



GREATER ORLANDO BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

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## Phone Interview Tips

### 1. Attend to your surroundings.

If you have an interview scheduled, take precautions beforehand to get in a good spot physically.

Don't take the interview when you are at your desk and can't talk freely. Don't take the call when there is too much noise in the background. And don't walk from one place to another because the breathlessness that comes from walking and talking at the same time subconsciously conveys lack of authority to someone who doesn't know you.

### **2. Dress for the part.**

Consider getting dressed up for your interview, even though no one will see you.

The emails you write to a hiring manager are different than your emails to your friends. You can't talk to an interviewer the same way you talk with your friends. You know this, but the shift is difficult without practice. And if you are not practiced at talking about business on the phone, it's hard to get into business mode for the call.

A way to compensate for this is to dress for an interview even though the interviewer can't see you. In the 90s when people debated the virtues of dumping suits at the workplace in favor of business casual, there was a fair amount of research to show that people took their work more seriously when they were in a suit. That makes sense. Girls act more like a princess when they're in a prom dress than when they're in running shorts, and the same happens with people in work clothes.

I'm not saying you should wear a suit all the time. I'm saying that when there's a risk of sounding too casual or unprofessional on the phone, dressing up a little can actually change how you sound.

### **3. Stand up.**

No kidding. You'll sound more self confident and dynamic if you stand while you speak than if you sit. Walking around a bit, but not too much, also keeps the call going smoothly. If your body is confined, your speech sounds different than if you have run of the room. It's one reason that the best speakers walk around instead of standing in one place at the podium.

Using hand gestures is very natural for talking, so allow yourself to use them, even though you're on the phone. You don't have to force it. They will just come, as long as your hands are free. And you want to sound natural on the phone because authentic is more likeable. So walking around a room with a headset will actually give you the freedom to be more yourself on the call.

#### **4. Prepare for the most obvious questions.**

A resume is to get someone to pay attention to you. An in-person interview is to see if people like you. Somewhere in between those two events, people need to make sure you are qualified and you don't have any huge red flags. So in a phone interview you can expect people to focus on those two concerns.

You will probably get questions asking you to show that you actually have the skills to accomplish the goals for the open position. Be prepared to give organized, **rehearsed examples of how you have performed at work in the past in order to show your skill set.**

Also, be ready for a question about the most obvious problem on your resume—often **frequent job changes or big gaps** in work. These are answers you should practice. Even if your answer isn't great, a good delivery can make the difference between getting through a phone screen or not.

#### **5. Don't forget to close.**

An interview is about selling yourself, and the best salespeople are closers. Your goal for a phone interview is to get an in-person interview. So don't get off the phone until you have made some efforts to get to that step. Ask what the process is for deciding who to interview face-to-face. Ask for decision-making timelines, and try to find out who is making the decisions. Don't barrage the interviewer with questions in this regard, but the more information you have, the more able you will be to get yourself to the next step.

And don't forget a key component of a successful interview—even for a phone interview—a thank you note.

#### **For your interview (Be prepared to answer):**

1. **Your Process** – From start to finish, what does your day look like currently? What do you like? What don't you like?
2. **When and why are you leaving or have left previous positions** – Be sure to know your resume! Address why you are looking for a new opportunity as something like: "I am looking for a position where I can take my experiences from cold calling and closing into a company where it will lead to a great financial rewarding career and growth within the company."
3. **Why you enjoy construction** – employers want to know where your passion comes from, outside of just a paycheck. Practice answering this question.
4. **Success Stories** – what do you consider your biggest success in the field so far? If new to construction, what sort of success stories do you have that can translate to the job?
5. **Why are you interested in a career with their company?** Good opportunity to discuss a couple facts you know about their company and that you did your homework before showing up. Google news and LinkedIn are a great place to find out information from the company
6. **Why you? Why should they hire you, and what are your strengths.** Let them know you are in here to make an impact. Employers love candidates that are show up on time, work hard, are coachable, and can work as a team.

**Ask good questions, all managers love candidates who ask questions.**

**Examples:**

- a. *What can I do to provide an immediate impact to your organization, day one?*
- b. ***What are the top three qualities an employee needs to be successful in this job?***
- c. *What is the training for this position?*
- d. ***What are some of the goals and challenges your team is likely to face in the next year?***
- e. *How would my job performance be evaluated?*
- f. *What are some of the things that you like about working for this company?*
- g. ***WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?!***

- CLOSE! CLOSE! CLOSE! Ask for the next steps in the interview process.
  
  - In this market, just telling the **truth** about your history isn't enough. That's just the start. What you really need to do is **tell a story** - what job are you going to be great at, and why should this manager bother to interview you? How are you going to be a slam dunk for this **specific position/industry?**
  
  - Finally, **CLOSE!** ASK for the next steps in the interview process! **Get their email** so you can send her **an immediate follow up email** when you get finished.
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