



A Successful Phone Interview

A phone interview is the first step in finding what may turn out to be your dream career. Follow these guidelines for successfully handling your next phone interview so you may move forward in securing the position you desire.

- **Prepare in Advance**

Ensure the job description, your resume, and topics you'd like to discuss are printed out before your interview. Research the company so you are familiar with it and can give reasons why you want to work there. Also, be prepared to answer typical interview questions such as "What do you know about the company?", "Why are you a good fit for this role?", and "What specific skills do you possess that are relevant to this position?" You'll be better equipped for tailoring your answers to common questions when you've studied them in advance.

- **Get Up Early**

Be sure you shower in the morning, brush your teeth, and dress professionally. Even though it's a phone interview, you'll have the right mindset for acting professionally.

Handle your interview on a landline to ensure clear reception. A cellular phone may have a poor connection and/or drop your call. Also, turn off call waiting, your answering machine, and other phone features that may disrupt your discussion.

Turn on your computer and turn off all email or other notifications. Have the company's website open in your browser and a second window open to a search engine so you may search for last-minute information. Make sure you listen and respond to your interviewer appropriately, and don't let them hear you typing.

Give yourself at least 30-60 minutes for the interview. You don't want to be rushing off to another appointment before the hiring manager is done speaking.

- **Ensure Clear Phone Reception**

If you have to use a cellular phone, ensure your battery is fully charged and you have a strong, clear signal. Turn off call waiting, silence all notifications, and eliminate other distractions. Make a test call to your spouse or friend so you know your phone is working properly with strong reception.

If your cellular phone typically doesn't have clear reception from where you're interviewing, ask whether the hiring manager can set up a conference call number you can dial into to ensure your connection is strong and clear. You don't want to risk having your call dropped and the interview ending, as you won't move ahead in the hiring process.

- **Eliminate Interruptions**

You need a quiet area in which to handle your interview. If you're at home, ask your spouse or another adult to keep the kids and pets occupied somewhere else. Close the door so others remember you're working.

Ensure your printed job description, resume, and topics you'd like to discuss are clearly displayed and readily accessible on a desk or table in front of you. Make sure you're sitting up on a chair or walking

around during your discussion. Have the mindset that you're interviewing in person so you behave accordingly. Avoid lounging on the couch, as you'll be too relaxed and have difficulty focusing on your conversation.

If you have to sneeze, sip water, or make other noise during your interview, use the mute button on your phone. You'll appear more professional and stay focused on the interview by taking away as much noise as possible.

- **Identify Yourself**

Answer the phone by stating your name so the interviewer knows they have the right person. For example, "Hello, this is Paul," or "Hi, Paul speaking." You'll start the conversation in a professional manner that puts the hiring manager at ease. Also, if your name is difficult to pronounce, the manager will know how to say it.

- **Watch Body Language and Speech**

Smile when you speak so you project energy and a positive attitude. If you're sitting, stay upright. If you're walking around, stay in the room so you can consult your notes if needed. You'll sound more confident and engaged in the conversation.

Avoid sounding disengaged or bored. The hiring manager will pick up on that immediately and look elsewhere for a motivated, engaged candidate.

Take a deep breath before answering questions. Think about your answers before saying them. Speak slowly and clearly so the hiring manager understands what you're saying.

Remember to listen to the hiring manager and let them guide the conversation. Take notes during your discussion so you can summarize what you learned at the end and show you were listening.

- **Close Properly**

When closing, restate what you learned during the interview, and be sure all your questions have been answered. Ask what the next steps are in the interview process so you can start preparing.

- **Say Thank You**

Soon after you finish your interview, send a thank-you email restating your interest in the opportunity and meeting the hiring manager in person. Be sure you show how you'll add value to the organization and stand out among all the other candidates.

Follow these guidelines for acing your phone interview and moving forward in the hiring process.

For additional formation please contact your Next Level office:

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