

Although cold calling is an acceptable and effective way to land a new job, it can be one of the most daunting tasks of a job search. Cold calling, or contacting people you've never met, puts the pressure on you to make a good and quick first impression. Very often the first contact a job searcher has with an employer is by telephone. Research of hiring practices consistently reveals the importance of first impressions made by the job seeker. A good telephone manner is crucial to a successful job search.

Cold calling demands self-confidence and knowledge builds self-confidence. By understanding and illustrating specifically how you can benefit the targeted organization and specific department, you will automatically build your sense of self-worth and self-confidence automatically.

Practice does make perfect in talking to potential employers on the telephone. Perhaps a friend or relative could role play with you --this can make your telephone calls go more smoothly. Your manner should be friendly but business-like. The more you use your skills the better you become! Remember that you will get better at cold calling with practice. You may want to start by calling the bottom of your list and save your top choices for the end.

BE PREPARED

Research the target company's history, needs and future goals or plans.

Cold calling to simply ask for a job severely undermines the likelihood of your success. The company is unaware of your potential benefit and may dismiss your inquiries as unimportant or desperate. By understanding the historical and future challenges that the company faces, you are better able to identify specific areas of need and describe in detail how you can immediately assist them in their goal achievement. It is very important that you show a keen interest in what they do, plus an interest and knowledge in the area you are looking for work in.

Talk to the right person at the right time

Seek to speak directly with the manager or executive who has hiring authority for your targeted department. Ideally, you should know this person's name so you can ask to speak with him or her directly. Try and source it from their website or ask the receptionist for it. In addition, be aware that certain businesses have busy times when they would not appreciate a phone call, ask the person is it a convenient time for you to talk.

Don't call me, I'll call you

If the person you want is not in when you call, don't leave a number and wait for your call to be returned. Ask what is the best time to call the person and say that you will call back later.

Plan what you are going to say.

Introduce yourself and what you are calling about. Briefly explain your background – education / employment / skills /personal qualities that are relevant to the organisation and explain your interest in their organisation and that you are calling to discuss whether they have any openings

Practice what you are going to say.

To help you sound natural, friendly, confident and professional. Use every day, conversational language without being too informal

Think about answers to any questions the employer might ask you. For example, about your skills, qualifications and experience. Keep your CV close by.

Make sure you won't be interrupted when you call and are somewhere quiet.

Have a pen and paper ready to take notes.

Put what you have practiced into effect.

Show that you are a good communicator - something that is highly valued by employers. Make sure you speak clearly and they can hear you. Say 'thank you' for any help they give you.

Vacancy / No vacancy

If there is a vacancy, ask how you can apply. If not, ask if you they might consider you for some work experience instead / whether they have any advice they might give you that might help you attain employment in this area.

Follow up as required.

If they ask you to send in an application, follow it up promptly!

Ending the Call

Thank the person for their time. Summarise any action you are going to take. For example, 'Thank you very much Mr. Jones and I'll see you at your office at 10am on Monday with my CV and the contact details for two referees'. Make sure you do what you said you would.