



## How to have a successful phone interview

By The N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions

For the Journal

Phone interviews are very popular in a competitive job market, especially when many of the job candidates live outside the area. These interviews can lead to in-person interviews and ultimately to a job offer. It is important to prepare for your phone interview to ensure that you give a great impression.

If it is an impromptu interview and it is not a good time or place, ask if it would be possible to call back or if you could reschedule. If it is a scheduled phone interview, take advantage of the time to prepare by brainstorming potential questions you may be asked and your responses to each.

Phone interviews are very different from in-person interviews so here are some basic tips to follow. Do not eat, chew gum, or smoke while you are on the phone. Find a quiet place to talk, and avoid calls while outside or in areas with poor reception. If on a cell phone, make sure it is fully charged, and do not use a hands-free device if it compromises sound quality.

Eliminate as many distractions as possible. Turn off the television or radio. While on the call, do not take calls on call waiting. Let family members, children, or roommates know that you have a phone interview and that you cannot be disturbed.

Have a pen and paper ready. Print a copy of your job application, cover letter, and resume so that you can refer to specifics in your work history and experience. This will also help you to address questions that the employer may have about your resume or qualifications. Keep your research about the employer close at hand, as well as questions you have about the job and company. Ask the caller's name, company and phone number in case you are disconnected.

Even though the interviewer cannot see you, your facial expressions and appearance can really affect your tone of voice and delivery. Your voice will reflect your facial expression. Look in a mirror at points during your interview to remind you to smile and be energetic. It may also help you to dress as though you are going to an interview in-person. You will be in a professional mindset if you are dressing professionally, rather than sitting in your pajamas.

If you need to think about a question, let the interviewer know that you need a moment. The interviewer can ask a question and if you pause to think and don't respond, they cannot see your body language and may assume that the call has been dropped. Dead air space can be awkward and misinterpreted on the other end, so be sure to communicate everything to the interviewer.

A great interview tip is to rephrase the question asked when you answer. This provides extra time to think about your response and directly answer the question. For example, the interviewer asks, "What is your job experience and education as it relates to this position?" You can answer, "I have both job experience and education throughout my career that directly relates to this position." This would give you a moment to then go into detail about your work history and specific examples that relate to the job description.

Phone interviews can be difficult since you are not sitting across from an interviewer, but if you prepare well and follow the tips, it is a great opportunity to communicate to an employer why you are the best candidate for the job.

This is a regular column written by the N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions. For more information, go to [www.dws.state.nm.us](http://www.dws.state.nm.us).

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