

Virtual Etiquette

ARIZONA@WORK is teaming up with employers to help you find your next career opportunity and Return Stronger to the workforce. We offer virtual workforce services, including employment readiness workshops and job fairs to help you safely meet with employers.

Suddenly, virtual interviews and meetings have become a fundamental part of our work lives. While this may be a new way of doing things, one thing remains the same: You never get a second chance to make a first impression. It's essential you put your best foot forward. So here are some tips to help you present your best self online:

TIP #1: Be Aware of Your Environment

- **MEET SOLO** - Tell the people you live with that you are joining a virtual meeting, and ask them to stay in another room.
- **FIND A QUIET SPACE** - Avoid loud noise in the background including TVs, loud fans or street noise.
- **MIND THE CHILDREN AND PETS** - You should treat any virtual meeting or interview from home the same way you would an in-person meeting. Arrange for child care during the meeting so you won't be interrupted. And if Fido goes crazy when the mail is delivered, you'll want to make sure he's taken care of so he doesn't make a fuss during your interview.
- **LOOK BEHIND YOU** - The background behind you says a lot about you. If it's messy and disorganized, that will be the impression people will have of you. Move anything that shouldn't be in the video or is distracting. The background should be simple and tidy.

That brings us to TIP #2: Check Your Setup

Preparation is so important. Here's where you troubleshoot your setup to make sure everything's working. First,

- **TEST THE VIEW** – The day before the meeting, turn on your camera to see what the other meeting participants will see. If your screen is fuzzy, gently wipe your camera with a soft microfiber cloth. Never use a glass cleaner or rubbing alcohol. Those products will likely fog up the lens and could ruin your computer screen.
- **CHECK THE CAMERA ANGLE**- Most people will be using the webcam in their laptop for the meeting. When it's sitting on a desk, your face could be featured in an unflattering way. Your camera should be right at eye level, pointing straight at you. You can use a stack of books to solidly bring the camera to eye-level, if needed.
- **LIGHTING** - You've already checked the view behind you, but how do you look? People want to look you in the eye, so lighting is important and you have more control than you might think. Windows are a great source of natural light. But make sure that the light is in front of you. If it's behind you'll likely just be a silhouette. Pull a shaded lamp around front, so it's slightly higher and to the side. Whatever light source you choose, you might need to adjust things a bit. Especially if you wear glasses. You don't want a big reflection blocking your eyes.

- AUDIO - Audio can be a bit tricky and you'll want to test it out in advance. Check the volume so that you can hear the person on the other end but not so loud it provides feedback. The best way to check is to do a practice call with a friend in advance to make sure they can hear you clearly.
- SIT STILL and BE STILL - Avoid rocking or swiveling in your chair. Opt for a non-moving chair and sit forward and relax. You should position yourself about an arm's length away from the camera and frame yourself in a pleasing manner. If you're using your phone and a facetime app, don't try to hold it. Your arm's going to get tired and things will get shaky. Find a way to prop your phone up in a way where it will stay steady and won't fall down.

TIP #3: Presentation is Key During the Interview:

- SO REMOVE DISTRACTIONS - This includes cell phones, social media, open webpages and food and drink.
- MONITOR YOUR BODY LANGUAGE - And communicate with confidence by smiling, sitting up straight and speaking clearly.
- CHECK YOUR GROOMING AND PROFESSIONAL ATTIRE - Even though you might be home, look your best and dress professionally just as you would for an in-person meeting with an employer.
- MAKE A CONNECTION - Connect with the others on the call by looking into the camera when you speak. According to experts, this is crucial as it maintains eye-contact with the person on the other end. It's the best way to convey that you are engaged in the conversation.

TIP #4: Plan Ahead to Hit Key Points

- BE CONCISE - Keep your questions, responses, and chat messages short and simple.
- UTILIZE STICKY NOTES - To remind yourself of the things you want to mention and questions you'd like to ask. Post them on your screen, near the camera so it appears like you're always making eye contact. Also feel free to take notes. It's a good sign you're engaged in the discussion.
- FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE MUTE BUTTON - Always be sure to mute yourself when attending virtual group meetings, and unmute when the meeting organizer opens it up for questions and comments
- AND SPEAK CLEARLY- Try your best to speak up without yelling or mumbling.

Which Brings Us to TIP #5: Practice, practice, practice

- TEST YOUR VIRTUAL EQUIPMENT- At least 30 minutes before the appointment to make sure the devices you are planning to use are charged or plugged in and working.
- LOGIN BEFOREHAND - Before the meeting time, download the app that is required to join the meeting. Open the app, click the meeting link, and practice functions like "pinning" the speaker, muting/unmuting yourself, and sharing your screen.
- MEET FROM HOME - At home, you're more likely able to control outside factors such as noise. But if you cannot meet from home, or things are just too chaotic there, consider using a quiet space in an ARIZONA@WORK Career Center or a local library.

- LASTLY, UTILIZE THE CHAT FUNCTION - Pre-type your questions and responses for employers before putting them in the chat to ensure there are no misspellings and typos.

For more information about ARIZONA@WORK and the Return Stronger campaign, please visit: www.ARIZONAatWORK.com.