



Effective Cold Calling

‘The process of making **cold calls** is very simple, but the manner in which you do it is **sophisticated** and takes a lot of **courage** and **practice**.’

Tony Beshara, the Job Search Solution, Amacom 2012

A True Story

A recent graduate was looking for work. He applied for many advertised roles and emailed many organisations in his field of engineering. He received no positive responses and was becoming increasingly disillusioned.

He decided to try **cold calling**, and for two weeks, he phoned organisations who he thought he would like to work for. He left a message with one company and received a call back, offering him a contract role. While working there, his employer also agreed to help him to find a permanent role.

What is cold calling?

Cold calling is the process of phoning (or visiting) organisations to ask about work or internship opportunities, or to request an informational interview. The main purpose of cold calling is to secure a face-to-face meeting with the employer.

Other job searching strategies

- Responding to advertised positions
- Applying for Graduate programs
- Tapping into your ‘Network’
- Registering with recruitment or placement agencies
- Paying a service to find you a role (last resort)
- Sending emails off to suitable organisations

Why choose cold calling?

- Taps into the Hidden Job Market - 80% of job placements are not advertised!
- Complements other job search strategies
- You are not competing with other applicants
- Places you ahead of the competition for a position that may be available now or in the future
- Puts you directly in contact with the decision makers of the organisation

More reasons to cold call

- Allows you to promote yourself to potential employers
- Hopefully leads to a face-to-face meeting
- May result in a job being created for you
- It allows you to contact several prospective employers within a short period of time
- Helps to build your network
- Assists the employer as no need for them to advertise

What employers have to say about cold calling

- ‘Don’t call during a grad or intern recruitment drive – we are too busy to talk! Call the line manager in the

department that interests you rather than HR – they will be much more informative’ - graduate recruiter of a major bank

- ‘You will probably be directed to our website. It’s all about timing and persistence’ - large IT company HR manager
- ‘We are really too busy to talk – please don’t call during tax time’ - property company accounts person
- ‘If you send an email, I would delete without reading, but if you sound good on the phone, I would like to meet with you.’ – financial advisory manager
- I would always be happy to talk and give you some help. Do your research first – Linked in is the way to go!’ – large recruitment company manager

Preparation for cold calling

Preparing mentally - Cold calling is not for the faint hearted!

- Expect to be rejected – only 1-2 in 100 calls results in a job
- Realise that rejection is not personal!
- Build your confidence by practicing and being prepared
- Be resilient - take a break when you need to but stick with it!

Getting organised to cold call

- Prepare a list of companies to contact through company research and networking
- Use LinkedIn to identify key people to speak with <http://students.linkedin.com/>
- Update your resume and have a copy in front of you plus any company information
- Keep a detailed record of the calls you make – date, organisation, people you spoke with and their roles, what was discussed, and outcome. You may need this for follow up calls.
- Take notes during the conversation and have your calendar at hand to make appointments.
- Call from a quiet location where you will not be disturbed or distracted. If possible, use a land line. But if not, make sure your phone is fully charged, and you are in an area with good mobile reception.
- Know your objectives before calling and plan your script!

Preparing the script

- Having a clear idea of what you are going to say will help you to remain calm and confident and ensure that you get the right message across.
- Remember that the aim of the call is not to get you a

job, but a face-to-face meeting with a decision maker in the organisation. This can be an informational interview, an interview for an internship, or a paid position now or in the future.

The content of your script

Once you are speaking with the right person, your script should cover the following:

- Features – Aspects of you or your study and career that make you unique
- Advantages – What strong selling points do you have that set you apart from others
- Benefits – What gains these features and benefits would bring to the organisation.

Follow up with an option of two possible timeslots to meet.

Finding the right person to talk to

- Generally, the best person to speak with is a line manager in the department you are interested in
- If possible, avoid speaking with HR
- Do not ask to be put through to the hiring manager as this will usually take you straight to HR
- Do your research beforehand on key personnel or call ahead to enquire who the head of the relevant department is. Then call again a bit later and ask to be put through to that person.

Make every call count

- Even if the employer does not wish to meet with you face to face, remember you have now expanded your network!
- Make the call worthwhile by asking if you can email your resume to keep on file for any future vacancies
- Ask if there are any departments or other organisations the employer is aware of who may be interested in speaking with you
- Ask if you may contact the organisation again in a month or two if you are still looking for a role

Some helpful tips

- Practice with a friend before making your first call
- Call the employers you are least interested in working with first and practice your skills!
- Choose local employers first, as you will have the location advantage
- Smaller employers without recruiting budgets may be more flexible

Timing of your calls

- The best days to make calls are Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- Try to avoid Mondays
- Best times are 8-9am or 4-5pm. Avoid lunchtime!
- Be sensitive to the fact that the employer will probably be busy. Check if they are free to talk, and if not, offer to call back at a time to suit.
- Keep the call short, no more than 3 minutes, and avoid unnecessary small talk
- Be aware of the business calendar and don't call busy periods.

What if my call goes to voicemail?

- This is a common occurrence
- The first time this happens, do not leave a message, and try again a little later
- If you are put through to voicemail on subsequent occasions, leave your name and contact number first, then a brief message about why you are calling, followed by your name and number again (repeated slowly)
- Follow up several times
- Make sure you have a reliable answering service with

a professional message if you are not available when the employer returns your call

Making a good impression

- Initial impressions are very important!
- Smile as you speak
- Stand to make the call – it makes your voice sound stronger
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Listen carefully and show interest
- Sound enthusiastic, friendly and professional
- Remember the name of the person you are speaking with and use it to address him/her
- Be courteous - thank the person you have spoken with for their time, and follow up with an email where appropriate
- Be authentic and be yourself!

Staying positive

- Stay focused by making a plan and sticking with it
- Aim to make a fixed number of calls per day or week
- Remember that most calls will not result in an interview or job offer
- If you need a break, take one - but only for a day or two, then resume your calling
- Remember cold calling is a numbers game – the more calls you make, the more likely you are to nail a job!