

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW ADVICE GUIDE

Your interviewers are looking to appoint someone who genuinely wants to join their company, who shows enthusiasm for the role, is committed to working in their offices and demonstrates excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

Most telephone interviews last no longer than half an hour. Some telephone interviews may simply gauge your interest in (and understanding of) the role being advertised, while others may discuss your background and suitability. Every telephone interviewer will be judging how well you communicate under pressure.

An interview is a two-way communication process. It is your opportunity to find out more about the position and it's an opportunity for the interviewers to assess whether you have the relevant skills and experience required.

The interviewers will be looking for someone with confidence and character, who is a team player and will fit in within their company. They will be able to provide more information about the role and the company during the telephone interview.

We advise you prepare answers to commonly asked questions so you can respond confidently and concisely. You may be asked why you are seeking alternative employment, more about your current skills, workload and experience, your long term plans and what you can offer the company.

We also recommend you prepare some questions to ask the interviewers e.g. what will my day look like? What is the team atmosphere like? You may find it beneficial to have a pen and pad handy so you can take notes during the interview if appropriate.

We have created this advice guide to give you as much help and guidance to ensure your telephone interview goes smoothly.

KEY SECTIONS

1. Preparation
2. Questions to ask the interviewer
3. Typical questions you may be asked
4. Interview dos and don'ts



1. PREPARATION

Preparation is the first essential step towards a successful interview. It's normal to feel nervous because you want to do your best but if you prepare and practice you can get the better of your nerves and give yourself the best chance of getting the job.

The interviewers will expect you to have visited the company website beforehand and have a brief understanding of what the company does so it is important to be prepared.



SIMPLE BUT REGULARLY FORGOTTEN POINTS



Make sure you know the exact time and date of the telephone interview and the interviewer's full name.



Find a quiet room to take the call. If you are expecting the call on your mobile make sure you have a strong signal as you don't want the call cutting out half way through.



Investigate specific, relevant facts about the company; where are their offices? What products and services do they offer? You should also research the company history and growth potential.



Refresh your memory about your current or former employment; what tasks did you do? What projects did you work on? What results did you achieve? You will be expected to be able to talk about this.



Think about what questions you want to ask the interviewers. Remember an interview is a two-way process, you should try to determine if the company will be a good fit for you and will provide the opportunity for growth and development.

2. QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

Here is a list of potential questions you could ask the interviewer. The answers to these questions should help you qualify whether or not the role is going to be a good fit for you.

- What exactly will the role involve?
- What does a typical day look like?



- Why is the position available?
- What is the broad culture of the company?
- What induction and training do you offer?
- What sort of people have done well in this sort of role?
- Are there advanced training programmes available?
- What are the company's key objectives for the next 3 years?
- What are your best-selling products or services?
- Is there room for progression within the company?
- What are the main challenges currently facing the company?
- Could you describe how this role relates to the overall structure of the company?
- How will my performance be measured?

3. TYPICAL QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED

By preparing answers to typical interview questions you will feel more confident, and be able to deliver prompt and precise responses. There is nothing worse than being asked a question in a telephone interview and not having a clue what to say.

Here are some typical questions you may be asked in an interview, think about the answers you could give that relate to the requirements of the job specification.

COMPANY-BASED QUESTIONS

- What do you know about our company?
- What interests you about our company's products/services?
- Why would you like to work for us?
- What attracted you to this particular position?
- What qualities do you think you could bring to our business?

CAREER-BASED QUESTIONS

- Why did you choose a career in [.....]?
- What qualifications do you possess?



- What were your responsibilities in your last role?
- What have you learned from the previous jobs you have had?
- Is there any training you are looking to undertake in the near future?
- How many sick days have you taken in the past year?
- Are you willing to be flexible in your work hours?
- How good are you at prioritising your workload?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- What are your salary requirements?

COMPETENCY-BASED QUESTIONS

- Tell us about the biggest change that you have had to deal with. How did you cope with it?
- Describe a situation where you had to explain something complex to a colleague or a client. Which problems did you encounter and how did you deal with them?
- Tell us about your biggest failure. How did you recover and what have you learnt from that incident?
- Describe a situation in which you were a member of team. What did you do to positively contribute to it?
- What are your main strengths and weaknesses?
- What have you done in your career that shows initiative?















PERSONALITY-BASED QUESTIONS

- What are your hobbies?
- How would you describe yourself in three words?
- Is it easy for you to get to our office?
- How do you evaluate success?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- What style of management do you prefer?
- What kind of job are you looking for?
- Do you have any questions?



4. INTERVIEW DOS AND DON'TS

Throughout the interview the interviewers will be assessing your strengths and weaknesses as well as your attitude, ability, skills and personality.

-  DO ensure you are ready to take the call at the time specified. Try to let someone know beforehand if you are going to be unable to answer.
-  DO smile when you talk. The interviewer can't see you but your tone of voice changes if you are nervous; smiling helps to overcome this.
-  DO listen to the question and answer clearly and concisely.
-  DO try to gather a full understanding of the position and duties early in the interview, so you can effectively relate your appropriate background and skills.
-  DO ensure your strengths are presented to the interviewer in a factual and sincere manner. Your objective is to sell yourself and make the interviewer aware of the potential benefits you can bring.
-  DO communicate your determination to get the job at all times. It's better to be in a position where you can choose from a number of jobs, rather than only one.
-  DO remember to ask the interviewer some questions at the end so show you are interested and to find out everything you need to know about the role and the company.
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-  DO thank the interviewer for their time at the end.
-  DON'T make negative remarks about your present or former employers or colleagues.
-  DON'T over-talk. If the interviewer steers conversation towards politics or economics, it is usually best to respond in reserved, non-committed fashion.
-  DON'T ask about salary, holidays or bonuses at the initial interview, but be aware of your market value and prepared to specify your required salary or range.
-  DON'T stray away from the question.

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