

How to Prepare for a Phone Interview

by Isabel Sperry | January 31, 2018



While progressing to the phone interview stage of a hiring process is exciting, it's also nerve-racking. In a phone interview, you can't rely on your interviewer's visual cues to guide your next move, and you can't expect your unique sense of humor to come across as it would in person. But don't fear, we've compiled several concrete strategies to prepare for a phone interview, which will help you make a positive impression on your interviewer and hopefully assuage some of your pre-interview jitters.

1. Do research on the company

Learning about the company and being able to talk knowledgeably about what it does is imperative. You should have a clear grasp on the company's core competency, mission statement, client base, and main competitors. A gap in any of these areas might raise a red flag to your interviewer and make it seem as if you didn't care enough about the company to do some basic research on it. You should also be sure to Google the company and read any recent news. For example, if the company has undergone a recent merger or acquisition, you should be aware of it. Finally, check out the company's social media pages, as they'll often highlight major company projects and goings-on.

2. Review the job description

Take the time to read through the job description again, slowly and carefully. You want to make sure you're familiar with all the duties of the role, and any relevant terminology. For example, if you're applying to an editorial role, you should know what a CMS is. If you don't have experience with a particular tool, being able to talk about it knowledgeably and demonstrating your desire to learn it will make your response much more impressive. You should also take a few moments to review your résumé and cover letter. You want to refresh your memory on your own accomplishments and qualifications for the role, so you can talk about them cogently in the interview.

3. Practice your answers to potential interview questions

Brainstorm a list of questions you think your interviewer might ask. Develop answers to the questions, and practice them—especially the ones you find hardest. At the minimum, you should always be able to answer “Tell me about yourself,” “Walk me through your résumé,” and “Why do you want to work here?” You might even ask a friend to give you a call and go over questions with you, so you can practice your answers—and get feedback on how they sound over the phone.

4. Look up your interviewer on LinkedIn

This one's easy. Look up your interviewer on LinkedIn ahead of time so you can get a sense of their work background, education history, and interests. Who knows, maybe they had the same major as you or studied abroad in the same country, and you can casually bring up your own experience in the interview. If you can establish a personal connection with your interviewer, you're guaranteed to stand out from other candidates.

5. Develop questions to ask your interviewer

Learning a bit more about your interviewer via LinkedIn can also inform the kinds of questions you might ask. You should prepare a list of questions to ask at the end of the interview, which demonstrate that you've done your research and are curious about the specifics of the role and company. Questions such as “Can you describe the company culture” and “Could you tell me more about the day-to-day responsibilities of the job” are always a safe bet. Avoid asking questions about the company's benefits; save these for the negotiation stage, after you've received a job offer.

6. Prepare logistics

Finally, find a quiet place to take your interview call. Stick a Post-it to your door with a note for your roommates not to bother you. And don't forget to keep your laptop open in front of you. The benefit of a phone interview is that you can Google something quickly if you don't know the answer, and your interviewer will never know. You can also prepare notes to help you answer certain questions and increase your chances of interview success.

Source: http://www.vault.com/blog/interviewing/how-to-prepare-for-a-phone-interview-1/?utm_source=UndergradNewsletter&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_campaign=02_05_2018_UG&referrer_ID=7778