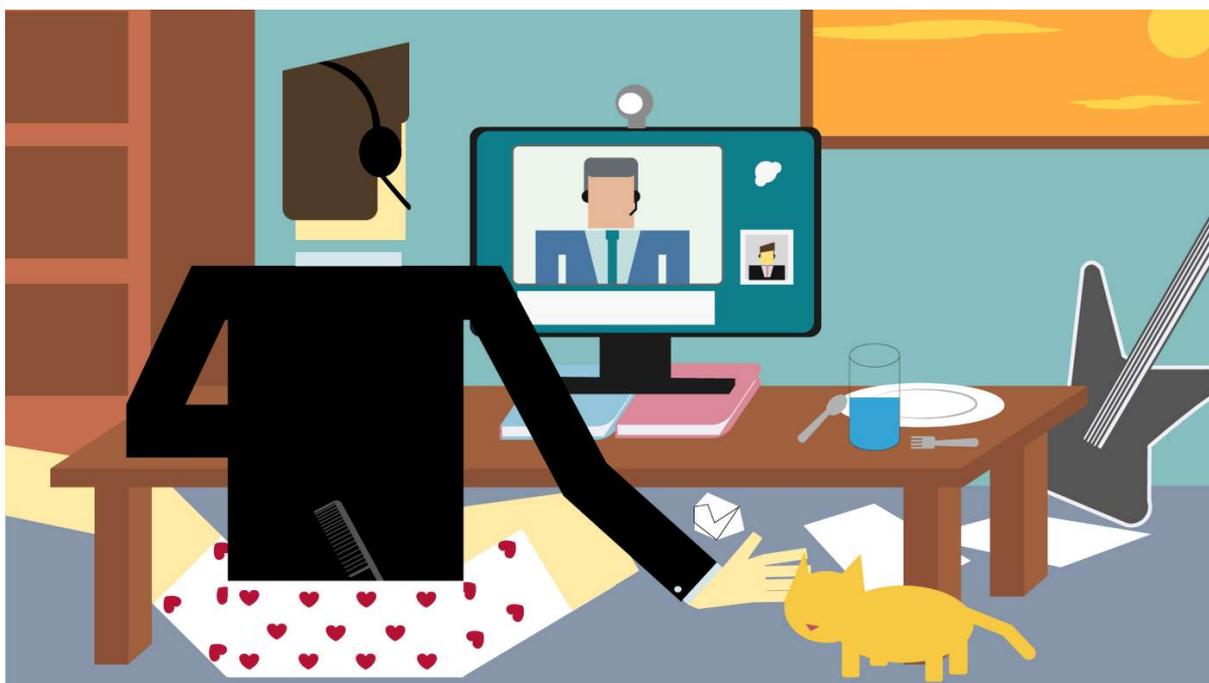


INTERVIEWING IN TIMES OF COVID-19... AND BEYOND

With the Coronavirus spreading all over the world, it is essential to start applying alternative solutions to carry on our daily routines. The governmental authorities might have restricted our physical and social interactions, but we remain constantly connected through technology. Even locked in their houses, many



people keep on actively looking for a job opportunity or want to recruit someone to fill their open positions. That's why never like during these times, remote interviews have acquired a crucial role.

Although we have always been taught how to conduct face-to-face interviews, we might lack knowledge regarding the tips and tricks of conducting interviews in front of our cameras in a crisis period as this one. Here are some recommendations both for the candidate and the recruiter!

TIPS FOR BOTH CANDIDATES AND INTERVIEWERS:

1. Show your best professional side while at home.

As the video call is an open window to your personal life, it is important to appear professional, precise and organised. Therefore, get a tidy room, neutral background,

regulate the lights, and inform people (and pets 😊) sharing your habitation that you won't be available at a set timeslot. If you're using a top application like Zoom you can use a virtual background to hide details about the location as well as people or kids that can enter the screen range.



2. Check your application, microphone, and camera.

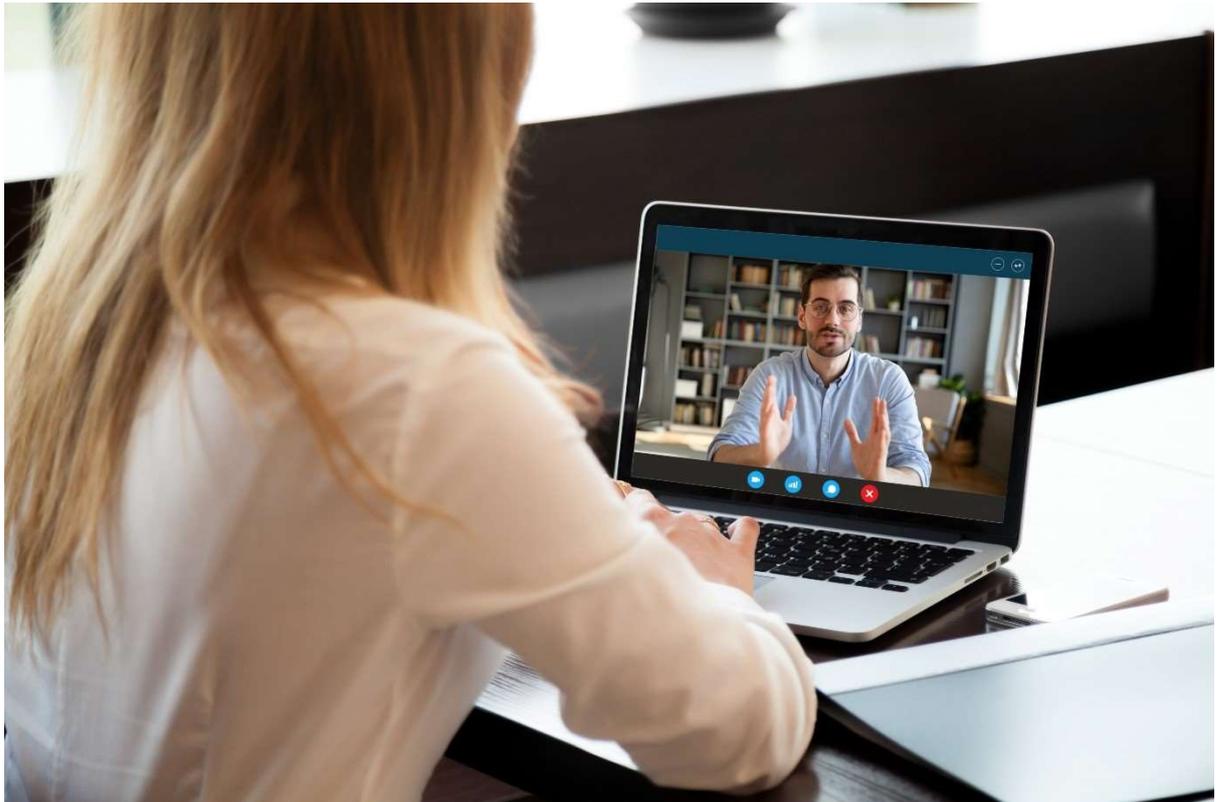
Before starting the interview, check if you have the right application on your device to match with the other party, try it out long before the meeting and check it again a few minutes before it. Assess the clarity of your voice through the microphone. Use a small headset (type earphone) if the quality is better; big headsets should be avoided as they create a feeling of isolation to your interlocutor. Avoid any noisy disturbances and filters when you are speaking and make your room soundproof. Check the quality of the camera and how you appear on the screen. Hearing together with sight are the only senses you can use to make a good impression, so make sure to take care of them.

3. Be empathic about COVID-19 or any major event happening in your interlocutor's environment.

Today 170 countries in the world are being affected by the Coronavirus. However, some nations have been impacted more than others, meaning that the seriousness

assumed different forms: depending on the effects of the virus on the country, governments have developed different opinions on the gravity of this situation. However, in case of major events happening in your interlocutor's environment, you should inquire how they feel about it and if everything goes well. It is a natural human sign of empathy.

4. Practical tips to conduct a professional interview.



- Use a normal screen and not your mobile as you will see the reactions of your interlocutor in more details and will be able to sympathise better.
- Place the camera in a horizontal line to your eyes; don't put it too low - your chin is not necessarily the nicest part of your face.
- Look to the point where the camera is located or to the middle of your screen; when looking away, move your head and not only your eyes. that might look odd on a screen.
- Do not react when not necessary: "hm" and "yes" are less sympathetic online than in real life.
- Do not wear striped clothing, as the lines might look moving all around your outfit.

TIPS FOR CANDIDATES

1. Dress to impress.

It takes about 7 seconds to make a first impression. As you can't shake hands, the first point of judgement becomes the way you are dressed, meaning that facade assumes a higher value. You only need to frame your face and the upper part of your bust, so establish that these parts are presentable. One can wear shorts, but don't stand up then, unless you apply for a job in Silicon Valley.



2. Prepare yourself to speak in front of a camera.

Looking and speaking in front of an inanimate object might be challenging for many of us, as we are not used to doing so. Prepare by speaking about your professional life in front of a mirror and look yourself in the eyes. This way you can exercise your communication skills but also become aware of your body language and adjust it if needed.

3. Check your mental state.

Be aware of how the crisis is impacting your life and the ones of your dears. Before bringing changes in your life, make sure to check whether you are in the conditions

to do so. Nobody is forcing you to do an interview during such a difficult period, so don't be afraid to cancel or postpone.

4. Ask about how the company is handling the crisis.

As a candidate, you should ask how the company is reacting to the crisis. This will give you a deeper understanding regarding the overall mentality of the firm, their infrastructures, and corporate culture. Moreover, it will inform you regarding the timeline and logistics of the hiring process.

See 3 above

TIPS FOR A RECRUITER/ HIRING MANAGER

1. Reassure candidates regarding the crisis.

This situation allows you to show how your company or your client is reacting during emergencies. Therefore, make sure to mention all the security measures, precautions, and employees' benefits that the company is implementing during this difficult period. However, don't forget to be as transparent as possible to create a trustful relationship with the candidate.

2. Adapt yourself to a remote interview.

Remote interviews are very different than face-to-face ones, as establishing a connection is more challenging given the lack of a physical experience. Therefore, listening to the content and the tone of voice becomes even more important. Moreover, you should pay attention to the candidates' eye contact, as many of you make an indiscreet use of notes.

Upon candidate's approval - in compliance with current GDPR regulation - you can record the interview: this will allow you to avoid taking notes and dedicate your undivided attention to the candidate.

In addition, this will enable you to review it and gather some details that you might have missed during the live conversation and annotate the relevant elements to be used in your report if needed.

This is a great advantage versus face-to-face meetings as often you might have problems in recalling certain statements or even the face of the candidate, especially if you have to interview several of them one after the other or after several days.

3. Check-in what's the candidate's mental state.

It is crucial to understand how the candidate has been impacted by the crisis. This gives you an idea of the candidate's conditions, but also an understanding of his/her overall attitude, culture, capacity to see the relativity of it and even humour.

CONCLUSION



Whether you are a recruiter or a hiring manager looking for the optimal candidate or a candidate looking for the ideal job opportunity, these tips can help when conducting a remote interview during a crisis period. Besides, it never harms to put yourself in your counter part's shoes, so make sure to understand what the other person wants to see in YOU!

Once the crisis will be over, going back to "normal" would likely be impossible, as this situation is affecting us socially, economically, and psychologically. Therefore, thinking of the "Next Normal" would become imperative and getting used to new measures would be necessary. In the recruitment world, remote interviewing will become a common practice, hence you can take this opportunity to develop the most effective approach to conduct interviews at distance and leverage this experience in the future.