

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a smartphone. The phone's screen is lit up and shows a standard numeric dial pad. The person is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved shirt. The background is blurred, suggesting an office or professional setting.

How to survive (and win) a telephone interview

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Telephone interviews are more staccato with less niceties than a face to face. They are also much less fun and far more nerve-wracking and dangerous. You need to be ready to go from the outset. You will often sadly simply be “the next one” and the interviewer is often just looking for reasons to make the pile in front of them smaller. And the quickest way to do that is to get rid of YOU!



Physical Preparation

- Do 20 minutes exercise to get the blood and oxygen pumping.
- Stand up or sit upright - it puts air in the lungs and deepens your voice.
- Dress as if it were face to face.
- Smile while you are talking.

Admin preparation

- Be in a room where you won't be disturbed by dogs, children or family.
- Have your diary and a note pad and pen to hand. Forget electronic gadgets - write on paper and transfer later.
- Be ready at least 15 minutes ahead of time.
- Re-read the job advert, the job profile and your CV - have them to hand and easily accessible - spread out so instantly visible.
- Check their website for any news items posted that day.
- Google news search the company name - use date search facility since you last googled them, specifically the last 24 hours.
- Imagine a lamp, chair or a picture is the interviewer. Speak to "them".
- Write down the interviewer's name in LARGE letters - and use it.

Content preparation

- Identify 3 reasons why you are qualified for the job (NOT certificates!).
- Identify 3 reasons why you want to work there.
- Identify 3 differentiating things you bring to the table.
- Tell stories/describe case studies. Evidence outweighs empty claims.
- Note and reuse key words that seem to be part of the corporate culture.



About Peter Botting

Strategy, storytelling and speaker coaching from a TEDMED speaker coach.

Peter has been a storytelling coach for 24 years - working with politicians, political campaigns, business leaders and non-profits. Helping them to stop underselling, identify and articulate their story and then tell it effectively.

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