

CANDIDATE ADVICE

Telephone Interview Advice

How to prepare for a telephone interview and make a strong first impression.

Job candidates are increasingly finding that the application process includes a telephone interview, where companies screen candidates efficiently, reduce their costs and cut down the number of applicants invited to a face-to-face interview. If you do not prepare for a telephone interview you could seriously lose out on that ideal next career move.

A telephone interview is a chance to put across your personality and make a good first impression. Most interviewers form a view of a candidate within the first few minutes, so it is important to be prepared.



How to prepare for a telephone interview

To achieve real success in a telephone interview you must take time to prepare. It may not feel as important as a face-to-face interview – it certainly is.

Hold a mock telephone interview

Before the real thing, practise with a mock telephone interview. Ask a friend or family member to help and record the session on your phone. Listen back and check how enthusiastic your voice sounds: if it sounds flat, change the pitch of your voice during the interview to show how keen you are. Smile when you dial!

On the day

- **Do your research.** Take time to research the company and review your CV so you remember which points to emphasise in order to sell yourself positively. Have notes prepared, but don't just read from them.
- **Have your questions ready.** Keep notes on what you would like to ask, and have your CV in front of you.
- **Choose the right location.** Pick somewhere quiet, away from children, televisions, washing machines and any other distracting noise. Find a quiet place at home if at all possible and get comfortable. Don't sneak off in the office to take the call – you may be interrupted or, worse, overheard.

- **Choose the right time.** Confirm a time when you will be available. First impressions count, and if your potential new employer cannot get hold of you at the agreed time your chances may suddenly diminish.
- **Dress for the occasion.** It may be tempting to fall out of bed and just answer the phone, but your mental preparation will suffer. Think how confident you feel when you are dressed for a face-to-face interview, and dress the same way.
- **Charge your phone!**
- **Mind your interview etiquette.** Listen, speak clearly and remain calm. A telephone interview lets you show good telephone technique, but it should also show good social skills and listening ability. Take time to listen to the questions and consider your answers. Never interrupt the interviewer. Speak slowly and clearly, and speak up so they can hear you. And don't forget to smile – the interviewer can tell, and it has a positive effect on how you come across.
- **Never eat, chew gum or smoke** during the interview, and always refer to the interviewer respectfully. Do not use endearing names such as love, mate or guys.

Preparing for an interview?

Your Sigma consultant can tell you what to expect from a particular employer's process. Call 02920 450 100, or visit sigmarecruitment.co.uk for more candidate advice.