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Key Considerations for Great Video Interviews

EXPERT VIDEO TIPS: SPRING 2017

Connecting with colleagues & clients across distributed locations has become increasingly common, alongside advances in technologies like web cams, streaming services, and social applications.

For consultants and experts interested in new work and litigation assignments, this often means a video, Skype, or web-streamed interview has replaced the old expectation of a telephone conference to discuss the assignment, review qualifications, and determine next steps.

Even the most tech-savvy experts and consultants who have mastered basic video streaming apps can falter from simple oversights. The next time you're preparing for a video or web-streamed interview with a new client, recruiter, or litigation team, take note of these nine key considerations.

Key Objectives

Consider your objectives for the video conference or interview, and keep them in mind as you prepare and engage in discussion with the potential client. At minimum, you are seeking to illustrate the alignment of your expertise with the opportunity at-hand, and to demonstrate a high level of professionalism. Use your introduction remarks to provide a simple, concise overview of your background. Emphasize the areas of your expertise and work that align with the parameters of the case or job at-hand. Remember that the video interview is also an opportunity to build confidence in the attorney or client that you are not only an expert on paper, but can verbally communicate abstract concepts or complicated information clearly and simply to a jury or audience of non-experts.

On-screen Environment

Remember that you are forging critical first impressions. Unlike in phone interviews, the visual environment around you conveys a message. Keep in mind that the items, objects, and art visible on walls and shelves behind you or in the on-screen capture area add to the impression you leave behind. Make sure your on-camera environment is professional and free of clutter or inappropriate materials. Choose a private office location that is free of wandering pets, children, people, and distracting noises.

Mind Your Manners

Don't underestimate the importance of basic courtesy and decorum in an interview or first discussion. Please and thank you are powerful words that also demonstrate your professionalism. Don't hesitate to ask questions, but make sure you pause, listen, and allow the potential client to talk and ask questions as well. Leverage the benefit of visual cues afforded to you by the video and web-streaming format, and watch for signs that the potential client may have a comment or question.

Stay Steady

Be mindful of your body when speaking during the video or web-streamed interview. Shifts and movements that may seem small or unnoticeable in person become exaggerated and distracting on-camera. Limit rocking, swaying, slouching, and arm gestures. Avoid wheeled or swivel chairs if you are concerned about distracting movement during your conversation. Do not chew gum during your video. Your audience should be focused on your conversation, not watching you chew.

Stay Focused

It's tempting to watch your monitor or the screen as you talk. Don't fall for that trap. Keep your eyes focused on the camera, just like you would another person's eyes during an in-person conversation.

Know Your Stuff

Preparation is another great way to boost your readiness and confidence. Refresh your talking points about your own career and pedigree by scanning your CV and background materials in advance. Take time to orient yourself to as much of the case and opportunity detail as you have been provided. Remember that preparation time can be one of the most valuable business development investments you make.

Dress to Impress

When selecting clothing and polishing your physical appearance, use the same standards you would for meeting in person with a new client or important colleague. Keep your face tidy, and your hair combed and neatly styled. Opt for professional clothing, such as blazers, jackets, and ties. Make sure your choices fit and provide enough flexibility for you to move, breathe, and speak comfortably. Neutral and soft colors work well on video. Opt for shades of blue or grey, and consider avoiding white, black, bright colors, and bold patterns. Your clothing choice should help you feel comfortable and confident, so you can focus your attention on the subject matter, rather than your apparel.

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Test the Connection

Before recording or connecting to a live-streamed interview, run a test to check your audio, video, and on-screen capture. Make sure your face and shoulders are clearly centered in the video frame, and adjust your camera and seating as needed. Check that your lighting is sufficient and produces a crisp on-screen image, and remove any clutter or distracting objects that fall into the video frame.

Ask for Feedback

One of the most common requests we hear from our expert partners relates to feedback. Knowing more about the potential client's perspective on our presentation, background, qualifications, and how well we communicate can help us refine our processes and discussion points. The best way to secure feedback from client interviews is to ask. Speak with your recruiter in advance of the interview to let them know that feedback is important to you. Agree on a strategy for tactfully requesting feedback during or after the video discussion. In most cases, the recruiter will be happy to help you seek this information. A simple statement that can help welcome client feedback is: Thank you for your time and discussion. Once you have had a chance to review your notes, I would appreciate any feedback you can share with me regarding this interview discussion. While not every client will provide feedback after interviews, politely asking for this type of input improves chances of receiving constructive criticism and context on client decisions.

If you would like to learn more about selecting the right technology and set up for videos and web streaming, check out these 4 key tips from Jay Kania or visit the Expert Video Toolkit.