

# Telephone Interview

## Objective

The objective of a telephone interview for a candidate is to share enough information with the company to be asked to move forward in the interview process. That next step may be a second phone interview, or a video call, or an invitation for an onsite interview. A second objective for the candidate is to get your initial questions about the job and company answered.

## Preparation

You should allow up to one (1) hour for a phone interview. Find a quiet, private location with a good connection to conduct the interview where distractions and interruptions are at a minimum. Test your connection and equipment beforehand. Have the following available during the interview:

- A copy of the version of the resume sent to the interviewer
- A notepad and pen
- Five or six carefully worded questions you'll want to ask
- Company literature with pertinent sections highlighted

## Phone Personality

The need to make a good impression on the phone cannot be overemphasized. The telephone screening interview is a make-or-break proposition, your one chance to convince the interviewer that you are worth serious consideration.

Here are some practical tips to enhance your phone "personality" and overall presentation:

- Speak in a relaxed, conversational style as though the other person was in the same room, not on the other side of the planet.
- Sound upbeat. Genuine enthusiasm is contagious and very important. Smile to show a sense of humor and delight. After all, the interviewer may have had a bad day too.
- Be a conversationalist. Listen carefully to get the big picture and to avoid saying something that indicates any distraction. Allow the interviewer to complete questions without you finishing his train of thought or blurting out answers prematurely.
- Handle any trick questions in stride. The interviewer may throw in several to test your alertness or mental keenness. Showing verbal adeptness is a sign of how quickly you can "think on your feet."
- Be cautious: the interviewer may say something that puzzles you or that you firmly disagree with. Show enough respect to voice your thoughts in a professional manner.

## **During the Conversation**

Begin the interview by thanking the client for taking a few minutes to speak with you.

Establishing rapport at the beginning of the phone conversation sets a favorable tone. During the first few minutes, mention something that shows the commonality of interest or similarity in the background. This helps both parties feel more comfortable as the conversation progresses.

Your prepared list of questions will indicate that you have given careful thought to the prospect of joining the firm. Even though you don't know everything about the position at this point, convey the impression that it's something you are interested in and competent at handling.

The interviewer needs to hear and conclude that you can get the job done. Mentally, they are making the connection between the company's problems and you as a problem solver. Don't overwhelm them with facts and figures; they're only going to remember so much.

You can best make your point by reciting memorable stories that document your ability to analyze a dilemma, weigh alternative responses, and choose the appropriate action. By selectively highlighting turnaround situations you spearheaded, you are communicating a willingness to tackle similar problems for your company.

By the end of the phone conversation, both parties should know how much of a "fit" there is. Provided the job interests you, express your desire to proceed to the next step: a company visit. End the conversation on a positive note which could be thanking the interviewer for the information shared, asking about next steps, and again letting them know that you look forward to a company visit.

## **Afterward**

After the phone interview has finished, take time to debrief. Reflect on the conversation.

- Which questions did you answer well, or not so well?
- Is there anything you did not get the chance to mention about your experience?
- Is there a question you wish you asked about the job or company?

After collecting your thoughts, send a thank you note and reaffirm your interest in the opportunity. If uninterested, kindly communicate to avoid any inconvenience and maintain professional relationships.

## **TYGES Can Help**

Your TYGES recruiter will share insights to increase your chance of moving forward in the process and then debriefs with you after the interview. This full circle approach helps you prepare for the interview and decompress afterwards.