

Get The Interview: 5 Tips For Leaving A Great Voicemail

Too many times job applicants prepare phenomenal resumes but fail to secure a physical interview. Often times, this is because of improper phone etiquette, poor voice presentation and bad voicemails.

Here are five things to improve interview rates and make a fabulous presentation over the phone using voicemail:

1. Never Underestimate The Power Of The Phone

In our digital age job applicants commonly tweet or text to stay in touch with friends. The telephone seems like a cumbersome and slow form of communication.

However, people over the age of 35 are much more comfortable using the phone and they will commonly use it as a screening tool for applicants. Phone interview skills are essential across all employment levels.

High-powered consultants as well as café workers will all usually face a phone interview and need to use voicemail sometime during the interview process. This is first physical contact and it is critical to make a fabulous impression.

2. Record And Listen To Your Own Voice

Leaving an excellent voicemail begins by nurturing a good speaking voice. Speak slowly, clearly and correctly. Use Dragon software or even the simple record feature on your phone to cultivate a good phone voice. This takes practice.

Prepare five outgoing messages in quick succession. On the first, use your normal speaking voice and your usual outgoing message.

On the second follow this text: "This is (your name). Press # to skip the rest of this message. I am currently unavailable. I check and answer voicemails after breakfast, lunch and at 3:30pm. Please leave a detailed message and I will get back to you as soon as possible." (Vary the content of the message to your own personal schedule but provide the listener with details about when you will be checking messages and calling them back.)

On the third outgoing message purposely lower the tenor of your voice and speak again. On the fourth outgoing message consciously speak a little slower and remove ums, uhs and any other weird speech habits. On the fifth message, make your voice slower, lower and speak clearly.

Wait at least four hours and then listen to all the renditions of your outgoing message. Then record a final outgoing message using what you have learned by listening to your own voice.

Listen to this sixth message the next day and if you are happy with the results keep it as your outgoing message.

3. Good Voicemails Begin With Details

When leaving voicemail always leave your full name and the job title of the position you are calling about at the beginning of the message. Then leave the reason you are calling and your call back number including the area code. Repeat the call back number and your name at the end of the voicemail.

4. Help The Interviewer Out

Leave enough information in the body of your voicemail so that the listener can quickly separate you from the rest of the applicants.

This can be as simple as, "This is John Jones, I submitted my resume two weeks ago on April 15. I am returning your call dated May 10 requesting a personal interview."

Something more informal can also work, "This is John Jones, the guy that sent you a resume printed on the back of the Giant's jersey, Go Giants!"

The idea here is two-fold: Make an impression and help the person on the other end quickly identify who you are and your reason for calling.

5. Leave Enough Information, Entice The Interviewer

Leaving too little information is a common mistake. In a voicemail there is room for at least one sentence after all the details to really leave an impression. Do not drone on! The idea here is to leave something for the interviewer that shows you are as interesting as you are interested.

Something like, "This is John Smith, I am calling about the job that you had listed to work in the herpetology lab at the Natural History Museum. I sent you my resume last week. My call back number is 913-244-8022, if your department can handle another crazy guy with an excellent Godzilla movie collection; I'm your man. Again, my name is John Smith and my number is 913-244-8022."

Craft your lines carefully and appropriately. Herpetologists are scientists who study reptiles and amphibians and they notoriously love Godzilla movies. The comment above reflects research as well as the personality of the applicant.
