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## A NOTE ON TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

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*Here are some guidelines for successful phone interviews*

In the event the interviewer misses you when calling to schedule the interview, be sure you have a professional-sounding outgoing greeting on your voicemail or answering machine. If you have others in your household, ensure that anyone who might answer the phone can professionally take a message.

Consider enlisting a friend or family member to conduct a mock phone interview with you for practice.

Try to arrange to be the one who places the call so you have control over exactly when the interview takes place. If not, at least schedule the call at a specific time rather than in a general span of time so you will be prepared at the exact appointment time. Be sure you schedule as much time as the interviewer needs.

If the interviewer calls and wants to do the interview on the spot, tell him or her how much time you have available (if you have any constraints). Offer to call right back or reschedule if you're in the middle of something.

Favor a landline for the interview over your cell phone, especially if your cell phone is prone to dropped calls.

Be sure you're in a quiet, secluded place, free of distractions, at the time of your phone-interview appointment.

Some experts advise standing up for the interview as this position also enables you to project yourself professionally and helps your voice carry.

Speak clearly and ensure that you can be heard.

Avoid any behaviors that will cause distracting sounds during the interview, such as gum-chewing, coughing, snuffling, sneezing, throat-clearing. Have a glass of water handy in case your throat gets dry or ticklish. If you feel yourself going off on, for example, an unstoppable coughing jag, ask if the interviewer would like to reschedule.

Just as you should smile in a face-to-face interview to project enthusiasm, smile as much as possible in the phone interview. The interviewer can't see your smile but will hear it in your voice.

Have your resume in front of you and organize notes about key questions and aspects of the company in index cards so you can easily put your hands on them. Outlines of responses to frequently asked interview questions can serve as loose scripts for your responses. Your goal is brief memory prompts, not full-blown responses to be read. Have a writing utensil and paper handy for taking notes.

Don't feel you need to fill quiet spots in the conversation. If the interviewer doesn't respond at the end of your answer, ask a question to deflect the conversation back to him or her.

Since the goal of phone interviews is often to screen out candidates, expect the unexpected. You might be asked questions that throw you for a loop. Don't let them rattle you, and don't feel you must blurt out an immediate response. Take a moment to think and then respond to the best of your ability.