

Conducting a Great Phone Interview

What should you ask on a phone interview? The phone interview is the second step in your 3-step hiring process. Cleaningjobs.co helped you screen applicants, and the phone interview will help you determine if the applicant's skills and goals align with those of the position you are trying to fill. Phone interviews are the most efficient way to get this information and will help you make sure your time is well invested by allowing only applicants who are likely to be a fit pass through to the final in-person interview.

We know that finding someone with passion for janitorial cleaning is rare, so the objective of the call is to look for signals that the job you have matches the needs of your applicant in more ways than just income. It's important on this interview to find out what is motivating them to take this job over another one, and uncover any red flags that might signal they won't be a fit in this role.

Cleaning can often be an unforgiving job because you are quite literally dealing with messy situations and working alone at odd hours. That's why you need someone who is going to be able to persevere through the tough situations even when you are not around. You need someone who is positive and can keep their eye on the prize and remember why their work is important to them, to your company, and to your clients.

Here are seven questions that will help you discern to what level your candidates are self motivated, have good common sense, can work independently and with others, and what relevant skills they already have.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS POSITION AND OUR COMPANY?

This is a great question to start out with because it is broad and will get the applicant talking about their personal and professional goals for this job. You're trying to get a sense of whether they see this opportunity as a short term fix (e.g. to bridge them until they can find something better), or long term fit (e.g. stable opportunity to supplement their income, opportunity for growth within the company, etc.). Take into consideration what stage they are in their life and what other factors could be driving them to seek new opportunities.

WHAT TYPE OF WORK DO YOU LIKE DOING? WHAT TYPE OF WORK DO YOU DISLIKE DOING? (DO YOU HAVE ANY HOBBIES?)

You're looking for someone who likes to do manual and sometimes repetitive work. By asking these questions you can get a sense of the types of tasks they excel at. Hobbies also show you what types of activities they are naturally drawn to (stuff they love to do vs. stuff they have to do).

TELL US ONE PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT YOU ARE PROUD OF. HOW DID YOU PULL IT OFF? WERE THERE ANY OBSTACLES YOU HAD TO OVERCOME?

In a cleaning position you're looking for someone who will be able to follow-through, think critically and get the job done. Getting them to describe a personal accomplishment allows you to see whether they are able to set clear goals and what their thought process is

to achieve them and overcome obstacles. Depending on their level of enthusiasm in this answer, you'll also be able to get a sense for whether they take pride in their work.

WHAT RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE OR SKILLS DO YOU HAVE?

How much previous experience an applicant in the cleaning industry has can tell you two things: 1) whether this type of work is for them; and 2) how much training they'll need. Someone who has been working for 5-10 years will already have a good sense of what they are getting into. In this case probe further to assess what technical skills they already have.

Ask specific questions like: What approach would you take to clean a public restroom? What on the job equipment have you used before? It's easy to put a lot of weight on this answer but keep in mind that it isn't always a good predictor for whether they'll be successful in your company. In most cases they will still require some level of training to learn your company's procedures and it may actually be more challenging to change any bad habits they have developed over the years rather than train them from scratch.

If the applicant doesn't have any previous cleaning experience, get them to describe their roles and responsibilities at each job to uncover what transferable skills they might possess. For example, if they have done landscaping or construction work, they will likely be good at operating equipment, lifting heavy objects, working on their feet for extended hours, arriving at work on time and following a scope of work.



COULD YOU DESCRIBE A SITUATION AT WORK WHEN YOU RAN INTO A PROBLEM AND HAD TO COME UP WITH A SOLUTION ON YOUR OWN?

Most of the time, you won't be on-site with a cleaner when issues comes up so you need someone who can use common sense and be resourceful. By getting them to describe a situation where they ran into a problem and had to come up with a solution on their own, you get to see their problem solving skills. Is their solution creative? Does it makes sense?

ARE YOU MOST COMFORTABLE WORKING INDEPENDENTLY OR IN A GROUP? WHY?

This is a practical question since there will be times when you need your cleaners to be able to work alone on site, and others when the job requires you to send in a team.

It's important to identify the applicant's comfort level with each scenario to know if it fits your needs and also to gage how flexible they can be.

WHAT KIND OF BEHAVIOUR FROM OTHERS IRRITATES YOU MOST AND HOW DO YOU HANDLE IT?

Even in cases when a cleaner is working independently on site, they still have to be able to work well with the other members of your team including your supervisors and managers. This question is great because it shows you their level of maturity and whether they are able to separate people's personalities from their behaviours, and whether they have a strategy to work through those kinds of problems.

MAKING A DECISION

These seven questions will help you cover the basics and determine if the applicant's goals and skills align with the position you need to fill. To insure your time is well invested, you should only move applicant's through to your final stage, the face-to-face interview, if you are satisfied with their answers.

To keep things consistent you can use a scoring system but we recommend keeping it as simple as possible. It's important in the phone interview to try and identify any make or break factors for the position or for your company, and if possible take some time to address them.



Phone Interview Worksheet

| | |
|-----------|-------------|
| APPLICANT | DATE |
| JOB | INTERVIEWER |

Questions

What attracted you to this position and to our company? EXCELLENT (4) GOOD (3) ADEQUATE (2) POOR (1)

What type of work do you like doing? What type of work do you dislike doing? (Do you have any hobbies?) EXCELLENT (4) GOOD (3) ADEQUATE (2) POOR (1)

Tell us one personal accomplishment you are proud of. How did you pull it off? Were there any obstacles you had to overcome? EXCELLENT (4) GOOD (3) ADEQUATE (2) POOR (1)

What related work experience or skills do you have? EXCELLENT (4) GOOD (3) ADEQUATE (2) POOR (1)

(If they have previous cleaning experience) What approach would you take to clean a public restroom? EXCELLENT (4) GOOD (3) ADEQUATE (2) POOR (1)

(If they have previous cleaning experience) What on the job equipment have you used before? EXCELLENT (4) GOOD (3) ADEQUATE (2) POOR (1)

Could you describe a situation at work when you ran into a problem and had to come up with a solution on your own? EXCELLENT (4) GOOD (3) ADEQUATE (2) POOR (1)

Are you most comfortable working independently or in a group? Why? EXCELLENT (4) GOOD (3) ADEQUATE (2) POOR (1)

What kind of behaviour from others irritates you most and how do you handle it? EXCELLENT (4) GOOD (3) ADEQUATE (2) POOR (1)

Recommend for face-to-face interview? YES NO

Other Topics to Discuss

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Schedule | Hourly Rate |
| Use of Technology | Requirements for Getting to Work |
| Training / Orientation | Equipment Requirements |
| Responsibilities | References |
| Commitment Level | Opportunity for Advancement |



