

Marketing You: Preparing for the Pre-Interview

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Do you have interest in a new position? If your resume, or “marketing tool,” describes achievements and experiences which appear to be a potential fit, your first in-depth interaction with a search consultant will likely be a telephone call to determine if a personal interview is warranted. A thorough candidate phone screen begins a successful placement process.

Executive search team members work together to develop a slate of candidates to present to clients for a specific engagement. An initial telephone conversation allows candidates and a team member to have a high-level discussion about a specific position. This conversation serves two purposes: 1) it helps determine if candidates meet the specifications in a job description and 2) it gives candidates the opportunity to ask questions and determine if there is potential interest.

This discussion is shorter than an in-person interview. You can prepare by keeping the following points in mind:

- This conversation, coupled with your resume, is “Marketing You 101.” Don’t push too hard; answer questions in a way that encourages — rather than monopolizes — the conversation. In the absence of body language, we only remember a small percentage of what we hear; what do you want the consultant to remember about you?

- Offer quantitative examples of accomplishments. Don’t say, “I improved patient satisfaction.” Articulate the satisfaction level, how it improved, how you measured it and enhancements you made.
- Review the goals, objectives and 12-18 month expected accomplishments on the position specification. What have you achieved in your current or previous positions that would be relevant?
- If the position under consideration comes with a significant increase in responsibilities, what experiences have prepared you for this step?
- This is an opportunity for you to build long-standing relationships. Be open, honest and up front. Provide explanations for job moves. If there are gaps in employment, share reasons for those experiences. If you are currently unemployed, why?

Short, concise answers are best; you can always ask, “Would you like more information?” or “Did that answer your question?” This also provides an opportunity for exchange, rather than one party controlling the conversation.

At this point, there is a lot to contemplate: relocation issues, spousal/significant other interest and compensation. It may seem early in the process to discuss compensation; this is not a time to negotiate, but to share information. Don’t be surprised when you are asked about your current salary.

It should not be assumed that this conversation automatically moves a candidate to the next level in the process; be honest with yourself and the consultant about your level of interest. Regardless of the outcome, this has not been a waste of time! You may receive suggestions on how to improve your resume or telephone presentation skills. Whether it is with this phone call or another, remember this is an important step for a successful search process.

Locations Nationwide:

Oak Brook, IL
Emeryville, CA
Irvine, CA
Denver, CO

Atlanta, GA
Burlington, MA
Nantucket, MA
Bethesda, MD

Minneapolis, MN
St. Louis, MO
New York, NY
Toledo, OH

Philadelphia, PA
Pittsburgh, PA
Houston, TX
Seattle, WA