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## ***Telephone Interviewing***

### **Why are telephone interviews used?**

Employers use the telephone to interview potential employees when they want to screen and/or evaluate candidates they have not seen in person

- A student attends a school that is not on a recruiter's campus schedule
- A mutually convenient interview time can not be arranged between the recruiter and the student
- A recruiter wants to follow up with questions s/he forgot to ask, or if s/he wants to invite a student for a site visit.

### **How to prepare for telephone interviews**

First, recognize that once you have sent out a resume, letter of application, or applied for a job, you are officially in the job market. Usually you will have no advance warning before you receive such a call

- Employers know students are often in class or working during normal business hours. As such, calls may come as early as 6:45 a.m. or as late as 10:00 p.m. or on weekends

### **Things to keep by the phone for ready access**

- Blank paper and a writing instrument (if necessary, secure them with string or tape so they're always available)
- A copy of your resume and cover letters you have recently sent out. These can be put in folders or a notebook and arranged alphabetically for easy access
- An appointment book, copy of your class schedule, or a record of current time commitments

### **Inform others of your plans**

- Be sure those who answer your telephone understand you may receive an important job-related call at any time
- When you go out, leave word when you will return or where and how to reach you
- Be careful to prevent rude roommates, forgetful message takers, and proud parents who brag shamelessly
- If you have an unattended phone, use an answering machine with a brief, professional message.

### **When the call comes**

- Answer the phone with a simple "Hello" or with your name.
- Immediately express your pleasure when the caller states his/her company affiliation.
- Assess the environment around you. If there are distracting background noises, ask permission to leave the line while you close the door, turn off the stereo, or inform others present you have an important call.
- If the call comes at an impossible time, tell the caller that you are eager to talk but can not speak freely at that moment. Ask to call back in a few minutes. Record the person's name and number and return the call promptly.

### **Ending the call**

- At the conclusion, the caller will explain what happens next (e.g., follow-up meeting, a letter, etc.). If s/he doesn't, politely ask what the next step will be
- Express your interest in working for the organization and thank the person for calling you
- Offer to send extra copies of your resume, transcripts, references or other materials that might be helpful
- Before the interviewer hangs up, be sure you have his/her full name, job title, address, zip code and phone number. If you didn't catch the caller's name at the beginning of the call, ask how to spell the name correctly
- Immediately send a thank-you letter for the phone interview and refer to topics that were discussed

### **Things to remember**

- Use good diction. Avoid slang and "fillers" such as "you know," "uh," and "like." Ask questions and be enthusiastic
- Don't chew gum, sip a drink, eat or smoke. Don't put the caller on hold for more than a few seconds
- Be certain the interviewer's question has been completed before you begin answering
- Practice by having a friend interview you on the phone. Tape record it to see how you sound