Video interviewing:

everything you should know and what the future holds

A summary of cut-e's recent webinar, plus answers to questions raised by participants

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About cut-e's webinar

Employment interviewing processes have come a long way since Thomas Edison first formally 'interviewed' applicants who wanted to work with him in 1921. Today, video interviews are increasingly being introduced by organisations as an early-stage screening tool, particularly for high-volume recruitment campaigns.

On 21 March 2018, cut-e delivered a webinar entitled 'Video interviewing: everything you should know and what the future holds'. Dr Achim Preuss, cut-e's co-founder and Chief Technology Officer, and David Barrett, the company's Chief Commercial Officer, highlighted the benefits as well as the challenges and pitfalls of video interviewing. They offered advice on when, where and how to use asynchronous video interviews and explained the implications of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). They also discussed how video assessment is evolving, with the growth of artificial intelligence and automated scoring.

The webinar was attended by 450 participants from over 200 companies and across 40 countries. A recording of the 60-minute webinar is available at: https://bit.ly/2JCBNfl

This document summarises the expert advice and best practice tips that were presented. It includes answers to a series of questions about the practicalities of video interviewing that were raised during the webinar. It also provides a checklist to help you choose the right video interviewing partner.

Video interviews: what they are and why you should consider them

A video interview is a job interview that takes place remotely via video technology. There are two types: **synchronous** and **asynchronous**.

Synchronous video interviews are conducted live over the Internet, for example via Skype. Asynchronous video interviews are pre-prepared by the interviewer and then undertaken by the candidate at a time that suits them. The interviewer asks a series of questions and each candidate then records their responses and submits them for review.

Ideally, asynchronous video interviews should be integrated into your recruitment workflow process. Psychometric information from the candidate's video responses should then be used to assess that individual's suitability for the job role.

Key benefits
Video interviewing offers a contemporary, easy-to-use and time-saving solution. From a business efficiency point of view, the great advantage of asynchronous video interviews is that you can interview many more candidates at an earlier stage of your selection process.

Logistically, you do not have to schedule these interviews. Candidates can participate at their convenience while using their preferred device. Each interview can be consistently structured to quickly identify whether the candidate has the necessary competencies, behaviours and attributes.

Today, most people are comfortable using video technology, having had experience with apps, such as Skype and FaceTime. Candidates like the convenience of video interviewing. They do not have to miss work or their own pursuits to conduct a scheduled, in-person interview. They can also think through the questions in advance, gather their thoughts and give their best answer.

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Challenges in using video interviews

The main challenge is integrating the video platform into your existing workflow. This includes seamlessly integrating the video interview with your other psychometric assessments in order to maximise the measurement process and provide a conducive candidate experience. Research shows that offering a video interview and assessments in a single session (as opposed to separate sessions for each) leads to higher completion rates.

Another challenge is the risk that a candidate might misinterpret your questions and provide inappropriate answers. Unfortunately, there is no way for a candidate to ask for clarification about the question area, if they are uncertain. Their assessment is based on the answers they provide. Therefore, if they do not fully answer your questions, you will not be able to assess them effectively. As a result, if a good candidate answers the wrong questions, they may inadvertently exclude themselves from your selection process. This highlights the importance of ensuring that your questions are clear and concise.

There is also some sensitivity regarding how the data from video interviews needs to be handled in order to meet the requirements of the GDPR.

Providing a positive video interview experience

The quality of the video interview experience needs to be considered from the three perspectives of candidates, recruiters and the business.

Candidates - above all, candidates want an easy-to-use process. Video assessment gives them an opportunity to express themselves and show their passion for the role. They also want a transparent assessment process which is fair and logical. Video assessment helps them to feel that they are truly being considered for the role.

Recruiters - recruiters, hiring managers and talent teams want efficiency. They want job-relevant data so that they can recruit the right candidates. They also want an assessment process that is consistent, objective and fair.

The business - video interviews provide an opportunity to promote your organisation's employer brand by embedding introductory and closing video messages; for example, from your CEO. Video interviews can also include insights into the actual job in order to convey a realistic preview of the role. This can help to improve retention in your organisation, as candidates will join with more realistic expectations.

Rating video interviews

Each candidate's answers need to be rated against your established competencies and scales. Usually, assessors will log into a separate rater hub where they can see and hear their allocated candidates and rate their responses against the defined criteria.

Care needs to be taken at this point. This is because manual 'human' rating of interviews is prone to errors and unconscious bias. A standardised process, therefore, needs to be adopted. The constructs to be measured should be clearly defined. Assessors should rate candidates based on defined behavioural anchors. They should look for examples of good and inappropriate behaviour in the given answers.

Using multiple raters can help to reduce unconscious bias. However, this requires a supporting infrastructure and a strong commitment within the organisation.

Some dimensions of video assessments can be rated automatically by splitting the audio and video elements. The audio track can be transcribed, using real-time speech recognition and analysed to check for aspects, such as clarity of speech and proficiency in English language. The video section can be analysed by facial recognition and emotion-tracking software.

However, many companies that automate the scoring of video interviews are actually correlating concepts that have no relation to each other. This is the equivalent of linking the murder rate in New York to the city's ice cream eating rate. The two may go up and down in tandem but one is not influencing the other (both are influenced by the weather). Analysing talent data in this limited way leads to inaccurate conclusions. Due diligence must, therefore, be undertaken when considering an automated video platform.

Impact of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the science of making intelligent machines that are able to learn without being explicitly programmed. AI has interesting implications for how video assessments will be monitored and rated in the future.

The problem with human ratings is that they are sometimes instinctive. Assessors may not be able to explain what causes them to give a specific rating to a specific response.

However, when you have an objective, unbiased rater using identifiable behavioural anchors, an algorithm can learn to mimic how that individual rates candidates. The machine will 'learn' to identify the relevant behavioural anchors and it will begin to rate candidates in exactly the same way as the human expert.

In time, this will enable you to automatically analyse your video assessments and identify, not only which candidates meet the specific requirements of your roles, but also which of them are likely to stay within your organisation.

GDPR and video interviewing

With an ability test, you can anonymise the response data. However, video data cannot be anonymised because you can always recognise the individual on the screen. This creates a challenge to ensure that your video data complies with GDPR.

Essentially, video interviews require explicit consent from candidates that their personal data can be processed. Under GDPR, candidates have the right to know what information is held about them. They also have the right to have their personal data rectified or deleted. This will inevitably increase the number of candidate queries. Recruiters will, therefore, need to put processes in place to manage these requests.

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A checklist to help you choose the right video interviewing partner

Here are some key questions to ask when choosing a video interviewing partner.

Recruitment-related questions
- Can the video interviews be seamlessly integrated with your Applicant Tracking System?
- Can they be integrated into a single assessment hub?
- Is their platform fully HTML-based (and Flash-free)? Flash-based platforms are incompatible with certain devices, such as Apple products. HTML platforms are device-independent, so they can be accessed from any smartphone, tablet or PC.
- Can the candidate view be customised?
- How easy is it to set up and manage new video interviewing projects?
- Can the candidate's answers be uploaded as soon as they have been recorded?
- Are all data collection processes clear and legally defendable?

Candidate-related questions
- How do they ensure that the video interview will provide a positive and engaging candidate experience?
- Are candidates given advice on how to set up and conduct their video interview?
- Are they given a chance to practise?
- Are there any technical or connectivity issues that might frustrate candidates?

Assessor-related questions
- Is their platform simple and easy to use for assessors?
- Can assessors see the video questions, the behavioural anchors and the scales to be rated on one screen?
- Can the video interview be rated by more than one assessor?
- Is there a clear set of criteria for assessors?
- Are clear instructions available for assessors?
- What basis, if any, has been used to create the automatic scoring of their video interviews?

Business-related questions
- Can employer brand messages be easily embedded into the videos?
- Can the provider help you to create talent analytics, which will provide fresh insights and meaningful data to enhance your talent strategy?

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Q&A on the practicalities of video interviewing

In the webinar, the following questions were submitted by participants:

1. At what stage of the selection process should video interviews be used?

Face-to-face interviews are typically conducted at the very end of the selection process. A key benefit of video interviews is that they enable you to cost-effectively interview candidates at a much earlier stage. This enables you to see and hear many more people. You can then more easily distinguish between those who have a real passion for the role - and the right attitude for success - from those who are simply going through the motions in applying to you.

Video assessments can be combined with cognitive ability tests in the first stage of the selection process or used as a second stage assessment after ability tests.

2. For what job levels is video interviewing best suited?

Video interviewing is primarily undertaken for high-volume or early-stage talent roles. It is particularly suited to roles that involve customer interactions, presentations or language proficiency. If these competencies are part of the role, then video assessment is a very effective and relevant approach.

Other competencies related to cognitive reasoning or problem-solving may be better assessed using an online ability test. Combining video interviews with ability tests provides a precise measurement with 'incremental validity'.

Video assessments can also be used effectively for senior executive recruitment, as they provide an opportunity to see and hear the individual 'in action'.

3. How can completion rates be maximised?

The best approach is to integrate your video interviews with your Applicant Tracking System and to ensure that you use short, focused, clear and well-phrased questions. Providing a positive candidate experience will also maximise completion rates.

4. Should video interviews only be available for selected candidates or to anyone wanting to apply for the job?

This is a decision for each organisation to make. Some prefer to conduct a first-stage sift of their applicants with an ability test and then use video assessments for the remaining candidates.

5. How does a video interview get rated? Is it rated by a human assessor or is it automatically rated?

Different video interviewing providers offer different options. Some involve a mixture of automatic scoring and manual rating. Best practice is to capture information that will help recruiters to make a clear yes/no decision. If your provider uses automatic ratings, be sure to check on the validity of what they are assessing, why they are assessing it and what evidence there is that these factors are relevant and valuable.

6. If a candidate talks a lot, how do you ensure that the final video interview is not too big to upload?

Best practice is to use short, clear questions. There should not be any problems uploading each candidate's completed interview responses.

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7. What happens if the upload fails?

An advantage of asynchronous video interviews is that they are not reliant on a live web connection. Your platform should upload each of the candidate's answers as soon as they have been recorded. That way, if the Internet connection is interrupted, the candidate is not asked questions they have already answered. This also saves storage space on the candidate's device as, once their answer is uploaded to your server, it is deleted from their device.

8. I would like to save time by using video interviews, but I do not want my candidates to feel that they are not important enough to be invited to attend a face-to-face interview. What can I do?

In recruitment, it is important to be clear and honest with candidates about exactly what your selection process involves. Explaining why you are using video interviews and how the candidate's responses will be analysed can help to clarify the purpose of using these assessments. Faced with a high volume of applicants, you simply want to identify which candidates are likely to suit the role. Face-to-face interviews may be completed at a later stage. Informing candidates of all this helps them to better understand what you are doing and why.

9. Is it possible to just transfer audio instead of audio/video?

Yes, it is possible. However, much of the benefit of a video interview stems from actually seeing the candidate.

10. My worry with video interviewing is not being able to use follow-up questions to a candidate's response?

This is a legitimate concern. It all comes down to choosing the right questions to ask in your video interview. Short and specific questions should enable your candidates to provide very specific answers. At an early stage of the selection process, you are simply trying to assess whether the candidate has certain job-relevant competencies and behaviours. If they do, you can progress them onto the next stage of your process. There will be other opportunities at later stages to question them more thoroughly.

11. Is there a Gartner analysis of video interviewing applications and vendors?

For many organisations, when considering a technology investment, Gartner is a 'go-to' and credible source of information. Unfortunately, there is not a Gartner research report specifically about video interviewing.

12. Which video platforms would you recommend for video conferencing? In some countries, Skype calls are blocked by local authorities. Any suggestions or alternatives?

Some alternatives to Skype include FaceTime, Google Hangouts, Appear.in, ooVoo, Viber, Talky, Voca, WeChat and WhatsApp.

Conclusion

Video interviewing is an efficient, effective and economical form of job-relevant recruitment. It helps you to standardise the early stage of your selection process so that you can quickly identify applicants who meet the requirements of the role.

As a recruiter, your key challenge is to choose a partner who can support and guide you through the challenges of implementing video interviews and who can deliver a platform that will provide the functionality and the data that you need. The importance of choosing the right partner should not be underestimated.