BERRY COLLEGE CAREER CENTER

TIPS FOR TELEPHONE AND VIDEO INTERVIEWING

When Employers Call, Here's How to Answer

Since 9/11 employers are doing more first interviews in nontraditional ways. A potential employer may want to do a preliminary interview on the phone. Or, the employer may choose an electronic face-to-face via video-conferencing. Here are tips for acing those interviews.

Are You A Good Communicator?

The telephone became an interview tool in the early 1990s – and employers continue to screen job candidates this way because it cost less and it is time consuming – phone interviews average 30 minutes versus an hour or more for a face-to-face interview.

A telephone interview can be like an open-book test. You may have the answer in front of you (see No. 2 below), but you need to know the material thoroughly to do well on the test – or in this case, in the interview.

Employers hope to catch you unprepared in order to see if you can think on your feet and if you have superior communication skills. So, if you're prepared for the call, you'll ace the test.

Here are some tips from NACE career counselor members on preparing for a successful telephone interview.

Do These Things Ahead of Time:

- Turn off distractions. Have your phone in a quiet room – away from radio, television, family, roommates, or anything else that may make noise or take attention away from your task.
- Gather your tools by the phone.
- Resume
- Pen and paper to jot the interviewer(s) name(s) down immediately and to take notes during the interview
- Company research (with relevant information highlighted)
- Questions to ask about company and position
- A loosely written outline of points to make or items to cover as you talk about the position
- Comfort items: tissues, a glass of water

Do These Things at the Interview Time:

- If the employer sets up an appointment in advanced, dress the part for the interview. Experts say if you're dressed in a professional manner, you'll speak that way.

- If the employer calls and wants to do the interview right away (instead of setting up an appointment), excuse yourself politely and offer to call back in five minutes. This will give you time to make the psychological switch from whatever you were doing to your professional demeanor.
- If you have call waiting, turn it off. (Your telephone book will have the instructions on how to do this on a per call basis).
- Stand up to talk. Your position affects the quality of your voice. If you are sitting down relaxing, you don't project the same readiness and intensity as you do if you stand up.
- Talk only when necessary. Since you lack the visual cues of body language to assess whether you've said enough, mark the end of your response with a question, such as "Would you like more details of my experience as an intern with XYZ Company?"
- Let the employer end the interview. Then you should say "Thank you for your time," and reiterate your interest in the position.

If you perform well on the telephone, you'll probably be invited to interview with a hiring manager on site.

Lights! Camera! Job Offer!

Your big break in the job market may be on camera – a video camera in the career services office that will allow you to interview with an employer in another city. Some employers are using videoconference technology to screen candidates before hosting on-sit interviews.

You'll find the videoconference interview gives you some of the benefits of a telephone interview (you can have your notes handy for reference), even while you are face-to-face with the interviewer.

On-Camera Tips:

- Arrive early so you can get comfortable.
- Adjust your chair so you can sit eye-level with the camera.
- Check your posture. Don't Slouch. Don't lean sideways.
- Use note cards or sticky notes that can't be seen on camera to remind yourself of points you would like to make.

No matter what kind of interview you do – telephone, video, or in-person – follow up with a thank-you note to each of the people you have talked to.

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