

# BUSINESS INSIDER

## 12 Tips On Acing Your Next Phone Interview



VIVIAN GIANG

FEB. 22, 2012, 4:20 PM

Phone interviews can be nerve-racking, but you have to get through them if you want to get to the next level.

Since the interviewer can't actually see you, they are judging you solely on your voice, answers and any other sounds that come through during the conversation.

"If you cannot get through the phone interview, you will not get the job," Paul Bailo, CEO of Phone Interview Pro. and author of "[The Essential Phone Interview Handbook](#)" told us. "If you cannot get through the first date, you will not get married."

According to Bailo, the stakes are higher today than ever before. More job candidates make initial contact with prospective employers via the telephone and the first "15 seconds either make or break the interview."



[Dietz via flickr](#)

Chloe

## Don't look in the mirror

A lot of people think that if you look in a mirror, you'll become more aware of your speech and will do better in the phone interview, but this is not true.

When you look in the mirror, you become too focused on your own reflection and not on the interview. Doing this also typically makes people smile more than they normally would - which is unnatural when you're speaking.

"It will affect your voice, making your speech sound unnatural."

Source: *The Essential Phone Interview Handbook*



MIT

---

## Look at a photograph of your interviewer while you're on the phone

Bailo advises to find a photograph of the person interviewing you and have it out in front of you during the interview.

This will help you connect to the person and, in turn, make you calmer. If you can't find a photo of them, substitute for a photo of someone you take seriously like a well-known authority figure.

Source: *The Essential Phone Interview Handbook*



micronomics via flickr

## Don't talk too much

Some people think that if they talk more during interviews, it'll help them. But this is incorrect.

"The less you talk, the more you listen and the better you'll do," Bailo told us.

The best method to use is to wait three seconds before answering questions. This will give you time to think and to cut out unnecessary "urns" and "ahhs" in your conversation.

**Keep in mind that the phone interview is much like a dance. Take time to listen to the music. The hiring manager determines the dance, so if they want to follow, then you lead. If they want to lead, you follow.**

"Be sure to listen to what the interviewer has to say, and think before responding. Take a few seconds to understand the question, and then prepare a quality answer before simply blurting out something less intelligent."

Source: *The Essential Phone Interview Handbook*



Chloe Dietz via flickr

---

## Exercise your voice before the interview

You should practice your voice before an interview so that it sounds clear, confident and rejuvenated. An hour before, talk to a friend or relative to warm-up your voice. Or even better, sing aloud:

"Practice different tones and pitches before your phone interview. Professional speakers exercise their voices before speaking, and so can you. Singing will stretch out your voice muscles and also give you the energy you need to ace your phone interview. Singing also lowers your stress level, leaving you excited and ready for your interview."

"How many times did you record your voicemail messages before you were content with the results? I doubt it came out perfect on the first try. Most people record their voicemails multiple times before settling on a message they feel comfortable presenting to the world."

Source: *The Essential Phone Interview Handbook*



minga/ing via flickr



## An hour before the interview, soothe your throat

Before the interview, take a spoon of honey or take a cough drop to keep your throat clear and concise.

Both of these options are a lot better than gulping down water during the interview or being too hyper from countless cups of coffee.

Source: *The Essential Phone Interview Handbook*



[Flickr/wiredwitch](#)

---

## Don't get too comfortable in the room

Make sure your space feels professional like it would in a face-to-face interview room. Beforehand, have all of the papers that you'll need during the conversation - cover letter, resume, set of questions you have - spread out in front of you so you don't have to rummage through papers during the interview.

"This will help you produce quality responses."

Source: *The Essential Phone Interview Handbook*



[wintersou/1 via flickr](#)

## Dress up in your professional clothes

"Wearing business attire will pump you up for your phone interview - giving you confidence that you can conquer the world! You will feel more confident in your responses and it will come through during your interview."

Source: *The Essential Phone Interview Handbook*



wanhee via flickr

---

## Listen to talk radio during your free time

Bailo told us that listening to talk radio is the best practice to perfecting a professional conversation.

During the talk radio, the announcers task it to tell you a story without you being able to actually see what they're telling you. Instead, you have to imagine it. For example, if you're listening to a sporting event, the announcers are illustrating to you what's going on in the game because you're not currently there or watching it.

This is a valuable skill to have during a phone interview.

"You must be able to pay attention to a speaker who isn't right in front of you. This means being able to maintain focus while avoiding distractions."

Source: *The Essential Phone Interview Handbook*



Subcity Radio

## Schedule the interview for a time of day when you're most at your A-game

"Don't sign up for your phone interview at times when you're normally sleeping, eating, or running errands. Some people are most focused during the morning hours; others need more time to wake up and are more motivated in the evening. Pick a time when you know you'll do your best work."

Source: *The Essential Phone Interview Handbook*



---

## Prepare 3 days in advance

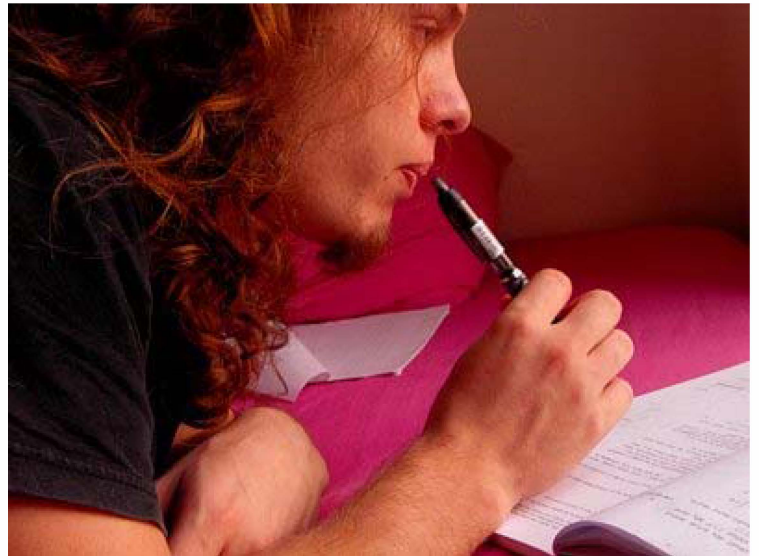
**Day 1:** Google the company and research their financial information and corporate culture.

**Day 2:** Take all of the information you have about the company and comprise it in a way that you can use in your interview, especially set questions you'll set aside to ask the interviewer. Bailo gives an example question:

[Interviewer's name], what are you most proud of about [name of company]? What corporate issues cause you to lose sleep at night?

**Day 3:** This is the day to prepare and practice. Set up your environment and decide what you want to discuss.

Source: *The Essential Phone Interview Handbook*



*madartichokeviaFlickr*



## Convince the interviewer that they need you

Companies are looking for people to solve problems so show them that you are capable of doing this.

With your research on the company, frame your answers during the interview to revolve around these two themes:

1. You can *make* the company money.
2. You can *save* the company money.

Source: *The Essential Phone Interview Handbook*



*bpsurf via flickr*

---

## There are three important steps to take after the interview

At the end of the interview, let your interviewer know that you're serious about the position and ask them to inform you of the next step.

Then, Bailo says you should:

24-48 hours after the interview: Send an email thanking and articulating why you're perfect for the job.

24-48 hours after the email: Send a handwritten card on a simple layout and simple stamp. No flower stamps.

24-48 hours after the thank you card: If you discussed any current events during the interview and you happen to come across something in the news, send them the article with a summary of why you think it's relevant. This will show you're smart, articulate and sharing.

Source: *The Essential Phone Interview Handbook*



*sween via flickr*

---