

## Preparing for a Phone Interview

### *Job Interviews by Phone Are No Less Formal than Face-to-Face Meetings*

Candidates often mistakenly believe that phone interviews are less formal than face-to-face meetings, yet they're a critical first hurdle in landing a job. The goal of a phone interview is to secure a face-to-face meeting. You can increase the odds of passing this initial screening if you follow the advice in these tips:

**MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS.** Traffic noise, clamoring dishes, barking dogs, etc. are a distraction during phone interviews. If you have scheduled a conversation, plan to be in a quiet place. Avoid using a cell phone, if at all possible. If you are limited to a cell phone, do not attempt to drive while talking (even with Bluetooth). You will need to take notes and refer to your list of questions as outlined below.

**SHARPEN YOUR VERBAL SKILLS.** Given a phone interviewer's lack of eye contact and body language, you will be evaluated largely by what you say and how you say it. Interviewers listen for clues indicating such qualities as passion for the job, professionalism and whether the person might be a good cultural fit. You need to have enthusiasm and intonation in your voice to sell yourself. Avoid using clichés and slang phrases. Tongue in cheek expressions are difficult to see through a phone line. Other turnoffs are gum chewing, smoking, and eating.

**PREPARE IN ADVANCE.** If you've scheduled or are anticipating a phone interview, be prepared. *Please review the steps outlined in preparing for an interview*

1. Research the company as you would prior to a face-to-face meeting
2. Have a list of questions you would like to ask
3. Have your resume at hand
4. Keep notes

A little bit of homework can go a long way?

**ASK FOR THE FACE-TO-FACE MEETING.** Aside from exchanging critical information the most important part of the phone interview is setting up the face-to-face meeting. Do not leave it up to the interviewer to assume your level of interest. If you remotely have an interest in moving forward ask what the next step will be. *Please review the steps outlined in preparing for an interview*

**FOLLOW UP.** After a phone interview, send a (hand written preferred) thank-you note that recaps your best selling points. Sending the note prior to the face-to-face interview will enhance the likely hood of a favorable welcome at this next meeting.