

Quick Tips for Successful Phone Interviews to Get an In-Person Meeting

Job openings that attract lots of competing candidates often have a series of interviews to narrow down the applicants in stages. Many times, the first round of interviews is done over the phone to save time for the interviewer and for interviewees who aren't a great fit for the position or the company for any number of reasons that come to light quickly.

If you [make a great resume](#) that highlights why you're right for the job and that helps you stand out from the pack, you should pass the initial phase, when the interviewer rules people out just based on what they see on paper. And then that puts you in the pool for phone interviews.

Job interviews conducted over the phone are almost never the final interview, though. They're a step between sifting through resumes and bringing candidates into the office for in-person interviews (and sometimes, there's more than one round of in-person interviews).

So, it's important to study tips for successful phone interviews. This boosts your chances of passing the phone screening and getting called in to meet your prospective employer in person, where you can really sell yourself.

How to Ace a Phone Interview

- Treat this just as seriously as you would an in-person interview; a phone call may feel less formal and like there's less pressure, but that's not a good way to look at it.
- Know what time you're getting the call, what phone number they're calling (a landline usually has a more reliable connection than a cellphone, so if possible, give a landline number), and who's calling you and what their position is.
- Make sure your phone is fully charged if you're using a cell or cordless phone, and keep your charger next to you, just in case.

- Have a quiet place set up where you won't be interrupted, there won't be background noise, and you'll be able to hear clearly.
- Research the company beforehand and prepare a few questions to ask about it and the position.
- Review the job ad and your resume and cover letter shortly before the call so it's all fresh in your mind; keep them on hand for easy reference during the call, too, in case you need to glance at them.
- Take advantage of the ability to have notes in front of you since this is a phone call; make sure they're organized, short, legible, and easily skimmable so you don't get distracted or go silent for too long while trying to read them.
- Brush up on things to never say in an interview – they're just as relevant in a phone interview as in an in-person meeting.
- Keep a glass of water on hand, but make sure you move the speaker away from your mouth when you take a sip.
- Dress professionally! You might be tempted to interview over the phone in your pajamas or underwear, but the way you're dressed can have a big effect on your confidence level and the way you sound.
- Sit up in a chair rather than sprawling out on your bed or the couch, as this similarly affects your confidence and tone.
- Pick up on the second or third ring; don't let the call go to voicemail.
- Speak with energy and enthusiasm; it's easy to slip into a monotone drone on the phone.
- But don't talk fast! It's often harder to understand people when you can't see their mouths, and you want your interviewer to be able to follow you and not have to keep asking you to repeat things.

- Smile and use your normal hand gestures even though the interviewer can't see you; this helps keep you sounding lively and natural.
- Have a polite, professional introduction ready.
- Don't be afraid to make friendly small talk if that's how the interviewer starts things off.
- Pay attention! Your interviewer is likely to be annoyed if you keep asking them to say things again.
- Be prepared to be specific about what experience and knowledge you have that will help you be successful in the position you're applying for.
- Have an answer ready in case they ask what salary you're looking for; this is a common question in phone interviews because it's an easy way to hone in on candidates who'll be happy with what the position pays and eliminate all the rest.
- Wait for a beat before answering when the interviewer asks a question to be sure they're finished speaking, and you don't interrupt; it's harder to tell when someone is done talking without visual clues.
- If the interviewer interrupts you, stop talking and let them proceed.
- Don't eat, chew gum, or suck on candy or a cough drop at any point during the phone interview.
- If some sort of loud noise or other distraction happens, acknowledge it and apologize for it, rather than letting the interviewer sit there wondering what's going on.
- Remember to send a thank you to the interviewer and to follow up if you don't hear back within the time, you were told you would (or, if no time was specified, wait a week).

