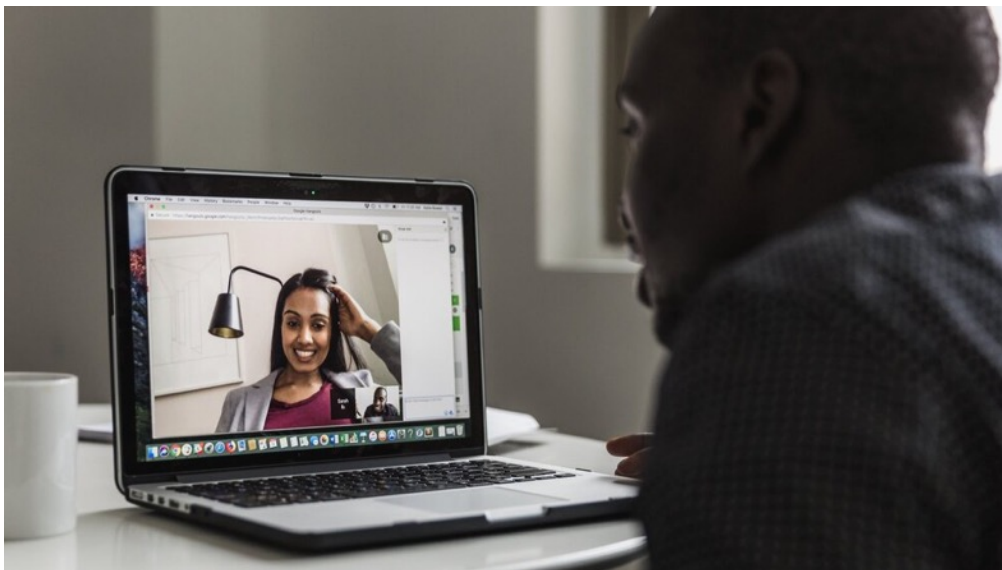


Introduction

Increasingly in the post-covid world the remote or online interview might be more favoured. Even after a vaccine has presented itself common thinking is that business meeting philosophy shall adapt with more use of online technology and less face to face interviewing.

Ideally for an investigation and certainly in the case of the main focus of the investigation and other key witnesses it is worth still holding face to face meetings as described in the fact sheet ahead of this on interviewing for investigations.

The following is a guide to help you establish a good interview and evidence collection from a remote interview.



1. Prepare well

Online interviews require some preparation. As the interviewer, it's up to you to set expectations with the interviewee beforehand about the remote interview details. Figure out who will place the call, what online meeting platform you'll use, and give the interviewee the names and titles of any other people who may be joining the interview.

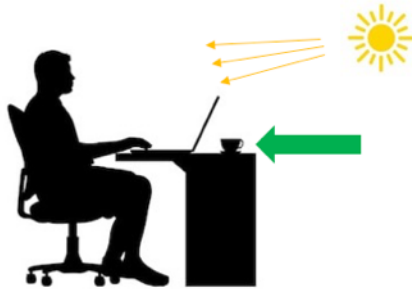
Having your note taker in view is courteous, but having your camera set to take in two people will reduce your screen space and make you two small – for this reason we would advise having the note taker as an additional invitee. Make sure the interviewee has a video camera and explain to them that you will be using video links, not just audio.

Clearly communicating the details and expectations of the meeting will put the interviewee at ease and make the entire process run more smoothly.

Fact sheet – Collecting and preserving evidence

2. Prepare your technology to avoid glitches

The strongest two technologies on the market are MS Teams and Zoom. Zoom does still hold some latent security issues and some organisations will not allow it, but linking via the web browser should still be possible. MS Teams presents less security challenges in general and can also be accessed via a web browser.



Whatever medium you use, conduct a technical trial run of your video conferencing platform a day or so beforehand,



giving yourself enough time to adapt if anything isn't working. Check your computer camera, microphone and internet connection, and make sure you know your login information, especially if you haven't used the videoconferencing application or tool in a while. If you're using your laptop or tablet, check your Wi-Fi connection and ensure your equipment is charged and



ready to go.

3. Have a backup plan

What if, despite all your preparations, the platform you planned to use doesn't work? Make sure you have the interviewee's email and phone number handy so you can easily connect. You might end up having a phone conversation instead of a video interview in this case.

Another common issue, especially if you or the interviewee are working from home, is bandwidth. If more than one person is online in an apartment or house at the same time, it can cause delays or other issues with video conferencing tools. Advise the interviewee during the preparation that having their children online at the same time might not be advisable.

4. Minimize distractions for both yourself and the interviewee

Switch off alerts and chats during the interview and put a note on your door saying you're not available. Avoid having remote interviews in high-traffic areas of your home. In addition, try to reduce movement during an online interview. If you're constantly shifting or walking around, it can make it hard for the other person to focus on the conversation.

5. Look professional

Almost goes without saying but particularly important if you are working from home, always dress as though you're going to work, especially the top half! Make sure the background the interviewee will see during the remote interview is free of anything distracting. Both Zoom and MS Teams allow you to set a blank or corporate background.

Fact sheet – Collecting and preserving evidence

6. Come prepared

Have your interview plan and any documents to hand. If you are going to electronically share documents using the application's share feature, have those opened on your desktop so that you don't have to search for documents and disturb the interview flow. You might want to log in a few minutes early, so you know all the technology is working and you're not rushing when the interview begins.

7. Body language

I have been quite surprised how much body language you can read over the online environment. I guess as humans we are adapting to new surroundings and finding ways to make it work. We clearly can't see all the body language, but we can see the facial expressions and can read these reasonably well. NOTE: the note taker can't say "He appeared to be lying here!" as that is subjective and open to interpretation, but they can factually record the facial expressions.

When talking, check your volume is okay for the interviewee and always keep your voice calm and speak clearly, but also be sure you smile and laugh when appropriate, just like you would in person. You want to demonstrate to the other person that you're engaged in the conversation, so maintain eye contact, don't be looking at your (physical) desk. An absolute annoying thing is when the person you are talking to has their laptop open, but connected to a larger screen – you spend the time looking at the side of their head – don't do it!

Also leave a few seconds at the end of sentences or after you ask a question to minimize talking over each other. Remember to look at the camera when you're speaking, not your own image or the other person's image, as tempting as that may be.

8. Have a strong close

When remote interviews conclude, tell interviewees what's going to happen next in the process and ask them if they have any questions. Be sure to thank them for their time as well.

Ultimately, you are representing your company during an online interview. Knowing how to effectively conduct a video interview will help you leave interviewees with a positive view of fairness and conduct of the investigation.

