



## How to win at telephone interviews

Often, telephone interviews are used at the first stage of recruitment processes - And the selection process can be ruthless! These are usually scheduled in bulk and the interviewers have to wade through many interviews to find the candidates they want to invite for a face to face meeting, so time is usually of the essence. To facilitate this, they would normally use a highly structured approach to get the particular pieces of information from a candidate required to either select or deselect.

Telephone interviews are also often used where there are large distances involved but generally, the rules of engagement are the same.

Always remember that, because there are no opportunities to include body language to build rapport or emphasise strengths, telephone communication is different to personal conversation. The importance of listening and answering concisely are magnified. So are bad communication habits like using continual filler words or veering off the subject, so be careful!

### 1. Conduct the call in a quiet place

Select a place where you will be uninterrupted for the duration of the call, free from kitchen noises, crying children, barking dogs or noisy televisions or radios. This will help you to hear them clearly, and for them to have a better sound from your side.

### 2. Preferably use a landline

Mobile service can sometimes be unreliable and you don't want to lose the connection in mid flow! Landline reception is also generally more reliable for clarity. If you must use your mobile, make sure you are out of the wind and that you have full battery and a good signal.

### 3. Give your undivided attention

Tone of voice is magnified on the telephone - If you are distracted by documents or a computer screen it will translate in your voice. Also, listen very carefully so that you can give concise and targeted answers.

#### **4. Prepare, prepare!**

Review the company website, make notes as the interview continues and have questions ready. Keep your CV and the job spec at hand. Waffle, time lapses or quiet moments are magnified on the telephone so avoid them by preparing properly and maintaining your focus.

#### **5. Sound enthusiastic and well-mannered**

Without body language, facial expression or non-verbal signals to rely on, the interviewer will listen out for vocal signs indicating passion, professionalism and enthusiasm. Allow them to get a sense of your personality but never be too casual in your choice of words or tone of voice. Standing up and smiling is a telesales technique that holds true: the smile translates in your voice. On the telephone, it's not just what you say but how you say it that is magnified, especially if you are not blessed with a melodious speaking voice, perfect diction or flawless accent. Be aware of these, speak slowly and clearly and don't rabbit on too much once you have answered the question.

#### **6. Closing and Follow up**

The same rules count as for normal interviews: Ask about timescales and next steps, and later follow-up with a thank you message. Here, you can summarise the conversation and reinforce our best selling points.