



Phone Interview Tips

Sometimes your initial contact will be a telephone interview. Often the employer uses a phone interview to narrow the selection of candidates. The employer usually schedules these phone interviews in advance. When receiving a phone call, if you are busy or need time to collect your thoughts, it is acceptable to tell the potential employer that you will return the call at a more convenient time. Then set up a time when you will return the call or they can call you. This gives you time to reread your letter of application, formulate questions to ask, and review material on the organization.

Anticipating the Call

- Record a professional greeting your voice mail to receive call when you are unable to answer the phone.
- Never answer a call during class or when you are not prepared to be in a professional mode.
- If another person is answering your phone, remind them to take a detailed message that includes the caller's name, company, date and why they are calling.
- If you did not arrange an interview beforehand, do not hesitate to ask the interviewer if you can call back at a more convenient time and suggestion some alternatives. You will not sound disinterested, but rather, you will sound concerned about being prepared and concerned for the interview. Remember, even though this is not a "phone interview" they are still evaluating your professionalism and communication skills.

Scheduling an Phone Interview

If you have arranged an interview with an employer, ask these questions to better prepare you.

- Who will contact whom? Who is the contact person and phone number in case you need to reach them prior to the interview?
- What time is the interview?
- What is the purpose of the interview? What types of questions may be asked?
- How long should you anticipate for the interview?
- Who will be involved in the interview? What are their names and titles?

Preparing for the Phone Interview

- Practice, practice, practice! Consider practicing with Perfect Interview in Eagle Opportunities. This online system allows you to practice interviewing at home or in Career Services. This program records your interview (if you have a camera on your computer) and allows you to self-critique your interview. Watch for enunciations, posture, awkward pauses, repeated phrases and nervous laughter. Additionally, you are able to arrange a mock interview with a Career Services staff member.
- Review common interview questions. Samples found at: <http://www.uwlax.edu/CareerServices/students/interviewing.htm>
- Research the employer. Don't expect the employer to educate you about what they do! Identify the organization's products or services; investigate its history and growth. Most employers now have excellent

websites that will provide you with all the necessary information. If you cannot find any specific information about the organization, then research the industry or field.

- Read the job description to identify your strengths related to the position.
- Once you have agreed to a phone interview, it is important to identify a place that will allow you to talk freely and without disruption. Don't take a call when there is a lot of background noise and interference. Consider putting a "Do Not Disturb" sign on your door to avoid any unnecessary interruptions.
- Consider dressing professionally for the phone interview. It may sound silly since the interviewer can't see you, but you really will project a more professional image than if you were wearing your sweatpants and a t-shirt.
- Be ready for the call 10-15 minutes in advance.
- Know your future schedule in case the interviewer wants to offer you a face-to-face interview.
- Be aware that the employer may be on a speaker phone with more than one interviewer listening and asking questions. If you have difficulty hearing the questions, do not be afraid to ask the interviewer to repeat the questions.
- Since you are unable to observe nonverbal cues to guide the timing of the interview, you have to be careful not to interrupt the recruiter. Be sure they are finished with the question/comment prior to answering, paying close attention to voice tone and inflection.
- Have I answered your question?????

During the Phone Interview

- Keep your resume, the job description, and company information close by for you to review during the interview.
- Speak directly into the phone. Speak slowly and clearly.
- Do not answer call waiting. If the interviewer hears the beep, tell them it should end shortly.
- Always address the interviewer by Mr. or Ms. Only use their first name if they ask you to and only use Mrs. if someone introduces themselves as a Mrs.
- Standing when being interviewed on the phone can add energy to your voice. Some say you'll sound more professional than if you're slouching on the couch.
- Answer questions as you would in a face-to-face interview. Remember to use examples to illustrate why you are the best candidate.
- Don't feel you have to fill in the silences. If you've completed a response, but the interviewer hasn't asked his or her next question, don't start babbling just to fill in airtime.
- Prepare a few questions that will show you researched the company and are aware of how you fit the position requirements.
- Smile! It will improve your attitude and the enthusiasm will elevate the tone of your voice. Remember the interviewer does not have a visual of you, so you will have to use your voice to show your energy, professionalism and drive.
- Create a strong finish to your phone interview with a summary statement about why you would be the best candidate for the position.
- Thank the interviewer (s) for their time and consideration and reaffirm your interest.
- Ask what the next step is in the interview process and tell them you are looking forward to continuing the hiring process.

After the Phone Interview

- Send a thank you letter to the interviewer(s) outlining your interest in the position.