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## PHONE INTERVIEW RULE #1: DON'T SAY HELLO

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Last week, it happened again. I had scheduled a phone interview with a candidate at an exact time and date. So my phone call was to be expected. And when I placed the call to the number given, I expected the greeting on the other end to be at a minimum professional. Ideally, it would also be an immediate recognition of the appointment.

Why? Because it sets the right tone for the rest of this very important conversation.

Instead, I received the unfortunate and awkward "Hello".

After I paused to shake my head in disappointment, I had no choice but to ask the candidate (in this case, we'll call her Mary), "Hi, is this Mary?".

"Yes, it is" Mary replies.

Another pause to shake my head in frustration and wait for her to say something else. Was the candidate even expecting my call?

Now, I had to really move the conversation forward.

"Hi, this is John Doe from Interview ABC Inc."

"Oh, hi" Mary responds.

At this point, the critical first impression wasn't a good one because I had to do the phone call confirmation, and it felt that I was inconveniencing the candidate.

I then spoke up again. "Uh, hi. I was calling for our phone interview. I am assuming this is a good time to talk."

"Sure," Mary concludes.

Ugh!

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**Let's rewind the tape and walk through how the conversation should have been handled.**

I place the call and the candidate picks up the phone:

"Hi, this is Mary Smith."

"Hi Mary, this is John Doe from Interview ABC Inc."

"Hi, Mr. Doe. I was expecting your call. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today."

**Perfect!**

Let me provide some additional clarity on these two simple recommendations -

## **Professional Greeting and Appointment Recognition**

### **1. Professional Greeting**

If you are a job candidate, answer the phone as if you are already in the office.

*"Hi, this is Mary Smith."*

### **2. Appointment Confirmation**

If you have a scheduled interview appointment with a recruiter or the hiring manager, be the first to acknowledge it on the phone.

You can simply state, in a friendly but professional tone, you were expecting the person's call. Your next step is to immediately thank the person for taking the time to speak with you that day.

*"Hi, Mr. Doe. I was expecting your call. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today."*

By following these two simple steps, you will start the conversation off on the right foot!

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