

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW TIPS

WHAT IS A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW?

Employers use telephone interviews as a method of identifying and recruiting candidates for employment. Telephone interviews are often used to screen candidates in order to narrow the pool of applicants who will be invited for site visit 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 telephone 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. It's also a good idea to keep a Jobs Log. This way if you are contacted by a recruiter, you have an idea of which job they are calling about. Do not ask the interviewer what job they are calling about because this will make you look disorganized.

VOICE MAIL OUTGOING MESSAGE

Because employers may be contacting you by phone, be sure to have a professional voice mail message on your phone.

For example:

"Hi, this is Your Name. Please leave your message at the tone and I will return your call as soon as possible. Thank you."

SCHEDULING THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

When You Are There to Take the Call

The phone rings and you are there to answer! The recruiter may ask if it is a good time to talk. Some recruiters are calling to ask only a few preliminary questions and others are calling to schedule the full telephone interview. In either situation, respond by saying that you are have a class (or meeting or another commitment) and then schedule a convenient time for them to call you or for you to call them. Ask for their name and phone number. The reason for this is so that you can research the employer, feel composed, settled, and have a quiet place to talk and think.

When You Miss the Call

If the recruiter leaves a message for you, RETURN THE CALL AS SOON AS YOU CAN! As you are returning the call, keep in mind that the recruiter may have called 10 other people that day about the same job. When you return the call, give your full name and indicate that you are returning the recruiter's call for XXXXX position. If the message was left for you during business hours, but you did not get the message until you returned home at 7:30 pm, then call and leave a voice message that same evening. Make sure to speak slowly and clearly. Leave your full name, the position you are interested in, and CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE NEXT BUSINESS DAY.

PREPARING FOR THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Prepare for the telephone interview as you would any other interview. Read the job description, research the company, review your resume, and practice your response to typical interview questions. Consider dressing as you would for a face-to-face interview. It may help you to project yourself more professionally and confidently if you dress the part. While you are talking on the phone, make sure that your phone battery is charged and not about to run out. Make sure that your roommate is not going to run the vacuum or cause any other distraction. It may help to have your notes, the job description, and your resume in front of you for quick reference. Make certain you have a pen and paper ready if you need to take notes. If the entire hiring committee is on the other end of the conference call, you may want to write down each person's name so you can refer to it later. Here are other helpful tips:

- Don't smoke, chew gum, or eat.
- Do keep a glass of water handy, in case you need to wet your mouth.
- Smile. Smiling will project a positive image to the listener and will change the tone of your voice.
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly. Your voice is all you have to form an impression, at this point!
- Use the person's title (Mr. or Ms. and their last name.) Only use a first name if they ask you to.
- Don't interrupt the interviewer.
- Take your time - it's perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to collect your thoughts.
- Give complete yet concise answers.
- Remember your **goal for this phone interview** is to have a successful interview (convince them that you are a good fit for the position and the company) so that the recruiter will want to then setup a face-to-face interview.

AFTER THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

At the end of the interview, thank the interviewers for their time. PROMPTLY, follow-up with a thank you letter or email. Take some time immediately after the interview to assess your responses, which will help you to prepare for your next interview