

Phone Interviews

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Perhaps the single most important thing that you, the candidate, needs to understand about phone interviews is the fact that it is just one of many methods that employers use to identify potential employees. This type of interview is just as important as the face-to-face meeting and this method of pre-screening, though efficient for employers, is not without challenges for candidates.

Here are some tips to help you through the process:

1. There are two kinds of phone interviews: the phone interview that is expected and the phone interview that is unexpected. Always opt for the expected phone interview if possible. Opting for the expected interview will give you the opportunity to prepare properly.
2. Set up your environment. The hard elements to have at your disposal include the following:
 - a. Background information on the company
 - b. A hard copy of the job advertisement
 - c. A hard copy of your résumé for ease of reference
 - d. Pen and paper to take notes
3. Use a landline to reduce the possibility of dropping the call - clear the room of as many distractions as possible, i.e. children, pets, TVs, music, turn off call-waiting and DO NOT use a speaker phone
4. Have a mirror to look into when answering questions - the mirror will help ensure that you are smiling when responding to questions. Remember that neither the candidate nor the interviewer has the added perk of associating body language with verbal responses, so your best tool is your tone of voice.
5. Do not smoke, chew gum or sip on beverages during the interview. If you must have a drink of water to alleviate your dry mouth, cover the speaker of the phone when sipping your beverage.
6. Address your interviewer in the most formal manner i.e. Mr. or Ms. until you have been instructed otherwise.
7. Listen carefully to the questions being asked of you. Some people find that it helps to close your eyes when listening to the question so that they are not distracted.
8. Answer questions succinctly and enunciate
9. Have good and thoughtful questions for the interviewer - candidates are often judged by the types of questions they ask
10. Thank the interviewer and ask what the next step in the process will be - don't forget to follow-up!