

# Career Resources: Five Tips for a Strong Phone Interview

With companies looking for ways to cut costs and so many applicants for any one job, more businesses are turning to phone interviews—instead of inviting applicants into the office—to sort through job applicants. An invitation to an in-person interview increasingly hinges on a successful phone interview. With that in mind, here are five tips for making a good impression by phone.



1. **Be prepared.** Do some research about the company, getting to know its priorities and practices. Assemble some index cards or notes that include some talking points, such as your key achievements or your unique experience. You don't want to noisily flip through your notes during the interview (that's distracting) or read verbatim from your notes (you will sound like a robot), but having such talking points handy will give you some confidence and also help you from blanking out when you're asked specific questions. Speaking of questions, ask some of your own. That shows genuine interest, and employers like that.
2. **Find a quiet space where you can talk comfortably.** Don't try to conduct a phone interview while driving or when you may face other distractions. Think about it: You know when your friends really aren't listening during a casual phone conversation. A prospective employer will know the same thing if you're distracted, and that's not good. The phone interview needs to be your sole focus during the interview. If you're employed and looking for a new job, only conduct a phone interview in your office if you're confident you won't be distracted and that you'll be able to speak in a strong voice. Having to whisper because you're afraid that your current colleagues might hear you means you won't project the kind of confidence and strength employers want.

3. **If possible, use a landline.** Yes, cell phones are better than ever, but do you really want to take the chance of a dropped call or battery conking out during a crucial phone interview? A lost connection can mean a lost job opportunity.
4. **Don't speak ill of anyone.** Even if you had the worst boss in the world, nobody wants to hear about it. It just sounds like sour grapes. Stay positive. Who would you rather work with – someone who dwells on bad experiences or someone who sees the silver lining in almost every situation?
5. **Stand up and smile!** You will speak in a stronger voice when standing, as opposed to sitting. And while this may sound silly, people can “hear” smiles. Make a point of smiling during your answers. A job candidate who speaks with intelligence, clarity and enthusiasm during a phone interview is a job candidate more likely to proceed to the next step.