

Making eye contact?

Weekend grooming?

Cozy clothes?

Background check?

Need coffee?

A Whole New World Tips for Great Meetings & Interviews from Home

97%

97% of the U.S. is in lockdown mode due to the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic.

Americans are finding themselves in a bizarre new world where things once done at the office or in a television studio are now being done in the home.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

We've all been working from home for a few weeks now – surely, you've learned a few things about what is working and what isn't.

Video Chat

Meetings with clients, prospects and even colleagues have been replaced by Zoom, Go to Meeting, Skype and a host of other video chat platforms. TV weathermen are broadcasting from their living rooms, news personalities from their kitchens and a couple late-night hosts have found cozy spots in the attic.

No More Studios

No longer in a studio with lights and producers and in-person reporters, asset managers are finding themselves doing interviews at home in front of a computer monitor or on the phone. At SunStar, we've transitioned all client TV interviews to audio-video platforms – some from home, some still from the office with less than a skeleton crew.

Our Best Tips

We've assembled our top recommendations below to help you make the most of this “new normal” as we all keep ourselves, families and colleagues safe during this pandemic, whether in a meeting with colleagues or talking with the media.

DRESS PROFESSIONALLY

You may be at home working in pajamas or sweatpants all day, but if you've got a meeting or interview scheduled, make sure to dress the part.

Advisors and investors need to see you as an authority projecting confidence in these unusual times. A manager in a sweatshirt with unkempt hair won't likely instill the same level of expertise as someone in work attire.

Putting on your suit or dress can help put you in the right frame of mind and subconsciously reminds us we're in "professional" mode.



Perhaps CNN's Chris Cuomo was over the top working while fighting the virus.... in a suit! But you have to admit, he looks good!

SHOW YOUR CONFIDENCE

From your tone to your mannerisms to your posture – be confident.

- Look directly into the camera lens and sit up straight.
- If you use your hands a lot when you talk, that's great. But will they appear in the frame? Check to be sure – if they don't, you might appear to be fidgeting or nervous.
- Sit up straight, speak calmly and confidently
- Leaning in just a touch, while pushing your shoulders back.

From your home to theirs, this is the ideal time to really connect with your audience. Investors are looking for leadership and a calm presence.

Take note of the professional TV personalities. They may still have producers coaching them and checking their look – but you can do it on your own by checking your appearance on screen beforehand.



HOME STUDIO

Designate an area for all interviews.

What's showing up in the background? Don't set up in an area of mess or chaos. The audience doesn't need to see your kitchen with family members bustling about, nor do they need to see piles of loose papers, wine bottles or your empty coffee cup.

If you don't have a home office, find a quiet location in an area that can provide a nice backdrop. Library of books? Great! Blank wall or wall with framed art? Perfect! No matter where you set up, make sure to look around and see what might appear on the screen.



The depth of a relatively empty, tidy room adds interest without distraction.



For a few hundred dollars, you can get a physical screen with your logo to place behind you.

Tips for Great Media Interviews from Home

UNINVITED GUESTS

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges in doing remote chats from home is other members in a household. Whether it's a partner, spouse, children or pet, the other members in a house can really throw you off!

Who can forget the BBC interview with Professor Robert Kelly when his two children came into the room when he was being interviewed on live TV? While the rest of the world enjoyed the clip – you can take steps to keep it from happening to you.

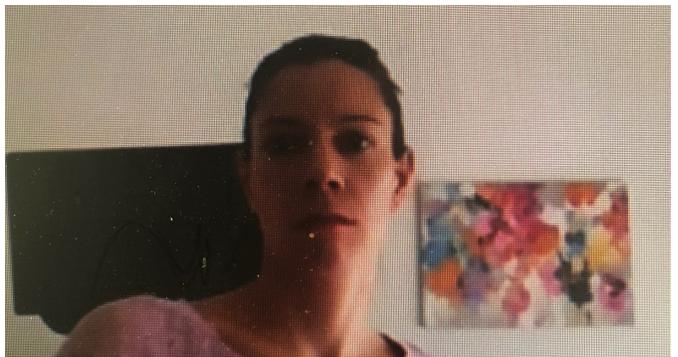


- Make your home “studio” in an area that is “off-limits.” Ideally, in a separate room with a door that can be locked.
- Put a sign on the door when you are going to be “on.”
- If there are others living with you, let them know not to interrupt during those times.
- Have children or pets? If you can, enlist a partner, spouse or roommate to help keep them occupied.
- Have kids but no one to keep them occupied? That might be the perfect time for a favorite show or game.

PAY ATTENTION TO THESE SCENARIOS



Your camera too low or too high may make you look awkward. Adjust your chair or camera height to get “eye contact” with the viewer.



Too much lighting can be as bad as too little. Strive for the Goldilocks of light!



Don't get too close to the screen. And, if all else fails, provide a great photo!

Tips for Great Media Interviews from Home

PREPARATION IS KEY

TEST YOUR EQUIPMENT

Test the equipment – make sure sound and video are enabled. Test your video, how will you appear? What is behind you? Clear away any unnecessary items.

CHECK THE ANGLE

Take a look at the angle of the video. If you're using a laptop adjust the screen so you're not looking down. Consider using a stand or stack of books to appear more at eye level. Sitting on backless stool will help you sit up straighter, with better posture.

A SunStar account executive is ready to work with you to practice and check lighting, sound, angles and message!

MAXIMIZE YOUR LIGHTING

Ensure you are not “back lit.” A lamp or window behind you may put you in silhouette mode. Too much light can be just as bad and make you appear ghoulish! Daylight is ideal. If you are on a laptop, you can move around to find the best spot for the scheduled time of day, a luxury you may not have on a desktop.

SPEAK IN A NORMAL RANGE

Practice speaking making sure you can be heard while not shouting. It's common for some using computer speakers to “shout” when only a normal voice volume is needed. Practicing beforehand can help you identify any of these issues. Earbuds may be ok, but drop the noise-cancelling headphones for a more professional look.

GET FEEDBACK

Ask for feedback on posture, perception, cadence. Whether the first or tenth appearance from your home office, consider enlisting a trusted colleague or PR professional to help you practice.

ABOUT SUNSTAR

DEDICATED TO YOUR GROWTH

SunStar Strategic specializes in providing PR and marketing programs for financial firms by:

- Developing outreach programs to attract and retain clients
- Enhancing your brand
- Strengthening distribution
- Creating new product launch campaigns
- Writing and designing professional content
- Managing a robust content marketing program
- Navigating compliance

25 + YEARS EXPERIENCE

Since our founding more than 25 years ago, we've worked with nearly 200 money managers and 20 leading regional banks. Our clients are counted among mutual funds, ETF providers, back office service providers, RIAs, wealth managers, and private banking divisions of large banks.

**You're all set – have a great interview!
If you're looking for more tips and
tools, we can help – give us a call at
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