

Cold Calling

Quick Tips

Tips on how to cold call effectively

WHAT IS COLD CALLING?

Cold calling is a common sales technique involving phoning potential customers to let them know about a product. This technique is also used in the careers field with much success.

Your target audience will not have advertised an opportunity. This means that you might feel a little uncomfortable about adopting this strategy. But it is a really effective strategy. So use these quick tips to make a plan and to be prepared before you start. It will make a big difference to your experience. The more you practice the better you will get at it.

WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE?

In career development and planning, cold calling is a technique commonly used for a range of purposes including:

- **Casual/part time work while you study** – most part time or casual jobs are not advertised so this is the single most effective way to find this work
- **Career research** – phoning people to find out details about their occupation and industry to gain tips and insights to assist you with your career planning – informational interviewing
- **Student experience** – contacting organisations to see if it is possible to negotiate some industry experience such as paid part-time work or vacation work or even to organise some work shadowing opportunities
- **Graduate/Professional employment** -a proven technique for tapping into the 'hidden' job market or to gain early notification of opportunities before they are advertised.

Start your plan with a statement clarifying your purpose.

WHO TO TARGET

Now you need to plan who to target. This may be done in several ways:

- **For casual/part time work**, - start with your personal network for potential leads; do a search based on geography and public transport; do a web search by the industry categories you are targeting (cafes, retail outlets, cleaning businesses etc)
- **For career research, student experience or graduate employment** – you might start with your personal network that includes your lecturers/teachers, the Careers & Employability team, friends and family; you can search through current job ads to locate employing organisations in your target field and their contact details; you can check with professional associations or industry directories to find lists of organisations.

Once you have a list of potential organisations to target, do your research. Check their websites to find out what they do, how big they are, what clients they have, how they advertise their vacancies, note any new ventures or projects they are involved in. See if you can find their annual report.

Make some notes and think about what might be attractive about working for them, what you could offer them. This will be really handy information once you phone them.

WHAT'S YOUR PITCH?

Before you start making calls, you need to work out a loose script that you can use.

- Start with a short elevator pitch which should include what you are seeking and some key information about yourself that will be relevant to your audience.



COLD CALLING

- Practice your pitch in front of the mirror or with friends. It needs to sound natural rather than scripted.

GET THE DETAILS RIGHT

Before you make contact with employers ensure that:

- Your resume is up-to-date and tailored to the purpose
- Your LinkedIn profile is looking professional
- Your other online sites are managed – ensure you have managed access permissions
- You have let your referees know that you are about to start contacting employers

PHONE OR VISIT IN PERSON?

Here is where you have to know your market. If your purpose is to gain casual or part time work in small businesses in hospitality or retail, then there are some advantages to visiting in person:

- Allows you to show off your presentation and communication skills
- You can check out the type of business and clientele
- Will demonstrate your initiative and eagerness for the work

This is time consuming but an effective strategy. You will need to be prepared for a lot of 'not interested' or 'sorry we have nothing' responses. Don't give up. You won't know when a 'yes' will happen but if you give up, it will never happen. Always leave them with a copy of your resume so they can contact you later when work is available.

BUT this strategy will not work well when conducting career research or as a strategy to uncover opportunities for graduate or industry experience. Starting with the process with a phone call will be most effective.

PREPARE YOUR SCRIPT OR DISCUSSION POINTS

Depending on your level of confidence, this might include writing out what you will say at every point, e.g.,

"Good morning. My name is _____. I would like to speak to the person responsible for recruitment in your HR team please. Thank you."

For more script ideas like this, check out:

<https://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/jobs-and-careers/how-to-find-a-job/ways-to-find-a-job/tips-for-successful-cold-calling>

Or you might just create a list of topic questions you could ask if you make it through to a good informant.

Have your resume handy in case you are asked questions about your experiences and be ready to send it as a follow-up to the call.

And finally, prepare for these phone calls as you would an interview. You will be judged by your level of politeness, quality of your communication and the level of knowledge (about yourself and the organisation) that you bring to this conversation. So use your charm - you are building your professional reputation.

DURING THE CALL

- Locate yourself in a quiet space where you won't be interrupted and can make notes as you speak.
- Dress to impress, this will get you in the right frame of mind.
- Speak clearly – you can actually hear a smile in someone's voice; this is your main vehicle for building rapport.
- Be friendly, polite and professional – remember to thank people.
- Be agile – be prepared to adapt to fit your target audience's schedule and preferred way to converse. If they prefer an email, or sound busy and rushed, check with them to find a better time to chat.
- Take notes. Write down names and use them during your conversation.
- Confirm any actions that have been agreed upon, e.g., that you will send your resume if requested.
- Be creative– if you haven't found what you wanted, ask for the contact details of someone who may be able to help.
- Be persistent (and polite). If the person you want to speak to isn't there, leave a message or ask when the best time to call back is. If the organisation won't give out direct numbers, get an email address if you can.

AFTER THE CALL

Keep your promises - If you said you'd email your resume or contact details, do it straight away!

Follow up - If someone said they'd call you back but you don't hear from them after a week or so, give them another call. Chances are they've been busy and forgot to get back to you. They'll probably be impressed by your enthusiasm in politely following up.

Cold calling will never be easy, but with confidence, politeness and persistence it can make things happen for you.