

Tips for Wowing the Employer on a Telephone Interview

- 1. Use a landline.** You do not want to risk having problems with cell phone service. It is irritating for employers to conduct interviews if the call breaks up frequently or is dropped completely. If you don't have a land line at home, just make sure you are in an area with as much cell phone service as possible. Do what you can so the process runs as smooth as possible.
- 2. Keep your materials handy.** In fact, lay everything out in front of you. This includes your resume, notes about your career objective (even if it isn't included in your original cover letter it's a good idea to have this out depending on the questions s/he will ask you), a pen and pad of paper for note-taking and anything else you think may be helpful during your interview. Because you won't have to step into an office, you can have anything out in front of you to aid with your success.
- 3. Steer clear of distractions.** Find a quiet place to interview and stay there! There shouldn't be any noise in the background to distract you or your potential employer. However, it is understandable that this can be tricky if you have young children at home who need your attention. When you set up your interview appointment, try to schedule it for as precise a time or window as possible. That way, you are able to avoid possible distractions (eg: your phone interview is between 4 and 4:30, so no one can have company over during that time, the kids are fed and occupied or a sitter will watch them, if need be.)
- 4. Speak slowly and clearly.** When you speak to people face-to-face, you are able to understand what they are saying more clearly because you can see their mouth move. So in a way, you are reading their lips! Neither you nor your potential employer will be able to do this over the phone of course, so speak clearly and a little bit more slowly than you would if you were talking to this person in person. If you can't hear him, drop hints that he isn't speaking clearly or loud enough by politely asking him to repeat himself.
- 5. Remember – you can't be seen.** That means that anything you say cannot be interpreted by your body language. Beware of jokes or sarcastic remarks that would have been harmless had he seen your facial expression. Maintain your professionalism; stay on target with the *interview* topics and focus on the key information about you that will get you hired.
- 6. No eating, drinking or chewing gum!** This is self-explanatory. But, we humans are creatures of habit and might pop a potato chip in our mouths at just the wrong moment. However, when I say no eating or drinking I mean during the phone *interview*. You should eat beforehand to get your brain going so you can focus.

([Edited] From LinkedIn courseware group via New Grad Life, July 4th 2011)
