



COVID-19 Pandemic 2020

Remotely Possible

10 Tips For Video
Interviews



Amrop

Leaders For What's Next

Remotely Possible

10 Tips for Video Interviews

As the first country to be hit by Covid-19, and having experienced an intensive lockdown, China has taken the lead in finding ways to keep key activities running. This extends to Executive Search, interviewing and hiring.

One of the multiple questions we've faced here at Amrop China is this: *how can we push forward with candidate interviewing through these difficult times?* When we're seeking a deep understanding of a senior leader's profile and motivations, trying to determine his or her fit for a demanding role, is it even possible to cover all the bases over a video interview?

Whilst there's no substitute for face-to-face interviewing, the answer to a large extent is, yes, we can still run high-quality searches, using video as our key enabler — as long as the right conditions are created and certain rules are applied.

Already, despite the various challenges we are facing, our team in China has run full search processes for clients all the way to offer stage. Of course, we may still run final cultural fit 'chemistry checks' face-to-face before a candidate joins, and identifying a start date that works for everyone is difficult, but we can still get things done.

Working from my home office and thinking of the lessons we've learnt recently, I'd like to share my top 10 tips for remote interviewing.

As you can imagine, these have been refined over the past months, and tested to the limit.

So whether you're a hiring organization or a candidate, we wish you all the very best in these difficult times.

Staying agile, connected and forward-looking are more important now than ever. And we're confident that many learnings will be applicable once the crisis has passed and even enhance the way we work going forward.

Read on for Thomson's Top Tips for a successful video interview. You'll find that it really is remotely possible.



Andrew Thomson is a Partner with Amrop in China, focusing on Industrial Markets overall, but the Automotive, Mobility and Transportation Sectors in particular. A graduate in Law and MBA, Andrew has worked for 20 years in Consulting, Professional Services management, Human Capital management advisory and Executive Search.

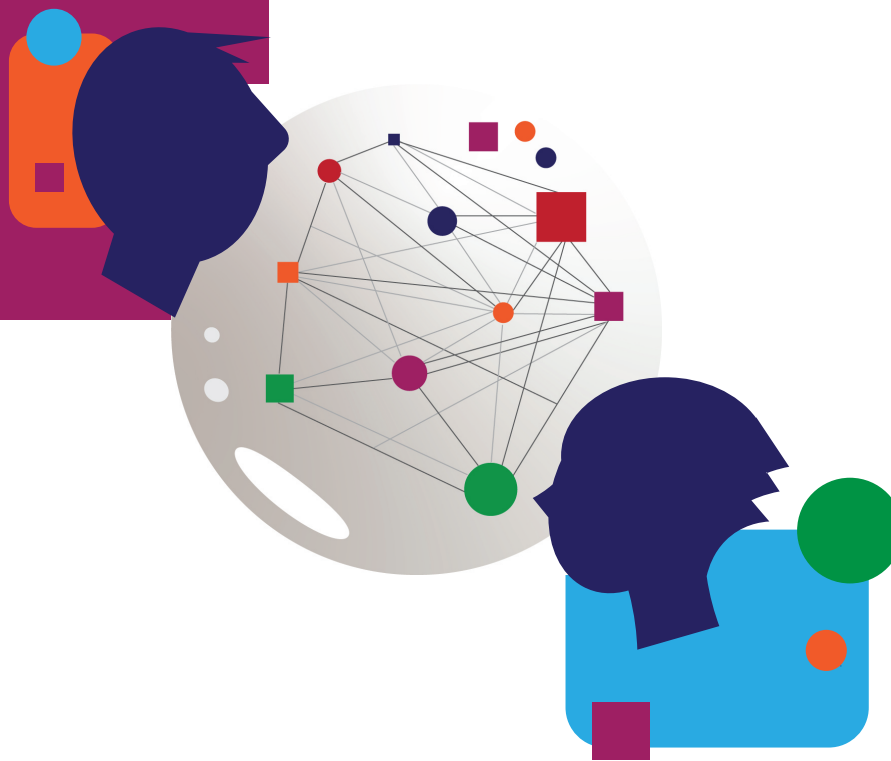
His earlier career included 5 years with Touche Ross Management Consulting, and 17 years with KPMG, where he was a member of KPMG's Regional Board and Executive Committee.

1 Check the Tech

We've all been part of failed or 'choppy' conference and video calls, and they are usually a major frustration for everyone involved.

Your interviewer may suggest a conferencing tool you haven't used before, or perhaps the WiFi on either side isn't quite good enough. It makes great sense, as far in advance as possible, to download any software you might need for the interview and test it. You may even engage the interviewer's PA (if there is one), in order to do a 'trial run' before your interview session and, of course, have a back-up plan.

Lastly, it's a good idea to make sure you 'free up' bandwidth by closing down other online apps. You should also avoid streaming content during the interview. This applies both to you and others in the household ●



2

Create the conditions



Do as much as you can to manage the environment in which you'll take the call.

At the moment, many of us are working from home, whilst others might still be taking advantage of a quiet corner of their local coffee shop. If you're in China, you may have returned to work in your office by now.

Whatever your situation, pay attention to where you are and any impressions created by the background or setting for the interview. Eliminate or at least minimize the potential for distraction and/or interruptions.

Going back to #1, make sure your headphones, microphone and video work well and, ideally, don't rely on someone else's WiFi unless you absolutely know that it works ●

As with all interviews, face-to-face or by video, it's important that you have a plan.

What's your objective? What's your beginning, middle and end? What key messages do you want to convey? For a video interview, you may need to think more carefully about your plan.

Usually, there is much less of an 'allowance' for calls to overrun — they tend to be more carefully scheduled and absolutely limited to 60 or 90 minutes. You may need to spend more time repeating or reiterating your message(s), perhaps due to call quality. Our suggestion is to prepare effectively, remain flexible, but apply more discipline and advance thinking to how you are going to 'run' the interview session. Manage the time available ●

3

Plan effectively



4 Build rapport



This is a vital component of all interviews, but of course harder to do in a video interview.

The separation and coldness that exists, compared to a face-to-face meeting, creates a need to put extra effort into relationship-building and creating an atmosphere in which your conversation can flow more smoothly. Apart from recognizing that extra time may be needed to look for and find some 'chemistry' between you and your interviewer, we also suggest that you do your research and think more intensively about what kind of common ground, or at least what kind of 'conversation starter' might get things moving ●

Of course, on video, it is much harder to read body language and to interpret the interviewer's visual signaling.

It is also harder for the two parties to remain actively engaged with each other. Make an extra effort and do your best to 'read the mood' and respond accordingly.

In China, we recently had a situation where a candidate was interviewed by two people on the client side. Because they were in the same room, they were wearing virus protection masks! You can imagine how challenging and, to some degree unsatisfying this was for our candidate ●

5 Read the visual cues

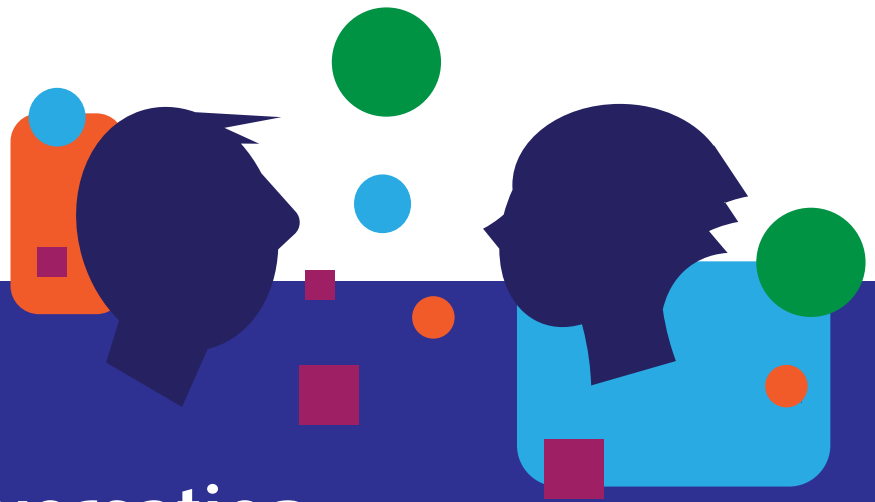
6

Ensure active engagement

We've all been on calls where the content is just not that interesting and attention can wander.

Your other devices are sitting close to your laptop and the temptation to check your latest incoming messages can be hard to resist. From WeChat to WhatsApp, Messenger and Viber, the influx of incoming info, especially now, is endless.

Of course, we are talking about video interviews here, and I hope that both sides are highly motivated and exercise some discipline. However, the overall point is that it's simply harder to connect on video and stay focused. Our advice? Practice 'active listening', sit forward in your chair, work hard to maintain eye contact and be responsive, taking advantage of your preparation to offer relevant thoughts and ideas. Keep your energy level high and smile — look like you're enjoying the meeting, even if you're not! ●



7

Pace the conversation

We've all experienced annoying delays or feedback noise online.

Of course, if this kind of problem is severely impacting your interview, it may be better (politely) to stop, log out and log back in. You may even have to agree to reschedule to another day. However, most of the time, such issues can be managed by taking things slowly, being succinct, allowing for pauses and doing your best to respond to the prevailing call conditions. The important thing here is that there is clear communication and understanding. In China, we often arrange video calls where the parties involved are both working in a non-native language. This kind of situation needs extra thought and attention ●



8

Check back



In any interview, it is important to confirm that you are being understood, and creating 'personal value'.

This means listening to the requirements of the role and positioning your strengths against what the organization needs. In a video call situation, we suggest more regular checking back with your interviewer. "Did that answer your question?" "Have we covered everything you wanted to talk about today?" "Do you have any lingering questions in your mind, perhaps about my skills or experience?" The extra effort will both show your professionalism and help to communicate your value proposition effectively ●

Relative to a face-to-face interview, there is generally less appetite and opportunity for elaboration during a video call.

By the time everyone has logged-in, got settled, resolved any tech issues and got through the introductory comments, less time will be available. Long explanations may lead your interviewer to disengage. A good way to focus and stay 'on point' is firstly, to review critically the key messages and strengths you want to convey.

Do you really need to make all of the points on your list? Would it be more effective to focus on your three most valuable and relevant propositions? Secondly, remember that in many ways interviewing is a form of selling, where your experience, competencies and 'presence' need to shine through. Interviewers mostly 'buy' the value you've created. So the focus, particularly in these conditions, is geared towards the outcomes from your work and experience, not all of the activities undertaken along the way. When time is shorter, focusing on value is even more important ●

9

Be succinct



Remember, on a video call, there won't be that closing moment at the end of an interview.

This is the part where the parties stand up, shake hands and perhaps exchange some final comments, thoughts or pleasantries. No one will be walking you back to the lift or reception. Plan to close with positive comments, thanks and a smile. Make time for this, and also make sure that you confirm any next steps or actions. Leave the strongest impression possible - proactively ●

10 Close effectively



We wish you all the very best in the coming weeks and months. And as ever, Amrop remains fully able and on standby to support you. Let's stay connected!



About Amrop

With over 70 offices in all world regions, Amrop is a trusted advisor in Executive Search, Board and Leadership Services. Amrop advises the world's most dynamic organizations on finding and positioning Leaders For What's Next: top talent, adept at working across borders in markets around the world.

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