

Phone Interview

This is your opportunity to advance to the next step, the face to face interview, so make every second count!

The interviewer's goal in performing phone interviews is to start with a pool of qualified candidates, and then screen out as many as possible. In most cases, this first call is a pretty straight forward screening call. The interviewer will likely ask questions about your work experience, upbringing, availability, and salary requirements. The interviewee's strategy should be to provide facts that support your resume and career ambitions. It is important that you sound professional and not desperate.

Preparation is the key to Success!

Make sure you schedule the phone interview at a time that you can be free of distractions. It is best to do that away from work. Make sure that if you are on a cell phone that you can be in an area with good coverage and do not do a phone interview while driving. Try to reschedule surprise phone interviews. Tell the interviewer that this is not a time that you can give them your undivided attention. Suggest a couple of alternative times when you can call them back and be distraction free. Make sure you approach the phone interview with the same level of energy and enthusiasm as you would the face to face interview. Research, prepare, research and prepare!

Things to have READY:

- ✓ Pen, paper, calendar
- ✓ Research on the company, competitors, & position
- ✓ Your resume and the job description
- ✓ Short list of questions

Be PREPARED to answer:

- ✓ Tell what you know about our company & products?
- ✓ How would you add value to our business?
- ✓ What is motivating you to make a career change?
- ✓ If relocation is necessary, are you committed to relocate?
- ✓ Where do you see your career heading in 5 years?

Things that will lead to SUCCESS:

- ✓ Relax and be yourself
- ✓ Speak directly into the phone
- ✓ Confirm the interviewer's name and company, ask for their title if you don't already know
- ✓ Make sure that you answer questions with a high level of enthusiasm
- ✓ Practice good listening skills and then speak clearly
- ✓ Avoid yes or no answers, elaborate and be prepared to sell yourself
- ✓ If you need time to think, say so, and ask them to repeat a question if you are unsure.
- ✓ Close! Re-affirm your qualifications; express your interest in the position and the company. Tell them that you are very interested in the opportunity to meet in person to further discuss this great opportunity.

Things to AVOID

- ✓ Smoking, chewing gum, drinking, and eating during the interview
- ✓ Poorly performing headsets and phones
- ✓ Unprofessional voicemail recordings
- ✓ Talking badly about past employers, competitors, or supervisors
- ✓ Rambling, stuttering, cursing (limit such phrases/words as "um", "like", "you know", or "I think")
- ✓ Asking any questions about compensation or benefits (Compensation should only come up at the end of the interview process, never at the phone interview or 1st face to face interview stage.) If the question is posed, simply state that you would expect to be compensated fairly based on the position responsibilities and expectations.

Follow-up after the interview:

Make sure you obtain the phone number, address, and email of the company and interviewer. Follow-up with the company within a few days with a thank you. Use this follow-up to clarify any of your answers you felt maybe you could have expanded on better during the phone interview. Also, this is a great time to re-emphasize your qualifications, ask additional questions, or provide additional quantifiable accomplishments that are not on your resume. Use this as an opportunity to re-state your interest in the position!