

## JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES THAT WORK

### Steps to Conducting Effective Cold Calls

#### Step 1: Identify organizations of interest and key decision-makers within

- Compile a list of all organizations that you might be interested in working for
- Gather the names of individuals with decision-making authority to either offer you a job or impact on the decision to hire you
- After you've made your list and reviewed it, prioritize your contacts
- To get the names of key decision-makers within an organization, search online for a company directory or call each organization's main number and ask the receptionist or department assistant for the name and title of the hiring manager in your field of interest. Aim to get more than the name and contact info of the Human Resources Manager (unless that is the department where you are trying to get a job) because your first point of contact should be with the hiring manager in your field. This step is essential -- you must get a name and title. Many hiring managers have said they throw away *any* letter that is not addressed to them by name.
- Keep detailed records of organization or industry information you find through the research and networking you do.

#### Step 2: Know your stuff; know your target audience

- Do a thorough self-assessment: If you don't know who you are, what you have done, what you want to do and why, and what you can do for the individual/organization, how can you confidently and articulately communicate that to prospective employers? Be prepared to answer questions such as "Tell me about yourself" or "Why do you want to work for us?" be able to explain why you want to work in the field, or what specific experience or skills you have that will make you a great fit for working in the field.
- Learn about your target audience: Do your research - know the companies you want to contact (their products, services, clients, competitors, economic environment, industry trends, factors impacting on the company's operations, mission, history, staff).
- Familiarize yourself with changes/trends in the industry or field of interest to you - what's happening in the field that may impact on anyone working in it?

#### Step 3: Plan your call

- How you say something is just as important as what you say
- Decide when the best time to call is – usually call just before or after regular or peak business hours
- Ask if it is convenient to speak; assure them you only need a few minutes

- Get your initial point across quickly and clearly – enunciate and smile
- Write a script – plan what you will say (greeting, introduction, overview), how you will say it, what questions you will ask, what you will say if you face objections or rejection (not interested, no need, no money, no time, no trust, no authority), what your response will be if asked questions, and what you will do if you get voice mail, reception or the wrong person

## Step 4: Prepare and practice your intro

- Your intro is your main message – the point of your call. Focus your intro on addressing: “Who am I? What needs or challenges does my contact/target audience have that I can help address? What can I do (or what have I done) that is relevant to meeting those needs or challenges?”
- Write out your intro; practice and rehearse it aloud often enough so that you can present it naturally without sounding as though you’re reading from a script.

## Step 5: Engage your target audience

- Your call should not be a one-sided conversation in which you do all the talking; ask a question to get your audience to talk. But DON’T ask questions you already know the answer to, or questions you should know the answer to (if you had done a little basic research).
- Seek to understand and learn more about your contacts’ needs and the challenges they face. Pause and think about what your contact wants/needs, and engage in a conversation about what specific things you can do to help them address some of their challenges or meet some of their needs.

## Step 6: Anticipate and address any questions or concerns

- Think ahead of possible questions, concerns, barriers or objections that your audience may have in response to your call or your words; plan ahead what you will do, say or ask when presented with such questions, concerns, barriers or objections (e.g. concern that students lack maturity, responsibility and the necessary skills/experience to do the job).

## Step 7: Listen and make notes

- Engage in active listening - listen to the actual spoken words, interpret the true meaning behind them, and paraphrase this interpretation back to your audience to get at the real meaning behind a question or a statement.

- Don't monopolize or interrupt the conversation. Don't rush through the conversation and start to seek out the next person before you've finished with your current conversation partner. If you listen attentively, you are more likely to make the person who is talking feel at ease, interesting, important and engaged. When you ask for help, show that you are open and receptive to the information, advice and feedback from others.
- Make detailed notes of your conversations, including information shared specific to the individual or the organization, concerns or questions presented, names referred to, etc.
- If given information or a contact, repeat and confirm details carefully.

## **Step 8: Say thank you and follow up ASAP**

- Manners do matter. It's often the little things that can impact on the impression you make, and ultimately, your success. Very few actions in the world of networking are as important as thanking those who have helped you or tried to help you. Anyone who provides even the minutest amount of assistance should receive a thank-you.
- Follow up:
  - to continue to engage your contacts in conversation and dialogue
  - to clarify, add or enhance information you shared with your contacts
  - to ask additional questions you may have
  - to show that you are genuinely interested
  - and to build/maintain relationships that you started