

Phone Interviews

Phone interviews have recently become more popular with companies as an initial employment screening technique. Phone interviews can save companies time and money since they serve as a more realistic screening alternative for cases in which companies are considering out-of-town candidates. A phone interview can be a success by following some simple guidelines.

- **Treat the phone interview seriously**

Although more informal than a face-to-face interview, it is still important to prepare for a phone interview. Research the company, study the job description, and practice your responses to anticipated questions, just as you would for any other interview.

Inform your roommates when you are scheduled for a phone interview. Ask them to keep the noise level to a minimum!

- **Have your resume and cover letter in front of you**

It is very likely that you will be asked about information that appears on your resume. You may also want to have any other material that relates to your resume nearby, such as documents you've designed or written or a portfolio of your various projects. Just be sure these items are well organized so you don't get distracted shuffling through papers during the interview.

- **Make a cheat sheet**

Write down a few notes about the most critical points you want to make with your interviewer. Are there certain skills and experiences you want to emphasize? Do you have certain interests you want your interviewer to know about and understand? Write these down ahead of time and be sure to touch on them during your interview.

- **Prepare your questions and take notes**

Prior to the interview, make a list of questions to ask. After each question, leave space to record the interviewer's response. In addition to your notebook, have several pens handy. If you use one color for your questions and another for the responses, you'll be able to tell exactly what happened during the interview.

- **Get a high-quality phone**

Don't use a cell phone that cuts in and out or a cheaply made phone that makes it difficult for you and your interviewer to hear each other. It is also a good idea to know where you will take the call and tell roommates not to bother you during the interview.

- **Shower, groom, and dress up**

Focusing on your appearance, just as you would for a normal interview, will put you in the right frame of mind. You won't do as well in a phone interview if you're lounging in bed in your pajamas.

- **Stand up or sit up straight at a table or desk**

Research has shown that people project themselves better when they're standing up or sitting up straight. If you feel more knowledgeable and confident, you'll come across that way as well. If you choose to stand up, tape your resume to the wall so when you talk, you are projecting your voice.

- **Ask the interviewer to spell his or her name**

Also ask for his or her title, phone number, mailing address, and email address. Remember to send a thank you note after the interview.

- **Smile when you talk**

Having a smile on your face will produce a smile in your voice.

Phone interviews can be difficult since you aren't able to read your interviewers facial expressions and body language. However, if you prepare well for your phone interview, you won't need their non-verbal cues to gauge your performance. Remember that the people you deal with during phone interviews are trying to fulfill a need, so relax, be honest, and be professional.

Acknowledgements:

Phone Interviews: New Skills Required, **intercom**, April 2002, Donna Ford

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