Many employers screen job applicants over the telephone, and the number of these calls is expected to increase as they seek ways to reduce their recruiting costs.

**Why Telephone Interviews?**

Telephone interviews are used for three main purposes:

- When you send a resume to an employer that is not interviewing on campus, a recruiter may conduct a telephone interview if your qualifications fit the employer’s needs.
- Recruiters often use the telephone for follow-up questions to students who already have been interviewed.
- Finally, many calls are placed by managers or supervisors who do the actual hiring. After a recruiter interviews you, your resume is often given to all department heads who may be interested in employing you. Frequently, these managers will telephone you before extending an invitation to come for a site visit.

**Preparing for a Telephone Interview**

Usually you will have no advance warning before you receive a call. You may answer the telephone perhaps expecting to hear your mother, your date, or a persistent salesperson only to find yourself speaking with a recruiter who holds your future in his or her hands. Consider the following suggestions to be prepared for interview calls whenever they may come:

- Keep a copy of your cover letter and resume handy.
- Keep paper and pencil near the telephone at all times.
- Be sure that everyone who answers your telephone understands you may receive an important, employment-related call at any time.

**Doing Well on the Telephone**

All recruiters recognize that an unexpected call places some stress on the job applicant. Among other things, interviewers want to evaluate your ability to handle the situation in a calm, mature manner.

- If you have an answering machine, be sure your message is clear, concise and reasonably businesslike.
- Respond positively. Once you realize the call relates to your job search, make every effort to put yourself into the proper frame of mind to be interviewed. If there are distracting background noises, ask the caller for permission to leave the line while you close the door, turn off the stereo, tell others who may be present that you have an important call, or do whatever is necessary to give yourself privacy and quiet.
- If the telephone rings at a time when it truly is impossible to hold a meaningful conversation, tell the caller that although you are eager to talk, you cannot speak freely at the moment. Ask if you may call back in a few minutes.

- Listen closely to everything the interviewer says. Think through your responses as carefully as you would if you were sitting across the desk from the recruiter. Remember, too, to ask the questions you want answered and take notes.
- Remember to be enthusiastic and smile during the telephone interview. The recruiter will notice the difference.
- At the conclusion of a telephone interview, the caller usually will explain what you should expect to happen next. If the interviewer fails to identify the next step, you should politely ask.
- Before the interviewer hangs up, be certain you have noted his or her first and last name, title, and telephone number.
- Be sure to thank the person for calling you.

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