

Mastering the **Phone Interview**



HOW TO SHINE ON YOUR PHONE INTERVIEW

The phone interview is a common first step in the interviewing process. Employers often receive hundreds of applicants for every position they have open, and the phone interview allows them to narrow that field of job applicants.

The phone interview is also useful in preventing any fundamental mismatches between a company's needs and a job seeker's candidacy. A phone interview is an efficient way to make sure moving forward makes sense.

Your goal as a job seeker is to convince the interviewer that you are worth pursuing further in a face-to-face interview. Phone interviews present a challenge, however, in that all you have is your voice. You can't observe the interviewer's body language and you can't make eye contact, so creating a positive connection is a little harder.

Advanced Resources' comprehensive guide to phone interview success will help you shine on your phone interview.

Ins	side This Guide
	Before the Call: Preparation
	During the Call: Making a Great Impression
	After the Call: Important Action Steps



BEFORE THE CALL: PREPARATION

The first key element of conducting successful phone interviews is preparation. There are four main areas in which you need to prepare: your environment, your self, your answers, and your questions.

01

Prepare Your Environment

First, when you're in a job search you never know who will call and when it will happen. Always answer your phone professionally and have a professional greeting on your voicemail.

If you get an unscheduled call and you're not ready, simply say: "Great to hear from you! I'm not at my desk right now and I want to give this call the attention it deserves. When can I call you back?"

Once you have a phone interview scheduled, here's how to prepare:

Eliminate distracting background noises (TV, pets, kids, etc.)
Turn off email notifications on your computer (visual or sound,
Turn off message notifications on your cell phone (sounds or vibrations)

If using your cell phone at your home, turn off the ringer on your home phone
If using your home phone, turn off your cell phone
If using your cell phone, make sure you're in an area with good reception
Make sure your phone is fully charged
If using a Bluetooth (or other headset) make sure it's fully charged and working properly
Make sure you're somewhere where you can talk for 20-30 minutes without any incidents or interruptions
Don't drive during a phone interview
Set aside a space for your conversation
Have a pen and paper handy for taking notes
Keep your resume/LinkedIn profile nearby
Have your research with you
Take advantage of the fact you can't be seen and use cheat sheets (how you would answer questions they might ask, questions you want to ask, a brief bio, why you're best for the role)

02

Prepare Yourself

Do some research beforehand to make a great impression with the interviewer:

☐ Research the company

- Primary mission or purpose of the company or organization
- Principal services or products
- Latest annual sales or revenue information
- Major competitors
- Organizational culture (management style, work environment, structure)
- Trends in the industry or field and the "hot" issues

☐ Research the position

- Major position responsibilities
- Qualifications and required skills
- Required training and education
- Typical earnings, advancement, career path, and employment outlook
- Opportunities for continuing education and training

☐ Research your interviewer

- Google them
- Use LinkedIn
- Also use Facebook and Twitter
- Make note of anything that could be useful during your interview
- Look for ways to make personal connections to help you stand out
- Look for awards, accomplishments that you can congratulate them on

In addition to completing your research, prepare yourself personally for the phone interview:

	Dress for the part (you'll project more confidence if you're dressed for success vs. doing the phone interview in your pajamas)
	Be ready 10 minutes early
	Eat something
	Use the restroom
	Be well rested
П	Take a deep breath and calm your nerves

03

Prepare Your Answers

The interviewer is going to ask you several questions to determine your suitability for the position. Although the questions may vary, craft some strong responses to some of the most commonly asked questions, like:

- ☐ Tell me about yourself
- Why are you interested in this role?
- What are your strengths?
- What salary are you seeking?
- ☐ Why did you leave your last role?
- What do you know about this position / our organization?
- ☐ What makes you a fit for our company / this position?
- What questions do you have for me?



Here are some pointers on how to answer four important questions: "Tell me about yourself" • Don't give a chronological history, start with the present and the direct experience you have that makes you a fit Keep your answer short and informative "What are your strengths / weaknesses?" They want to know your own ability to assess your experience, work style, and mistakes They also want to see how you think on your feet A great technique is to tell stories about how your skills helped you excel • Engage them, but keep the answer brief "Why do you want this job?" They want to know what you know about the job • They want to see if you've done your homework, have you gone above and beyond to study the job and the organization? "What salary are you looking for?" Interviewers just want to know if you're asking for more than the position is paying

• Never fully answer this question ("I don't have enough

requirements fall within my range.")

information yet to make a firm determination, but your salary

04

Prepare Your Questions

At some point during your phone interview (usually at the end), the interviewer will ask you, "What questions do you have for me today?" You must always be prepared to ask 2-3 questions to make the best possible impression.

DO ask questions like...

What would I be doing on the job?

Who supervises this position?

At what stage in the process are you?

What are the top three things you're seeking in the ideal candidate?

Why is the position open?

Tell me about the team.

What is the culture like at your company?

How long have you been with the company, what do you like most about working there?

What is the vision / future for the company?

What are the next steps in the process?

DON'T ask questions like...

Will I have to work overtime?

Are the working hours flexible?

Can I work from home?

Does this job require that I pass a drug screen?

How much does this position pay?

What type of health insurance does the company offer?

Is there public transportation in the company's area?



DURING THE CALL: MAKING A GREAT IMPRESSION		
	SMILE! You will sound more upbeat and engaged. Your smile will be "heard" by the interviewer.	
	Take notes. There's no way you will remember everything from your conversation.	
	Be cognizant if you have a tendency to say "umm" or "uh" a lot (same thing with "like").	
	The tone of your voice reflects your personality. Avoid sounding shy, hesitant, scared, unsure, or arrogant.	
	Don't use your speakerphone. It can make your voice harder to hear and it's more impersonal.	
	LISTEN! You don't have the advantage of reading body language so you need to listen very carefully.	
	Speak CLEARLY. No mumbling - annunciate!	
	Show ENTHUSIASM! Express genuine interest and excitement. Get a real sense for the job to see if it's a good fit for you.	
	Wrap things up professionally (confirm next steps, end on a positive note, sell yourself).	



AFTER THE CALL: IMPORTANT ACTION STEPS

- Send a thank you email within 24 hours. Reiterate your fit for the role and your enthusiasm for moving forward in the process.
- Send something extra! If possible, attach a sample of your work: a blog you've written, a link to your portfolio, etc.



- ☐ Connect on LinkedIn. Show that you're socially savvy and make a new connection.
- ☐ Be patient and realistic. Follow up after a week if you haven't heard anything.





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