

PHONE INTERVIEWS

Interviews can be stressful at the best of times, but having an interview by phone rather than in person means there are extra considerations to take into account. Whilst it might seem that a phone interview is an 'easier' option than face to face, this isn't necessarily the case. As for any other interview, preparation will provide many benefits. The same rules apply for preparing for a phone interview as compared to face to face, though you should also consider the following:

Where to take the call

Consider if you can use a landline somewhere, this can be preferable to a mobile if reception is unpredictable. Also, take into account the physical setting:

- Is it free of background noise from the street, loudspeakers, television etc? Too much background noise will frustrate interviewers and throw you off guard if you have to repeat yourself.
- Will you be distracted? Children and other members of your household, including pets, can affect your focus.

How to dress

It might seem like you can wear anything you like to a phone interview as you can't be seen. This is true, however dressing as you would for any other interview will put you into the right frame of mind. Wearing your pyjamas might seem perfectly acceptable. However, if this is how you prepare to go to bed at night then your brain will still be geared to relax in that way, and that's not conducive to the quick thinking required for an interview. Dress sharp to think sharp.

How to prepare

It's tempting to consider having 'cheat sheets' to refer to when answering questions by phone. Just because you can't be seen by the panel is no reason to prepare yourself less mentally than you would for a face-to-face interview.

If you don't know your stuff, you'll end up spending all your time hurriedly reading your cheat sheets when you should be thinking things through. Prepare yourself properly and keep the cheat sheets for the essentials only.

How to organise

Once you have decided what is essential, it's time to consider how to organise your information. As for any other interview, it's sensible to have a copy of your resume and application with you, and you may have some additional sheets, as discussed above. Try to organise all these in front of you on a table so that you don't have to flick through them if you need them. Remember, you'll only have one hand free as you'll be holding the phone, and the sound of rustling paper is not only distracting for the interviewers, but very distracting for you.

Your phone manner

Your phone manner is a basic transferrable skill and is a direct reflection on your verbal communication skills and professionalism. Take some time to reflect on how you speak to people when you're on the phone. Practice your phone manner when booking doctor's appointments, making enquiries with businesses, or ordering things over the phone. Take into account:

- You might need to speak slightly slower than normal to ensure you're speaking clearly.
- Pauses on the phone seem much longer than pauses in person. If you need to think, consider 'verbal nods' (using words like 'ok', 'right' and 'yes') to acknowledge you have heard and are thinking.

The absence of body language can make it more difficult to understand conversations. Don't be afraid to ask to hear the question again, or to repeat the question back to confirm your understanding

Resources

- [Big Interview](#) – training and practice online
- [Employability Edge](#) – Contemporary Recruitment Processes module.