



Tips on Telephone Interviewing

Your objective during a telephone interview is to convince the company representatives that you are the right person for the job... and to obtain a face to face, personal interview with the hiring official.

Successful interviewing takes careful preparation. Some of the following information is very basic but most people don't do a lot of interviewing.

Remember that first impressions, either in person or by phone, are critical. The person or persons calling you will be evaluating everything you say...from the time you answer the phone until you hang up. They will be trying to determine your skills, your experience, training, accomplishments, attitudes, stability, work style, motivation, business sense and so forth. In other words, they will be trying to determine what you will be bringing to the table. This telephone interview will determine if they feel it is worth their money and time to bring you in for a personal, face-to-face interview.

If you have a choice, schedule the telephone interview for a time when you are rested, alert and undisturbed. A time when you will have at least 30 minutes, and preferably, an hour to talk without having to worry about anything else.



Remember, very few people ever get hired from a telephone interview alone. However, a lot of people end any chance of being hired by conducting a poor telephone interview.

Preparation:



1. Have a current resume nearby so you can verify employment dates, education, etc.
2. Have a pen and paper ready to take notes.
3. Have a list of general questions that you may want to ask the interviewer; questions such as the quality of the school system, if you have children, shopping, employment opportunities for the spouse, if applicable, etc.
4. Have a glass of water available in the event your throat gets dry.
5. Do not chew gum or eat anything while you are talking on the phone.
6. Speak clearly and directly into the mouthpiece of the phone.

7. Know as much about the company as possible. Find out as much as possible about their products, their customers, and their operations as possible. Find out about the location and surrounding area. Much of this information can be gathered from the Internet. Ask your First Search America, Inc., consultant for help. Know the size of the company, where it is headquartered, sister companies, reputation, image, management style, etc. Ask the interviewer what were some of the things that enticed him to join the company and what are some of the things that he likes about the company now.

**Project an
informed
interest.**

8. **Never, ever**, under any circumstances, complain about your current or previous employers. Not the company. Not the management. Not your supervisors. There is no way you can turn a complaint into a positive.

Always stress that you are looking for a growth opportunity.
After all, isn't this what you want?

9. Be prepared to answer general questions such as the following:

“Tell me about yourself.”

- Keep your answer to one or two minutes.
- Don't ramble.
- Use your resume summary as a base to start.

“What do you know about our company?”

- You've done your homework - Be factual, concise.
- Talk for a minute or two.
- Don't ramble.

“Why do you want to work for us?”

Don't talk about what you want; first, talk about their needs: You would like to utilize your skills, experience and background to help them meet their goals while affording you the opportunity for growth and challenge.

“What would you do for us?” What can you do for us that someone else can't?”

Relate past experiences that show you've had success in solving previous employer problems that may be similar to those of the prospective employer.

“What do you like best about your job? What do you like least?”

List three or more things you like and only one minor thing you dislike.

“Why should we hire you?”

Because of your knowledge, experience, abilities and skills.

“What do you look for in a job?”

An opportunity to use your skills, to perform, to contribute, to be recognized. An opportunity to work for a growing company.

“What is your present job title, your responsibilities and your accomplishments?”

Give your official title, your three major responsibilities and three of your major accomplishments.

“How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our firm?”

I would expect to start contributing immediately. I would need to assess your current situation and make recommendations for improvements and implement as soon as approval is granted.

“How long would you stay with us?”

As long as we both feel I’m meeting or exceeding expectations.

“What is your management style?”

(If you’ve never thought about this, it’s high time you did.) “Open-door management is best...and you get the job done on time and within budget or inform your management as soon as you are aware of changes from plan.

“Are you a good manager?” Give an example/ Why do you feel you have top managerial potential?”

Keep your answer achievement- and task-oriented; emphasize management skills...planning, organizing, interpersonal, etc.

“What do you look for when you hire people?”

Example: Skills, initiative, adaptability, a track record of success.

“Did you ever fire anyone? If so, what were the reasons and how did you handle it?”

Give a brief example of a time when you faced this, and stress that it worked out well.

“What do you see as the most difficult task in being a manager?”

Getting things planned and done on time within budget.

“What do your subordinates think of you?”

Be honest and positive...they can check your responses easily.

“What is your biggest weakness as a manager?”

Be honest and end on a positive note, e.g. “ I don’t enjoy reprimanding people, so I try to begin with something positive first.”

“Why are you leaving your present job?”

Refine your answer based on your comfort level and honesty. Give a “group” answer if possible, e.g. Our department was consolidated or eliminated. Or, I wasn’t looking but The First Search Consultant called me and I felt this was an opportunity I couldn’t afford to pass.

“How do you feel about leaving all of your benefits?”

Concerned but not panicked.

“Describe what you feel to be an ideal working environment.”

One in which people are treated as fairly as possible.

“How would you evaluate your present firm?”

It’s an excellent company that afforded me many fine experiences. (Remember....Do not criticize your present firm...no matter what)

“Why haven’t you found a new position before now?”

Finding a job is easy; finding the right job is more difficult. Stress that you are being selective, and are looking for the right “fit”. That you expect to be with your next employer a very long time.

“What do you think of your present boss?”

Be as positive as you can...even if you don’t really believe it. Again...Don’t criticize your present or past bosses. It only reflects negatively on you.

“If I spoke with your previous boss, what would he say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?”

Emphasize your skills, and don’t be overly negative about your weaknesses. It is always safer to identify a lack of a skill as an area for improvement rather than a shortcoming.

“How much money are you looking for?”

Answer with a question, e.g., “What is the salary range for similar jobs in your company?” If the interviewer doesn’t answer, then give a range of what you understand you are worth in the marketplace. Stress that you want the best offer the company can make based on your experience, skills, background, education and accomplishments. If I’m in your salary range, I would prefer to postpone salary discussions until after a personal interview so you can better evaluate what I have to offer and I can evaluate the opportunities and challenges you have to offer.

“How would you describe your own personality?”

Balanced is a good word to use, but remember the type of company you are interviewing. Some companies may want someone who is aggressive and more outgoing. Some companies may want someone who is more reserved.

You may be asked to cite examples of problems you have encountered and solved in your specific job.

Have a couple of examples ready. If your job requires specific knowledge of equipment, systems, industry trends, etc., make sure you are up to date and ready to answer questions regarding these.

Be prepared...Ask your spouse or a good friend to help you practice, using the telephone, making sure your voice is clear and distinct, that you answer the questions without too many pauses, uhs and ahs.

One last thing...

Remember: Your objective is to get a **FACE-TO-FACE, PERSONAL INTERVIEW**. **Before you hang up, thank the interviewer** for his time and interest and tell him/her that this is an opportunity that you want to pursue. Ask them what is the next step and when would it be possible for you to visit them for a personal interview. Have a couple of dates in mind that will fit your schedule.



Good Luck on your telephone interview!

