over pajama bottoms. Dress professionally from head to toe because it will help you feel professional and confident during the interview. If your outfit does not include a suit jacket, you are advised to not wear a white shirt or blouse because white material tends to diminish the quality of video images. And, depending upon your skin tone and the paint color of the room you are Skyping in, white can "wash out" your video image. Clothing with colorful patterns can also be distracting to the interviewer. Therefore, dark, solid colors are generally safe choices for digital interview clothing. Women should be mindful of the neckline on the outfit they are considering. Blouses with a slight scallop cut are considered more professional than v-necks or other revealing neckline styles.

Manage Your Environment

Use the webcam program to "see what the interviewer sees" and evaluate how you and the background space looks to the interviewer. Are you sitting too close or too far from the camera? You are encourage to adjust the camera angle and position as needed so that you are able to look at the interviewer on the computer screen while they are talking, but look directly into the camera while you answer their questions. This will allow you to have good eye contact with the interviewer.

Make sure there are no windows nearby that would create glare or shadows on your face. Clean up any clutter, and use a nice background like a solid wall, or a nicely organized bookshelf. Make sure it is quiet. Street noise, construction equipment, children, pets, and loud roommates all need to go. Anything you can hear will also be picked up by the interviewer...you want them to focus on your responses not distracting sounds.

Know the Technology

Practice using a webcam to talk with your friends and family to become familiar with adjusting the volume, picture size, camera placement, etc. If something goes wrong, it's better to learn possible fixes beforehand than to become flustered during the interview trying to solve the problem. If you are using someone else's system for the interview, give yourself plenty of time before the interview to get familiar with the set up and controls, and know who you can contact for assistance.

Have a Back-Up Plan

At the start of the webcam interview, discuss what to do should the screen freeze or the audio stop working. Will you be able to chat with the interviewer? Or, would they prefer for you to call instead? Be sure to have the interviewer's name and phone number so that if the internet goes down you can contact them to discuss alternatives.

Check out this great overview of successful webcam interview techniques: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=My677kxeCZM>

Use of Skype Space in ASC Career Services

Students and recent graduates using FutureLink now have the option of interviewing via a Skype equipped room in 100 Denney Hall. If you submit an application for an OCR (on-campus recruitment) position in FutureLink, and are selected for an interview, the employer will decide to either meet with you in person or via Skype. You will receive an e-mail notification from ASC Career Services if the interview is to be conducted via Skype. As the interviewee, you are required to:

1. Set up a Skype account if you don't already have one.
2. E-mail your Skype username to the employer at least 24-hours in advance of your interview
3. Arrive to 100 Denney Hall 15-minutes prior to your interview to allow ample time to adjust the camera and system settings so that the video image will be clear and focus on the area from your midsection to just above your head.
4. While not a requirement, you are strongly encouraged to pick out interview clothing that will not blend in with the Skype space. While skyping, you will be sitting in front of a wall with dark yellow paint; therefore, you are discouraged from wearing clothing with yellow or gold tones.

If you have been asked to interview online with an organization that is not recruiting via FutureLink, you can submit a request to asccareer@osu.edu to use the Skype space in Denney Hall. Requests should be submitted 5-7 business days prior to the desired interview time to increase the chance that the space will be available. Additionally, when you submit your request, you will need to provide career services with the name and e-mail address of the contact conducting the interview.

Use of the Skype service in Denney Hall is restricted to undergraduate students with an Arts and Sciences major and those who have completed an ASC bachelor's degree within the past four terms.