



Telephone Techniques

Employers calling you

When you include a telephone contact number on your CV or letter, remember you can be called at any time.

Usually this is to check that you are serious about applying for the job and to assess your spoken English. It doesn't look good if you can't remember applying for the job, or the name of the company, or what the job is. You will need to be organised and treat this telephone contact as part of the recruitment process.

Always give a reliable telephone number and ensure that it is written down correctly. If it is a house telephone and you are out during the day, arrange for an answering service. Check that your answer machine message is suitable for potential employers to hear. Tell anyone you share a phone with to take detailed messages and to ask for spellings of unusual words or names. Make a list of the jobs and companies you have applied to and keep these with you or near the telephone.

Keep a copy of your CV close by. You don't want to keep the employer waiting while you search for it.

You calling employers

Whenever you contact an employer, always prepare beforehand, even if it is just to ask for an application form.

Find a quiet place to make your call. Have a pen and paper handy to make notes and write down important information.

If you are using a payphone, ensure you have enough credit/change to complete the call. If you are calling from a mobile, make sure you have plenty of credit and good reception.

Have a copy of your CV ready so that you can answer any questions. Keep your diary with you in case you are invited for an interview.

Make sure you are prepared to answer questions such as 'Why do you want the job?' and 'How do you think you match the job description?'

The telephone conversation is a good opportunity to ask relevant questions. Have a think before you pick up the phone about what you need to know i.e. hours, skills required, days of work etc.

First impressions

First impressions are lasting and the employer will not be able to use body language, dress etc to make a decision. Therefore your voice is your most important asset at this stage. You must convey to the employer that you are smart, well organised, efficient and reliable through your voice and what you say. How can you do this?



Speak clearly and plainly - and smile.



Rehearse your first few sentences



Don't forget to pause and listen to what the employer is saying.



Avoid using big words that can be misunderstood - stick with simple sentences.



Avoid long silences - if you need time to think about an answer, say so.



If you are invited for interview, write down all the details accurately and check back to confirm them.



Reflect afterwards on how well the conversation went.