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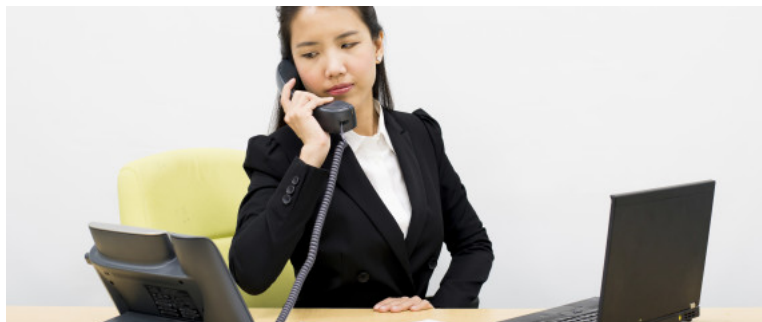
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How to Own a Phone Interview

Posted: 01/22/2015 12:04 pm EST | Updated: 01/22/2015 7:59 pm EST



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Interviews in general are never easy, but when it comes to phone interviews, that's a whole different story. Phone interviews can be challenging because you don't get that

face-to-face contact that you may benefit from during an in-person interview. You are relying on your voice and words during a phone interview, whereas in an in-person interview you can be a bit more personable and memorable. If you're applying for a job or internship, don't let a phone interview ruin your chances for success. Here are 10 (and one bonus!) tips that will help you own your phone interview.

Dress the part.

Your interviewer can't see you, you might not have had to go out in public, and you might feel comfortable in your sweatpants. However, these are not good enough reasons to wear your pajamas during your phone interview. When you dress the part, you act the part. Dress in an outfit that you would wear if you were doing the interview in person. You want to feel and look confident and powerful so that you convey that through the phone.

Pay attention to body and facial language.

Smile. Breathe. Sit up straight. Be animated with your hands. One perk of your interviewer not being able to see you is that you can be more animated than you normally would be in person if it helps you sound more eager, excited, and confident. When you aren't sitting across from someone it's easy to fall into a conversational tone, but remember to keep your voice upbeat by smiling and being alert.

Enunciate.

Communicating by phone can sometimes be difficult to understand people, as well as to be understood. It goes without saying that this is not the time to be chewing gum or snacking, but it's worth mentioning anyways. Speaking slowly and clearly!

Be prepared and do your homework.

Print out notes, speaking points, your resume, questions you think your interviewer might ask (with your prepared answers), and questions that you have for your interviewer. Don't read from your notes or resume, but have it easily accessible in case you completely blank and need a trigger. Also, research your interviewer's background and know what he or she looks like so you can create a mental image when you are talking on the phone.

The first impression matters.

When you found common ground with your interviewer when you were doing research, use it. Did your interviewer go to the same college? Note that fun fact. Does he or she volunteer at the same organization or care about the same causes? Mention it. Make yourself relatable at the right time during the conversation.

Find a quiet place to talk.

Finding a quiet space to talk is crucial. You don't want to be distracted by others talking, walking around, or goofing off. Talk to your career services center - perhaps they have an empty meeting room you can use. If you plan on talking in your dorm room, make sure your roommate will be out of the room. Turn off music and the television. Make sure that the space is as peaceful and quiet as it can be so that you and your interviewer don't have a hard time hearing one another.

Use a landline.

If possible, use a landline. Now is not the time for your cell service to fail you. It's extremely awkward to deal with dropped calls, which causes even more stress, time wasted, and the potential of being thrown off your game. If you have to use your cell



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phone, make sure you have a clear connection and that your phone is fully charged.

Do a practice interview.

Before the day of your phone interview, practice with a friend, parent, counselor, or teacher. Have them ask you questions that your interviewer might ask, and answer the questions as if you were actually being interviewed for the job or internship.

Drop filler words.

When in doubt or in awkward situations, it's natural to fill the silence with *umm*, *like*, and *you know*. Before your interview, record yourself answering mock questions and listen to yourself. Are there extra words you say that you didn't even notice yourself saying? Pay attention to the words that come out of your mouth. If you can't think of something to say, simply pause, breathe, and then continue. Short moments of silence always beat filler words, especially in professional situations.

Always say thank you.

As the conversation comes to a close, remind your interviewer why you would be a great fit for the position and say thank you. Tell your interviewer that you greatly appreciate his or her time, and that you look forward to hearing from him or her soon. After the phone call, follow up with a thank you email with a sentence or two about what you discussed during the conversation. Within the next 24-48 hours, follow up with a handwritten note.

Bonus: Have a computer or laptop nearby.

This is one point that I didn't think of when I was doing a phone interview many years ago for a summer internship. Thinking I wouldn't need my laptop, I only brought the notes I prepared. However, halfway through the phone call, one of the two interviewers asked me (for bonus points) to tell them what she tweeted (this was for a social media internship, after all). Luckily, because I was using a landline, I pulled out my cell phone and got my Twitter feed up in time to find the exact tweet she was referring to. I said the magic words that she tweeted and ended the call on a happy note. Lesson of that morning: always be *extra* prepared.

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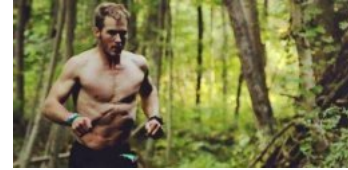
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