

# 5 Tips to Acing Your Phone Interview

The unexpected phone ring! Acing your first contact from a recruiter or hiring manager is just as important as the in-person interview. It's actually the second "knock-out" part of the selection process (your resume, letter or application being the first).

**1. Be Prepared** Have your resume and letter handy, plus know:

- Some things about the Company calling and what makes their position attractive to you.
- Know your resume details. Know why your skills and achievements align with their particular job and company needs, and be ready to talk about it.
- Prepare for questions you may be asked and your response.
- Prepare key questions you want to ask about the job, organization and opportunity.

Have this info in a place that's handy—you never know when a call will come in. Don't be caught off guard: there are few things that'll set a recruiter off more than a potential candidate who doesn't remember the job, company or why they are interested.

## 2. Best Time to Talk

When the call comes in, evaluate your immediate situation. If it's not a clear, comfortable place for you to talk, let the call go to voicemail or answer the call and respectfully let the recruiter know that now is not a good time to speak, but you'd like their name and number and will call back in 15 minutes / OR ASK TO RESCHEDULE THE PHONE INTERVIEW AT A CONVIENT DAY AND TIME FOR THE CALLER.

It's much better to reschedule the phone interview OR delay for a few minutes, in order to get to somewhere quiet, and collect your thoughts and key information than it is to muddle your first impression with background noise, distractions or seem foggy about who you sent your resume to and why. When you quickly return the call, be ready to talk in a quiet, undisturbed environment. Of course, have your information in hand to be ready to speak about the company, position, and your related experiences, achievements and qualities!

## 3. Use Voicemail Professionally

You may not always get to your phone when the recruiter calls. In that case, your voicemail becomes your first impression. Make it a good one. Voicemail often gets overlooked, but it can make the difference between the recruiter leaving a message or passing you by. **Avoid:**

- Music as your message. A recruiter doesn't care that you love Beyoncé's latest single.
- Too casual. "Hey, you know who it is and what to do!" They *don't* and they *won't*.
- Family greeting. While your daughter's voice can melt your heart, in a career search, try a more polished approach. Stick with a concise, professional message.

- Be professional.

#### **4. During The Phone Interview Always Be Professional**

No gum. No food. No noise. No distractions (music, children, dogs, etc.).

#### **5. Get His / Her Name and Number**

Before you even start the conversation, get the full name and contact information of the recruiter or hiring manager you are speaking with. Don't wait until the end because:

- If you're on a cell phone and get disconnected, you'll want to have their information to call back immediately.
- In the course of the conversation, you may get excited and forget to ask at the end.
- If you don't immediately schedule the interview during the call, you'll want their information to follow up at a later time.

**Follow these tips, and you'll land the follow-up interview desired.**