

Telephone Interview Preparation and Tips

It is a normal practice today for companies to conduct a telephone interview or a screen as a first step. You have spent so much time preparing your resume as well as conducting a job search, and you finally have attracted interest. You need to make all that hard work pay off by delivering a great interview. Your goal is to move the hiring process to the in-person interview stage.

What information is the interviewer seeking?

When you are being screened by a hiring manager they are evaluating 3 main areas:

1. Your technical fit, skills/qualifications
2. Your verbal communication skills
3. Your personality and fit with the group or company culture

The Manager is seeking to answer three main questions:

- Can you do the job?
- Are you the right fit?
- Will you do the job?

The keys to the technical or qualifications part of the game are usually found in the job description. Make sure to brush up on these key areas before the interview. When answering questions, come up with work examples that support your abilities and knowledge and that relate to the key areas on the job description.

Take the time to write out the relevant examples and keep them with you while you are speaking on the phone to the hiring manager. Make sure you print out your notes in large font so they are easy to refer to - like cue cards.

If you will be speaking with a hiring manager, make no mistake you will be getting questions regarding your technical skills and your abilities, so prepare accordingly.

During the interview you are bound to run across a question that deals with an area that you do not have experience in, just make sure to demonstrate your passion for learning. Bolster this by giving an example of something you had to learn from scratch in your job or previous job and point out how proficient you became with that new skill.

Remember passion, enthusiasm and excitement trumps experience. A hiring manager will usually pick the person who is more enthusiastic and will easily overlook a lack of experience in a few areas.

Good Personality Wanted

A large part of any interview, be it in-person or on the telephone, is to evaluate how well you will fit in with the team, company and culture. You must make every effort to come off as likeable over the phone. Coming across as likable over the phone can be challenging for some. In order to come across as likeable it is best that you match the interviewer's style.

Style Match Up

People like people who are like themselves therefore it is important to match your interviewer's style. For instance, if the interviewer gets right to it with serious snappy questions then follow suit and match their style, with quick snappy answers. If they are matter of fact then do not try and lighten the call just go with it and be matter of fact as well.

If the hiring manager is upbeat and friendly and starts by chit chatting or discussing personal items then follow suit and open up and share, just keep your guard up and keep it professional even though they may take things a bit off line.

You want to match the interviewer's energy as closely as possible.

Some people like to have a few drinks after work and that is OK, just not on the night that you are expecting a telephone interview...many times an interview have been blown this way. People have told me they need it to take the edge off. Forget it! The interviewer expects you to be a bit anxious, that is OK.

Be Enthusiastic

If you are interested in the position then say so and take it a step further by proving it. Most interviewers never state during the call that they are interested or want the position but wait until they follow up with an email – don't wait state it during the call and state it enthusiastically.

Nothing says "I am interested" like the fact that you went through the company's website and learnt about the culture, the products, and the recent items in the news. During the interview use every opportunity you get to let the interviewer know that you have done your homework by intertwining what you have learnt about the company into your answers or the questions you ask the interviewer.

Communication Skills

The interviewer will be seeking to find out if he/she can understand you and can you answer questions with more than just a yes or no. Make sure to avoid rambling on – once you have given your answer...just stop talking.

Practicing will keep you from being too talkative. There are many 'Interview Questions' resources on the web – here is one you can use to prepare <http://www.advtechnical.com/interview-preparation-guide/>

I often hear from hiring managers that yes and no answers lead them to believe the candidate does not know his/her stuff and likewise 'ramblers' are just trying to cover all the bases and really don't know the right answer. Again the best way to avoid these traps is to prepare properly.

Wrap up

Always find a quiet place to talk - avoid taking a call at work or at home when the kids are around. Make sure you make arrangements to be in an area where you will not be disturbed.

A cell phone is to be avoided - you never know when the signal can drop or if the caller can hear you properly - find a landline to receive or make the call.

I have seen too many telephone interviews blown because the candidate was in a noisy area or the cell phone line was bad.

If you are caught unaware, ask for the interviewer's number and call him/her back from a quiet place.

Understand the difference between a hiring manager and a Human Resources telephone interview. A screening call from Human Resources will deal more with your personality, salary, your work record, validating the accuracy of your resume and ascertaining why you are considering employment and why you picked their firm. The hiring manager will be keying more on determining if your skills fit the position.

Interviewing can be stressful but it does not have to be if you take the time to prepare properly. By doing so, you will reduce your anxiety and your preparation will be reflected in a positive outcome - an in-person interview.

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He transforms dejected job seekers into stars that get hired.

More resources to get you hired can be found now at www.TransitionToHired.com