

## TELEPHONIC INTERVIEWS AND METHODS TO ACE IT

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### ABSTRACT

In almost all areas of life, we constantly pursue to present ourselves to others in favorable light such that, they might be impressed. The same phenomenon occurs during an interview also. The format of a telephonic interview is such that, the candidate should portray his/ her enthusiasm and level of competence, in a short conversation. It is a major tool that is being put to use by present day employers, to assess a candidate during the initial stages of selection. It is being used widely because of its diverse range of uses and applications in various fields. With advancements in the area of telecommunication, this method is considered convenient and less time consuming, for assessing large number of candidates and screening them for the best. This paper discusses about some important aspects of telephonic interviews and strategies to overcome difficulties, it poses and emerge victorious.

**KEY WORDS:** Telephonic Interview, Presenting, Selection, Convenient, Assessing

### INTRODUCTION

Even before the completion of the course and declaration of results most students, would have to face the prospect of selecting a career path and finding a job in that, particular field of interest. Though, this may sound as an easy task, it is not very easy for a student. He / she will have to work hard in various areas which they need to develop in order to qualify for a job. And during this process they are tested at various levels, through different methods and are evaluated. And, only those who have succeeded in all levels of competition are given the reward. In the pursuit of securing a job in a firm, one must go through an important phase of selection, which is called as interview.

An interview is simply defined as a meeting between a prospective employer and an employee, to check if there is a possible fit between personality, goals and credentials. It helps the employer to check the suitability or compatibility of a candidate, for a position that is vacant in his/ her company (Huffcutt & Young court, 2007). Employment interview is most commonly used technique, for selection and recruitment of able candidates, despite several theories of research challenging its validity and the reliability of the persons, conducting the interviews (Judge *et al.*, 2000). It is used in some cases for the initial screening of the candidates (eg. in job fairs), or it may also be the final stage of a multilevel selection process (eg. recruitment drives conducted by colleges) (Julia *et al.*, 2014). Today, however, we come across a very different scenario in the field of recruitment. The interviews conducted for the selection of potential candidates is no longer restricted to face-to-face interaction, like in a personal interview or panel interview, but has also reached out to other media like telephone (telephonic interviews) (Oliphant, Hansen, & Oliphant, 2008) and through computer-assisted live video chat (skype interviews, videoconference) (Chapman & Rowe, 2002).

With the world becoming more and more tech- savvy, the above mentioned methods of interviews are gaining popularity over the conventional ones. Also, most corporate and multinational companies claim it to be a convenient and less time consuming method, for the screening and selection of a vast number of candidates. Since, most of the clients they work for are abroad, such kind of interviews is considered more apt for the selection of candidates. The work is assigned to the HRs (Human Resources managers) of the company, who then shortlist the candidates for the next round of the interview. Of the above mentioned kinds, telephonic interviews are most widely and frequently used. This is because; a telephone (both mobile and landline) is a commodity that one has easy access to, in the present day.

A telephonic interview is an interview that occurs on a pre-scheduled date over a phone, between a recruiter and a candidate, who has applied for a particular position in a company. It is mainly used as a screening procedure, to strike out the poor performers. The selected candidates may then be called, for a personal interview. A telephone interview is generally structured and the candidates, will be asked only general questions related to their CV, education or work experience. Very rarely the candidates will be asked competency based questions. Most companies resort to telephone interviews, as they consider it as an effective way of conducting interviews, for huge number of candidates with less cost and time expenditure.

### **THINGS TO REMEMBER DURING A TELEPHONIC INTERVIEW**

Companies encourage conducting interviews through phone, as it is a good opportunity for them to pick out the best talents from a huge pool. One might consider this procedure to be cake walk, as it occurs at a location which is convenient to the candidate and therefore, feel that the chances of making mistakes is very less and the recruiter noticing it is negligible. But, it is not an easy going task. All types of preparation, etiquettes and rules that are followed, in a personal interview apply for telephonic interviews also. Discussed below are few points that would help to crack a telephone interview and succeed.

#### **Preparation**

Preparation is the key to success for any task. Similarly, preparation for a telephonic interview is also must. Interviews through phone cannot be neglected. They should be treated on par with one-to-one interviews. Lack of preparation, will result in nervousness and anxiety, which in turn will affect the performance of the candidate in the interview. Though, the area of coverage will mostly be some general topics, regarding the credentials mentioned in the CV, educational qualification, work experience, projects undertaken etc. it is best to run through these topics, in mind and have a framework prepared. This will help the candidate in saving valuable time, by thinking and keeping the answers ready before hand, since thinking and answering on spot may not be everyone's cup of tea. For some answering on spot may also disrupt their flow of thought, resulting in stammering and repeating the things that, have already been mentioned. To avoid such situations, mental preparation of certain things is best.

#### **Practice**

Since the interviews are pre scheduled, candidate will have time ample time for practice. Several videos are available online, which can be viewed to get an idea about the whole process. One can also record one's own voice, in a recorder or mobile and check for the pace, volume of the voice and make corrections, accordingly.

### **Keeping Distractions at bay**

Since most of the time the interviews are already pre-planned and scheduled, it is mandatory on the part of the candidate to keep herself/ himself free and away from major distractions, during the stipulated time. If at all, a representative from the company calls to fix an appointment, for the interview it is best to schedule it, during lunch hours or even after work. While at home, staying in a separate room away from noise producing sources, such as the television is advisable as it reduces sound interference and helps you to listen to what, the interviewer is saying through the phone loud and clear.

### **Expressions, body Language and non-verbal Communication**

The involvement of these elements in a telephonic conversation may sound absurd. But, the fact is that, they all play a major role in a telephonic interview. The manner in which, the questions are being answered is assessed, by the interviewer and he/ she draws a fair conclusion, about the candidate from it. Answering the questions in a very fast and haphazard manner will reflect on the state of mind of the candidate, as being tensed and nervous. Answering too coolly would project the candidate, as one with a laid back attitude. Talking with too many pauses and jargons, would show the candidate, as one with low confidence and command over English. The tone of speech can, also reflect on the mood of the candidate (Abhishek & Arthi, 2016). Shouting and talking, with high volume can sometimes be mistaken, as anger or rage by the interviewer. Therefore, candidates should respond in a polite and professional manner. Smiling is an example of NVC, which helps significantly during interviews. When we smile, a certain chemical called dopamine is released in the brain, which gives us a feeling of goodness and well-being. This in turn would boost our confidence and will also make our appearance, pleasant and appealing. Even though, the interviewer is not in front of the candidate, smiling would improve the mood and create a positive environment, for the candidate who would help him/ her to perform well (Abhishek *et al.*, 2017).

### **Avoiding Technical Faults**

Technical issues are very common phenomena that can sometime occur, during telephonic interviews. Though, it is beyond our control and nothing much can be done about it and certain measures can be taken by the candidate, to avoid such mishaps from happening. A good handset and a service provider with a wide range of coverage are sufficient, as in this case. A good amount of charge should be maintained in the cell phone, to avoid disruption of calls abruptly. If the call is scheduled to a landline number, then it is best to check the cable connections to the landline and rectify faults if any.

### **Listening and Clarity of Speech**

One must listen to the questions asked carefully, as disturbances and sound interferences are bound to occur, during interviews over the phone. Answering to the question only, if the question is heard and understood clearly is best, as it will avoid confusions and also, the candidate might end up with giving the wrong answer. If the question is not understood clearly, one can always request the interviewer politely to repeat the question. Candidates should give clear and crisp answers to the questions asked, as the time allotted for each telephonic conversation would be very less. A long and lengthy answer would irritate the interviewer and can end up in a negative manner, for the candidate. Keeping answers short is advisable. If the answer for a particular question is not known then it is best to frankly admit, by saying "Sorry sir/ma'am, I am unaware of it, but I would like to know." This would also help the interviewer to move on with the next

question and continue the interview session (Abhishek & Arthi, 2016).

### **Avoid Rushing**

As mentioned earlier, rushing with answers would reflect negatively on the result of the interview. Candidates should realize that it is acceptable to take a moment or two to compose your thoughts and then give out the answer. Rushing straight away with the answer can result in the answer being disoriented, not to the point and unsatisfactory to the interviewer. Sometimes the meaning itself might change while answering in a hurry. It would be misinterpreted by the interviewer which can lead to confusions. So it is best to take a little time to give out the answer.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Telephonic interviews are employed by recruiters to carry on their preliminary assessment of a potential candidate. During most times it is the performance of a candidate in a telephonic interview that is used to decide his/her eligibility of moving to the next phase of the interview. This type of interview usually focuses on the manner in which the candidate comes across and his/ her communication skill. Though there are no visual cues involved, the interviewer will be on a watch full lookout for non- verbal cues. In the era of globalization, modernization of conventional interviews has shown to be less time consuming and has been adopted worldwide because of its wide array of advantages. By addressing the above discussed points, one can be confident of facing a telephonic interview and crack it with ease.

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