

## TIPS FOR THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

*The goal of a telephone interview is to get a face to face interview. Prepare for a phone interview just as you would for a regular interview. Do your research and practice.*

**Schedule your interview:** If you are called for an unscheduled interview, tell them it's not a convenient time and ask to schedule for a later time. This gives you time to prepare and allows for a better interview for you.

**Things you will need:** Keep your resume in clear view. Compile a list of your accomplishments, skills, strengths and weaknesses as well as a list of answers to typical questions and a list of questions for the interviewer. Don't forget pen and paper for taking notes, your calendar and a calculator.

**Secure your location:** Insure you are in a location where you will not be distracted or interrupted. Evict the kids and pets. Turn off call waiting, the stereo and the television. Close the door. Choose the landline over the cell phone.

**Stand up:** This common technique allows your voice to project and sound more confident.

**Dress for success:** Don't come to the phone in your bathrobe and slippers. Dress as if you are going to a face to face interview. Research shows that this has a very positive effect on what you project and what is perceived.

**Facial expressions matter:** If you can have a mirror to look in, use it. Your facial expressions will reflect through your voice. If you are smiling, you will sound interested. If you are frowning, you will sound disinterested.

**Be up, enthusiastic:** You are only a resume, a piece of paper, to potential employers. They likely have many resumes. Your enthusiasm/energy must stand out, but don't sound phony.

**Speak clearly and slowly:** Many people get very nervous during telephone interviews and may have a tendency to mumble into the phone. Relax, speak slowly. Do not sound rushed or anxious.

**Make preparation notes (questions),** but do not write a script for the interview; just speak freely from your notes.

**Be prepared to give highlights:** Be prepared to give a positive two-minute summary of your professional career. This is a great place to use your 60-second commercial. Be sure to rehearse this!

**Asks questions:** You should talk and carry the conversation, not the employer. Avoid yes & no answers.

- Determine the employer's short term concerns. "How can I make an immediate impact on the job?" Tailor the balance of your responses to examples where you resolved similar concerns.
- Ask hiring authority what his/her background is. This provides insight and can put each of you more at ease.

**Have a script for this item only:** When you sense the conversation is ending, be proactive and ask, "I know you are busy, and there is only so much we can cover on the phone. Based upon what we have both shared, I would like to meet with you. I have my schedule here; when do you think we can get together?" You always want to end the conversation knowing what the next step will be.

**Know your skeletons,** such as job hopping, gaps, or being fired. Avoid weak excuses. NEVER CRITICIZE YOUR FORMER EMPLOYERS. Role play and rehearse your responses to difficult or uncomfortable issues that may come up.

**NEVER ASK QUESTIONS IN THESE AREAS IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW:**

- a) Dollars, b) Security, c) Benefits, d) Commute, e) Comfort & convenience, f) Hours

## QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

Asking the interviewer questions is a very important part of the interview. Failing to be prepared with questions to ask can be a critical mistake. Below are some questions you might want to ask. Avoid asking about salary, vacation time, employee benefits, etc. until after you've been offered the job. You will impress the interviewer if you ask questions that indicate you've done some research beforehand, such as *"I read in the Wall Street Journal last week that your company is planning to expand its retail operations in the region. Could you give me more details about the company's plans for expansion?"* Please do not ask any questions where you already know the answer.

1. When do you plan to make a hiring decision?
2. What are the primary results you would like to see produced in this job?
3. What attributes are you looking for in the person that you hire for this position?
4. What types of people seem to do well in this department/company?
5. What skills and experiences would make an ideal candidate?
6. Could you give me an idea of what the company culture is like?
7. Will there be opportunities for advancement within the position or company at a later date?
8. How would you describe your management style?
9. Please describe a typical day in this position.
10. Can you tell me about the team I would be working with?
11. Can you describe the opportunities for training and professional development?
12. How long have you worked for this company? What do you like about working here?
13. How would job performance be evaluated for the person in this position? Who would be responsible for that?
14. What are the next steps in the interviewing process?