

## INTERVIEWS:

# PHONE INTERVIEW: TIPS AND TRICKS

### Takeaway Points

- Review common interview questions and prepare your responses ahead of time.
- Always offer to be the caller when you schedule a phone interview. This allows you to initiate contact when you're prepared and ready to go.
- Asking questions during the interview is the best way for you to gather information about the position that wasn't listed in the job posting.
- If you've appealed to the interviewer and you remain interested in the position during the phone interview, the conversation should end with a scheduled in-person interview.

By: Team Pongo

Companies frequently use phone interviews as a way to pre-qualify your interest and expertise after seeing your resume. This kind of interview also gives you an opportunity to decide if the job is worth pursuing.

Here are some recommendations to ensure your next phone interview is successful.

#### Isolate Yourself

Phone interviews place you at a disadvantage because you have only one tool of communication: your voice. The interviewer's impression of you is shaped by all the sounds coming through the phone. When the interviewer first contacts you, make sure you can talk on the phone for at least 20 minutes. If it's not convenient, recommend rescheduling the call. Also, isolate yourself from distractions and background noises. Don't have your interview when you're surrounded by a lot of noise like at an outdoor café at a busy intersection. If the call is on your cell phone, make sure the interviewer can hear you clearly and that your battery is fully charged.

#### Schedule the Phone Interview

If you're unable to do the interview when the employer's representative makes his or her initial call, ask to schedule a specific time for the phone interview. Be sure to define who will call whom, but offer to be the caller. This ensures you're fully prepared and in a situation in which you can speak without interruptions. Schedule the phone interview just as you would any face to face interview.

#### Stand Up

Stand up, walk around, and smile during the call. All these things make a big difference in the projection and quality of your voice.

#### Prepare Your Responses

Phone interviews follow a similar pattern of questioning with the purpose of screening you out of consideration or placing you on the short list of strong candidates. Here is a list of questions most phone interviewers ask. Write down your responses and practice saying them out loud.

- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you know about our company?
- How did you learn about this position?
- What is your current salary?
- What are your compensation requirements?
- Why are you looking for a new position?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Do you have any questions?

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### Did you know?

Pongo's Interview Tips video program provides 12 how-to videos for every stage of the interview, plus printable checklists and interview guides.

#### Ask Questions

Questions are your primary tool of influence with an interviewer. They help you direct the conversation and assess if the company is right for you. Here are some questions to ask during a phone interview:

✓ **Opening Questions:**

- What is your position with this company?
- How much time would you like to speak on the phone?
- What position are you considering me for? (If it has not been made clear.)
- What are the key things you'd like to learn about my background?

✓ **More Questions:**

- What business imperatives are driving the need for this position?
- Describe the top three challenges that I'll face in this job.
- What are the characteristics of people who are most successful in your company?
- What are the key deliverables and outcomes this position must achieve?

✓ **Closing Questions:**

- Is there any additional information you would like me to provide?
- What concerns about my background or qualifications do you have at this point?
- When is the best time to follow up with you?

#### Get Face to Face

At the conclusion, ask the interviewer about the next steps and timing of the employer's hiring process. If you remain interested after the phone interview, ask for a face to face interview. Remember that your objective during the phone interview is to secure an in-person meeting, where you will be most effective discussing your background and assessing the company.

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