

Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews often precede in-person interviews, and are used as a screening tool to filter out potential candidates for a position. In an employer's point of view, they are an efficient way to further narrow the candidate pool to those who will best fit the position. Naturally, telephone interviews are less in-depth and lengthy than face-to-face interviews. They can be more unnerving to the candidate due to their spontaneous nature. Keep these tips in mind to make the most of phone interviews:

- Consider giving the employer your home phone instead of cell. This will allow you more control over surroundings
- No matter which phone number you give them, make sure your voicemail message is professional
- Keep a log of which employers you are expecting (or hoping!) to hear from and brief roommates, partners, or children how to take the best message for you – possibly by letting a machine take the message!
- You can feel free to call them back if you are not ready for the interview at that moment, just make sure you convey your interest, find a time very soon to return the call, and make sure you follow-through on any time commitments you promise
- It is also okay to say something like, "I'm so happy you called. I have about 10 minutes before I have to run out the door. Is that enough time, or can I call you back later this afternoon?"

How to prepare

The first step to being prepared is to make sure you know the organization and position very well. Besides that, you will want to keep the following items handy (and preferably set up in a private, quiet place where you will be able to concentrate):

- Your resume
- Any info you have about the organization (maybe their webpage up on your computer)
- Paper and pen to take any notes you need to during the interview
- Notes to help you answer common interview questions
- A list of questions to ask the interviewer
- A glass of water

Although it may seem trivial, it may be helpful to dress in a professional manner as a way to psychologically assume the right mindset. Do not slouch or roll your eyes at any point during the interview, and remember that smiling will single-handedly enhance the tone of your voice, giving warmth and energy, which can be harder to convey over the phone!

During the interview

- Slow down, breathe, and concentrate!
- Watch for pauses. They are dead air, unlike in a face to face interview, they cannot see you are thinking
- Speak in a normal tone – do not use speakerphone and make sure they can hear and understand you
- Remember to smile, sit up straight or stand, and make sure your surroundings are not distracting you!
- When the interviewer seems to have no questions left, make sure you have questions prepared to ask them
- It is all about getting a face to face interview – let them know you are interested in meeting in person, ask the interviewer for an approximate timeline of when the company will be notifying candidates for in-person interviews
- Hanging up can be awkward. Have a closing line planned, end on a high note, not an awkward one! Thank him/her for making the time to call you, confidently hang up
- Then get busy writing a thank you note!