

PHONE INTERVIEWING ETIQUETTE

Employers find phone interviewing an affordable and effective screening tool, especially in this scaled-back, cost-conscious economy.

Phone interviews can result from a variety of activities:

- You call the hiring manager.
- An employer calls you, for instance, from a resume referral or from your posting on an Internet job board.
- The company schedules a preset time with a hiring representative.

If you are in a job search, you must be ready to have a professional interaction every time the phone rings. Not only should you record a refined voicemail message, but also you should teach whoever might answer your phone how to respond to a professional caller and how to take an accurate message.

You prepare for a phone interview in the same serious, focused way you do for a face-to-face meeting. You do your research and have your points ready to prove that you fit the job and will add value to the company.

Phone interviews are concise, focused, and last, generally, between 20 to 30 minutes.

Prepare your environment for a phone conversation:

- Have a "do-not-disturb" sign on the door.
- Make sure the room is quiet.
- Turn off all your electronic equipment which could be distracting, your TV, stereo, radio, and cell phone.
- Turn off Call-waiting on your conventional phone.
- If you can, warm up your voice by singing an uplifting song.
- Have a glass of water handy.
- Tape your resume to the wall in front of you for easy reference.
- Have your company information and research notes in front of you.
- Have your interview agenda prepared.
- Have a pad and pen to take notes.
- While on the phone, stand up, but do not pace. You will sound better.
- Smile as you would face-to-face--you will come across friendlier and more interested.
- Speak naturally and calmly.
- Be positive, straightforward, pleasant, and friendly.
- Try to match the speaker's pace and pitch.
- At the conclusion, ask about the next step in the interviewing process.

You may follow-up this phone, screening interview with a thank-you voice-mail or email message, but always send a snail-mail letter, too.

You may check the status of the recruiting process only after the deadline set by the employer and then at responsible intervals only. An interested candidate is good; a pesky candidate is annoying.

If you get a job offer by phone, after first asking for at least a 24-hour period to consider the offer, you then may accept or reject the job by phone.

However, if you intend to accept the offer, first, make sure you request the details in writing before you then officially agree, also in writing.

If, after a long recruiting process, you reject an offer, also send an appreciative letter in writing.