

Tips for Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews can be challenging because you receive no visual cues from the interviewer. However, there are some advantages. You can use notes, you can move around, talk with your hands, or wear whatever you want.

If you have applied for a job and anticipate hearing from an employer about an interview, or if you expect a call from a prospective employer for any reason, consider the following in preparation for that call.

- Make sure the message on your answering machine or voice messaging is courteous and professional. It may be the employer's first impression of you.
- Inform everyone who may answer the telephone that employment calls may come at any time. If you feel your roommates or members of household are unreliable, consider listing a message or cell phone number. Be sure to manage your cell phone calls appropriately.
- If you leave a message after returning a missed call, always leave your first and last name, your phone number and a good time to call you back.
- If an employer schedules a specific time to call you, make sure you are available and that you have a quiet place to talk.
- Keep a copy of your resume and cover letters close to the phone.
- Keep paper and a pen next to the phone, or on you at all times for taking notes.
- Create a file on each organization that you have contacted in any way. You can refer to the file while talking on the phone and bring up pertinent information.

There are also some important things to remember when an employer does call.

- If a call surprises you, ask the employer to hold for a moment and compose yourself. Do not put the employer on hold for more than 30 seconds. If the timing is extremely bad for you, ask if you can return the call. Let the employer know the exact time that you will call, or arrange an appropriate time convenient to both of you and stick to that time.
- Never put the employer on hold while you answer "call waiting" or another "incoming call."
- Be aware that the interviewer may actually include a group of people. If they do not introduce themselves, ask if they would mind doing so. Write down their names and titles, and feel free to ask who is asking a specific question if you are not sure.
- Voice is important. Be sure to convey energy and enthusiasm. Although the employer can't see you, smile. It will help you feel more energized.
- Listen carefully to each question asked. Envision the recruiter sitting across from you and answer as if they are present.
- Speak directly into the phone. Keep the mouthpiece about one inch from your mouth. Do not eat, chew gum or smoke while on the phone, sound is amplified! Do not use a speakerphone, even if the interviewer does.