

Job hunters—don't answer your phone.

Instead of a short phone call to invite you to a job interview, many hiring managers are now using that phone call to conduct a mini job interview. It's a faster, easier way for them to sort through their huge pile of good applicants and invite only the best people to an interview. So, be prepared for that phone call. Create a packet for each employer you applied to. Keep those packets in a folder and keep the folder near your phone. Include the following items in each employer packet.

Your resume. Hiring managers will want to talk about your work experience. With your resume in hand, you'll be able to give accurate dates, job titles, duties, addresses, and other details. **Your cover letter.** A quick glance at the cover letter you sent to that employer will tell you why you wrote to them and what you said. **The help-wanted ad or job posting.** If you responded to an ad, a quick look at it will allow you to talk intelligently about the requirements of the job and what you have to offer. **Your research notes.** Look over your notes from the company's web site and you'll be able to recall who they are, what they do, and why you want to work there.