



Phone Interviews

Career-management experts estimate that more than 80% of job interviews are won or lost (mostly lost) during the first five minutes of a phone screen. This can be especially tough if you rely on visual presentation and your physical presence to define yourself in interviews. The key, again, is to be prepared!

- Find a quiet place to talk where you know you will have no interruptions or background noise, such as TV, pets, or children. This may mean scheduling a babysitter for this time.
- If at all possible, use a landline vs. your cellular phone – the connection will always be better.
- Do not answer your call waiting if another call comes through during your interview. If you are the one who makes the initial call for the phone screen, you can disable your call waiting by dialing *70 before dialing the number.
- Have a copy of your resume, note pad, pen, a list of prepared notes and basic questions sitting with you for your phone screen. In addition, you should have your calendar and any research notes on the company.
- Stand up if you feel your voice carries better – your enthusiasm will come through over the phone and above all else, sound positive, self-confident and focused.
- Be aware that phone screens are used to screen candidates out of the process if they don't meet the broad requirements of the position, so be sure not to ask questions related to salary, vacation time, or benefits at this time as this creates the wrong perception in the mind of the interviewer.
- Focus on what you can immediately contribute to the company. Not on what the company can contribute to you.
- Talk directly into the mouthpiece and try to be aware of the volume of your voice. If you have a bad connection or have difficulty hearing, have the interviewer call you back or adjust the volume on your phone.
- Educate your roommates/family on the correct way to answer the phone and take a message. Their behavior greatly influences the impression of the potential employer.
- Your voicemail or answering machine message should be professional and courteous.