

Best Practices for Virtual Interview Taping

1. Picking a location: While this may not be an option if a guest is dialing in from a desktop computer, with the wide array of mobile devices and laptops, choosing the right place to tape is usually flexible and very important.
 - a. The first thing to consider is proximity to your modem/router. While being hardwired in is the most preferable, even just being close on a Wi-Fi signal can make a world of difference between a choppy video signal and a much smoother signal.
 - b. The second thing to consider is your background. While virtual backgrounds can be fun for video calls, we strongly feel they don't add positive value to taped videos. They can cause a lot of problems with cutting out part of the subject, especially with movement. This means having a complimentary background in the room in which you're taping is vital. Try to pick an area that looks pleasant. It should be tidy, but not too plain. Having things like pictures or flowers (in moderation) are a welcome sight! *A big thing to keep in mind is to avoid windows or any bright light sources.* Unfortunately, the built-in cameras on most devices just aren't capable of adjusting to that light source and ends up having a very bright spot on screen and darkening the subject greatly. Another plus if at all possible is picking a room that is not super big and open as this can create some issues while recording audio. We're aware this is a lot of things to consider and it may not be able to accommodate all of those concerns perfectly. Often, the ideal location is just the best mix of all of these factors. We're always happy to see pictures and help consult if that helps!
 - c. Good lighting can go hand in hand with your location, but if you've found a location you are happy with, it would be good to think about some extra lighting for your subject. This isn't always necessary, especially if you've eliminated any bright light sources in your background. But if the light in the room is behind the subject while taping, it's likely they will look darker on camera than desired, so if you have even just a desk lamp, it would be great to place that behind the recording device.
2. Placing your recording device: Once you've decided on a location, it's good to make sure your recording device is set in the best place possible. Ideally, it's best to have the camera located at about eyelevel. From here, you want it placed about 2.5 feet away from the subject. Then, it's important to angle it so that they are centered evenly from left to right. And from the top to the bottom, you want just a little bit of space between the top of their head to the top of the screen. This will likely put their shoulders at about the halfway point.

Best Practices for Video/Photo Assets

1. Photos: Collecting photos should really just follow a couple of principles.
 - a. They should be fairly large when on screen. They don't need to be the entire size of the screen, but if they are too small, they may be unusable.
 - b. They should be original photos. It's best to avoid pictures of pictures, so scanning is a better option if you'd like to include a photo you only have in print.
 - c. When sending, it's best to use a cloud-based storage and delivery system like Google Drive or Drop Box. Texting any content highly compresses the images and they become too small to use.
2. Videos: There are a couple more things to keep in mind with video, but it's not that different from photos.
 - a. Before recording, it's best to check your device's camera settings. This is usually under your device's "settings" app and then more specifically under the camera settings. For video, it's best to record at least in HD. This may be displayed as "1080p" or "1920 x 1080". Anything larger than this is only better to work with, but that resolution should be the smallest used. You may see a options for "FPS" or "Frames Per Second". This is just the speed at which your camera is recording images. If you don't see it, it's probably automatically selected and should be fine. If you do, either 60 or 24 is fine.
 - b. Once you are ready to record, make sure you are holding your device sideways. As a sidenote, if you have video content already that compliments the subject but is vertical, by all means please send it along! There are instances where we can still use it, and if it complements the subject's story, then we'd absolutely love to use it! For filming something new though, horizontal video is a much cleaner look for the final piece.
 - c. Again, when sending, please follow the best practices from the photos section and avoid direct ways of transferring that compress the content.