PLUGGING IN: 2020-21 CAREERLAB HELPFUL VIRTUAL RECRUITING TIPS

While there are many similarities with virtual events, there are some differences we want students to keep in mind when engaging from afar. As a rule, use your computer vs your phone for the best connections, camera, and sound options and to reduce potential mishaps.

Here is a guide to some of the things you should be thinking about when preparing for a virtual recruiting event.

ENGAGING IN A VIRTUAL WORLD

As with in-person events, how you look "on camera" can matter to recruiters. Here are some things to take into consideration:

- **Your attire.** If you are interviewing, wear what makes you feel confident. If you are attending an event and you'll want to look at least business casual. Check out these hacks to help you look your zoom best.

- **Be Prepared.** Have a pen and paper, your resume, and a water bottle, at the ready so you will not need to get up to grab them and interrupt your participation or worse, cause a distraction.

- **Plan ahead:**
  - **The background and environment.** Create a professional-looking or neutral background, when possible. Avoid showing clutter, laundry, and your bed. If it is compatible with the system, consider using a virtual background. If you have a small space, use the door as a neutral background if nothing else will work.

  - **Lighting.** Soft lighting positioned in front of you enhances your appearance. Avoid having a window or bright light directly behind you, as it will wash you out.

  - **Background noise.** Jumping cats, barking dogs, noisy traffic or roommates, phones ringing are just a few examples of distractions that can be unwelcome distractions. Minimize interruptions by setting your phone on mute and alerting housemates (hang a note on your door, text them if they are out but arriving when you'll be in a meeting) to your need for quiet. Close doors to keep pets out of your space and shut windows to cut down on outside noise.

  - **Use earbuds or headphones:** Earbuds or headphones are a great way to ensure you can hear / be heard in your virtual space. Many headsets have built in microphones that are better than the ones in your computer.

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CHECK YOUR TECH

Shortly before each event you attend, be sure to double check:

- **Your internet connection.** Especially when using new platforms, make sure that your internet and system capabilities are compatible with the platform requirements. Here are some help pages on the requirements for common platforms used for recruiting at CareerLAB: Zoom, Handshake Virtual Fairs, and Talentspace.

- **Your video and audio equipment.** Make sure that your mic, speaker, and camera are all working. Give yourself at least 5-10 minutes log on time as glitches can delay the most well-intended of us.

- **Maximize your display name.** Your display name matters. We recommend that your display name is at least your first name, or full name, as well as any other relevant information you want to share (such as pronouns, class year, school affiliation or other similar identifying information). Make sure that your profile picture, if you have one, is appropriate for the situations for zoom meetings and engagement.

- **Leverage the virtual background.** Virtual backgrounds can be a good solution for a clean, professional setting. Zoom provides some choices and if you would like to use some Brown backgrounds, here is a folder of backgrounds created by CareerLAB.

- **Close open programs and tabs.** Close any programs and tabs that you will not need during the event — this eases the load on your system and internet connection. This is especially important if you are planning to share your screen-make sure that you don't show recruiters anything you don't want them to be seeing!

IMPROVE ZOOM ENGAGEMENT

Zoom fatigue is real and it can be difficult to have the same level of connection as if you were in person. To increase your feeling of connection, try these tips:

- **Join early.** Being early / first in can allow for casual small talk with the recruiters, feel more comfortable and make a good impression.

- **Keep your camera on.** Seeing your face on camera makes a difference, even during presentations. Behaving just as you would if the event were in person and using visual cues, such as nodding or smiling in response to what is being said, helps create a connection. This lets the recruiter connect your name with your face, demonstrates interest and they will likely appreciate having a real person to present to, rather than a blank box.

- **Look into the camera.** One of the hardest things to do virtually is to give the impression of making eye contact. Looking into the camera when you speak everyone a better zoom experience and develop the group engagement.

- **Engage and communicate.** It is easy to feel lost in virtual events. Take advantage of any 1:1 times or smaller sessions offered by the employer. If a large event is what you have, take advantage of chat and Q & A functions. If you are asking questions live, try and be brief — consider your questions and the length and timing of your engagements.

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NORMS AND BEST PRACTICES

Lastly, there are a couple other virtual event norms to keep in mind:

- **Be careful with the chat.** Only use the chat for publicly engaging with the event, or to privately send questions to moderators. Avoid using "private" chat features to converse with friends, as it is possible that you could make a mistake and accidentally publicly send a private message, and event organizers may be able to view full chat transcripts after the event, including "private" messages.

- **Mute yourself when not speaking.** This reduces background noise that could distract from the speaker.

- **Avoid on-camera eating, drinking and pets.** Sips of water are acceptable, but eating on screen should be avoided—of course, unless it's an event explicitly structured around food. Make sure you are muted when eating or drinking. Keep pets off laps and off your desks; remember if your cat is facing you, your guests see a different view.