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Standing Out in Virtual Hiring Processes

Preparing for the Remote Interview: Top Tips for Candidates

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Preparing for the Remote Interview: Top Tips for Candidates



Remote interviews have become a standard part of the hiring process. In fact, for some companies, they're the only way to ensure they can connect with and review the right range of candidates.

The process works for everyone. No trains to catch, no meeting rooms to find. More people can be brought into the process.

Yet it's a different kind of conversation. Without a handshake or small talk on the way to the room, you lose a layer of connection. A slight delay in the audio can make an answer feel flat. Poor lighting can make you look less alert than you are. You can't read the panel in quite the same way when two of them are just profile pictures on a screen.

Strong remote interview skills bridge that gap. They're how you ensure you're ready for both the questions and the interview format. Here are the skills candidates really need to develop today.

What You Will Learn in This Post

- **Master pre-interview technology setup** – Test platforms, optimise internet connection, and configure audio/video settings to avoid technical disruptions that damage first impressions
- **Create a professional virtual environment** – Position lighting correctly, choose distraction-free backgrounds, and eliminate noise interference to appear polished on screen
- **Develop virtual communication skills** – Maintain camera eye contact, control body language effectively, and adjust vocal delivery to compensate for the lack of in-person presence
- **Prepare strategic interview content** – Research beyond company basics, develop relevant stories, and ask insightful questions that demonstrate genuine interest in remote work dynamics
- **Execute with confidence during the call** – Start strong, deliver concise answers, engage multiple interviewers effectively, and showcase remote work readiness through focused participation
- **Follow up professionally** – Send timely thank-you messages, deliver promised materials promptly, and reflect on performance to improve future interviews.

Pre-Interview Technology Preparation

Plenty of virtual interviews start badly for reasons that have nothing to do with the candidate's ability. The link doesn't open. The sound is faint. The camera points at the ceiling. It's not a great first impression, and it's avoidable if you check things the day before.

Open the platform ahead of time. Not just to see if it launches, but to click through the settings as well. Zoom will let you sharpen the image and adjust the background. Microsoft Teams offers various views that make it easier to view everyone in a single panel. Google Meet has captions built in, which is useful if there's a bit of echo on the line.

If you're using software that you've never tried before, ensure it works with your browser and grant it access to your microphone and camera, so you're not rushed through pop-ups when the call starts.

Remember, the internet connection is the backbone of the system. Shut down anything you don't need running and keep your charger connected.

Sound quality is just as important as the picture. Even a basic wired headset can make a big difference. Test it with a real person, not just by talking to yourself on screen.

Also, keep anything you might need (CV, portfolio, slides), on your device, and available online. If you plan to glance at notes, be upfront about it. It's better for the interviewer to know than to wonder why your eyes keep shifting away.

Virtual Communication and Body Language Mastery

Research shows us that that 55% of communication comes down to body language but talking to a camera isn't the same as speaking to a person face-to-face. You lose little things, like the quick glance when someone's about to speak, the energy in the room, and the subtle shift when someone's really engaged. That means the basics matter more.

Eye contact is one of them. Most people keep their eyes on the other person's face on the monitor. Makes sense. Except from their side, it looks like you're always looking just below them. Every so often, glance at the camera instead. It feels odd at first, but to them it feels like you're talking straight to them.

Movement is another. Chairs that swivel make you look distracted without you realising. A hand tapping a pen sounds louder than you think. Even leaning too far back can give off the wrong signal. Sitting forward a bit, staying still enough without being stiff, works better on screen than it does in a room.

Your voice has to carry more weight here too. Online, you don't get the same help from body language, so slowing down slightly helps. Not so much that it sounds staged, just enough to make sure they catch it all, even if there's a small delay.

Then there's listening. On video, people can't always tell if you're following them unless you show it. A small nod. A quick "got it" or "that makes sense" when they pause. All of these things give your interviewer feedback that lets them know you're listening.

Interview Content Preparation and Research

There's small talk on the way to the meeting room, time to read the mood, moments to settle in.

Remote interviews don't give you that. One click and you're there, straight into questions. If you haven't done the homework, it shows fast.

Look past the basics. Everyone reads the company's "About" page. Go deeper. See what they've posted on LinkedIn in the last month. Skim their press releases. Even a quick look at employee profiles can tell you how long people stick around, or whether they've been hiring in your area. Those small details give you something to work with when you're making conversation.

Think about how the role works in a remote setup. If they never see you in person, how will they know you're reliable? If it's hybrid, how do they expect you to split your time? These are things you should be ready to talk about, not just for them, but for yourself.

Have a couple of stories ready. Talk about a time you solved something tricky. A time you worked with someone you'd never met face to face. Keep them short. People remember details.

If you're asked about something technical, don't just say you can do it. Show them. Have a file open, or a link ready, so you're not scrambling mid-call.

Ask your own questions, too. Try "What does a good first six months look like here?" or "What's the hardest part of the job that doesn't show up in the description?" Those answers tell you more than anything in the job ad.

During the Interview: Execution Excellence

The first minute matters more online than it does in person. There's no handshake, no walk from reception, no warm-up chatter while someone pours coffee. You're there, on screen, and they're looking at you straight away.

Start steady with a simple "Good morning, thanks for making the time," then let them set the pace. Be prepared for what you're going to do if the technology doesn't work as planned. If something glitches, acknowledge it, and tell them what you're going to try to fix the problem like refreshing your internet connection.

When you're answering questions, be clear and concise. Long answers can feel even longer on video. If they want more detail, they'll ask.

If there's more than one interviewer, pay attention to who's speaking, but make sure you look at the camera often enough that it feels like you're speaking to all of them.

Finally, focus on showing everyone you can work well remotely without having to say the words. Answer clearly, respond quickly, and stay engaged even when they're talking about something less exciting. It's those small signs of focus that tell them you'll show up the same way in the job.

Post-Interview Best Practices

Once you hang up, the room feels quiet. That's normal. You start replaying bits of the conversation in your head – the answer you wish you'd tightened, the one you think landed well. Leave it for a minute. Take a breath. Then get one last thing done.

Send a short thank-you note while the conversation's still warm. Just a quick message to say you appreciated their time, maybe mention one part of the discussion that stood out to you. That's enough. If you said you'd send something like a work sample, a link, or a reference, do it straight away. It shows you follow through on your promises.

After that, you wait. If they gave you a timeline, trust it. If it slips, a gentle check-in is fine, but don't start sending daily emails. Before you move on completely, jot down what worked and what didn't. A sentence or two. You'll thank yourself when the next interview rolls around.

Making the Interview Work for You

Remote interviews aren't going anywhere. For some roles, they're the whole hiring process. For others, they're the first gate you have to get through before anyone meets you in person. Either way, they're worth getting good at.

Most of it comes down to a few things: knowing your setup won't let you down, showing up like the conversation matters, and giving them a clear sense of what it would be like to work with you day to day. None of that happens by accident. It's in the preparation, the small details, the way you carry yourself once the call starts.

If there's one thing to keep in mind, it's that the interview isn't just about proving you can do the job. It's about making it easy for them to picture you already doing it. Every choice you make before, during, and after the call should help with that.

A little about Sarah Bishop and Recruit Recruit Ltd



Whether you're a sole trader hiring your first team member, a VC-backed startup needing to scale fast, or a corporate looking for top-tier C-suite talent, one thing stays true:

Your business grows when your people grow.

I help founders, CEOs and business leaders build brilliant teams through:

- **Recruitment:** finding and placing the right people for the right roles or embedding a talent team into growing businesses
- **Sales & Leadership Training:** developing high-performing teams that sell, lead and deliver
- **Speaking & EmCeeing:** energising events and conferences with insight, humour and practical takeaways
- **Coaching:** supporting leaders to grow confidently, communicate better, and build culture that sticks

Over the years, I've supported businesses at every stage, from bedroom startups to scale-ups and established firms navigating change. What they all have in common? A vision to grow and the ambition to get the right people on board to make it happen.

I bring no-nonsense advice, energy, empathy and results, whether I'm:

- Hiring a game-changing leadership role
- Training a founder-led team to sell with confidence
- Speaking on stage about team-building, fearless follow-up, or people strategy
- Coaching a business owner through their first ever hire

So, let's talk if:

- You're ready to grow and want to hire with confidence
- You need training or coaching to get more from your team (or yourself!)
- You're planning an event and want a speaker or EmCee who brings both energy and value

Drop me a message or connect – let's build something brilliant together.

Now – #1 Bestseller on Amazon –

Scale Up!: The Founders' Guide to Accelerating Growth by Building Dream Teams by Sarah Bishop

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