

Researchers find video conference job interviews bad for companies and candidates

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Job applicants interviewed through video conferencing come across as less likeable, a new study from the DeGroote School of Business at McMaster University has found.

The study, conducted by Greg Sears and Haiyan Zhang when they were PhD students at DeGroote, shows that using [video conferencing](#) for job interviews disadvantages both employers and candidates.

With use of video conferencing growing—in recent surveys 50% up to 65% of employers have reported using the technology for job interviews—the DeGroote study raises cautions about widespread use of video conferencing in recruitment.

In simulated [job interviews](#), candidates who were interviewed by video-conferencing were rated lower by interviewers and were less likely to be recommended for hiring. On the other side of the webcam, candidates also rated their interviewers as less attractive, personable, trustworthy and competent.

"Increasingly, [video technology](#) is being used in employment interviewing because companies feel it provides convenience and cost savings. Despite their growing use, our study shows that [video conference](#) interviews are not equivalent to face-to-face interviews," explains Sears, now an associate professor at the Sprott School of Business.

Accurate assessments of candidates and positive evaluations of interviewers are essential as organizations compete for talent. Candidates who evaluate their interviewers more positively are more likely to accept a job offer.

Study co-author Willi Wiesner, associate professor of human resources at DeGroote, says, "These findings suggest that using video conferencing can adversely affect both applicant reactions and interviewer [judgments](#). Video conferencing places technological barriers between applicants and interviewers. Employers and applicants should work to reduce the barriers that arise through video conferencing and improve the interpersonal aspects of the interview process."

The researchers recommend that video conferencing be used only for preliminary screening interviews. Final selection of candidates should be conducted through face-to-face interviews.

The study is published in the journal *Management Decision*. The research was funded by the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

McMaster University, one of four Canadian universities listed among the Top 100 universities in the world, is renowned for its innovation in both learning and discovery. It has a student population of 28,000, and more than 159,000 alumni in 139 countries.

10 tips for using video conferencing for job interviews

- Use the same interview approach on all candidates who are competing for the same job. Don't interview some by video and some in person. Candidates might first be interviewed using video technology, with successful candidates invited for on-site face-to-face interviews.

- Both interviewers and applicants should use the best equipment and internet connections they can afford to lessen delays or technical limitations which can lead to conversations becoming less fluid or interactive.
- Body language is important, but facial expressions are most important. Ensure that cameras are positioned close enough to catch facial expressions of both the interviewer and the candidate.
- Because people are looking at the image of the other individual on the screen and not the webcams mounted at the top of their screens participants report a lack of eye contact in VC interviews. Place the webcam as close to eye level as possible.
- The lack of physical proximity, signal compression, and participants' nervousness in communicating via technology tend to make for stilted, flat communication. Just as screen actors need to be particularly expressive with their faces and voices in order to convey feelings or emotions on camera, interviewers and applicants should be more expressive than usual. Practice nodding more noticeably, smiling more broadly, making greater use of hand gestures, varying vocal pitch, tonality and emphasis.
- Given the added novelty and nervousness that may occur from a VC interview, preparation is key. Practice with readily available technology, such as Skype or FaceTime. Conduct "mock interviews" with friends and family.
- To make a good impression on a candidate, interviewers should take extra time at the start of the interview to outline the process and engage in small-talk to allow the applicant to get comfortable with the technology.
- Add a more personal touch to the selection process. Provide candidates with an informational video showing existing employees and their work/non-work activities. Allow [candidates](#) to speak directly with employees about their experience at the company.

- Have a notetaker, so that the [interviewer](#) does not further distance him or herself from the applicant by constantly looking down.
- Reserve video conferencing for preliminary screening interviews. Final selection is still a job for face-to-face interviews.

Provided by McMaster University

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