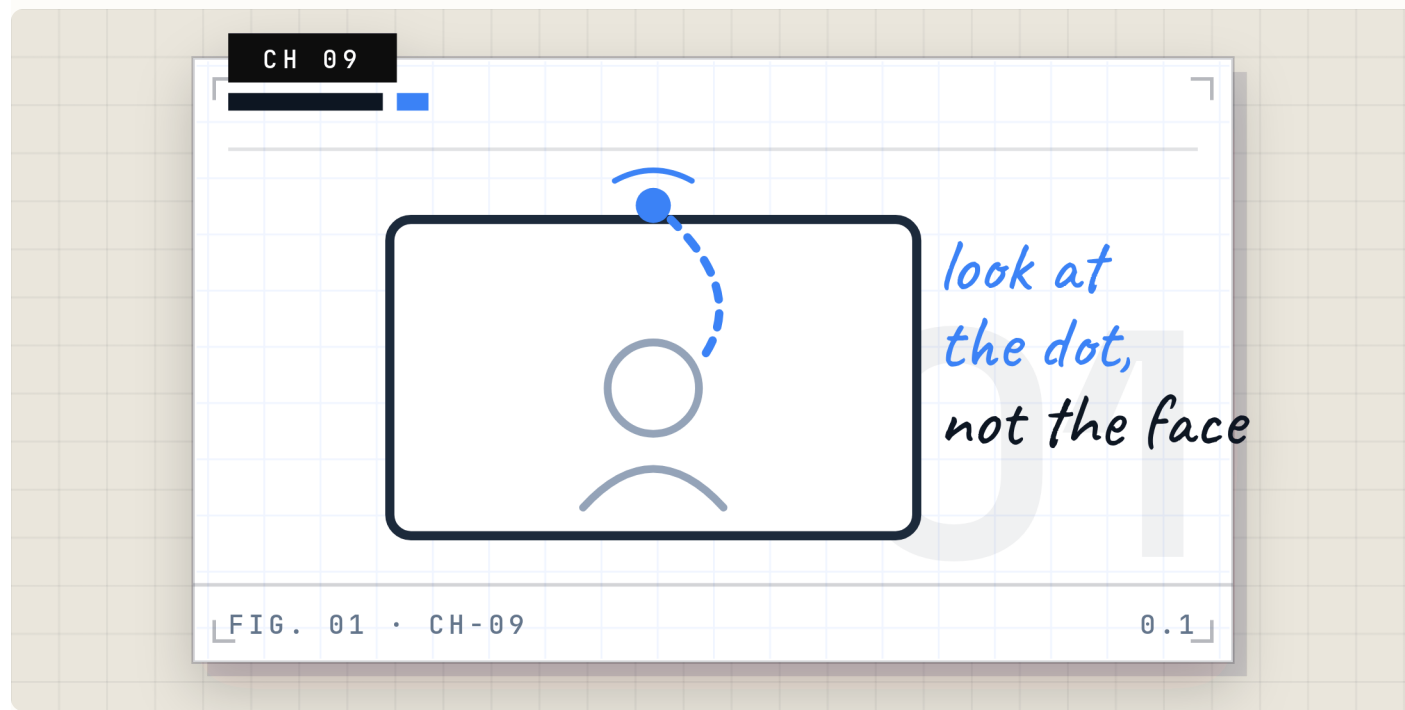


How do I actually connect with a hiring manager through a screen?

By **Chris Baldwin** · Founder, Baldwin Blueprint · Updated June 2026



SHORT ANSWER

Shift the screen from a barrier to a shared workspace by presenting a concrete plan instead of just answering questions. Stop treating the video call like an interrogation and start treating it like your first team meeting, using physical or digital artifacts to anchor their attention.

Virtual interviews feel cold because you cannot read the room or shake a hand. This guide shows you how to run a virtual interview like a working session, using your screen to prove your value instantly. We will look at how to turn a passive video call into a collaborative project review.

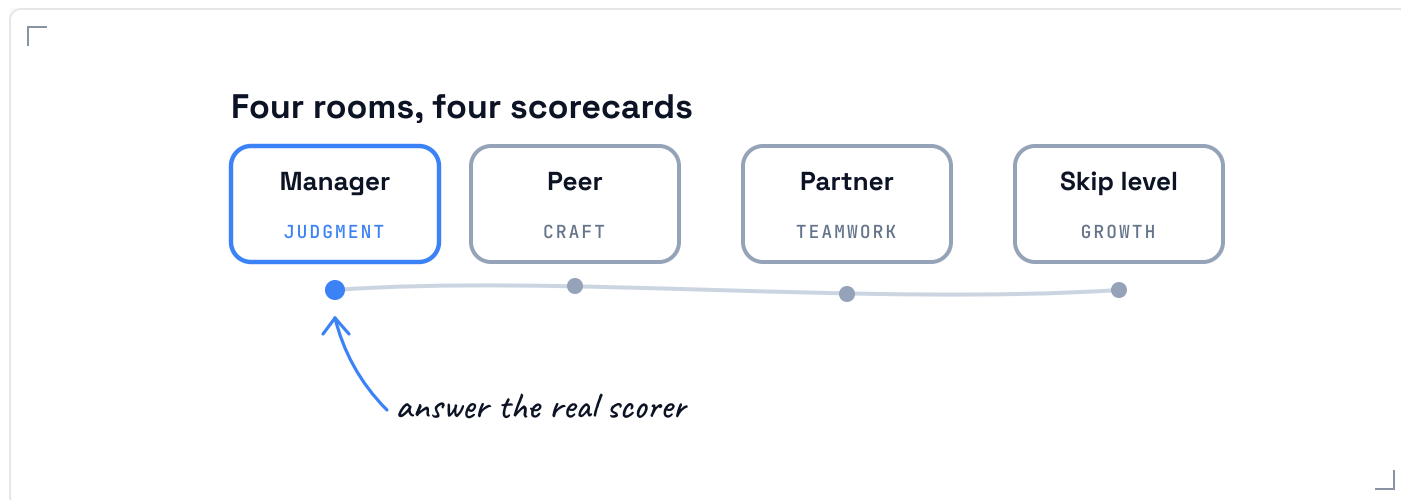


FIG. 02 An interview loop is not one test, it is four. Each person in the room is measuring a different thing: the hiring manager scores judgment, the peer scores craft, the cross functional partner scores collaboration, and the skip level scores trajectory. Speak to what each one is actually grading.

§ 01

How do I stop looking like a talking head on their screen?

You can share your screen during a virtual interview to present a document. Doing this with a 30 60 90 day plan shifts the focus from your face to your actual work, transforming an awkward interrogation into a collaborative meeting where you are already doing the job.

I see candidates stare at the green camera light like they are trying to hypnotize it. It does not work. You need to give the hiring manager a reason to look at something else.

When you say, 'I put together a quick draft of how I would approach the first month, can I share my screen,' the dynamic changes. You are no longer an applicant begging for a job. You are a colleague presenting a solution.

§ 02

Where should I actually look when I am speaking?

Eye contact on a video call is determined by where you position your windows. Look at your camera when speaking, but look at their face when they speak, placing their video box directly beneath your lens to minimize the distance your eyes travel.

Most advice tells you to stare at the camera lens the entire time. That is terrible advice because you miss every head nod, squint, or smile. You end up talking to a wall.

Keep their video box small and drag it to the very top center of your monitor. This way, when you look at their eyes, you are almost looking at the camera. It feels natural to both of you.

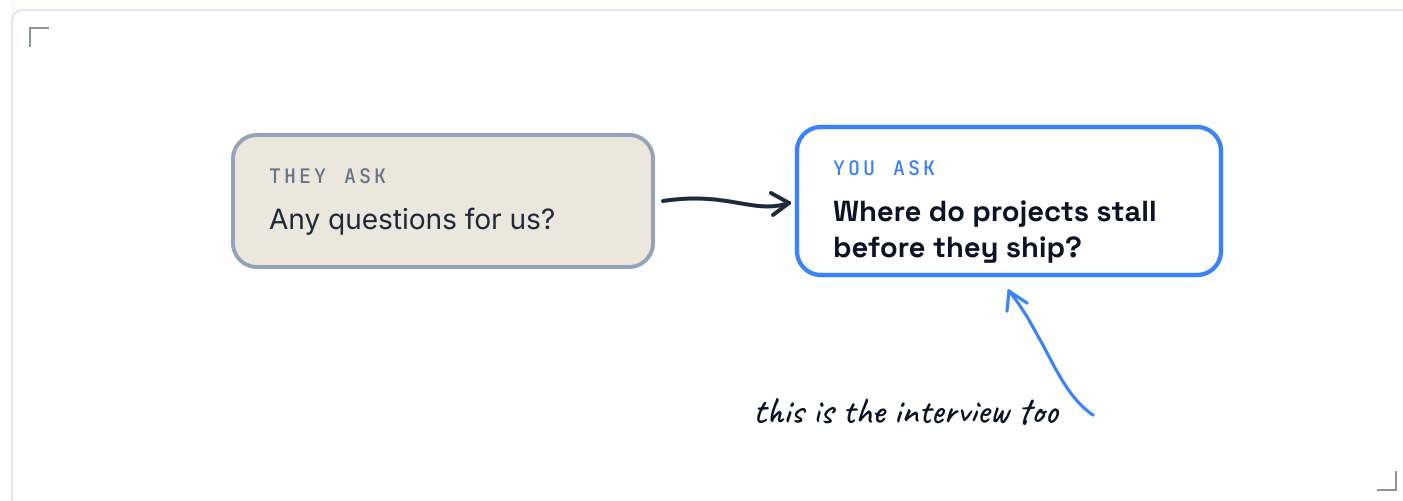


FIG. 03 The questions you ask are part of the interview, not a polite afterthought. When they ask if you have questions, skip the perks and ask about the real work: what success looks like in 90 days, where projects stall, who owns the roadmap. The questions you ask reveal how you think, so make them sharp.

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§ 03

What do I do if they ask a question I am not prepared for?

Hiring managers sometimes ask unexpected questions to test your critical thinking. Acknowledge the question directly, take a slow breath, and anchor your response in the goals of the job posting rather than trying to guess the perfect answer.

It is okay to pause. Silence on a video call feels longer than it is, but a five-second pause to think looks thoughtful, not slow.

Say something like, 'That is a great question, and it relates directly to the scaling challenge mentioned in the posting. Here is how I would break that down.' This shows you

do not panic when things go off-script.

§ 04

Why is most virtual interview preparation advice completely useless?

Traditional interview advice focuses heavily on hardware setups and background aesthetics. This advice is largely useless because a beautiful camera setup with a shallow conversation still ends in a rejection letter, as depth of content always wins over production value.

I have seen people buy expensive ring lights and professional microphones, only to read generic answers off a sticky note on their monitor. The hiring manager notices. They can hear the lack of depth in your voice.

The hard truth is that prep is about deep research, not your camera resolution. If you do not know their product and their problems, no amount of soft lighting will save you.

WORKED EXAMPLE • STAR ANSWER

BEFORE

If you ask me about managing projects, I have a lot of experience with agile methodologies and I always make sure we hit our deadlines on time.

AFTER

Let me share my screen for a second. This is the Experience Accelerator map from my Baldwin Blueprint, which shows the three specific agile launches I led. In the second one, we pulled the timeline in by two weeks because we mapped the dependencies early.

What most people do	What actually works
Staring blankly at the camera lens for sixty minutes	Positioning the speaker window right below the camera
Reciting resume bullets from memory when asked a question	Sharing a strategic document to guide the conversation
Answering questions passively and waiting for the next one	Treating the call like a collaborative working session

The takeaways

- 01 Treat the video call like a collaborative working meeting.
- 02 Position the speaker video box directly under your camera.
- 03 Share a concrete strategic plan to shift the focus.

Questions people ask

How do I handle technical glitches during the call?

Acknowledge the glitch immediately without panicking. Keep a backup device ready, like your phone with the meeting app installed, so you can reconnect in under a minute. Your calm reaction to a tech issue tells them exactly how you handle work stress.

Is it okay to use notes during a virtual interview?

Yes, but do not read them line for line. Place physical sticky notes with key metrics or stories at eye level next to your camera. This keeps you from looking down or sounding like you are reading a script.

Is Baldwin Blueprint just a fancy cover letter?

No. A cover letter is a generic plea for attention, while Baldwin Blueprint is a 12-page operational document built from the actual job posting. It includes an Impact Memo, an Account Map, Strategic Signals, an Experience Accelerator, and a 30/60/90 day plan. The first draft is free, with no card required.

SOURCES

- Indeed: Guide to Virtual Interviews

BUILD SHEET

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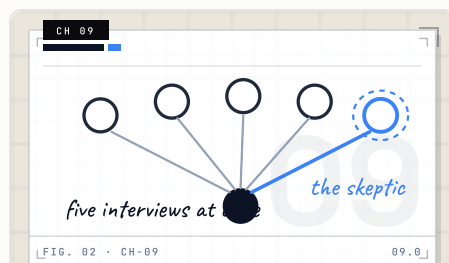
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