



Next Phase
Life Science Solutions

Telephone Interview Tips





This guide is a companion to our “Advanced Interview Tips” document. If you are having a telephone interview, we strongly recommend that you read both, because we have tried to avoid too much doubling-up. We would generally provide the same overall advice to someone whether they are having a telephone interview or a face-to-face meeting; but there are some very important additional details to consider for a telephone interview which are often overlooked. You are welcome to call us any time on **01403 216 216** if you have any questions or would like advice. We also post useful information on [nextphaserecruitment.com](https://www.nextphaserecruitment.com) and our social media platforms including [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

TECHNOLOGY

Most people have modern, high-quality phones, tablets or other devices, making interviews via telephone, Skype, WhatsApp etc very easy in principle...or so you might think.

However, over the last 5 years we have had ever-increasing instances of disastrous telephone interviews because of calls cutting out, poor signal, loud background noise, dialling the wrong number, entering the wrong code – the list goes on! Sometimes technology is to blame, whereas other times it is a question of people forgetting the fundamental basics, or not taking enough care and attention to be in the right place at the right time, with sufficient signal (or Wi-Fi) and battery charge. Almost 50% of all telephone / videoconference interviews have to be rescheduled, paused or restarted due to basic problems – don’t let this happen to you.

For practicality, a telephone / video interview is often the first stage of an interview process, and the first time you will speak to your potential future employer. You definitely owe it to yourself to ensure you are as prepared as possible and do not assume that modern technology will always work!



THE DO'S

DO your research. Just like a face-to-face interview, start by researching as much as you can about the company. Find out about the size and structure of the business, their products and services and the markets in which they operate (including looking at competitors' websites). The best place to start is the company's website, but also keep an eye out for news articles in different locations, which may mention plans for growth and expansion.

DO write down any questions you want to ask. A phone interview is a really good opportunity to find out more about the role you've applied for, the company culture and your potential career path with them. Unless you are having a video interview, the interviewer will not see you, so you can use this to your advantage and have notes in front of you. Always make sure you have a pen and paper handy for taking additional notes.

DO warm up. Vocal exercises can be a really good idea. If you are on your own at home, you could even break out your inner Pavarotti for a few minutes! If you are out and about, perhaps call a friend or family member 20 minutes before the interview, partly to warm up your "interview voice" and partly to get you in the right mindset for talking about yourself over the phone, without feeling self-conscious. If you are at home, try not to go straight from silence to the interview – you will feel much more prepared if you are physically warmed up.

DO refer to the job description. This is important as you can highlight or take notes around the job description for any questions you want to ask. This may be around what skills the job requires or about the company itself. This can act as a crib sheet for questions you want to ask near the end of the interview. It also would not hurt to drop in a few choice words that you have seen on the job description when giving your answers. The chances are that the interviewer had some involvement in writing the job description; so if you see a phrase such as "pragmatic approach to continuous improvement", "promoting a quality culture", or "demonstrating accountability", don't be afraid to say these words yourself. In a subtle way, it will help you and the interviewer(s) to use the same language and build rapport, in the absence of face-to-face contact.

DO smile. This may sound corny – but it actually works. Although your interviewer can't see you, always try and remain smiling throughout the conversation as it does have a noticeable impact on the tone of your voice. Numerous studies have shown that smiling helps ensure you sound upbeat and makes you more attractive to the listener.

DO have your CV to hand. It is always useful to have to hand exactly what you have written in your CV when questions arise about your background and experience. This is one of the benefits of a telephone interview as you can highlight pieces of your CV that you especially want to point out.

DO listen. This is undoubtedly the most important element to consider. Take on board all components of the interviewers' questions and make notes of anything that seems of particular importance, just in case they refer back to it later. Even if they do not, you can use it as a crib sheet when answering the inevitable "any other questions?" invitation at the end of the interview.





THE DON'T'S

DON'T treat it differently from a face-to-face interview. Strange as it sounds, it can be a good idea to dress like you would for a face-to-face interview. Even though the interviewer may not see you, it is harder to feel – and therefore sound – professional if you're still sitting in your dressing gown.

DON'T slouch. If you are lounging on the sofa with the TV on, you will not come across as being attentive. Much like dressing professionally, making sure you are upright and taking note will ensure you give yourself an upper hand.

DON'T get distracted. You need to remain focused on the task at hand, something that can prove difficult if you still have one eye on household chores. The same goes for your partner/family members. They might think they are being supportive, but your interview should be a two-way conversation. Having a loved one's frantic arm flapping and mouthed words of encouragement in the background will only put you off.

DON'T eat. There is a time and a place for snacking. During your phone interview isn't it. You might think you are being quiet, but chances are that you aren't. A mumbled answer because you have your mouth full (including chewing gum or a mint) would be memorable, but for all the wrong reasons.

DON'T interrupt. The easiest way to avoid irritating the interviewer is to let them finish their sentences, so always allow for a gap before you begin answering. Not only will it give you time to think of a coherent response, it will also mean you don't speak over the person you're trying to impress. Just make sure you approach gaps with a degree of caution. There's a difference between a courteous pause and an awkward silence.

DON'T sound bored. Remember that the interviewer cannot see your body language or look into your eyes, so the only way you can show your engagement and interest is to use your voice. Again, it may seem obvious, but when you haven't done a telephone interview before, it's easy to overlook. In a face-to-face meeting you may nod or smile, but over the phone the interviewer could easily jump to the conclusion that you are disengaged unless you go out of your way to indicate otherwise. Try to sound upbeat and avoid mumbling your responses.



OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Use a landline, if possible, and turn your mobile phone off (whichever number you wish to be called on, please let us know in advance)
- Have a glass of water to hand
- Enunciate
- Remember to breathe, pause and not rush





AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Telephone interviews are often limited by strict time constraints. Hopefully you will know in advance how long the interview should last (telephone interviews can sometimes be as short as 10 minutes, or as long as an hour or more), so bear this in mind throughout. If you come off the phone feeling unsure how it went, with your head spinning and a multitude of questions still unanswered, this is often a GOOD sign! There is no way you will be able to cover everything you would like to cover in such a short time, so do not try to cram it all in. Respond carefully to the specific questions that you are asked.

Please call Next Phase as soon as possible after the interview on **01403 216 216** so we can talk through your feedback. We will then pass this feedback on to the interviewer(s) and ensure that this crucial part of the interview process is handled in the most informed, appropriate, accurate and professional way possible.

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ABOVE ALL, BE
YOURSELF.
THOUGH YOU
SHOULD NOT NEED
IT, GOOD LUCK!

Now, where's that
phone charger....?

