

The goal of a telephone interview is to get a face to face interview. Below are some helpful hints on how to prepare and conduct a telephone interview. Be prepared for the call just as you would for a full-dress interview.

Have ready:

- Pen and paper (calculator if applicable to the role)
- The job description and your CV
- A list of your accomplishments which relate to the job you are discussing.
- The research you have done on the company.
- A short list of questions about the job.
- Keep a glass of water handy, in case you need to wet your mouth.
- Your calendar / diary
- Clear the room or potential noise from (children, pets, stereo, TV) and close the door.

During the telephone interview:

- Don't smoke, chew gum, eat or drink anything. It all telegraphs to your listener.
- Stand & Smile when on phone: This common technique allows your voice to project and sound more confident. Facial expressions will reflect through your voice. If you are smiling, you will sound interested. If you are frowning, you will sound disinterested.
- Be up-beat and enthusiastic - your enthusiasm/energy must stand out, but don't sound phony.
- Speak clearly and slowly: Many people get very nervous during telephone interviews and may have a tendency to mumble into the phone. Relax, speak slowly. Do not sound rushed or anxious.
- Avoid ah, er, hum. This habit is especially noticeable on the telephone. This takes practice - so practice!
- Be prepared to give a positive two minute summary of your professional career. Rehearse this!
- Don't interrupt the interviewer and provide short concise answers.
- Remember your goal is to set-up a face-to-face interview. At the end of your interview, thank the interviewer and ask if it would be possible to meet in person – don't miss out on this opportunity!

For a winning performance

- Be aware that the interviewer can't see you: they can't see your hand gestures not can they see you taking notes.
- Pace the call. Let the interview do most of the talking - without interruptions!
- Do use the technique of repeating or re-phrasing questions. It tells the interviewer that you are listening carefully and gives you time to think about your answer.
- Avoid the simple yes or no; add selling points at every opportunity.
- If you need time to think, say so - as in radio, silence during a telephone conversation is dead air time.
- Money questions should come at the end of the interviewing cycle, preferably *not at the telephone stage*. If you are asked about your salary requirements, say you are open to discussion but it will be based upon the position and the overall package. Or tell the employer you'd like to know more about the responsibilities and the challenges of the job prior to discussing salary. Another option is to give the employer a salary range based upon the salary they are advertising. Say you would appreciate the opportunity to talk about the job further - in person.
- Role-play and rehearse your responses to difficult or uncomfortable issues that may come up in the conversation.

What to avoid:

- Know your skeletons, avoid weak excuses.
- NEVER CRITICIZE YOUR FORMER EMPLOYERS.
- At the telephone interview stage, avoid asking questions about the Salary & Benefits, Hours or the company's Sick pay and Holiday policies - there will be ample time to get these questions answered in a face to face interview or even at offer stage.

Questions you may wish to ask:

Q: How can I make an immediate impact on the job?

Tip: Tailor the balance of your responses to examples where you resolved similar concerns.

Q: I know you are busy and there is only so much we can cover on the phone. Based upon what we have both shared, I would like to meet with you. I have my schedule in front of me, when do you think we can get together?"

Tip: You always want to end the conversation knowing what the next step will be.

Questions the interviewer may ask:

Q: What are your goals for the future?

Q: Where do you see yourself in five years?

Tip: The interviewer will be referring to the position you are being considered for and the company you are being interviewed by. Don't discuss your goals for returning to school or having a family, they are not relevant and could put you out of the pre-selection processes - connect your answer to the job you are applying for.