

JOB HUNTING ADVICE

# TELEPHONE INTERVIEW SURVIVAL GUIDE





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## Telephone Interview Advice

Telephone interviews are on the up, which I'm sure some of you will be relieved to hear. There's nothing better than picking up your handset in the comfort of your own home, rather than rummaging for your Oyster Card and hopping on public transport to attend an interview right?

Well, yes, but be aware - the telephone interview is full of pitfalls, which could turn them into your worst enemy.

### Why, oh, why?

The phone interview is usually used to narrow down candidates for a face-to-face interview when an employer has received a lot of applications.

It is also a way of cutting down on travel expenses if the employer is recruiting nationally or internationally.

### Surprise, surprise

Most employers will contact you beforehand to arrange a time slot for your phone interview however; there are a handful of employers who prefer the element of surprise.

These employers will call you out of the blue and interview you right there and then. Nothing like putting you on-the-spot eh?

So, to help you wow the socks off a potential employer, here's a telephone interview survival guide with hints and tips from our experienced consultants.

## "PHONE INTERVIEWS ARE USED TO NARROW DOWN CANDIDATES"

## The Survival Guide:

- 1. Do your research** – From knowing what attracted you to the position and how it fits into your career goals to knowing the ins and outs of the company and what questions you want to ask – the more you know, the more confident you will be.
- 2. Prepare, prepare, prepare** – we can't emphasise this one enough. There is no such thing as too much preparation. If you get a chance beforehand, or even at the beginning of the interview itself, ask what structure the interview is likely to take so you know what to expect. For more on interview preparation, check out our Interview Preparation guide.
- 3. Technology troubles** – If you're using a mobile, consider using a headset so you have both hands free to write notes. If you're not 100% confident about your mobile signal, use a landline. Also turn off call waiting – you don't want to be distracted by your mum or your nan on the other line.
- 4. Practice makes perfect** – sit in front of the mirror, record yourself or rope in your bestest bud – we're not too fussy how you do it, but make sure you practice. This will help you come across well and help you judge whether you're speaking too quickly or quietly.
- 5. Make yourself look smart** – sounds a bit odd if you're sat at home alone right? But believe us, if you don your smartest slacks it will put you in a better frame of mind and boost your confidence.
- 6. Find a quiet location** – being interrupted by the barista, your daily dose of 'Doctors' or being cut off while going through a train tunnel won't do you any favours.
- 7. Smile before you dial** – you'll forget about your nerves and your confidence will beam down the telephone line.
- 8. Sit next to a table or desk** – this will allow you to have your notes, copy of your application or CV, interview details, pen and paper to hand. If you do this, make sure they are neat and tidy so you are able to refer to them with ease.

**“IF YOU'RE NOT CONFIDENT  
ABOUT YOUR MOBILE SIGNAL,  
USE A LANDLINE”**

- 9. It's only words and words are all you have** – not to point out the obvious, but you don't have body language to back up everything you are saying. To overcome this, ensure you use active listening skills – use phrases like 'right', 'ok', 'mhmh'. Speak slowly, clearly and don't interrupt the employer.
- 10. Pause** – don't be afraid to take some time to think, ask for clarification or ask for some time to reflect on the question – this will buy you some valuable time to get your thoughts in order and answer the question effectively.

Hopefully you will follow our survival guide and bag yourself a second interview but if not, don't be afraid to phone your interviewer for feedback. A few small pointers could be all you need to really impress the client on the end of the line at your next phone interview.

For examples of the type of questions you may be asked during your telephone interview, take a look at our Competency Based Interview Questions.

#### **Don't even go there**

Bad habits to stay well away from during your telephone interview...

- Eating your lunch or having a beer
- Taking other calls or responding to texts
- Replying to emails
- Slouching on the couch
- Checking your Facebook or posting a tweet

## **Good Luck!**



There are loads more helpful guides, hints and tips for your job search in the candidate area of our website, and our blog. You'll find it all at

**[www.stopgap.co.uk](http://www.stopgap.co.uk)**