

Telephone Interview Tips

1. Get the Environment right.

Try to avoid conducting the interview in a busy, noisy environment or indeed in your car. A private office where you will not be disturbed is perfect. Too many telephone interviews are interrupted by questions from colleagues, or the barista behind the counter at Starbucks! Ensure you allow enough time for the interview and do not assume it will be a 'quick ten minutes.' Use a landline for receiving the call if possible. Poor mobile phone reception is the single biggest reason why many telephone interviews fail to take place.

2. Prepare.

Have your notes and resume in front of you during the interview. Make sure you summarize your notes focusing on key points to avoid scripted answers.

3. Sit in front of the mirror.

This may seem a little odd but quite simply it will give you an indication of how you are coming across. Do you look animated? Is your head up? Perhaps most importantly are you smiling? If not then try to focus on doing so, this may translate into you feeling more confident and therefore sounding more positive! Alternatively you could try standing up and walking around. If you are more comfortable walking and talking then ensure you are in the right environment to do this. Many people feel they are more animated when upright and this allows for a greater level of focus.

4. DO NOT actively listen when asked questions.

A common mistake to make, however actively listening in a telephone interview can disrupt flow as you will find the interviewer may stop talking. This can lead to a disjointed and awkward conversation.

5. Ask the interviewer to rephrase or repeat back the question.

If you are slightly uncertain about the question either ask the interviewer to rephrase or indeed paraphrase this back. You should try to avoid doing this repeatedly but it is better to get your answer right the first time.

6. Use regular pauses.

Leave healthy pauses after every two or three sentences to allow the interviewer to either drill further down or confirm they have heard enough.

7. Vary your pace, pitch and tone.

It is very difficult to convey energy and empathy over the phone so it is important that you vary your speech. The monotone interview is the bane of all interviewers!

8. Practice a CV run through.

The structure of telephone interviews will often vary but a standard format will be CV based. If you are asked to run through your career history you should qualify how long this should last. Do they want a 30 second elevator pitch or a detailed 30 minute conversation? Either way, plan ahead!

9. Build rapport early on but avoid too many jokes!

Good interviewers will try to break the ice early on. Reciprocate and avoid coming across as 'cold.'

10. Ask Questions.