

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE HELPFUL HINTS

From
CASCADE CAREER SERVICES

Telephone interviews are used by employers to screen candidates and narrow the pool of applicants who will be invited for in-person interviews. They are also used as a means to minimize the expense involved in interviewing out-of-town candidates.

PREPARING

- Practice your interview skills ahead of time (tape record yourself talking and listen to the playback)
- Make sure the message on your answering machine is professional
- Have a pen, paper, calendar, and calculator near the phone
- If you are using a cell phone make sure it is charged
- Dress as you would for a regular in-person interview
- Keep a copy of your resume and list of accomplishments in view
- Have available a copy of the job ad and cover letter you sent in response
- Keep handy the research you have done on the company
- Have ready a list of questions about the job and what the best “match” would be for the position
- Have a mirror nearby so you can make sure you are smiling
- Turn off call waiting
- Clear the room of kids & pets, turn off the stereo & TV, and close the door if possible
- If the interviewer has not prearranged the interview and the time isn't convenient for you, ask if you could schedule for another time

DURING

- Stand up
- Smile
- Be enthusiastic
- Use the person's name when speaking
- Establish a connection if possible (suggestions: ask about the caller's experience with the company; mention something you have read about the company; or try to find a common experience)
- Avoid using lots of “uhs” “ers”, or “ums”
- Don't smoke, chew gum, eat or drink during the interview
- Speak slowly, take your time, collect your thoughts
- Don't interrupt
- Give short answers but more than just “yes” or “no”
- Use buzz words
- Be aware that the caller can't see you – if you are taking a few seconds to do something that will appear as silence during the conversation, let them know what you are doing. For example: “Just a moment while I pull a copy of that report out of my briefcase.”
- Repeat or rephrase questions if necessary – it tells the caller that you are listening carefully and gives you time to think about your answer
- Know your resume and accomplishments. Make your resume “come alive”. Don't assume that the interviewer knows your background or is familiar with the companies you have listed.
- Thank the interviewer for their time (and ask if it would be possible to schedule an in-person interview if you are interested). Ask: “What would be the next step in the process?”

AFTER

- Send a thank you note
- Review what went well, what you would like to change next time