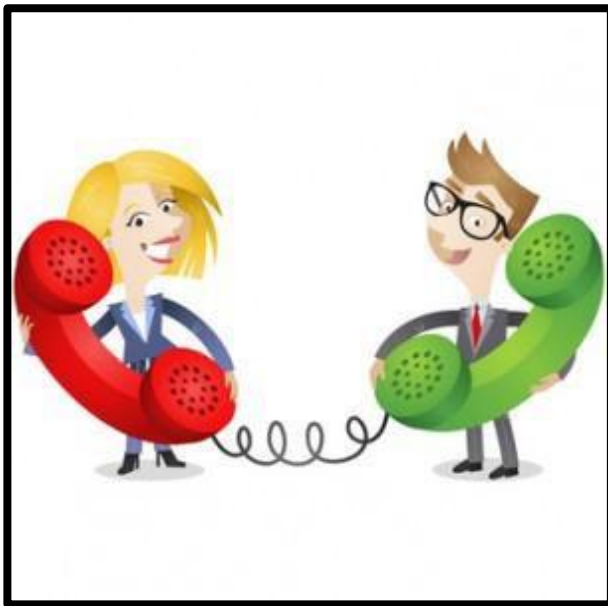


# Acing Telephone & Remote Interviews



# CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Before The Telephone Or Remote Interview .....	2
Practice, Practice, Practice .....	2
Prepare Devices.....	2
Be Prepared.....	2
Create A Professional Account For A Remote Interview .....	2
Eliminate Distractions .....	3
During The Telephone Or Remote Interview .....	3
Smile.....	3
Be Aware Of Your Body Language .....	3
Stand Up.....	4
Take Notes .....	4
Use SAP To Answer Questions .....	4
Ask The Interviewer Questions .....	5
Ending The Interview.....	6
After The Interview .....	7
Follow-Up.....	7
Continue With Job Search And Practice .....	9
One Last Item.....	9

## Introduction

Telephone and remote interviews are becoming more common as employers look for ways to improve hiring practices by saving time and money. Just like an in-person interview, **telephone and remote interviews also require preparation**. To move onto the next level—the in-person interview—your job during the telephone or remote interview is to:

- ✓ be confident and know what you would bring to the position
- ✓ have knowledge of the company and the position you are applying for, and
- ✓ answer the interviewer's questions by providing specific examples of the skills and attributes that make you a good fit for the position.



Both the telephone and remote interview provide you with the opportunity to promote yourself in the comfort of your own home. Other pros and cons include:

### PROS

- ✓ having your job search materials on hand to refer to; this includes the:
  - cover letter
  - resume
  - job description/posting
  - company research

### CONS

- ✓ not seeing the interviewer's body language and conversely the interviewer not seeing your body language
- ✓ having your tone of voice interpreted incorrectly by the interviewer

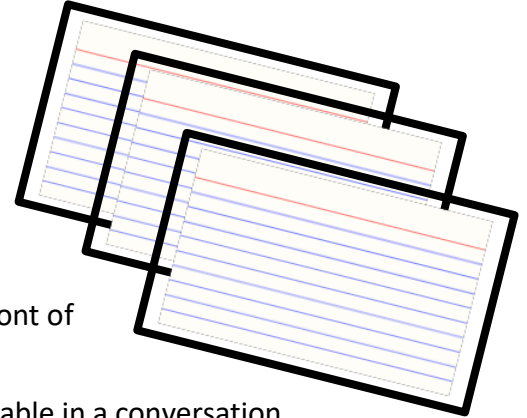
It is **important to maximize the advantages and prepare for the drawbacks of a telephone or remote interview**. This booklet provides the information you need to prepare and conduct a successful telephone or remote interview.

## Before The Telephone or Remote Interview

Your goal is to demonstrate you are the best candidate for the position. Increase the chances of achieving your goal by doing the following:

### Practice, Practice, Practice

1. Practice responses to questions on a daily basis as part of your job search routine.
2. Write your interview answers on index cards so they are portable and practice while waiting in line at the grocery store.
3. Practice responding to questions out loud, and in front of a mirror.
4. Eliminate irritating umms and ahhs that are noticeable in a conversation.
5. Get your friends to help critique your tone of voice, enunciation and volume.
6. Record yourself on the webcam answering interview questions and then review to see what you can improve upon.



### Prepare Devices

1. For a **telephone interview**:
  - a. Use a **land line to eliminate the possibility of technical difficulties** during a telephone interview.
    - i. If you don't have a land line **make sure your cell phone is fully charged.**
2. For a **remote interview**:
  - a. Use a hardwire connection as it is more stable than wireless.
  - b. Check the sound quality of your microphone jack, and if necessary consult with someone who can help you improve the sound.
  - c. Practice setting up the webcam so you are prepared for interview day.



### Create a Professional Skype or Zoom Account for a Remote Interview

Just as you would for an email account, **create a professional username** for your Skype account. If your name is already taken, combine your name with your industry or occupation. Here are some examples:

- jjackson\_accountant • jdoe\_editor, • dsmith\_projectmanager

## Eliminate Distractions

Create a quiet, uninterrupted space for a **telephone and remote interview**. For the **remote interview** you want a professional looking background so **eliminate visual distractions** that may interfere with the interviewer's attention. Remove the bulletin board with bills, or that hip hop poster with potentially offensive stances.

## During The Telephone or Remote Interview

### Smile

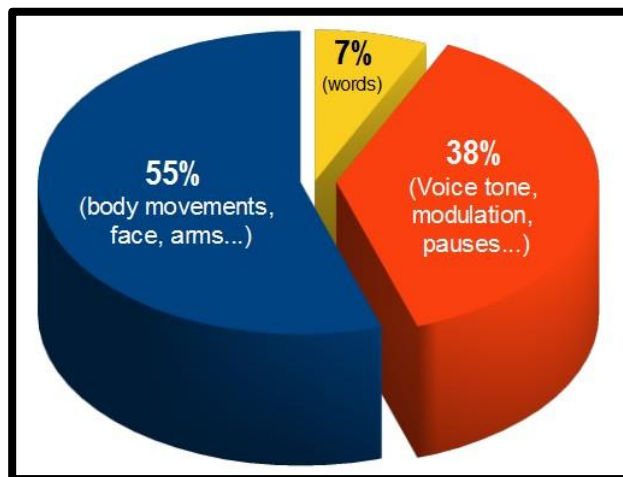


Try an experiment with friends. The next time you talk on the telephone see if they can sense a difference in your voice or attitude. You may be very surprised to discover the positive impact a smile can have on people, even when they can see you. So don't forget – smile during the interview!

### Be Aware Of Your Body Language

Even though you will not be in the physical presence of the interviewer, it is important to be aware of your body language just as you would in a regular interview. A whopping **55% of a person's response is to your body language**, so make sure that you have good posture and smile whether you are conducting a remote or telephone interview. Here are some more **tips for the remote interview**:

- To show your interest and confidence, **lean into the computer screen slightly** and keep your **hands on the table**
- **Make eye contact with the interviewer**; look at the webcam camera not the computer screen
- **Speak at an audible volume** and **enunciate your words clearly** to ensure the interviewer can understand you and responds positively to your tone of voice
- If you have used Skype or Zoom previously, you know there is often a delay before the person on the other end has finished speaking. Wait until the person has stopped talking and then respond.



## Stand Up



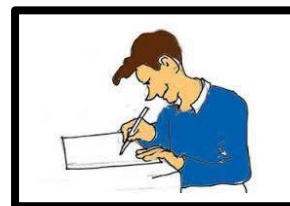
For a **telephone interview** stand up and walk around, if you are prone to being nervous. Standing up while on the telephone:

- Improves your posture
- Raises your energy levels
- Improves how you feel
- Gives you more freedom of movement and expression

Source: <http://www.gaviningham.com/2007/10/23/stand-up-if-you-like-cold-calling>

## Take Notes

Quickly jot down any additional information the interviewer provides regarding the job, or the company, in order to better prepare for the in-person interview.



## Use SAP to Answer Questions

To keep your answer focused, without getting lost in details, answer a behaviour descriptive question using **SAP**. Talk about **a specific example** from your work or volunteer experience and use SAP to structure your response. Here is a breakdown of SAP.

1. Set the scene:	2. Action steps taken:	3. Positive results:
1. position held	1. first step taken	1.
2. employer or sector	2. second step taken	2.
3. specific incident	3. third step taken	3.

To see how SAP works, read the question and answer on page 5.

## Question

**Communication skills are very important in this job. Describe a time when you effectively utilized your communication skills.**

## Response Using SAP

### Set the scene

As an Ophthalmic Assistant at an eye doctor's office, my communication skills were constantly being put to the test, as many of our patients were elderly with hearing difficulties. An incident occurred with an irritated patient who did not want to take a specific test requested by the doctor.

### Action steps taken

I escorted her to the testing area and listened to her concerns without interrupting. This had a very calming effect on her. I empathized with her and related my own personal experience with the procedure, and she became willing to give it a try. I then began to set her up for the procedure, and very patiently explained how the test would be administered. I also assured her that I would stay in the room with her until the procedure was completed.

### Positive results

She was able to complete the test on the first attempt and was very happy that I had taken the time to explain things to her. In her future visits she was always cooperative with the staff when taking tests.

## Ask the Interviewer Questions

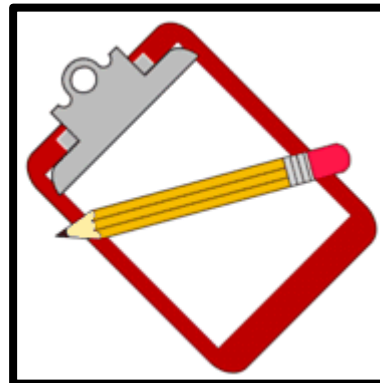
During the interview, if you are unsure what the interviewer is asking, ask to have the question repeated or rephrased to ensure that you understand what the interviewer is trying to find out. If your response is met with a long pause, don't be afraid to ask the interviewer, **"Have I answered your question?"** to make sure you have provided the information the interviewer was looking for.

You will know the telephone interview is coming to an end when the interviewer asks, **"Do you have any questions?"** Being prepared will demonstrate your professionalism and enthusiasm for the position. Have 5 to 7 questions ready, but be prepared to only get responses to 1 or 2. You will find that the majority of your questions will probably be answered during the interview. If you still have questions after the interview you can raise them before accepting a job offer. Listed below are some sample questions.

- What is the mentoring/coaching/training program like?
- What is the most important quality I need to succeed in this position?
- What are the goals for this position within the first 30 or 60 days?



- Is there anything else I should know about the position?
- Where do you see your company in five years?
  - *This question illustrates your desire to understand the organization's goals and vision; it also allows the interviewer(s) to assess your overall compatibility, and see how you can contribute to the company goals.*
- How would you describe the culture of the workplace?
- How often is an employee's performance evaluated and what criteria are used?
- Would it be possible to have a tour of the workplace?
- Can you tell me a little bit more about (something learned about in the interview)?
- I was reading on your website about a new initiative working with \_\_\_\_\_. Can you tell me about \_\_\_\_\_?
- When can I start?



This is also your final opportunity to discover if the interviewer has concerns about your ability to do the job. Asking the following question provides the interviewer with the opportunity to reveal any hesitations, and you the final opportunity to address those hesitations.

***“Do you have any hesitations in hiring me that I can clear up right now?”***

## Ending the Interview

Thank the person for the interview and confirm the date, time and place of the next interview. Then check to see if there is anything else that you can provide at the interview.



If the interviewer states there will be a review of all candidates before in-person interviews are scheduled, ask:

***“When can I call you to get the results of this interview, next Tuesday or Wednesday?”***



Don't forget to update your job search schedule and make revisions to accommodate preparing for your next interview.



## After the Interview

Write down information that you have been given during the interview that will help you prepare for the next interview. Also assess which questions you need to (1) polish responses, (2) practice more often, and (3) which questions were well received. This strategy will maximize your interview practice time, create stronger answers, and build your confidence.

### Follow-Up

People often balk at sending a thank you email after the interview. To their detriment, they think of it as fawning and insincere. At the website [careerconfidential.com](http://careerconfidential.com), writer Peggy McKee states:

Sending a thank you note after your job interview is very important. Thank you [emails] show your good manners and communication skills, they can seal the deal on moving you to the next step or the job offer, and they can even do damage control if parts of your interview didn't go as well as you would have hoped.



Source: <http://careerconfidential.com/category/thank-you-emails-after-interview/>



Whether you have been given another interview date or you are waiting for the interviewer to get back to you, take a few minutes and **send a thank you email to the interviewer**. Following up will make you stand out from other candidates and could potentially tip the scales in your favour when the final hiring decision is made. Following up also shows the employer a number of positive aspects about you, it:

- ➔ provides an opportunity to add any new information that was not covered in the interview which could enhance your application
- ➔ demonstrates initiative and genuine interest in the position
- ➔ reinforces a positive memory of your interview, along with your skills and abilities
- ➔ favourably influences those who have a "say" in the hiring process

The email should briefly:

- ➔ thank the interviewer(s) and include something specific about the interview
- ➔ state your key skills and abilities relevant to the job that make you a good fit for the position
- ➔ provide any details that you may have forgotten to mention
- ➔ express your interest in the position and your acknowledgement of the next steps in the hiring process

Sign off with your name and your contact information. See the example below of what to write in a thank you email.

To: thomasj@abccompany.com

Subject: Thank you for the interview

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me this morning regarding the \_\_\_\_\_ position, and telling me more about the plans to increase membership.

I am confident that I can make a positive contribution in achieving the membership goals and look forward to liaising and building relationships with new stakeholders. I am also very excited about the opportunity to work in the field with clients to further develop their sports skills.

I look forward to our next interview on \_\_\_\_\_ at 10:30 am.

Sincerely,

**Jane Doe**

<https://ca.linkedin.com/in/janedoe>

204.222.2222 – Cell • doe.j@gmail.com

For a professional look, use a **Signature Block** to provide the interviewer with your contact information.

Read the next example of a thank you email on the next page.

To: [mjones@abccompany.com](mailto:mjones@abccompany.com)

Subject: Thank you for the interview

Dear Marilyn:

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me this morning regarding the \_\_\_\_\_ position. Your friendly manner put me at ease and I appreciated the more detailed information about the job.

I know that with my extensive knowledge of interior design and decorating I can provide clients with the assistance they need to create that perfect home. My competitive nature will also help me to reach, and exceed, the monthly sales targets while providing top-notch quality service that will result in long-term, loyal return clients.

I'm very excited about this position and I look forward to hearing from you about next steps. If I haven't heard from you by Tuesday, I'll give you a call to see where we are.

Sincerely,

**Jack Adams**

**Interior Designer**

<https://ca.linkedin.com/in/jackadams>

204.222.2222 – Cell • [adams.jack@gmail.com](mailto:adams.jack@gmail.com)

For a professional look, use a **Signature Block** to provide the interviewer with your contact information.

## Continue with Job Search and Practice

Never wait for a call from an employer. Keep practicing your answers, out loud, and in front of the mirror, to prepare for your next interview. Continue networking and sending out targeted cover letters and resumes to employers you would like to work for.

## One Last Item



**Celebrate your success.** Give yourself a healthy reward for a job well done. Go for a walk, get together with friends, go for a bike ride, or take the afternoon off and read a book. Whatever activity you decide upon—enjoy, you've earned it! And get back to your job search schedule the next morning.

Booklets on a variety of job search topics are also available for you—pick up a copy of any booklet at the front desk.



**Follow us on our new social media and give us a “like” or tweet about our services.**



**Twitter: @O\_V\_R\_C**

[illegible]