What does your video background say about you?

According to Linked-in's Future of Recruiting Report for Europe and Middle East (2021), 84% of talent professionals say virtual recruiting will continue post COVID-19 and it will become the new standard. Recruitment processes changed overnight due to pandemic. With constantly shifting business needs and fewer resources, companies moved through historic challenges and started to rethink their approach to recruiting from the ground up. Same thing happened to the way young people are searching for jobs and/or promoting themselves. Use of online platforms and video interviewing is the common practice at least for the first interview.

Bookcases. Plants. Bedroom. Sofas. Art paintings. Walls. These are just a few things that may appear as a background in a video interview. All these can give information for someone's personality but also for how much seriously he/she has taken the interview process.

On a video interview, the interviewer judges also the interviewee's background. While they are setting questions, they are also searching what's behind you for clues to your personality. They want to see if you're professional, organized, authentic, and intellectually engaged.
There much have been said and written as appropriate advice on how to select your virtual background. Some experts propose neutral, others vote for more personal backgrounds or even with personal branding quotes or favorite moto.

According to Nunez, a chief marketing officer of San Francisco University and author of the book titled "Take Charge of your Brand" (2021) your zoom background should show your personality. "A lively background shows your personality and could give the interviewer something to start a conversation". There could be pictures of your family, your favorite books or a large canvas of pictures taken from places you have traveled. All these could give interviewers a glimpse of your personality but also they serve well as an icebreaker.

In a US Survey conducted in 2020, findings from 1507 participants, revealed that when 2 models displayed in front of 6 different settings (plants, art, bookshelf, window/natural light, candles or a blank wall), people thought that every background tested ended up rating higher for making the model seem more intelligent, trustworthy, approachable, and professional. However, models in front of the

bookshelf were rated as less approachable than models in front of the blank wall. "So, is there an ideal video call background? Hiding your background with a virtual image might be the way to go if you really cannot find a suitable place to have a video call", is the best advice that researchers of this survey give! And what is the best suitable place? Keep it neutral, clean and avoid distractions. Choose a quiet, well-lit area, preferably with natural light. It is better if your light is behind your computer, not behind you. Make sure you have tried to diminish distractions such as turning your phone and mobile phone on silence mode and make sure someone else will answer the doorbell and will babysit for your pets or kids.

As Angie Tinnel, President of a Talent Management Company (2021) suggests "Avoid distracting furniture and art elements that may appear. That does not mean that you have to have a blank background. As long as it is balanced and uncluttered, you will be fine". While being interviewed, it is advisable to try the focus to be on you!

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