



## CONTACTING POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS **ARE YOU READY?**

So you are looking for work and you would like to approach employers. You have a list of companies and have identified some names of key contacts that you'd like to get in touch with... But how do you make an approach? How do you get yourself in front of the decision maker and convince them to take you on? Unfortunately there is no magic answer, but there are certainly things you can do to make sure you have the best possible chance of success.

### HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR RESUME?

This is an offensively obvious point to make, but the amount of times that people don't know what's on their own resume is startling. We don't mean you should know roughly what's on your resume; you need to know it in detail... every word... every example...

An employer needs to find out as soon as possible whether you're the right candidate or not, and the only thing they have to go on is your resume. As such, expect them to ask questions about specific parts of it. To have a productive conversation with a potential employer, you need to be comfortable discussing details and additional aspects of EVERYTHING in your resume. *If they ask you a question about something on your resume and you hesitate, they will probably question everything else on there, too!*

### ARE YOU READY TO BE CONTACTED?

- **Email:** Before you send your resume off or get in touch with employers, make sure you're ready to be contacted. That means if your email is still oyvey@walla.com, we would urge you to change it to something more suitable, something that reflects you are ready for the local job market.
- **Your voicemail.** The outgoing message on your answering machine needs to sound professional and be brief and easy to understand. Write it down and rehearse it before you record it... Call them back asap, but 1<sup>st</sup> make sure you have the necessary information handy: company name and website, position you applied for, date you applied, etc.
- **When you receive a call** from an unknown number, answer in a clear and professional manner. Answer with a simple "Hello" and say your name clearly. Please, please don't use one of the following opening statements: "Yellow", "Wassup!", or "Who the hell is this?", Remember, you need to be perceived as a respectable potential employee. *If you are not sure you are ready for a professional phone conversation, or if you are in a noisy or distracting environment, it is always best to let the call go to your voicemail and return the call at a later time.*
- **Your 'digital footprint'**. Whether you like it or not, there is a possibility that potential employers will conduct Facebook investigations. If that picture of you in the bar with a keg over your head is currently up, perhaps now is the right time to change it to a more respectable one.
- If you use **Twitter or any other social network** that helps you broadcast your opinions, think wisely about whom might be reading.

### MAKING THE MOVE...

**Whether speculatively getting in touch or responding to an invitation for applications, there are some rules to follow:**

1. Firstly, **read every last line of text on the recruitment page** of the employer's website. Recruiters can get particularly annoyed if you start asking questions that are already answered on their site.
2. As many recruiters are continually bombarded with the same questions, **choose your questions wisely**. If you have an important (and worthy) question which is not covered on their website or in any of the literature they distribute at careers fairs, do get in touch.
3. When applying, make sure to **follow instructions**. If it's an online application, don't send a paper resume. If they want you to call, don't randomly turn up on their doorstep!
4. With anything you send, **make sure all of your contact details are provided**. If you email for example, take advantage of your signature and pop your number in there too! Make it as easy as possible for them to contact you. Even the slightest difficulty may go against you, as it's likely that a bunch of other candidates will be very accessible and instantly contactable.

Source: adapted from: <https://www.allaboutcareers.com/index.php?/careers-advice/looking-for-a-job/contacting-potential-employers-etiquette>