

## THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Employers use telephone interviews as a way of identifying and recruiting candidates for employment. Phone interviews are often used to screen candidates in order to narrow the pool of applicants who will be invited for in-person interviews. They are also used as a way to minimize the expenses involved in interviewing out-of-town candidates.

While you are actively job searching, it is important to be prepared for a phone interview on a moment's notice. You never know when a recruiter or a networking contact might call and ask if you have a few minutes to talk.

### Be Prepared

Prepare for a phone interview just as you would for a regular interview. Compile a list of your strengths and weaknesses, as well as a list of answers to typical interview questions.

- Dress for the interview. Some even suggest dressing just as you would in a face-to-face interview as it will improve your confidence and poise.
- Keep your resume in clear view, on top of your desk, or tape it to the wall near the phone, so it is at your fingertips when you need to answer questions.
- Have a short list of your accomplishments available to review.
- Have a pen and paper handy for note taking.
- Take the call in a place where you will not be interrupted.
- Clear the room - evict the kids and the pets. Turn off the stereo and the TV. Close the door.
- Avoid using a cell phone for the call. If you must use the cell phone, make sure you are some place where you have good cell reception -- the last thing you want is a "dropped call" during an important interview; make sure your cell phone is fully charged.
- Print the word "SMILE" on a sticky or piece of paper and set it in front of you next to your resume -- it will remind you to smile and a smile comes through in your voice; smiling will project

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a positive image to the listener and will change the tone of your voice.

- Do not smoke, chew gum, eat, or drink.
- Do keep a glass of water handy, in case you need to wet your mouth.
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly. It may help to open your mouth a bit wider while you are speaking.
- Stand up. It gets your blood flowing, improves your posture, and improves your response time. Some people also feel like they think better on their feet.
- Use the person's title (Mr. or Ms. and their last name.) Only use a first name if they ask you to do so.
- Do not interrupt the interviewer.
- If there are multiple interviewers, try to keep track of who is asking the question. When one interviewer asks you a question, clarify who asked the question so you can direct your response to that person (see more tips regarding multiple interviewers below).
- Practice with a friend - it is hard to know how your voice comes across on the phone. Are you a low-talker? Do you talk too fast? Is it easy to understand you?
- Have questions prepared for the interviewer(s).
- Take your time -- it is perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to collect your thoughts.
- Give short answers.
- Remember your goal is to set up a face-to-face interview. After you thank the interviewer, ask if it would be possible to meet in person.
- Follow up with a thank you letter.