

## How to prepare for a telephone interview: a few tips and tricks

The telephone interview is a crucial stage of the selection process. Lots of companies consider it an effective form of pre-screening. If you applied for a specific role the recruiter will contact you to make an appointment to talk at a specific time and date, so you will have time to prepare. Here are some simple tips to help you perform during your telephone interviews.

**Preparation** for a telephone interview is as important as preparation before any other form of interview or meeting. The impression you create in the opening moments, and the manner with which you present yourself will determine whether or not you will be successful.

**Find out as much as you can** about the company and the job description. The company websites are one of the best sources of information. Find out about the size and structure of the company, its products and its markets.

**Make a note of any questions** you would like to ask. Ask questions about items that are important to you, especially if your decision whether to proceed depends upon the answers (for example: will I have to relocate? (if that is something you do not wish to do!). Otherwise, ask broad questions such as: What training will be given? What opportunities are there for advancement? Have these questions written down.

**Have a notepad and pen ready**, along with your diary.

**Have your CV at hand.** In all probability the hiring manager will have a copy of it too, so you probably won't be asked to describe your background in detail.

### The main rules are:

- Sound interesting/interested, energetic and enthusiastic
- Be succinct (don't waffle)
- Ask open-ended questions (beginning with who, what, when, why, where, how: these all ask for information, and keep the ball in the other person's court). Be prepared that they will do exactly the same!
- Don't use jargon
- Be polite
- Use the other person's name regularly throughout the conversation (but not all the time). Also, use the company name a few times.

### Prepare to answer these questions

You can't prepare for every possible question, but there are a few which frequently come up:

- Tell me about yourself!
- What do you know about our company?
- What are you looking for?
- What would you like to know about us? (A good opportunity to ask your prepared questions)
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What else would you like to know? (An ideal opportunity to 'close' - see below)

## **Closing the telephone interview**

Part of the purpose of the telephone interview (from the recruiter or hiring manager's perspective) is to find out how keen you are, and (especially in the case of sales jobs) whether you have natural closing ability. As soon as it seems appropriate during the conversation, ask for a date to meet for a face-to-face interview. Say something like 'I'd really like to visit you to show you what I can do for you. When can you meet me?'

**If you are invited for a face-to-face interview**, thank the recruiter, and discuss the details:

- When?
- Where?
- With whom?
- What should you take to the interview?
- What will the procedure or next steps be?
- Will they be able to make a decision after the next interview? If not, what will happen after that?
- How many people are you up against?
- What is the most important thing the company is looking for?