

Online job interviews:How to prepare and succeed

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How to Prepare and Succeed in Online Job Interview

Picture this: you hear back from an employer that you've passed screening and want to schedule an interview. You feel happy, nervous at the prospect of an interview but overjoyed nonetheless – but here's the twist: it's online. Here are the tips and tricks on how to succeed in online job interviews in Japan!

JPORT EDITORIAL TEAM

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Picture this: you hear back from an employer that you've passed screening and want to schedule an interview. You feel happy, nervous at the prospect of an interview but overjoyed nonetheless – but here's the twist: **it's online.**

Online Job Interviews in Japanese Job-Hunting

So, what are the odds of facing an online interview in Japan? [An HR Tech startup compiled data](#) showing that **40%** of students who have gone through job hunting in Japan have experience in online interviews! Now, you might think that an online interview is the same as a typical in-person interview; but make no mistakes, there are subtle differences that may make or break your interview.



Source: <https://images.pexels.com/photos/288477/pexels-photo-288477.jpeg>

Numerous companies in Japan adopt video interviews to speed up their screening process and reach potential employees positioned abroad. While every company has contrasting recruitment methods, you'll probably face a video interview at some point.

A Quick Tip to Always Be Prepared for Job Interviews

[Glassdoor](#) has an "Interview" section on every company's pages where applicants share their interview experiences!

For example, [Rakuten](#) holds live online interviews in their first to second stages of vetting. On the other hand, [Bloomberg](#) requires applicants to do a pre-recorded interview.

Learn from their experiences and be the best they've ever seen!

Offline vs Online Job Interviews in Japan

To state the obvious, offline interviews are done in-person where you physically meet your interviewer; whereas online interviews are done through virtual tools such as [Skype](#) or [Zoom](#).

You might be familiar with Skype - the app that provides instant messaging, video chat and voice call services between computers, tablets and mobile devices. Between the two, Skype is often used between family, friends and generally more casual interactions; however, many interviewers choose to use Skype for its simple interface.

On the other hand, Zoom is created to help businesses, organizations and now schools gather in a platform to collaborate and generate productivity. Unlike Skype where you'd have to add or be added by the interviewer's profile, with Zoom, you can connect to a call through a link or a code. For other video conferencing platforms, check out this picture below!

However, other than that, there aren't really many differences. The Japanese recruitment culture (Shuukatsu) can be rather complicated and daunting, and it is in fact, inescapable. Despite the virtual nature of your online interview, you'll still need to stick to the same attitude, language and outfits.

Surprisingly, there are very little differences. For example, instead of knocking thrice on the door, you would send a message to the company at start time. We'll delve deeper into the customs of an online interview in the next section!

Now, you would think that an in-person interview allows you to establish deeper connections, but on the contrary, some interviewers state that online interviews are much more intimate. During online interviews, both parties remove their visual and audio sense from the world and focus solely on the video call in question. So, this is the perfect time for you to show your engagement and interest in their company!

Pre-recorded Job Interview



Source:

https://cdn.shrm.org/image/upload/c_crop%2ch_Compliance/video_interview

A recorded type online interview is where the recruiter has questions set up in advance, then the applicants are to video record and submit their answers within a specified deadline. Simply put, it's a one-way interview.

The great thing about pre-recorded interviews is that it's completely fine to mess up; simply re-film your answers, over and over again! However, this means that the company will have a higher expectation of the quality of your answers seeing as you can script it out and practice it numerous times.

Now, here are some tips to help you triumph in your next pre-recorded interview!

1. **Practice!**

You already know the questions! So, jot down key points you want to touch on and write your script, then practice, practice and practice. Be concise and don't lose sight of the theme and main focus of the question. The amount of attempts you can carry out is limitless - make sure the one you submit reflects your identity and knowledge well.

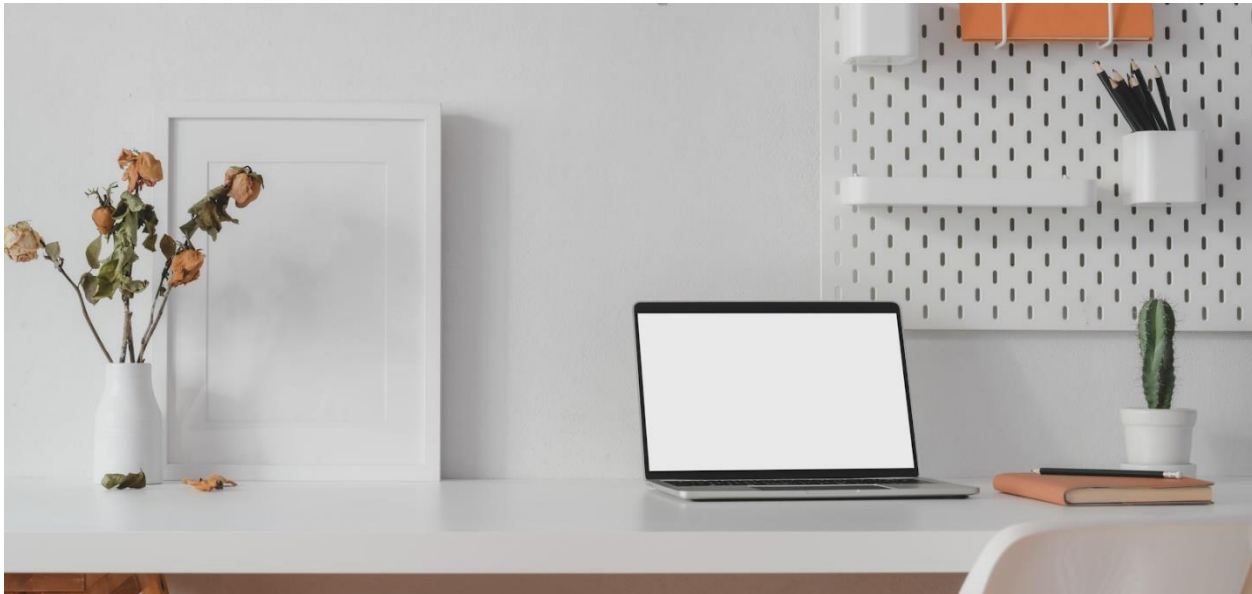
2. **Be natural**

Even though you have a script, remember, you're not a robot. You still need to sell your personality and characteristics. If you read straight off your script, chances are that you won't be looking straight at the camera, and your voice will be rather flat. Imagine you're having an actual conversation - don't be stiff with a monotone voice!

3. **Have a timer nearby**

There will be specified time limits for each question, so script your answers timely. Have a timer nearby, preferably in line with the camera lens, so you can easily glance at it to help you pace yourself well.

Live Online Job Interview Flow



Source: <https://images.pexels.com/photos/3787319/pexels-photo-3787319.jpeg>

Although live online interviews may differ per company and recruiter, according to [Shukatsu-Mirai](#), these are the typical flow you should focus on:

1. **Prepare yourself and your surroundings**

With an online interview, you have the freedom of setting the tone of your interview. It is important that you keep it professional. Wear a suit and make sure your background looks professional. Make sure you won't be disturbed during your interview.

2. **Login to the agreed platform 10 minutes prior to start time**

Use this time to ensure that your mic and camera are working perfectly. Also, as the login status can be seen by the other party, being online early will deliver your motivation and dedication to the interview and thus the company itself.

3. Send a message to the company at the start time

You've already set a meeting time; however, don't call them when it's time. Send them a message saying that you are ready and wait for a response from the company. This shows that you are on time and well-prepared for the interview! Take this time to run through your notes and remember your lines.

4. Start the interview when you receive the call

Keep in mind that when you answer the call, the camera will immediately be activated. So, be ready with a friendly smile to greet them and introduce yourself! It might be worth it to practice your greeting right before the call to keep your voice smooth and at a good volume. Additionally, take notice of the volume and video view - this is your time to subtly adjust your distance to the microphone or camera for a perfect interview!

Extra Tips and Guidelines for Online Job Interview



Source: <https://images.pexels.com/photos/461077/pexels-photo-461077.jpeg>

1. **Test your tech**

There are 4 main elements to focus on:

- **Audio:** Are your speakers and microphone working? Is the sound loud and clear?
- **Camera:** Are your background and lighting appropriate?
- **Internet connection:** Is the WiFi you're using reliable and steady?
- **Power:** Is your battery fully charged? Keep your charger nearby anyway!

Additionally, you might also want to familiarize yourself with the app or software being used. You can try out the platform or watch tutorial videos! Some of the common platforms include Zoom, Skype and Google Hangouts. If you already have an account prior to the interview, always make sure that your name and profile picture is professional and appropriate.

It is also worth being familiar with the **"share screen"** function! Keep all relevant files like your CV, resume, portfolio or website open to prove your qualification.

2. **Eliminate all distractions**

If you have roommates, let them know you have an important interview and

that you can't be disturbed. Close your windows, turn off the TV and mute all your devices!

3. **Practice makes perfect**

Before your interview, get used to seeing yourself on camera and be very, very comfortable with it! Record yourself on video or do a practice interview with a family or friend. This way, you can ensure that your volume, posture and body language exhume confidence. Always speak slowly and clearly too!

4. **Use notes**

The interviewer can only see what you present on camera. Therefore, take advantage of this situation by having notes or cheat sheets around you in case you fumble or forget certain details. Having your notes near you may also help you relax. Remember, don't rely too much on your notes or you'll be losing focus. They're there if you need it, but all the info is already in your head!

Also, take down notes and memos on paper - the typing sound can be distracting and irritating. This will also show your eagerness to learn about the company and the position!



Source: <https://images.pexels.com/photos/7103/writing-notes-idea-conference.jpg>

5. **Look at the camera**

Let's face it, we're all used to looking at the screen rather than the camera. There's nothing wrong with looking at yourself on the screen to make sure

everything is shipshape, but you won't be able to make eye contact with the other party when doing so. Make sure to look up at the camera once in a while!

6. **Stay focused**

Keeping yourself engaged through a computer can be difficult; however, this is very crucial. Try to avoid asking your interviewer to repeat a question, and in turn, also keep your answer concise and to the point.

7. **Body language**

Aside from keeping eye contact, it's important to maintain a welcoming body language. In an online interview, you can't shake your interviewers' hand or even bow properly; however, you can sit with your back straight and shoulders open to convey confidence and optimism. Nod and smile when they are talking to show that you're paying attention. You can use hand gestures to support your answers when appropriate, but avoid fidgeting or looking elsewhere!

Real Voice on Online Job Interview

Saki Arimoto from Tokyo International University

"I have done quite a number of online interviews, probably more than offline. I would say that an interviewee can take the advantage of preparing all necessary files on their tabs. Personally, I always have my resume in front of me and my LinkedIn account. I also read the company information thoroughly and try to incorporate them to my thoughts and beliefs."

Some Final Remarks...

Don't stress before the interview, otherwise, you're going through it twice. Instead, use all the time you have to prepare - research on their company, learn the job responsibilities, think about your strengths. The wait before the call will make your stomach turn and churn, but don't let it spook you - you'll be fine once you start speaking! Relax and enjoy!