

Phone screen script and scorecard

A 15-minute phone screen script in six parts, with what to say, what to ask and what to listen for, and a 1–5 scorecard to fill in straight after the call.

- Replace each [bracketed] placeholder with the role's own details before the first screen.
- Ask every candidate the same questions in the same order, and follow up on any vague answer before moving on.
- Write down what the candidate said, in their words, rather than what you concluded.
- Score each category from 1 to 5 against the anchors straight after the call. Leave a score blank if the call gave you no evidence for it.
- Treat a no to a knockout question as a flag to review, not an automatic rejection.

Step	Say or ask	What to listen for	Notes
Opening (1 minute)			
1	"Hi [name], it's [your name] from [company]. Is now still a good time for about fifteen minutes?"	A clear yes. If it isn't a good time, rebook rather than rush.	
2	"Here's the plan: a little about the role, then your background and what you're looking for, pay and logistics, and time for your questions."	Nothing yet. This sets expectations and keeps the call to time.	
3	"In short, the role is [one sentence: what the person will own and why the role exists]."	Whether anything in the summary surprises them.	
Background (3 minutes)			
4	"Walk me through your current role: what you own, who you work with, and what a normal week looks like."	Scope and level. "I run" and "I was part of" describe different jobs.	
5	"What's something you've achieved in the last year or two that you're proud of? What was your part in it?"	A result, ideally with a number, and what they did personally.	
Fit for this role (4 minutes)			
6	"The most important part of this role is [top requirement]. Tell me about a recent time you did that. What happened, and what did you do?"	A specific example, their own actions and the outcome. If it's vague, ask for one real example.	
7	"How did you know it worked?" or "What would you do differently next time?"	Whether they can judge their own work. Use whichever follow-up the answer needs.	
Motivation (2 minutes)			
8	"What's prompting you to look now?"	The push. Check whether this role fixes it; if it doesn't, the same reason may move them on again.	
9	"What made you apply for this role in particular?"	The pull. Something specific to the role or the company, not an answer that fits any job.	
Pay and logistics (3 minutes)			
10	"The range for this role is [pay range]. Does that work for you?"	A clear yes, or how far apart you are.	
11	"When could you start, and is [location or hybrid arrangement] workable for you?"	A date or notice period, and a plain answer on location.	
12	"Are you interviewing elsewhere? How far along are those processes?"	Your deadline. Final rounds and offers elsewhere set the pace for your process.	

Step	Say or ask	What to listen for	Notes
13	[Knockout question, for example: "This role needs [license, shift or requirement]. Is that something you have?"]	A yes, or the exception to review. A no is a flag for review, not a rejection.	
Their questions and the close (2 minutes)			
14	"What questions do you have for me?"	Questions about the work itself are a good sign. No questions at all is worth a note.	
15	"Next, [next step] by [date]. If you haven't heard from me by then, email me at [address]."	That they know exactly what happens next and when.	
Scorecard (straight after the call)			
S1	Skills and experience, 1 to 5	1: no example of the top requirement. 3: a relevant example, light on their own part. 5: a recent, specific example with their own actions and a result.	
S2	Motivation and interest, 1 to 5	1: no clear reason for the move or for this role. 3: a reason that would fit any job. 5: a specific reason this role answers.	
S3	Communication, 1 to 5	1: hard to follow; answers drift from the question. 3: clear, but needs prompting. 5: clear, structured and answers the question asked.	
S4	Knockout answers to review	Any answer that needs a second look, in the candidate's words.	
S5	Recommendation	Move forward, hold or don't move forward, with one sentence of evidence.	