
Virtual Job Interviews are Here to Stay: How to Impress Potential Employers Over the Computer

Hiring Managers Are Tougher with Candidates Doing Remote Interviews

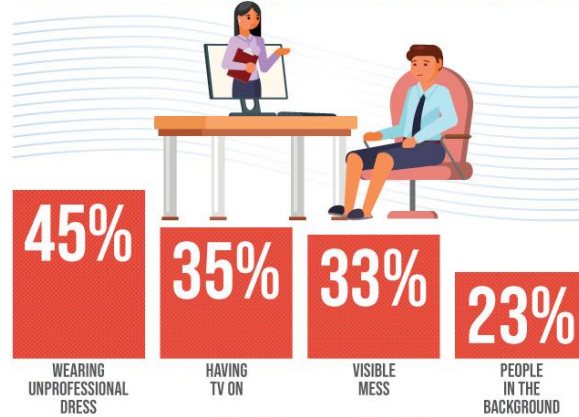
TORONTO, May 11, 2022—The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many changes to the workplace, some which will remain permanent long after the pandemic has ended. One practice which is here to stay is the virtual job interview, but this practice comes with its own set of challenges, according to a recent survey from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

Close to half of employers (44%) say they have conducted remote video interviews, and white collar industries (59%) are more likely than blue collar (27%) to have conducted remote interviews. In addition, large companies (100+ employees) are most likely to do remote job interviews (64%) compared to medium-sized employers with 10-99 employees (50%) and small businesses with fewer than 10 employees (18%).

Notably, 2 in 5 hiring decision-makers (39%) say they are tougher with candidates in remote interviews as compared to in-person.

Specifically, if interviewees are unprofessionally dressed during the interview (e.g., wearing loungewear) almost half of hiring decision-makers would not hire the candidate (45%). An interviewee's background during the interview is also a factor, as having a TV on (35%), a visible mess (33%) and/or people in the background (23%) could result in a candidate to be denied the position.

REASONS EMPLOYERS PASS ON JOB SEEKERS AFTER VIRTUAL JOB INTERVIEWS



Source: The survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Nov. 10 and Dec. 2, 2021, among 510 Canadian hiring decision-makers.

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Jessica Culo, an Express franchise owner in Edmonton, Alberta agrees that virtual interviews are here to stay.

“Clients who we work with like the efficiencies of virtual interviews, however, there is a lot of value in in-person, on-site interviews as well,” according to Culo. “I think the mix of both is here to stay, especially with preliminary interviews being virtual, followed by second or third interviews in-person.”

Bruce Hein, an Express franchise owner in Sarnia, Ontario, points out that virtual interviews were rare before the COVID-19 pandemic, and that it has helped some employers in a very tight labour market plagued by labour shortages.

“While in-person interviews will always be ideal, with more people working remotely, businesses don’t want to risk losing out on the right employee by insisting on an in-person interview,” said Hein. “After two years of mainly conducting meetings virtually, it has shown that we can easily connect online and more job seekers and employers have become comfortable with doing job interviews remotely.”

Culo and Hein advise job seekers to approach virtual interviews similarly to how they would approach an in-person interview.

“Poor technology, physical distractions, inappropriate appearance and dress, or taking the call in an inappropriate environment are all discouraging signs for most employers,” said Culo. “Especially when so many roles are now remote or hybrid, employers expect to see that a candidate conducts themselves virtually for an interview in line with how they would be expected to be during work hours.”

“Most hiring managers understand that with a virtual interview, there are opportunities for technical difficulties or an appearance from your pet or a family member and we have all learned to be more understanding and flexible during the pandemic,” said Hein. “However, dressing appropriate remains important, as well as staying focused during the interview. Don't let your eyes wander and give your interviewer the impression you aren't engaged or are multitasking, because that's a definite way to rule yourself out of the running.”

When it comes to their tips for a successful interview, Hein recommends “doing a practice run of the technology ahead of time. Make sure you've downloaded the meeting platform and know how to access it, determine ahead of time the best place in your home to do the interview that's quiet and has decent lighting, cut out distractions by closing other windows on your computer, and putting your phone away, and of course, dress for the job you want.”

Culo reminds interviewees that many of the same etiquette rules apply to virtual job interviews.

“Do not be late. For whatever reason, we see employers less likely to notice if an interview is a minute or two late in-person, compared to virtual, so log in 10 minutes early to ensure that you do not have any connectivity issues,” said Culo. “Most platforms will notify the interviewer that you are ready (early) and that is something they like to see, as well. Always be ready with some questions to ask and follow up with an email to thank the interviewer for their time.”

Whether a job interview is taking place in-person or virtually, candidates should always try to be professional and make a good impression to potential employers, according to Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller.

“Virtual job interviews can be convenient for job seekers who cannot always travel for job interviews and can allow employers to widen their search area to find the talent they need,” said Stoller. “But in order for virtual job interviews to be successful, both sides need to treat it similarly to how they would an in-person interview by being professional and being prepared with the useful questions and answers.”

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Nov. 10 and Dec. 2, 2021, among 510 Canadian hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in Canada who are employed full-time or self-employed, work at companies with more than one employee, and have full/significant involvement in hiring decisions at their company). Data were weighted where necessary by company size to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Ana Curic at

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About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment International. Founded in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the international staffing franchisor supports the Express Employment Professionals franchise and related brands. The Express franchise brand is an industry-leading, international staffing company with franchise locations in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

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