

How To Be Successful in a Telephone Interview

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These are succinct points I learned as I interviewed 16 candidates for plant manager position

1. Do your homework
 - a. Check out website – especially for cultural information (guess what, a good interviewer is also looking for the right character fit)
 - b. Check Linked in for others who have worked there, they can give you hints
 - c. You are making a decision too so don't forget to list your priorities
 - d. If you are working through a recruiter, pick the recruiter's brain – it is in their best interest for you to do well. Do they have a job description?
2. Great Questions:
 - a. What are your objectives in this interview? What is your time frame? Will I have time to ask questions? May I make a summary comment at the end?
 - b. Who would this position be reporting to? What are their priorities for the "Ideal candidate"?
 - c. Why is this position open? Are there internal candidates? If not, why?
 - d. Where are you in the decision process? How will the decision be made? By whom? What is the anticipated decision date? What is the next step in the decision process?
3. Ask for the interviewers e-mail and send a follow up thank you note.
 - a. You may want to do a "reverse Franklin" "Here is what you stated you were looking for and here is how I meet those needs".
 - b. Consider sending a brief "reminder of why I am the best candidate" e-mail after a week or closer to the decision date.
4. Look for hints and trends in the interviewer's questions (i.e. the company may have had a poor motivator in the position and is seeking someone with excellent motivation skills):
 - a. How have you demonstrated leadership in overcoming an obstacle?
 - b. Give an example of how you effectively led a team through difficult times?
 - c. How do use effective communications to encourage a team?
 - d. Tell me a time when you worked with others to effectively accomplish a goal?
5. If you have ever had a DISC, Myers-Briggs, or 360 degree assessment or other instrument performed that you feel aligns you with what the company is looking for then ask permission to send it. You could do this via e-mail, but hard copy is much more memorable. There is a risk in doing this, so make sure that you have proper alignment.
6. Listen and clarify!!! Depending on who is conducting the interview, you will have an opportunity to learn what they really value to be effective in this position. The higher the level interviewer, the better. The interviewer at lower levels will be looking for skills and experience; but at higher levels will be looking for culture fit (personality, character, personal beliefs).
7. Answer questions directly and quickly. DO NOT TALK TOO MUCH – this will get you tossed out faster than anything else. Any statistics you can provide adds value (turnover down 15%, Productivity up 8% - make sure the numbers are realistic and believable and be prepared to share how you came to that conclusion.
8. If you have any "problem areas" as to why you do not have a job. Figure out an effective way to state your case, being sure you do not cast any negatives toward previous employer.
9. Do not cuss, use slang, etc. If you have a strong accent, seek to neutralize it. Watch out for background noises!
10. If relocation potential exists – tell how you might make it easier on the company, (e.g. I am currently renting, etc). State a compelling case as to why you would be able to successfully make the transition (e.g. I have family in the area or that is one of my favorite areas of the country, etc.)
11. Know your PC skills (MS Office, IE, MS Word, Excel, - use them all at home, daily.

12. Ask “How well do you feel I meet the qualifications”? If you receive a negative response ask what would have improved your chances...you never know, there may be some mis-information that you can immediately clarify.