

NEWSLETTER ON LINKEDIN

Get Hired

By [Andrew Seaman](#)

Special Edition - Job interviews during a pandemic

The number of companies around the globe asking their employees to work from home increases each day with the number of infections tied to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. As a result, recruiters and managers are being forced to move their hiring processes online.

The most immediate change will likely be — as we're already seeing — companies switching in-person interviews to video. While the substance of those interviews is ultimately the same, video interviews differ from in-person meetings.

I spoke with [Sarah Johnston](#), a friend of #GetHired and founder of [Briefcase Coach](#), to learn the best practices for video interviews and to hear what job seekers may face over the next few weeks.

What you should expect

Companies are always proud when they are able to quickly fill positions. They may be less concerned about that measure during the pandemic, though. In other words, companies may take longer to make you an offer, especially for senior-level positions, said Johnston, who was also [a 2019 LinkedIn Top Voice in job search and careers](#).

"It would be shocking to me if someone made an offer to a senior candidate without meeting the person, but I can see — in this situation — getting the person through several rounds of interviews until they can meet the person," Johnston said.

Another issue is that it's likely more difficult to get all the key stakeholders to weigh in on a job candidate to make a decision.

“If everyone is going to be out of the office, working remotely and not meeting regularly, it may be harder to get people on the same page.”

While no one wants to take part in prolonged hiring processes, you need to remember that we’re currently dealing with unprecedented circumstances. If you want to land a job, you’ll need to continue engaging with these processes — no matter how long it takes — to be considered for roles.

Do your research

Fortunately, the first step in preparing for video interviews is not unlike what you did before the pandemic began. The key is to do as much work and research ahead of an interview as possible. You can read more about that from [Dawn Graham](#) in a [past edition of #GetHired here](#).

During your research, it’s important to find potential topics of conversation with interviewer or interviewers. Johnston said video interviews tend to contain less small talk and be shorter than in-person meetings. So, it’s even more important that you make an effort to form a bond with the person on the other side of the screen. She suggests looking for things to talk about on the interviewer’s LinkedIn profile, for example. Or, you can mention something they said on a podcast or elsewhere.

Prepare your space and practice

Unlike in-person interviews, those done by video often open a window into your personal life. “As humans, we make decisions about what people’s spaces or homes look like,” said Johnston, adding that you shouldn’t let recruiters or hiring managers see a messy environment filled with mountains of papers or crooked picture frames.

Instead, opt for a neutral background with good lighting. Also, make sure the camera is at eye level to avoid any unflattering angles.

Also, Johnston said a benefit to video interviews is that you can have notes in front of you or around your workspace. “The person doesn’t have to know that. Also, if you have dual monitors, you can have one for the interview and one for your notes.”

For those of you who don’t have access to a webcam or a laptop with a built-in camera, Johnston said local libraries can often be a one-stop-shop for job seekers. She said they may even have a quiet space for you to sit with a laptop for the interview.

Alternatively, you can ask local co-working spaces if they have a room and equipment to rent.

Lastly, you'll want to practice talking to the camera, which is more complicated than it seems. Johnston suggests a trick she learned from [Brighton West](#), who specializes in online videos. Basically, you put a pair of googly eyes right near the camera lens to encourage you to look at the camera during the interview — not down, off to the side or elsewhere. "You want to make sure you have good eye contact," she said.

During the interview

While many of the formal job interview questions will be the same whether in-person or over video, Johnston said you should ask for specific information about the company's hiring timeline. Also, you should ask if the position will be remote until the pandemic is over and how the onboarding process will proceed if the company continues to work remotely for a month or two.

She said it's also important during a video interview to tell the recruiter or hiring manager how interested you are in the opportunity. You should thank the person for their time, tell them how impressed you are with the team and say how honored you are to be considered for the position.

"Leave no doubt in the hiring manager's mind that you want to be there," she said.

Additionally, you should expect the unexpected during these next few weeks while people are working from home. While everyone will want to continue on with their professional tasks, life can sometimes get in the way when children, pets or even the doorbell intrude on a video interview.

"The best thing you can do is show grace and hope they'll return the favor," said Johnston.

What are your tips for video interviews? [Join the conversation.](#)

► Speaking of the outbreak...

My team at LinkedIn is curating [a page of information about the outbreak from official sources](#), such as the World Health Organization. As someone who spent the better part of a decade as a health and medical reporter, I know that accurate information is

among the best defenses we have in these situations. You can find LinkedIn's page about the new coronavirus here: [lnkd.in/virusfacts](https://www.linkedin.com/company/virusfacts)

► The follow-up:

We discussed the potential impact of the coronavirus outbreak earlier this week in the [last edition of #GetHired](#). [SHRM's Johnny C. Taylor, Jr.](#) told us that you should continue on with your job search despite the uncertainty. Other people who continue their job search may land the job that was right for you if you continued.

Additionally, recruiters say it's mostly business as usual despite concerns about the coronavirus. The only change is that more interviews may be conducted by video rather than in person. Hiring may eventually take a hit if the outbreak is not contained soon enough, however. [Here's what people are saying about that edition.](#)

► Other news to help you [#GetHired](#):

The economic slump tied to the ongoing pandemic is starting to hit the U.S. Layoffs are appearing [across the workforce](#), with reports coming in from the shipping, retail and travel sectors. So far, [government data](#) have not shown an uptick in unemployment insurance applications, but that may soon change. Additionally, LinkedIn members are also reporting that positions they were in the running for are no longer being filled. [Here's what people are saying about the news.](#)

The coronavirus is shaking up how recruiters operate. As we discussed above, recruiters and companies are moving job interviews to video. [Recruiters told Reuters](#) that the switch has — in some ways — made their jobs easier since so many of their clients are working from home. Instead of waiting to hear back from people who may be at meetings or walking around the office, the clients are at home and available to talk when needed. The downside is that a face-to-face meeting is still needed to secure larger positions, meaning recruiters may have to wait to cash in on fees until the outbreak is over. [Here's what people are saying about the news.](#)

A lot of industries will take an economic hit from the coronavirus, but not all. Health care is generally seen as a recession-proof industry. It may also be able to weather whatever happens in the wake of the ongoing pandemic. Before the coronavirus outbreak, the U.S. was already short 1 million health care workers, [reports MarketWatch](#). Other industries may not fare as well, however. The retail, hospitality, food, hospitality and transportation industries may reduce payrolls as they see a drop in

demand for their services, for example. [Here's what people are saying about the industries.](#)

► Up next:

Don't worry. Even though I sent this special edition of #GetHired, you'll still get a fresh edition on Monday. We'll be tackling the topic of finances. Why? Juggling finances is difficult under the best circumstances. It can be even more challenging when you add a job search or unemployment into the mix. We'll be chatting next week with [Suze Orman](#), the legendary personal finance expert who is celebrating her 10th consecutive New York Times bestseller. We'll discuss what to do before you start looking for a new job or leave the one you have. Also, we'll talk about what to do about money if you get laid off.

Thanks for reading! Feel free to reach [out to me](#) if you have ideas on topics or questions I should address in future editions of [#GetHired](#). You can also email me at [GetHired\[at\]LinkedIn.com](mailto:GetHired[at]LinkedIn.com).