



## What is the proper phone interview etiquette?

Remember that on the phone all visual impressions are absent; all we hear is a voice, so your voice should be positive and cheerful.

"Career-management experts estimate that more than 80% of job interviews are won or lost during the first five minutes of conversation. This includes telephone screening interviews". What you do when you answer a phone call from a recruiter or an employer could have a major effect on your career future.

Make sure that your voice mail or answering machine message projects a mature and professional image. Second, if you get a message from an employer, return the call as soon as possible during business hours. If you wait too long, the employer might think you're not interested. Third, be prepared in case the employer wants to conduct a preliminary screening interview over the phone. If you are unable to conduct such an interview when an employer first calls, ask to set up an appointment for later in the week--and then make sure you are there when the employer calls back at the scheduled time.

Prepare for the phone interview in the same way you would prepare for an in-person interview, including having the names and phone numbers of references handy. You can also prepare a written outline of points that you would like to cover. Since the employer can't see you over the phone, you will be able to consult the outline during the interview itself.

Make sure there are no background noises. If you are expecting the phone call, you should have the television and radio turned off, and if you have children, they shouldn't be running around in the background. Be aware also of any distracting noises that you might be making yourself. You shouldn't be eating while you are on the phone, or chewing gum.

Before the phone interview ends, find out what the next step will be. Find out when you can expect the employer to contact you again, or if there is a best time for you to call and follow up.

Remember that on the phone all visual impressions are absent; all we hear is a voice, so your voice should be positive and cheerful. You should smile, because you can hear a smile over the phone even though you can't see it. You should be very articulate, use good grammar, no "umms," say yes or no, please and thank you--that's really important over the phone. People really notice when you say thank you or please. Think before you speak and don't just talk incessantly; let the interviewer take the lead in the interview. You should sound "positive, self-confident, and focused.