



Telephone Interviewing

Why are telephone interviews used?

Employers use the telephone to interview potential employees:

- As a less expensive and less time-consuming means of screening and evaluating candidates.
- Because a student attends a school that is not on a recruiter's campus schedule.
- Because a mutually convenient interview time can not be arranged.
- Because a recruiter wants to follow up with questions s/he neglected to ask in a previous interview.

How to prepare for telephone interviews

- Recognize that once you have sent out a resume, letter of application, or applied for a job, you are officially in the job market. Often you will have no advance warning before you receive such a call.
- Employers know students are often in class or working during normal business hours, so calls may come as early as 6:45 a.m. or as late as 10:00 p.m. or on weekends.

Things to keep by the phone for ready access

- Paper, pen, and a copy of the resume and cover letters you have recently posted or mailed.
- An appointment book, copy of your class schedule, or a record of current time commitments.

Inform others of your plans

- Be certain that those who answer your phone understand you may receive an important job-related call at any time. Be careful to prevent rude roommates, forgetful message takers, and proud parents (who brag shamelessly) from saying anything inappropriate.
- When unavailable by phone, leave word when you will return or where and how to reach you.
- If you have an unattended phone, use an answering machine with a brief, professional message.

When the call comes

- Answer the phone with a simple "Hello" or with your name. "Whassup," "Yeah," "Talk to me," and "Yo" are not appropriate greetings.
- Immediately express your pleasure when the caller states his/her company affiliation.
- If there are distracting background noises, ask permission to leave the line while you close the door, turn off the stereo, or inform others present you have an important call.
- If the call comes at an impossible time, tell the caller that you are eager to talk but can not speak freely at that moment. Ask to call back shortly. Record the person's name and number and return the call promptly.

Ending the call

- At the conclusion, the caller should explain what happens next (e.g., follow-up meeting, a letter, etc.). If s/he does not, politely ask what the next step will be
- Express your interest in working for the organization and thank the person for calling
- Before the interviewer hangs up, get his/her full name, job title, address, zip code and phone number.
- Immediately send a thank-you letter or email and refer to topics that were discussed.

Things to remember

- Use good diction. Avoid slang and "fillers" such as "you know," "uh," and "like."
- Ask questions and be enthusiastic.
- Don't chew gum, sip a drink, eat or smoke.
- Don't put the caller on hold for more than a few seconds.
- Be certain the interviewer's question has been completed before you begin answering.
- Practice by having a friend or USD career counselor interview you on the phone
- For more interview tips, schedule an appointment with a USD career counselor and visit: www.sandiego.edu/careers/handouts.php