Phone Interviewing Tips

In today’s economic climate and job market, phone interviews are becoming more and more common place as a means of screening candidates and picking finalists to put in front of hiring managers. Below is a list of tips and things to remember when participating in a phone interview or screen as it may be called:

• Make sure you are available at the designated number you have provided to the interviewer. Whenever possible, try to use a landline, for better reception.
• Do not have a silly or long greeting on your answering machine or voicemail when you are in job-hunting mode. This is the first impression a potential employer will have of you if they are unable to reach you when they call.
• Practice having a phone interview if you have never done one before. Phone interviewing can sometimes be awkward so ask a friend, mentor, or career services etc. to conduct a mock interview via the phone prior to your actual phone interview.
• When being interviewed by phone, make sure you are in a quiet place that allows for concentration and note taking. If you are at home, you should not have the radio or television on. If you are not the only one home, make sure you go into an area of the house where you are alone and free from distraction. The person on the other end of the phone will be able to tell if you are not fully engaged or distracted by something or someone else.
• If you are contacted for an impromptu phone interview and cannot dedicate enough time or proper attention it is ok to ask the recruiter for a specific, alternate interview time. It is often good to be the one who calls back so that you can be mentally prepared.
• Be sure to have your resume, notecards or outline of the company in front of you so that you can easily refer to them during the interview. However, you do not want to sound scripted nor do you want to be fumbling in trying to make important points on the phone.
• Take the call at a desk or table. You may want to dress in a professional manner as it if were a face to face interview. This will help you to feel like it is more formal. Remember, this is the first interview and your chance to make a great impression so that you are asked for a face to face interview.
• Make sure you can clearly hear what the recruiter is asking you and that your responses are clear. Consider standing during your interview, as your voice will project more clearly while standing.

• Be ok with silence. The recruiter may be taking notes and writing important points down. Do not start babbling just to take up airtime. The Interviewer will ask his or her next question when they are ready. Or, have a question of your own related to your last response ready.

• Do create a strong finish to your phone interview. Do not be afraid to assume or ask next steps in the process. Show your interest and confidence in your abilities to do the job. Closing at the end of a phone interview is just as important in a face to face meeting.

• Follow Up. It is important to follow up with a thank you note after a phone interview. It is another opportunity to tell why you should be considered for the position and let them know you look forward to speaking with them again soon.

• Do not eat or chew gum during a phone interview. You would never imagine doing that during a face to face interview. Same rules apply to a phone interview.