



TIPS FOR TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

More and more companies are relying on telephone interviews in their recruiting and hiring decisions. A good telephone interview can give you an advantage prior to meeting a potential employer. Because preparing yourself is the best way to be effective in a telephone interview, please review the following tips for success:

Before the Call

- * Quiet environment. Make sure the environment at your home or office is clear of other people and extraneous noise, such as radios, TVs, etc.
- * Have your resume in front of you
- * Prepare a list of accomplishments for each of your positions prior to starting the call - keep this list in front of you.
- * Research the company , products, revenues, and other pertinent industry information.
- * Prepare questions based on the position's responsibilities, goals of the division, cultural style of the company, or the interviewer's background, if it is the hiring manager.
- * Be on time.

Beginning the Call

- * Be enthusiastic. The first 15 seconds are crucial and interest in your voice is key. Just the way you answer the phone has an impact on the caller. Talk distinctly and with confidence.
- * Establish a connection. Ask about the caller's experience with the company or mention something you have read about the company. Also try touching on a common experience.
- * Ask for an overview. Once you are comfortable, ask the interviewer what they are looking for and why the position is open. If you don't already have this information, this will provide you with good information so you can plan your responses.



During the Call

* Know your resume. Don't assume that the person on the other end of the phone knows your background or is familiar with the companies listed on your resume. Assume that you have to illustrate your entire background. Make your resume "come alive". Try to anticipate what a company may ask about your background.

* Demonstrate a career plan. The interviewer may start with the question, "Tell me about yourself." One approach is to begin by saying, "Let me tell you how and why I am in my current position". If you have had a number of other titles at one company, explain how value you added to the company resulted in promotional opportunities.

* Demonstrate accomplishments. Review a problem that you turned into a positive situation for each position that you list. Help the interviewer understand the problem, your specific role, what path you took to resolve it, and the final result. Paint a picture. Also, try to quantify accomplishment in each position (e.g. Increased sales by X percent; Oversaw budget of \$Y).

* Address reasons for leaving. Be clear on your reasons for leaving each position. Almost every interviewer will ask that question. If you left a job because there was a conflict in the department or with your supervisor, be brief about the conflict. Most people don't enjoy hearing a long drawn out negative explanation.

* Ask questions from the list you prepared. Asking good questions illustrates that you are already thinking seriously about the position and joining the company. Potential employers expect to be asked questions and welcome opportunities to talk about their companies and/or their own backgrounds.

* Be open to compensation questions. If you are asked, be specific and precise about the base, bonus, stock options, car allowance, etc. If asked "What salary are you looking for to make a change?" A good answer is, "My current package is a base of \$XX.XX and bonus of XX%, and I am hoping you will make me a fair offer based on my experience and the value I can bring to your company." The interviewer will usually not press you for a specific number if you answer the question in that manner.

Ending the call

* Give up control. The end of the call is always a tricky thing. A good suggestion is to thank the caller for his or her time and say that you are interested in the opportunity. If the interviewer has not asked you about your schedule or availability, it is a good idea to ask, "What would the next step be in the process?" Let the interviewer reestablish control of the interview with this question.



* Confirm information. If you don't already have it, be sure to ask for the interviewer's exact title and name spelling, along with a street or email address, so that you can send a thank you note. (Ask if the interviewer uses email regularly before sending one).

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