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Careering out of the crisis

Your guide to a happier and
more fulfilled working life.

Tip No. 6 Master your online interview

In the past, we've supported many of our clients with online interviews and video profiles to get a shortlist of top candidates that they would inevitably meet in person. But now, we all have a new and very real reliance on video to replace the routine face to face model of interviewing.

Let's get the obvious out of the way first... First and foremost, you need a solid internet connection for video. You can run a 'free internet speed test', just by typing that into Chrome. If it's over 4 mbps, then you shouldn't have any problems. Depending on what video platform your interviewer is using, you may need to create a profile or download an app. We use Zoom to avoid all that unnecessary hassle. Now that you're online, set up your laptop or phone in front of a light source - preferably natural.



NICKI DENHOLM

Nicki Denholm was the pioneer of specialist sales and marketing recruitment and has developed an unrivalled network at senior levels in Scotland and beyond. She successfully launched and developed Denholm into a widely respected and leading player within the UK market for providing top talent. She currently heads up Denholm Associates.



You should be facing the light, not to one side of it or with it behind you, casting shadows. Once you're situated so that your camera is at eye level, you can prepare the shot. This is important, really take a look at what's in the frame - is there a cluttered background that needs tidying up, is the pattern on your shirt distracting? We all need to be mindful that even though we are in a completely different room from the interviewer, we're creating an even more visual, and potentially personal, rendering of ourselves than if we were meeting someone face to face in their office. It goes without saying that you should check your sound is working properly a

and if you're going to be using visuals or a presentation - check that your screen share option is working and those elements are easily accessible. Now, that we've covered the basics - let's look at how you can set yourself apart from everyone else...Whether you have one interview or ten, it would be ideal to have a dedicated space for online meetings. If that's not possible, here's how to create your own studio, anywhere...

Space

In any great film studio you have different backdrops, professional cameras, lighting and sound in a tailored space. Recreating that in a busy house

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will take a bit of effort! So the first thing I would do is take look around to see what comfortable and quiet spaces are available. After all, this is for an interview so you need to be relaxed, focused and undisturbed. Once you've decided on the best spot, that's when it's time to set up your laptop or phone to look at what's being viewed in the frame. Your camera should be at eye-level, so you may need to prop up them up with a few books, if you don't have a stand. Make sure you can see your head and shoulders in the frame before you tackle lighting.

Lighting

As I said before, natural light is the best but if you don't have that available in your 'new film

studio', a lamp will work in place of common overhead lighting that can be quite harsh on camera. Again, things we would never have given a thought to before can make a huge difference, so position the lamp in front of you to see how it lights you, but don't assume that's the only spot it can go! Move it around and check to see where it lights you best. If you have two lights, position them one on each side to create some balance. If you don't have a lamp to play with and your overhead lighting is casting lots of shadows, you can get really technical and try bouncing light from a torch off a sheet of white paper or the wall to get a softer lighting effect. The key is to play about with it. You may see yourself only using

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these techniques once but it's likely we'll be moving to a much more online focused environment, so these tricks could become part of the 'new norm'.

Sound

You've set up in a quiet spot to avoid disturbances on your end, but it's also important to have the right tools to make sure you can fully interact with your potential employer. The easiest way to limit interruptions is by investing in a pair of headphones with a mic. This is an excellent way of containing the sound and ensuring you can hear and be heard properly.

Screen Presence

Once you're satisfied with your uninterrupted space, lighting choices and sound, it's time to

look at your presence. Introduce yourself, do you appear professional and engaging? Or are you distracted by your background or what you're wearing? We would always recommend wearing suitable clothes for an interview, whether it's corporate attire or business casual, don't skip this tip just because they can only see your shoulders - but instead of focusing on the perfect ensemble, look at flattering colours. Normally, you wouldn't have the opportunity to wear colours that complimented their offices, so take the time to get your interview wardrobe right. If the backdrop in your 'new film studio' is a white wall, avoid wearing a white shirt. Make

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sure whatever you're wearing doesn't clash with your background and avoid patterns that can buzz on camera. Once you're happy with your attire, take a closer look at other presentation factors – are your glasses creating a glare on camera? Does your beard need a trim? We all know that what looks great in person can be quite a different story than what works on screen, so look critically at makeup choices and grooming when you're viewing yourself on camera.

Practise makes (close to) perfect

Now that you look the part, it's time to practise... If you're comfortable with people face to face but nervous on camera, I would get everything set up and then minimise your face

onscreen, so your eyes aren't drawn to looking at yourself. Focus your eyes on the interviewer, I've seen a few places that encourage you to look directly at the camera, but that isn't necessary. It's much more likely that you'll be more comfortable speaking to a face than trying to be animated and engaging staring at a black dot, so position the frame of the interviewer just under the camera instead. Video interviewing also gives you an opportunity to record yourself answering a couple questions and seeing where your presentation strengths lie and what might need work. This shouldn't become an in depth critique of every pore or an attempt to be perfect. What you want to create is a sincere impression of you on your best

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day. So take the time to get your setup right, practise, and relax!

If you have any questions or would like to find out more about our Career Transitioning Support -please feel free to contact me directly.

nicki@denholmassociates.com



NICKI DENHOLM