



Telephone Interview Preparation Tips

In preparing for your phone interview, there are several things you can do. To prepare for an unexpected contact:

- Tape your resume to a wall in view of the phone. It will be there for the call and will be a constant reminder for your job search.
- Keep all of your employer research materials within easy reach of the phone.
- Have a notepad handy to take notes.
- Keep a mirror nearby (you will see why in the next few pages).
- Place a "Do Not Disturb" note on your door.
- Turn off your stereo, TV, and any other potential distractions.
- Warm up your voice while waiting for the call. Sing an uplifting song to yourself.
- Have a glass of water handy, since you will not have a chance to take a break during the call
- Speaking of breaks, if your phone interview is at a set time, make sure you answer nature's call first.
- Turn off call waiting on your phone.

Point One

Although you obviously cannot match the interviewer's physical characteristics, try to match the interviewer's speaking rate and pitch. Remember to stay within your personality range, but venture toward that portion of your range, which most closely matches that of your interviewer. This is an excellent way to establish rapport quickly over distance and phone lines.

Point Two

You have a major advantage in a phone interview, which does not exist in a face-to-face interview.

Have all of your materials on yourself and the employer open and available on your desk as you are speaking on the phone. This includes not only your resume, but also a "cheat sheet" of compelling story subjects which you would like to introduce. It can also include a "cheat sheet" about the employer, including specific critical points describing the employer and their products.

*Keep your mind
focused on your
phone call. Remove
all distractions from
your line of sight.*

Point Three

As I am speaking with you on the other end of the phone, I have no idea that you are actually being prompted from a document as you are speaking. All I can hear is a well-informed, well-prepared interviewee. Keep in mind that this preparation is not "cheating" at all. It is preparation, pure and simple.

So have your materials open and available when you are preparing for a phone interview. They are there to support you and enhance your value to the employer, who will greatly respect your ability to answer questions with focus and meaningful content.

Point Four

Here is a simple technique to increase the enthusiasm and positive image that you project over the telephone: stand up. Whenever you are talking with a potential employer on the phone, stand up. It gets your blood flowing, improves your posture, and improves your response time.

It's interesting to note that many telemarketing companies have come to realize that standing can actually improve their sales, so they often provide the telemarketers with hands-free headsets that allow them to stand and pace back and forth. It helps give an action perspective to an otherwise passive activity. So apply this same technique to improve your telephone presence.

Point Five

When I was in college I had a roommate who enjoyed flexing his muscles in the mirror. He could do it for hours at a time. A little vain? A lot. Well, I am going to ask you to do the same thing (except leave out the flexing muscles part). In prep for a telephone interview (or any telephone contact), make sure that you have a mirror within view. Why? Because I want you to look into that mirror consistently throughout the phone call. ***And smile.*** You will improve your telephone presence 110 percent just by using this simple technique. You will find yourself coming across much friendlier, more interested, and more alert. If you are at all self-conscious about seeing yourself in the mirror, you can use the mirror as an occasional checkpoint. But for most of us, seeing oneself reflected back gives us the kind of feedback necessary to make instant modifications toward a more positive presence.

Good Luck!

Resource Point LLC.,

IT Staffing (Onsite & Remote) | Offsite Projects Development in the USA

Ph: 248-649-5600

Careers@resourcepoint.net www.resourcepoint.net

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