



Sounding successful.

Telephone interviews are growing more and more prevalent nowadays with the tough economy. They allow organizations to pre-screen candidates, as well as to cut down costs of travel and hotel expenses. For someone seeking a job, this means you have to impress a potential employer over the phone using your voice, quick thinking, and winning phone personality. You have to make them see that you're worth pursuing.

Phone interviews are no less important than in-person meetings. In fact, their only purpose is to get you that in-person interview. These calls may be impromptu, unexpected, or scheduled. Either way, the interview begins as soon as you answer the phone.

Testing, testing, 1-2-3.

The same rules apply to phone interviews and in-person interviews. It's all about practice and preparation. Know your material inside and out, and always be ready to take the call.

The beauty of silence. Make sure to find a quiet place with privacy. Remove all distractions around you and background noises – close the windows and doors; select a time and place without pets, TV/radio, vacuums, children, etc. No eating, chewing, or smoking.

At your grasp. Things to keep within reach during the phone call: paper, working pens, calendar, calculator, your résumé, and notes with vital points you want to make.

"Hello? Hello?" Try to use a landline

as opposed to a cell phone to avoid dropped calls. Always charge cordless batteries, have an extra handset ready, or have your cell phone charger handy. No speaker phones.

Time to talk.

Don't answer the call if it's unexpected and you're unprepared. It's acceptable to reschedule, if need be. Always return missed calls as soon as possible. Once you've decided to make or take the phone call, remember these guidelines.

Manners get you everywhere. Greet and answer politely. Use appropriate titles: Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc. Sound professional, as though you were face-to-face. This is a business call, not personal.

Stand up for yourself. Stand up and/or walk around. Standing opens up your diaphragm, so you'll sound stronger. Walking also helps relax you – just don't sound out of breath.

Pay attention. Listen closely, take notes, then speak clearly and slowly, but naturally. Pauses and short silences can add effect, but don't overdo it. Don't interrupt.

Put a smile on. Even though no one will see it, a smile can be heard – it will make a difference. Sound enthusiastic – you have to make up for the lack of visual signals.

Watch your voice. Nervousness often leads to speaking rapidly and at a higher pitch. Don't ramble. Pace yourself and breathe. Avoid "um," "like," "ya know," and slang.

Telephone Interview Tips

Guidelines for successfully interviewing over the phone.

Simply put:

Even if they don't require fancy attire or a GPS to get you there, telephone interviews are no less crucial:

- They get you where you want: an in-person interview.
- Be prepared, know your material, sound professional, focus.
- Stand up and smile – you'll sound better.
- Eliminate distractions and background noises.
- Have paper, working pens, your résumé, and notes handy.
- Avoid "um," "like," and "ya know."
- Don't wing it.
- "Show," don't "tell."
- Send a prompt e-mail "thank you" and follow up a few days later.

Details matter. Answer all questions. Where appropriate, provide extra facts and info, not just a "yes" or a "no." It's important to "show," not "tell." What you add may put you above the competition. Just don't go overboard.

Don't do it. Don't wing it. Don't put the interviewer on hold. Don't eat. Don't lie.

End the call by asking about the next step. A prompt e-mail "thank you" in this case is fine. Follow up a few days later. If the telephone interview was successful, the next time you try to impress someone will be in person.

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