

# The New World of Job Interviews

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The employment [interview](#) isn't what it used to be. While the vast majority of interviews are the standard face-to-face variety, technological advancements have made it possible for employers and applicants to connect quickly in other ways.

Some hiring managers conduct phone interviews during the early phases of candidate searches; others may request you meet via videoconference if you live far away. And, yes, certain [companies](#) even hold virtual job fairs.

Following are tips for success when participating in non-traditional [job interviews](#).

## The Phone Interview

**Minimize distractions.** Conduct the call from a quiet, private setting. You won't impress hiring managers if they hear loud pets, honking horns, or your clicking keyboard in the background. If possible, use a landline (which is often more reliable than cellular phones), and disable the call-waiting function.

**Speak up.** Because the interviewer can't read your facial reactions or body language, verbalize your thoughts. After the hiring manager completes a thought, say something like, "Yes, that aspect of the job sounds appealing" to keep the discussion moving. Speak with confidence and enthusiasm.

**Have supplies handy.** Keep your [resume](#) and cover letter at arm's length, as well as any company research you've collected. You also might prepare a bulleted list of speaking points or questions. Make sure a pen and pad are nearby for taking notes.

## The Videoconference Interview

**Mock it up.** It's intimidating to be interviewed on camera. Calm jittery nerves by doing a trial run with a friend or family member. Record the mock interview and study areas where you can improve. Did you look at the camera, or did your eyes dart nervously around the room? Did you exhibit good posture or slouch? Rehearsing will help ensure you're polished at showtime.

**Beware of busy backgrounds.** Most video interviews are conducted at a videoconference site, your recruiter's workplace or an employer's satellite office. Wherever you are, remain the focal point by clearing the table of clutter. If you do the interview from home, choose a professional-looking, well-lit setting. In addition, make sure your computer's webcam and microphone are working properly a day in advance.

**Dress to impress.** Dress as nicely as you would for an on-site visit. And don't assume you'll only be visible from the shoulders up. More than a few jacket-clad candidates have unexpectedly been seated at see-through glass tables or stood up to reveal fashion faux pas such as jeans or shorts.

## The Virtual Interview

**Wear appropriate avatar apparel.** An avatar is a computer-generated icon you create to represent yourself online. If you attend a virtual job fair on Second Life, a popular online community, for instance, your avatar should look professional. You don't necessarily need to don a virtual suit for an "in-world" corporate recruiting event, but don't show up as a flashy nightclub-goer, space alien, or vampire.

**Message with care.** When communicating via instant message on Second Life, focus on accuracy, not speed. Hiring managers will likely forgive a typo or two, but making a series of grammatical goofs will cause them to question your writing skills and attention to detail. Take a moment to proofread your message and steer clear of emoticons and cyber slang.

No matter what the meeting format, always send a thank-you note to those with whom you [interview](#). Even when communicating with a hiring manager using high-tech tools, a traditional handwritten letter of appreciation will be well received.