

Telephone Interviewing

- Some employers use phone calls to pre-screen candidates before offering in-person interviews.
- Some employers also conduct interviews by telephone — they usually tell you this and formally schedule the telephone interview in advance, but some may informally do this without warning.
- If the employer catches you at a bad time and you can't speak, don't hesitate to politely explain this and offer to call back at a time convenient to the employer.
- You are always being evaluated on your telephone conduct. So...

Sound hireable on the telephone

- Remember that tone of voice carries a lot of weight in a telephone conversation.
- You don't have facial expressions, body language, and other non-verbal elements coming through in a phone conversation. However, silly as it may seem, smiling while you speak on the phone can make you sound more pleasant.
- Ask friends (who will tell you the truth) how you sound on the phone. They know you, but an employer doesn't. Do you sound cordial or aloof, articulate or fumbling, interested or gloomy?
- Practice how you speak on the phone.

Prepare for a phone interview

- **Do** give accurate and detailed contact information in your cover letter so your interviewers can easily connect with you.
- **Don't** have a disproportionately silly or long greeting on your answering machine or voicemail.
- **Do** ensure that household members understand the importance of phone messages in your job search.
- **Do** know what job you are interviewing for.

- **Do** practice, if possible. Have a friend call you to do a mock phone interview so you get the feel of being interviewed over the phone.
- When being interviewed by phone, **do** make sure you are in a place where you can read notes, take notes, and concentrate.
- If you cannot devote enough time to a phone interview, **do** suggest a specific alternate time to the recruiter. It's often best to be the one who calls back so you can be mentally prepared.
- **Do** consider keeping some note cards or an outline in front of you to remind yourself of key points you want to cover with the interviewer. You don't want your responses to sound scripted, but you don't want to fumble for important points either. **Do** also have your resume in front of you so you can remember highlights of your experience and accomplishments.
- **Do** ensure that you can hear and are being clearly heard.
- **Do** consider standing when being interviewed on the phone. Some experts say you'll sound more professional than if you're slouching in an easy chair.
- **Do** consider dressing nicely for the phone interview. It may sound silly since the interviewer can't see you, but you really will project a more professional image if you're dressed for the part instead of wearing, for example, a ratty bathrobe.
- **Don't** feel you have to fill in the silences. If you've completed a response, but the interviewer hasn't asked his or her next question, don't start babbling just to fill in airtime. Instead, ask a question of your own related to your last response.
- **Do** create a strong finish to your phone interview with thoughtful questions.
- **Don't** panic if you have special needs. If you are hearing-impaired, for example, phone interviews are still possible.
- **Don't** chew gum or food, or drink anything noisy.