



## TIPS FOR A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Telephone interviews are often used to screen candidates in order to narrow the pool of applicants who will be invited for in-person interviews. A telephone interview is usually short, just enough time to rule you in or out, so the focus is on questions that help evaluate you quickly.

Your goal is to turn it into a face-to-face meeting, so your answers need to be concise.

Phone interviews are conducted just like in-person interviews. They are used by hiring managers and recruiters as a tool for screening candidates for employment. It's important to take time to review the typical phone interview questions (see attached) you'll be asked and to prepare answers. In addition, plan on being prepared for a phone conversation about your background and skills. As a rule of thumb, keep your answers to less than two minutes, if an interviewer wants to know more they will ask.

### [Prepare for the Interview](#)

Prepare for a phone interview just as you would for a regular interview. Compile a list of your strengths and weaknesses, as well as a list of answers to typical phone interview questions. In addition, plan on being prepared for a phone conversation about your background and skills. Some suggestions include:

- Keep your resume in clear view, on the top of your desk, or tape it to the wall near the phone, so it's at your fingertips when you need to answer questions.
- If you have to take the telephone interview on a cell phone – which I do NOT recommend – make sure you are not distracted, e.g., driving (*YES – a candidate I was representing did this... and NO, the candidate did not get the next interview, so, please don't be driving...*) Also, make sure your battery is fully charged.
- Have a short list of your accomplishments available to review.
- Have a pen and paper handy for note taking.
- Turn call-waiting off so your call isn't interrupted.
- If the time isn't convenient, ask if you could talk at another time and suggest some alternatives.
- Clear the room - evict the kids and the pets. Turn off the stereo and the TV. Close the door.
- Unless you're sure your cell phone service is going to be perfect, consider using a landline rather than your cell phone to avoid a dropped call or static on the line.

### [Practice Interviewing](#)

Talking on the phone isn't as easy as it seems. I've always found it's helpful to practice. Have a friend or family member conduct a mock interview and tape record it so you can see how you sound over the phone. Any recorder will work. You'll be able to hear your "ums" and "uhs" and "Okays" and you can practice reducing them from your conversational speech. Also rehearse answers to those typical questions you'll be asked.

Length of Telephone Interviews (minutes)



## During the Phone Interview

- Don't smoke, chew gum, eat, or drink.
- 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. *My wife always tells me to do this and I know she is right. When I make a deliberate effort to do this, that telephone conversation seems to work for me.*
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.
- Don't interrupt the interviewer.
- Take your time - it's perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to collect your thoughts.
- Give short answers.
- Remember your goal is to set up a face-to-face interview. After you thank the interviewer ask if it would be possible to meet in person.



The telephone interview comes to an end when you are asked whether you have any questions. If you have not already been invited to meet the interviewer, now is the time to take the initiative, "The most pressing question I have is when we can meet?"

## After the Interview:

- Take notes about what you were asked and how you answered.
- Remember to say "thank you." Follow with a thank you note or email which reiterates your interest in the job.

