

Job Interview: Phone



Employers use phone job interviews to screen (evaluate and select) job seekers. Phone job interviews offer benefits for employers: 1) Phone interviews save time because they are shorter than in-person interviews. 2) Phone interviews are easier because questions asked to every job seeker are the same. 3) Phone interviews reduce number (pool) of job seekers that are invited to the in-person interview. 4) Phone interviews help the employer decide if the job seeker is a “fit” for the job opening.

For job seeker, the goals of the phone job interview are: 1) to build rapport (positive relationship) with the interviewer; and 2) to pass the phone interview test and receive invitation to the in-person interview. Most employers arrange a time to call the job seeker. However, some employers may ask a job seeker to call at a certain time to test how serious the job seeker is about the job. Job seekers who do not prepare may fail the phone interview and not get invited to in-person interview.

Before Phone Interview: Plan & Prepare

- Research the company to understand its history, products, and advertising to customers (or called guests or clients).
- Use a voice recorder to get an idea of how others hear you on the phone. Warm up your voice and practice smiling. A smile can be heard over the telephone.
- Place your resume near the phone to remind you of your skills, work history dates, job titles, job duties, and former supervisors’ names. Keep papers spread out and orderly. The employer does not want to hear the shuffling of papers.
- Turn off all phone distractions such as call waiting and other notices.
- Have a pen, paper, and your personal calendar nearby so you can take notes and schedule a future in-person interview if asked to do so.
- Close the door to the room and make sure there are no distractions. Turn off the stereo and TV. No pets or kids in the room with you during the phone interview.
- Dress as if you are at an in-person interview to help your language and paralinguistic transfer through the phone as professional. **Paralinguistic is defined as how words are delivered to another** — speaking tempo or speed, rhythm, voice pitch, voice quality, and voice volume.



During Phone Interview: Alert & Positive

- Keep a glass of water (no ice) nearby in case your throat becomes dry. Sit up straight in a hard chair. You may stand to add more strength and alertness to your voice. Do not chew gum, eat, or smoke. Do not use the speakerphone for a phone job interview.
- Listen to the interviewer’s questions. Do not interrupt the interviewer. Speak clearly, slowly, and directly into the phone. Use correct grammar and complete sentences. Your voice is your visual presentation to the employer so sound interested in the job, confident (I can do this job), and capable.

- Use the interviewer's name. Speak of your skills, education, and activities that qualify you for the job.
- Do not use the sounds: ah, hum, a hum, oh, and like. Do not only use "yes" or "no" answer too much without saying comment about your skills, strengths, volunteer positions, or work history.
- At the end of the phone interview, ask the interviewer when you will be notified about the next step of the application process. If the interviewer asks you to call the company in one week, ask for and write down the contact person and the phone number. Do not forget to call on that date.

After Phone Interview: Reflect & Thanks

- Think about the phone interview. Write down what you did correct, and what needs improvement. Write down ways you can improve your next phone job interview.
- Within two days, send the interviewer a thank you note. Use a small, folding card that simply says "Thank You" on the outside and is blank on the inside. Do not use a fancy or decorated card. Neatly handwrite a short message on inside to say "thank you" for the interview, express interest in the job, and restate your qualifications, such as: *"Thank you for the phone interview for the sales associate job. I am interested in the opportunity to work for the Fashion Bug. I believe that my sales skills and work experience qualify me to be an outstanding sales team member for the Fashion Bug. Sincerely, Janet Jones"*
- If you do not wish to handwrite a note, you may word process a thank you letter to mail to the interviewer in an envelope with your resume.



QUICK CHECK:

1. Define "screen."
2. a) List 4 benefits of phone interviews for employers. b) List 2 goals of phone interviews for job seekers. c) Define "rapport."
3. Why may some employers ask a job seeker to call at a certain time?
4. What may happen to job seekers who do not prepare for the phone interview?
5. **Before phone interview:** a) Why do you use a voice recorder? b) Can a smile be heard over the phone? c) Why do you need your resume nearby? d) What does the employer not want to hear? e) What do you turn off? f) Why should you have a pen and paper nearby? g) Why should you have your personal calendar nearby? h) How do you prepare the room? i) How should you dress? j) Why? k) Define "paralanguage." l) What 5 things does paralanguage include?
6. **During phone interview:** a) Why do you keep water nearby? b) How should you sit? c) May you use a speakerphone? d) Describe how you speak. e) What is your voice to the employer? f) What 3 things should you sound? g) Of what 3 things should you speak? h) What should you say after "yes" or "no"? i) What should you ask at the end of interview?
7. **After phone interview:** a) List 3 things to write down. b) What should you do within 2 days? c) Describe the card to use.
8. a) If you were an employer, would you be impressed by a job seeker who sent a thank you card after a phone interview? b) Give a reason for your answer.
9. Pretend that you, as job seeker, just completed a phone interview with Mr. Lopez of the Home Store for a sales associate job. Write down what you would say to Mr. Lopez inside your thank you card to thank him for the interview.