



futuredirections

You can write to, telephone or visit possible employers, but get organised first. This worksheet gives tips on the best ways to contact employers.

Introduction

No matter how you intend to contact an employer, make sure you have your information such as your resume handy, and a pen and paper for making notes about times and contact telephone numbers. Keep a checklist with you so you remember to ask all your questions.

Cold and warm calling

'Cold calling' is telephoning people you have not met and is a way of finding jobs in the hidden job market. You can use cold calling to:

- gain an interview
- find out job related information
- get more networking contacts.

You need to sound confident. You can do this by:

- knowing the name and title of the person you want to talk to
- practising what you are going to say
- letting the person you are talking to know how you can benefit the company.

Cold-calling procedure

Practise the following procedure first with a friend to work out what you are going to say and how you are going to say it.

Getting past the receptionist/personal assistant

Receptionists/personal assistants are often responsible for screening calls and the more important the person you're calling, the harder they will be to reach.

Ask the receptionist the name of the person who does the hiring.

'Hello, this is Kathy Porter. Can you please give me the name of the person who is responsible for staff selection? Thank you.'

OR

'Can you please tell me the name of the manager for the IT department?'

Ask for the person's full name and the correct spelling, and find out how to say their name correctly.

If you can't get past the assistant, sell them on your experience and skills. Ask about the company and for advice about the best way to follow up about a position.

If this doesn't work call at a different time of the day and speak to someone else. If none of this works don't continue. Call other people on your list.

Opening lines

Rehearse your opening lines before you call the person you want to speak to. During the call:

- introduce yourself
- tell them why you are contacting them
- tell them about the skills you have that relate to the type of job you are enquiring about
- ask if you can send them a copy of your resume
- arrange a follow-up contact.

If the person you want to speak to is unavailable

Call back later and ask for the person by their first name and department.

'Can I please speak to Jack in the IT department?'

If you get voicemail

If you get voicemail the first time you call, leave:

- your name
- telephone number
- a brief message saying you will call again.

Contact employers

If the recruiter says there are no jobs now

You have at least three options:

- Ask if you can send in your resume and call again in a few weeks. If the answer is yes, send a resume and cover letter immediately. Plan a follow-up call and ask again for an interview at that time.
- Ask the person for information on what they look for in new employees:
'I know you don't have any vacancies at the moment, but what sort of skills are you looking for when you do recruit?'
- Ask for a referral or other leads:
'Do you know of a company looking for someone with my skills?'
- If you get a company name, ask for a contact name and phone number.

Warm-calling procedure

A 'warm call' is when you phone a likely employer because you:

- have been referred by someone from your network (**see Worksheet 4: Find a job** for more information on networking)
- have already sent your resume and you are following up with a phone call (in the cover letter you should write that you will follow up, by phoning in the next three days, for example)
- are responding to an advertisement.

You would follow the same steps for a warm call as for a cold call except that you will have the name of the person that you need to contact.

Enquiry (cold) letter

Rather than telephone, you can write to possible employers and ask if they have any employment opportunities (**see Worksheet 6: Write a cover letter**).

- Make sure you tailor your letter to each business separately and know who to address the letter to.
- Keep your letter brief and to the point. State what you are seeking (a job or an interview), and preferably explain how the business could benefit from the skills and qualities that you

bring with you.

- Include your resume with your letter of application.

Cold canvassing

You can also visit businesses in person and ask if they have any openings. This personal approach to job searching is often called 'cold canvassing'. You must be well prepared.

- Make sure you dress appropriately for the employer you are visiting. Be neat and tidy.
- Before you walk through the front door or approach the employer on site, make sure you have practised your introduction and questions. Know what you are looking for, and who you need to talk to.
- Introduce yourself and think about how you look and how you come across as a person.
- Do your research and know what the business does and how they do it.
- You should have your interview portfolio with you (**see Worksheet 8: Interviews**) and you may want to leave a copy of your resume with the employer (**see Worksheet 7: Write a resume**).
- Follow up with a repeat visit in a week or two.

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This worksheet is one of a series which supplements the booklet, Getting A Job – future directions. Further information about careers and job searching is available on the Australian online careers site, myfuture, at www.myfuture.edu.au.

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