

Tip of the Month

How to ACE a Phone Interview

The phone interview is generally the result of a well-prepared, targeted resume and will determine further actions in the hiring process. Those who are well-prepared and know how to communicate their potential value to the organization will advance to in-person interviews with hiring managers. A phone interview can be as short as 10 minutes or as long as 30, so job seekers must be well-prepared for a conversation about their skills, knowledge, and experiences that meet the employer's needs.

There is no specific formula for preparing for this important first encounter, but there are a number of things you can do to prepare that will help you to be ready and confident when the call comes. Recommendations on acing a phone interview include the following:

- Create a file, either electronic or paper, of all the jobs you have applied to: include the targeted resumes with relevant accomplishments in the file.
- Research the companies and make notes on the resumes you sent to each company.
- Prepare a list of well thought out questions that reflect your interest in the job and the company.
- Set aside a place where you can take the call and keep a short list of relevant accomplishments in clear view when the call comes in.
- Always have a pen and paper handy to take notes.
- Try to schedule the interview at a good time for you. If the first call is not convenient (i.e. you are in the check-out line at the supermarket or driving at 60 mph), tell the person why and ask if you can call back in 15 minutes. As a last resort, let it go to voice mail, but call back promptly.
- When at home, use a land line and disable call waiting in order to avoid interruptions.
- Match your style to that of the interviewer— using industry language when appropriate, listening carefully, and never interrupting.
- Recap your “fit” for the job with a 30 second summary using examples from your previous work history.
- At the end of the call ask about “next steps” and try to get an idea of how well your qualifications meet the company's needs.
- Always get the name and email address of the interviewer and follow up with a thank you note or email that highlights the strengths you presented during the interview as well as your interest in the job and company.



The phone interview is not as easy as it may seem, so practicing for it— as you would any other interview—is not only advisable, but necessary. Be confident, be enthusiastic, and be your best self.

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