Telephone Interviews

A recruiter may use a telephone or Skype interview as a way of screening candidates before offering them a formal face-to-face interview. It is usually the first stage of an interviewing process.

A telephone or Skype interview is usually used when making decisions based on an applicant’s CV is not enough. You may think that presentation may not be as important for either; however this will be an interviewer’s first initial impression of what type of applicant you are.

There may be a sigh of relief for telephone interviews due to the fact that a recruiter can’t see you. This shouldn’t be the case; all interviews should be taken seriously and with a professional attitude.

Telephone interviews are generally pre-scheduled, which allows time for you to prepare. A recruiter will be looking for an excellent telephone-manner, enthusiasm and overall an understanding of the role in which you have applied for.

You will be asked questions about your CV and your current situation and it shouldn’t last any longer than around thirty minutes.

Preparation is the most important process of an interview, whether it’s over the phone or face-to-face. Research the company and the role; know the specifications and details of the organisation from size, reputation to when they were first established. This will help when asked what you know about the company but will also show that you have done your research.

Study your CV and application, highlight certain areas such as your experience and qualifications and make notes on how to expand on these. Think about and rehearse the questions that you may be asked and what a recruiter will want to know. Also make note of questions to ask, this will show that you have genuine interest in knowing all there is to know about the role.

This may sound fairly obvious, but make sure that you are in a quiet area and ideally use a landline opposed to your mobile. If you do have to use your mobile, ensure that your phone is fully charged and that you have all of the relevant documents that you need. If it helps,
have a notepad and pen handy to take notes so that you can jot down all the information that you need.

If your call has been scheduled, make sure that you are prepared and expect the phone to ring at that exact time, don’t start making a cup of tea or begin cleaning. Treat it as you would any other interview and be punctual. Avoid slang and remain formal on the phone and remember to smile; although the recruiter won’t be able to see you they will be able to detect this by the way that you are speaking.

A telephone interview is more spontaneous and you may feel like you are caught off guard or are not sure what to expect. Always refer back to what the interviewer has asked by looking at your CV and notes, if they go quiet ask if they would like you to go into further detail or explain more about your example. Generally, if they have what they need to know they will want to move on.

It is difficult to know what the recruiter is thinking opposed to in a normal interview with an employer, as you can tend to make some sense from body language and may not receive as much feedback. However, be patient and although it is important to appear confident try not to waffle, be concise and give appropriate information that relates to the role.

Take time to think about your responses and try not to worry, a recruiter will understand that on the spot questions can be daunting and that you will not have an immediate answer. If you have trouble with a question, don’t be afraid to ask for more detail rather than trying to answer it anyway. Present yourself as someone that they want to be working with as part of the team!

Ask about what will happen next with your application and express interest, ask if there is anything else that you can do. Remember to thank the interviewer and say you’re looking forward to the next stage.