

Interviewing over Skype – Tips for Lawyers

The increasing mobility of lawyers combined with rapid improvements in *Skype* and other similar technologies has led to a dramatic increase in the number of interviews taking place over this medium.

Whilst you need all of the usual interview preparation, a *Skype* interview brings some additional considerations that are well worth preparing for. Below we list our key tips for ensuring that the technology is on your side.

Technology

- Ensure that you have sufficient bandwidth for the call – if you are unsure, consider plugging in rather than using wireless, or holding the interview somewhere that does.
- Check your microphone and sound (consider using a USB headset if it is not optimal).
- Ensure that your skype username/profile picture is professional as this is your first impression.

Surroundings

- Find a neutral professional background and remove any mess/clutter.
- Any artificial lighting should be pre-tested (it is likely to be best positioned behind the camera). Natural light is preferable if at all possible.
- Ensure that you are in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed (avoid coffee shops).

Practice

- Set up a practice call with a friend or family member to allow you to check the technology, the surroundings and your responses as seen by the interviewer.
- Consider recording the call if you want to review and improve performance.
- If all else fails, as a minimum, use the *test call* function to check the basic technology.

Pre-Interview Preparation

- Aim to position the camera as close to eye level as possible (you may need to raise a laptop) with your head and upper body in shot.
- Print off a copy of your CV/Resume, any notes about the interviewers and the firm, and any questions that you hope to ask. Have these to hand but not in sight of the camera.
- Ensure that you have a telephone contact number for the interviewers in case there are problems with the technology.

Dress Code

- Business attire (...yes, including the bottom half!)
- Avoid strong or complicated patterns as they can become blurred over a video-connection.
- Try to wear contrasting colours – e.g. light background, dark suit and a light shirt. Beware the “floating head” impression of a white shirt on a white background.

Body Language

- There is a natural tendency to focus on the image on the screen but remember to look at the camera frequently to give the impression of making eye contact.
- Avoid fidgeting or gesturing heavily as what might seem natural can be exaggerated when viewed over a *skype* link.
- Speak calmly and ensure that the other party has finished speaking before responding.
- Try to use plenty of tone in your voice as this compensates for the artificial setting.
- Smile and don't let the technology inhibit your usual warmth of personality.

Problems

- Technical issues can occur despite your best preparation. If the faults are making it impossible to concentrate on the interview, make the interviewer(s) aware.
- If closing and redialling doesn't fix it, consider suggesting you continue the call over the telephone (perhaps keeping the *skype* connection on mute for visuals).
- Above all, remain calm, polite and don't get agitated...and remember, they may be able to hear you even if they can't see you.

Wrapping Up

- Glance at your list of questions to see if anything hasn't been covered.
- Try to summarise why you think you would be a good fit for the role and why you are particularly keen to be considered.
- After the thanks and goodbyes, stay on interview mode until you are sure the connection has been closed.

Contact

Please contact Origin Legal on +44 (0)1206 233500 or for Origin Legal International contact us on +44 (0)20 7096 1681 or email jason.horobin@originlegal.co.uk for more advice.

References / Further Reading

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