



## **PHONE INTERVIEW ETIQUETTE AND TIPS!**

In a face to face interview, it's easy to tell if an interviewer is tuning you out if you notice them staring off into space or sending messages on their BlackBerry. On the phone, you (and the interviewer) are missing out on important visual cues. You can't read the interviewer's body language or see how they react to you. So, how can a job seeker really dial into an interviewer's demeanor to tell if she's bored, distracted or underwhelmed?

Here are a few tips on etiquette and how to prepare for a phone interview:

### **PREPARATION:**

- 1. Practice!** The best way to prepare is to roll play the interview with a friend or your recruiter. Provide them with some practice questions to ask as well as your resume. Test different techniques while talking with them. You may also want to consider taping your conversation and listening to yourself afterwards. You may be surprised by what you hear! Finally, ask yourself, "Would I hire this person?"
- 2. Find a quiet area where there will not be any distractions.** In the absence of sight, hearing becomes sharper. And interviewers can easily hear distraction over the phone. Once you've scheduled a phone interview, locate a calm, quiet place where you can focus. Make sure you're not near children, co-workers, a computer, TV or anything that will draw your attention away from the interview. Tell anyone who has access to the space that you are not to be disturbed unless catastrophe strikes.
- 3. Next, have a pen and paper handy to take notes during your interview.** You should also have a copy of your resume so that when the interviewer refers to your experience, you can both literally be on the same page.
- 4. If you receive another phone call during your interview, do not put the interviewed on hold.** It is imperative that you give them your undivided attention the entire time you are on the call. If for some reason you know you may have to get off the call, make sure you inform them of that before you get into your interview. For example, explain to them that you are expecting a call from your daughter around 3pm and you may have to take the call but you won't be too long.
- 5. Finally, consider your attire, particularly if you're interviewing from your home.** It's your prerogative to wear sweats, but may we suggest something closer to business attire? You'll feel more professional -- and, thus, you'll sound more professional.

## THE INTERVIEW:

1. **Make a conscious effort to sound upbeat and enthusiastic.** You want to start your phone interview off right. And, because the interviewer can't see you, they will be listening even more carefully.
2. **Smile.** Interviewers can hear you smile -- and smiling can put you in a better state of mind. (Don't believe it? Try smiling when you're in a bad mood.)
3. **Stand Up.** If you feel your confidence wane, stand up. Standing can make your voice sound more powerful.
4. **Breathe.** Always remember to breathe. It will help you stay calm and sound more relaxed.
5. **Sounds of Silence.** A phone interview isn't just about speaking. It's about listening. To listen carefully, try closing your eyes when the interviewer is speaking so you can focus on what is being said. This technique can also help you read the interviewer's mood. Is he interested and enthusiastic, or bored and distracted? Is the interview conversational? Are questions and answers flowing easily?
6. **Listen hard after your responses.** Did your response prompt additional questions or make the interviewer hesitate? If the interviewer seems distracted, use one of the powerful questions you were saving for the "Do you have any questions?" section of the interview. A well-chosen question can re-engage him and put the interview back on track.