



Tips for Successful Virtual Interviews: Phone Interviews

These days, phone interviews are common first-round interviews for most candidates. Do not make the mistake of being careless about such calls. Heed these following suggestions when interviewing over the phone:

Check your connection. It is hard enough to make an impression over the phone—bad reception or having the call cut off only makes this a much greater challenge. Make sure you are taking the call from a reliable location that has good cell service.



Eliminate background noise. It is disconcerting for an interviewer to hear background noise. This is only magnified if you take the call from home and have a television or stereo blaring behind you. Take every measure you can to reduce sound assaults, whether that entails closing doors and windows or appeasing your dog with a bone to keep him/her occupied during the call.

Don't be too casual. There is a tendency, particularly if you are taking the call from home, to be more lax—this should be avoided at all costs. The interviewer is taking this call as seriously as an in-person meeting, so you should, too. For some people this may require dressing for the phone call as they would for an in-person meeting, just to put them in the right mindset.

Concentrate. As you have no visual clues to gauge the interviewer's reaction to your comments, it is imperative that you listen very closely to what you hear. A corollary is that you should also be exceedingly careful not to cut off the interviewer, particularly since he/she may be making a point that is quite important.

Do all the standard preparation. Research the organization in advance and make sure you understand what they do and who the key players are. Your interviewer will be checking to make sure you have real interest in the company and the best way to demonstrate this is by showing that you have actually visited their website and possibly spoken to connections you already have in the organization. Be sure to also research the interviewer(s) as well by reviewing their profiles online (i.e., LinkedIn, company/firm Web bios, etc.).

Do everything you would in preparing for an in-person interview. Remember that this is still an official interview even if you are sitting in your living room in your pajamas. Have questions ready to ask, mind your manners and be ready to answer the standard questions about your past experience and interest in the company.