

## Cold Calls

Cold-calling is the art of approaching an employer by telephone. Contacting a potential employer in such a way requires a great deal of initiative and can be quite stressful. Although some people are confident in their ability to engage in cold-calling, the majority of job seekers are reluctant to pick up the phone and make a cold call. Effective use of cold-calling is easier than you think, but it does require practice.

Cold-calling is an essential job search tool because it helps you access the hidden job market. Statistics illustrate that only one in five available jobs are advertised. Tapping into the hidden job market will mean that you will face less competition because the position will not have been advertised yet. In addition, you may discover employment opportunities that are better suited to your skills and abilities because you are approaching organizations that interest you!

Firstly, in order to effectively engage in cold-calling, you must have a clear and realistic occupational goal. *(For additional information on how to identify your occupational goal, please refer to resources available at Career Services.)*

Secondly, you should compile a list of all the organizations that you would like to work for. You might consider factors such as industry, geographic location, success, mandate, etc. *(Career Services has a documentation centre to help you find organizations you would like to contact.)*

Thirdly, you should research the organizations and find as much contact information about their hiring managers as possible. If you cannot access this information, contact the organization's main number and ask the receptionist for the name, title and extension of the hiring manager in your field. Whenever possible, you should obtain the name of the specific Hiring Manager rather than the Human Resources Manager.

Once you have completed your research, you will then be prepared to contact the hiring manager directly. Always be polite and courteous when speaking with the receptionist and be persistent without being pushy in your request to speak to the hiring manager. *(More tips below)*

A cold call should consist of the following in a clear and concise manner:

- a personal introduction,
- an explanation of the reason why you are calling,
- a brief description of your career and educational background, and
- a specific question regarding job opportunities.

It might also help to adopt a more subtle approach by requesting an information interview instead of a job. This will give you a chance to meet and impress potential employers.

*(For additional details about information interviews please visit*

<http://www.careers.uottawa.ca/en/students/tools/infomeeting.>)

## The Do's and Don'ts of Cold Calling

Do	Don't
Have a specific occupational goal or objective	Call employers to whom your career objective will not be applicable
Research the organization that you are attempting to contact and familiarize yourself with the names of the individual(s) you are requesting to speak with (hiring manager)	Mispronounce the individual's name that you are attempting to contact
Prepare a script in advance to have a clear idea of strategies to use: explain the benefits of hiring you, obtain referrals or book an information interview	Read directly from the script or sound rehearsed when speaking directly to the employer or Hiring Manager
Smile while you are speaking on the phone	Be rude to the receptionist or the employer
Consider calling just before or after office hours when the employer is most likely to answer his or her own phone	Leave long and boring voice messages on the employer's answering machine
Inquire if this is an appropriate time to call	Leave inappropriate messages on your own answering machine
Project confidence	Hesitate, mumble
Use proper grammar and pronunciation	Be dull or take too long to get to the point
Demonstrate your skills and how you can benefit the employer	Be aggressive or pushy with the employer
Establish common ground	Lie about your qualifications, resumé, skills, etc.
Request an information interview	Try to turn the information interview into a job interview
Ask intelligent well-researched questions	Ask questions to which the answer is readily available on the company website or other promotional material
Ask for referrals and request permission to keep in touch	
Send a thank you letter to employers for referrals or immediately following an information interview	Wait too long to send a thank you letter (24-48 hours maximum)
Maintain a detailed record of all your calls and messages left to various employers	Forget the names of your contacts
Prepare yourself for rejection	Become discouraged

### Questions the receptionist might ask:

*What is the purpose of this call?*

- Appropriate responses could be a personal project, looking for information about the organization, career exploration.

*He (Mr.) or She(Ms.) is unavailable; may I take a message?*

- Ask when a convenient time to call back would be; don't leave a message.
- Have insightful questions about the organization prepared. If the receptionist cannot answer your questions he or she will most likely connect you to a manager.

*Are you looking for a job?*

- Be honest, tell the receptionist that you are looking for a job and ask if he or she can assist you by referring you to individuals within the organization who are hiring.
- Tell him or her that you are interested in exploring employment options in your field within the organization, and you would like to speak with an expert (if you intend to ask the manager for an information interview).

**Once you get a hold of the employer** be prepared for many different reactions:

*We aren't hiring.*

- All employers hire, so verify their recruitment period and take advantage of this particular situation to establish an excellent contact. That way, the employer will remember you when a maternity leave, sick leave or retirement occurs.
- You can also request an information interview or ask for referrals to other employers.

*Send your resumé to Human Resources.*

- Request contact information for Human Resources and be sure to ask for an information interview with them.

*Why should I hire you?*

- This is where your research comes in. Demonstrate your knowledge of the company and show the employer how you would be an asset by making the link between your skills and the organization's needs.
- After this you should offer to send the employer your resumé and suggest meeting to discuss this question in more depth.