Tips for Phone Interviews

Phone interviews are becoming more and more common in the job search process. They save the company and the candidate a lot of time. If you are in the job market, it is important to prepare yourself for a phone interview. Just like any other interview, the better you are prepared, the better the phone interview will be. A good telephone interview can give you an advantage prior to meeting a potential employer.

Use a Land-Line Phone if Possible. Calls can drop or be difficult to hear on cell phones. If you need a phone to use, feel free to contact the Career Services Office to set up your phone interview in one of our offices.

Be Enthusiastic. The first 15 seconds are crucial and interest in your voice is key. Just the way you answer the phone has impact on the caller. Talk distinctly and with confidence.

Schedule the Interview for a Quiet Time. If you have the opportunity to schedule the time of the phone interview, be sure to schedule it when you know you will be able to give them your full attention. Make sure the environment at your home or office is clear of other people and noise, such as radios, TVs, pets, etc. You do not want to have any distractions or any loud noises that may be disruptive to you and/or your interviewer.

Have Your Resume Next to the Phone. Have your resume in front of you for quick reference. Be sure it is the same copy you had sent out to the employer who is calling. Your interviewer will be looking at your resume throughout the interview, and you want to be sure you know exactly what he/she is talking about. It will help make the interview run smoothly. You do not want to come off as being unsure of some of the details of your work history.

Prepare Notes. Prepare a list of accomplishments for each of your positions prior to starting the call. Know what you are going to want to highlight. Have prepared answers ready to some basic questions like, "why do you want to work for our firm?" or "why should I hire you?" Take advantage of the fact that this is over the phone. Use your notes to help you say exactly what you want to say. Remember, so far your resume is the only tool your caller has to know who you are. Sell yourself more than your resume does!

Research the Employer. Just like any interview, research the employer and interviewer. You should jot down a few things in your notes that you can refer to. If possible, have the firm website already pulled up. That way if something comes up in the conversation, it shows you are right on top of things.

Have Questions Ready. Show your interest in the employer rather than focusing only on yourself. Have a few questions prepared in your notes that you might want to know about. Asking good questions illustrates that you are already thinking seriously about the position and joining the firm. Potential employers expect to be asked questions and welcome opportunities to talk about their firm and their own background.

Know Your Schedule. If your interviewer is interested in setting up an actual face-to-face interview, know your availability. That last thing you would want to do is succeed in a phone interview only to tell them to call you back because you are not sure when you can meet with them. Have a copy of your schedule next to the phone.
**Closing.** How many times have you thought of something you should have said after you left an interview? Do not let that happen again! Know that you have said everything you want to say before the interview is over. Again, write down any comments and/or questions you want to address as well as how you would like to close the interview.

**Always Thank the Caller** for his or her time and say that you are interested in the opportunity. If the interviewer has not asked you about your schedule or availability, it is a good idea to ask, "What would the next step be in the process?"

**Send a Thank You Note.** Confirm information. If you don't already have it, be sure to ask for the interviewer's exact title and name spelling, as well as the complete mailing or email address, so that you can send a thank you note.